



# BOX 4-5-9

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

Vol. 14 No. 6

Holiday Issue 1969

## Language of the Heart Heard 'Round the World

The A.A. Fellowship overcomes both natural and man-made boundaries because alcoholics around the world hear the A.A. message in the language of the heart—whatever their native tongue.

These truths became especially evident in New York, October 9-11, 1969, when 27 delegates joined us here at G.S.O. for the very first A.A. World Service Meeting.

The unity keynote was sounded at the opening session in eloquent greetings from Dr. John L. (Dr. Jack) Norris, nonalcoholic chair-

man of our General Service Board for North America, and in the account by Bill W. of the birth of A.A. services.

Unity was echoed by the delegates who recited, each in his country's own language, A.A.'s First Tradition:

*Our common welfare should come first;  
personal recovery depends upon A.A.  
unity.*

Bill also described the U.S. and Canadian experiences of A.A.'s early years, which gave birth to the 12 Traditions.

Reports from each region represented at the meeting pointed up the similarity of A.A. challenges and answers everywhere.

Highlights of the reports are:

### AUSTRALIA: A.A.'s FIND SUCCESS BRINGS PROBLEMS

"A.A. has become such an accepted part of our community that it is of little interest to our news media," said Berenice and Laurie.

Since Australia has no national service office as yet, groups in each state are separately responsible for services in their own areas. The P.R. officer for each state, for example, regularly arranges for A.A. members to act as speakers before non-alcoholic groups.

All hospitals treat alcoholism as a specific disease and cooperate with A.A. Prison authorities use



A.A. as an essential part of their rehabilitation efforts.

Beginning in 1959, an annual convention has brought together members from all over the continent, a different state hosting each year.

Meeting the same weekend as the convention, the yearly Australian Service Conference has also begun to assist, coordinate, and add to the existing independent service centers. It makes recommendations on A.A. matters common to all and now has a publishing company.

### BELGIUM: A.A. FOUND PUBLICITY PAYS OFF

Both French- and Dutch-speaking A.A. groups now flourish in Belgium. But in 1968 A.A. services for Flemish alcoholics were organized according to "Partners in A.A." and "Guide to G.S. Structure" furnished from New York, reported

(To p. 3)

*Dear Friends. . .*

*This is possibly the finest Christmas we have ever known. A.A.'s unexampled progress worldwide, culminating in the recent World Service Meeting, must be counted among the greatest of our blessings in this year, 1969. More than ever before we can truly feel that our A.A. family knows no barrier of distance, custom or language.*

*It is with deep gratitude and thanksgiving that Lois and I join in sending each of you our warmest holiday greetings.*

Ever,

*Bill*

# 20th General Service Conference

## Agenda Topics

Now is the time to start thinking about the topics to be covered at the 20th annual meeting of the North American General Service Conference to be held in April, 1970. In order to truly reflect the overall A.A. thinking, the experiences and views of each group need to be expressed. Group discussions, district meeting and assembly discussions would be interesting and would provide information from your area for the delegates' discussion. Let's truly reflect the "voice of A.A." on the following topics:

(1) How can A.A. better cooperate with outside agencies, i.e., courts, medical profession, etc.?

(2) The problem of the A.A. member and "pills."

(3) How can the percentage of groups contributing to General Services be improved in order to meet financial responsibilities?

(4) What is the experience of the Fellowship when a local Conference area needs redistricting? Who drafts it and on what basis

### AN IMPORTANT DEADLINE— DECEMBER FIRST

If we are to refer to your group any sick alcoholic from your community, we *have* to have correct information. PLEASE get your Group Information Card in for the 1970 *World Directory Part I* (U.S.-Canada only) by *December 1, 1969!*

Travelers use it to find you, too, and it tells us where to send you announcements about Miami Beach, new books, worldwide A.A., and much more.

\* \* \* \*

The postmark on the envelope said, "Dawson Creek, B.C.," but Alf M., in Ottawa, couldn't think of anyone. . . .

does approval need to come from the whole area—or from just the groups involved?

(5) Should we be concerned about A.A. members being employed as "A.A. counselors" when traditionally A.A. is not to be professionalized?

The theme will be based on *Service*, the actual wording to come later. If you have agenda topics you feel should be discussed, please give them to your G.S.R., committee member or delegate. Make the 20th General Service Conference your service tool.

Inside, he found that the letter writer, a new A.A., had found Alf's address in the *World Directory*.

It was no ordinary A.A. letter, either. It was signed "W-," a brother Alf had not seen in 20 years.

### A.A. CALENDAR

#### NOVEMBER

- 21-23 — Loveland, Co., Winter Regional Conf. Write: Conf. Sec., Rt. 2, Box 109-H, Berthoud, Co.
- 29 — Baltimore, Md., 12th Annu. "Sobrieties" Show. Write: Intergroup Office, 3111 St. Paul St., Baltimore.

#### JANUARY 1970

- 16-18 — Ocean Springs, Miss. Gulf Coast Round-Up. Write: Chairman, Drawer U, Ocean Springs, Miss.
- 16-18 — Beaumont, Texas, 8th S.E. Texas Gen. Serv. Conf. Write: Conf. Chm., P.O. Box 3322, Beaumont.
- 23-25 — 3rd Tar Heel Midwinter Conf. Write: Chm., Box 2271, Durham, N.C.
- 24 — Bedford, N.H., 3rd Annu. Midwinter Banquet. Write: N.H.S.A., Box 182, Portsmouth, N.H.
- 30-31 — Blytheville, Ark., 13th Annual Tri-State Coon Supper. Write: Chm., P.O. Box 401, Blytheville.

#### FEBRUARY

- 20-22 — Louisville, Ky., 19th Kentucky State Conf. Write: Conf. Chm., P.O. Box 13082, Louisville.
- 21 — Phila., Pa. Intergroup 30th Annu. Dinner and Dance. Write: Chm., 2202 St. James St., Philadelphia.

### WHERE \$ \$ \$ GO

"If A.A. is self-supporting, why give money?" whispered the new pigeon to his sponsor.

If you know some A.A.'s who still wonder, ask G.S.O. for free copies of a new pamphlet explaining what A.A. services are supported by the contributions you send G.S.O.

**DEADLINE:** To be acknowledged in the 1970 *World Directory*, group or individual gifts must be received at G.S.O. by *Dec. 31, 1969*.

Oh yes—that sponsor replied, "We're only self-supporting IF we give money. We let no one but ourselves pay our expenses."

### MIAMI BEACH, HERE WE COME!

Registration and housing application forms are pouring into G.S.O. No housing forms were forwarded to the Miami Housing Bureau prior to Oct. 15. All rooms are being assigned by them on a first-come, first-served basis; you will hear direct from your assigned hotel about your reservation.

The opening dance will be on Thursday, July 2, 1970; the Big Show will be on Sunday evening, July 5.

Walter T., Florida Host Committee chairman, has had to resign this position; business reasons necessitated his moving to Ohio.



Wesley P. has now assumed this important post. Our thanks and best to Walter and our sincere gratitude to Wes.

Get your forms from your group or write P.O. Box 459, Grand Central Post Office, N.Y., N.Y. 10017.

## BELGIUM (from p. 1)

Dolfe, secretary, and Andries Van Staen, nonalcoholic chairman of their Board.

There are now 94 groups, plus three in psychiatric institutions and one in a hospital. Belgian law forbids formation of prison groups, but armed forces groups exist in nearly each garrison town.

A G.S. Board (six nonalcoholics, two A.A.'s from each province) is responsible for G.S.O., publishing, and a committee on Public Information.

Volunteers publish an A.A. periodical and translate literature. Hopefully, a joint Advisory Board with French-speaking A.A.'s will soon be formed.

Each group sends delegates to a Provincial Workgroup, run by a Provincial Workcommittee. These, plus trustees and a delegate from each province, a secretary, treasurer, and delegate of publishing, make up the Flemish G.S. Conference.

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## CENTRAL AMERICA: SEVERAL SERVICE CENTERS

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From Central America, both Northern and Southern Zones, the A.A. story is one of growth. El Salvador, Honduras, Costa Rica and Guatemala have one national service office, enabling groups, old and new, to keep in touch with each other through the office and also acting as a "force against negative localism," Roberto and Gustavo reported. The El Salvador G.S. Board has recently published the Big Book in Spanish.

Nicaragua has three separate intergroups and Panama has only groups.

Most Central American groups meet every day, and many groups go on excursions to Twelfth Step other groups.

Finances are a problem, but literature sales, excursion profits and



World map "at a glance" showing A.A. areas represented at the Meeting — one of a number of display boards set up in the meeting room at the Roosevelt Hotel.

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contributions so far have permitted observance of the 7th Tradition.

The Central American groups have an annual convention, many public meetings, group anniversary meetings and just lots of A.A. activity. All countries are in need of better publishing facilities so that literature will be more readily available to all.

This problem will be studied by the Board of Directors of A.A. World Services, Inc.

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## COLOMBIA: 119 GROUPS IN FIVE YEARS

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When the Colombian G.S.O. began as just a literature distribution center in 1964, there were only 11 groups in 10 cities. A 1965 loan from North America's G.S.B. was a big help, reported Arturo, G.S.O. staff in Medellin.

At first, A.A. there was supported (\$20 a month) by a commercial firm, but problems grew. Members have mostly overcome them and are proud to observe the Traditions now.

In 1969, there are 130 groups in 63 cities, several good intergroups, and the Medellin office supplies free literature to new groups in

eight nearby countries. Its expenses are now about \$330 (U.S.) a month.

If there had not been a general information center (G.S.O.) for the new groups, each may have gone its own way and Colombia A.A. would have been divided, maybe operating inadequately and fighting each other in disregard of the Traditions.

Six nonalcoholic trustees have done outstanding public information work—such as Attorney G.V. Bustamente, board president, who persuaded large companies to buy A.A. literature, especially the Spanish "What Happened to Joe."

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## FINLAND: A.A. INTERGROUPS DO NOT SUCCEED

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"Area meetings and national roundups (nearly 1,000 in attendance quarterly) are very popular, and the service center (G.S.O.) for the whole country has worked well over 15 years," said Johan and Veikko.

This center publishes *The Information* semi-monthly (it has 700 subscribers) with news, a financial statement, members' A.A. anniversaries, and directory corrections. A group directory is issued thrice yearly. Nearly every meeting is "closed," so very seldom do outsiders get to see A.A. work.

*The Decision*, a monthly magazine (with 2,000 subscribers) has

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## FINLAND (from p. 3)

articles by local members, plus Grapevine illustrations and translations.

The Finnish Big Book contains a history of A.A. there, 16 Finnish stories, and statements from the Archbishop of Finland and the president of its Medical Board.

Finding the best expressions for translating A.A. literature into Finnish and Swedish has been difficult. Corrections are made in each new printing.

## FRANCE: MANY LONERS IN THE PROVINCES

Five Paris groups and three suburban ones form the stout heart of French A.A., but in the provinces many Loners find tough going, reported Jacques and Bernard.

Since French A.A. got started only nine years ago (helped by the American group in Paris), the growing pains are many. Such as—

1. Confusion among members about the distinction between the Paris Intergroup Committee and the French G.S. Board. Intergroup handles A.A. telephone answering with paid personnel, tries to handle public relations and inter-group relations.

The Board, on the other hand, is primarily responsible at present for A.A. publishing, distribution, and relations with A.A. in other countries.

2. Lack of funds. Many new French members—like those everywhere—have little or no money. Nevertheless, French A.A., “respecting the 7th Tradition. . . , has refused to become a public service.” It could mean financial advantages, but A.A. would be dependent on the government.

3. Literature is purchased from Quebec. Only a few small items are published in France.

French A.A.’s held their first G.S. Conference this autumn in Paris, with “great heart and hope.”

## GERMANY: A.A. PATTERNED AFTER NORTH AMERICAN

“Perhaps because American soldiers stationed in Germany 12th-Stepped German alcoholics, forming the first group in Munich in 1953, German A.A. has largely

*We are grateful to report that the Big Book is now available in 8 languages other than English: Afrikaans, Finnish, Flemish, French, German, Norwegian, Portuguese and Spanish.*

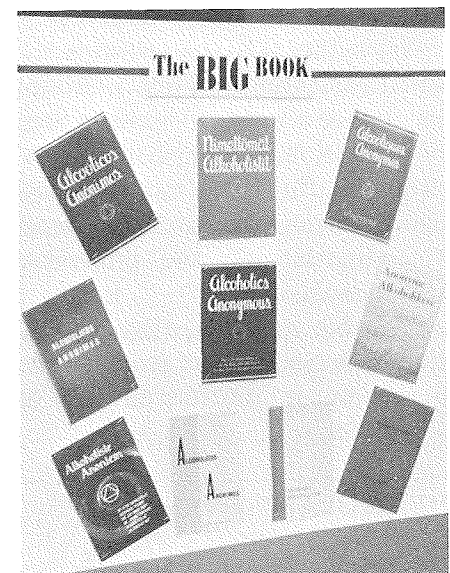
followed the North American plan,” said Guenter, chairman and Dr. Walter H. Lechler, nonalcoholic member of their G.S. Board.

At first, however, Germans felt no A.A. structure of any kind was needed, because “Germans had, since Hitler’s time, an allergy against any form of organization.”

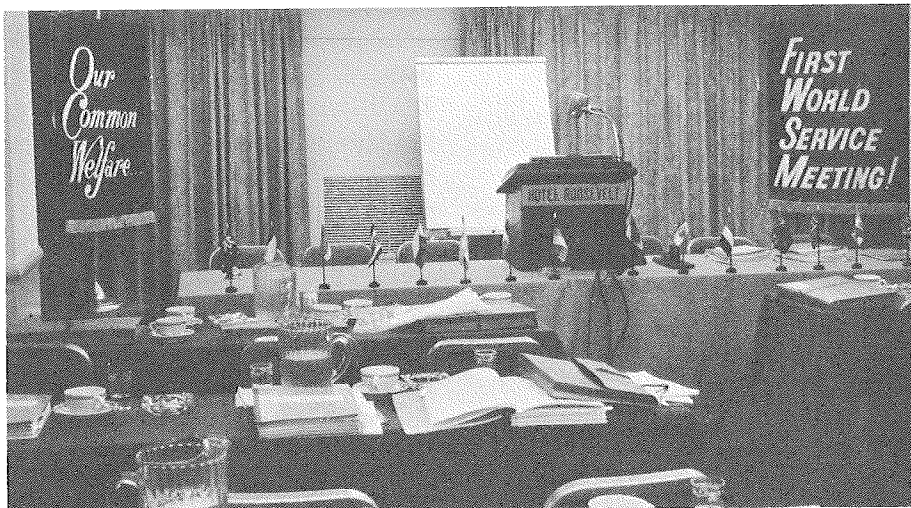
Therefore, for some years translation and distribution of literature, contacts between groups, assistance to new groups, and public information activities were not undertaken at all, except by individuals.

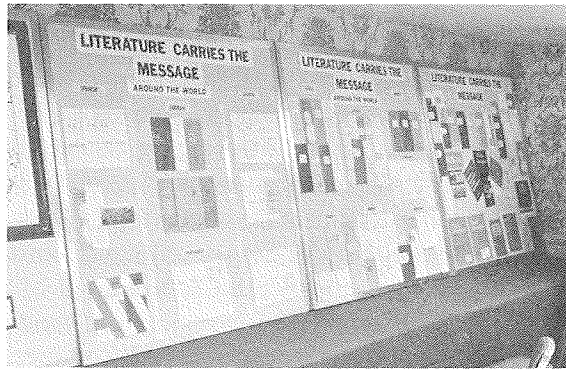
Nevertheless, each group had its own structure and elected “servants,” and about 10 years ago one alcoholic started to give information from group to group. All groups corresponded with him, and thus a general service office developed called the Contact Center.

The national Contact Center and a publishing company are self-supporting and are guided by the General Service Board.



This is the “East Room” in the Roosevelt Hotel, New York City, where the delegates from around the world shared A.A. in the language of the heart.





◀ These display boards added color and meaning to the World Service Meeting, as they displayed A.A. pamphlets in more than seventeen languages.

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## HOLLAND: A.A. HAS UNUSUAL FEATURES

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“We are but a small country, and A.A. in The Netherlands is also small in comparison with A.A. in the U.S.A. But we try with the tools we have to make the best of it.” Piet and Hans said.

Structure includes two foundations: Workgroups of A.A. and Publicity in A.A. Their boards are advised by non-A.A.’s from medicine, the judiciary, industry, and by social workers and clergymen. These boards also include A.A. members.

There are 15 large groups, 10 smaller ones, and 15 Loners. Groups meet once a week to discuss a Step or Tradition, and also members’ problems. *De Boei*, a monthly magazine, carries local stories, Grapevine translations, and interviews with non-A.A.’s.

The big problem, they said, is that A.A. in Holland is not growing compared to the number of alcoholics.

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## MEXICO: APPROVES GENERAL SERVICE PLAN

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In 1964, in Guatemala, at the Second A.A. Convention of Central America—Mexico—Panama—Caribbean Areas, Mexico City was designated as the site of the third such convention, Antonio and Jorge told us.

In response, the five Spanish-speaking Mexico City A.A. groups

formed their Intergroup Office, and organized the First National Mexican A.A. Congress for all Mexican groups, now held semiannually in various cities.

Widespread interest throughout the country has resulted in 200 flourishing groups, and the Intergroup of Mexico City endeavors to give whatever service it can to new groups started anywhere in Mexico. Only some Mexico City groups support the office, however.

A plan to organize along the North American lines for General Services to all Mexican groups was approved in Sept., 1969. A plan for a G.S. Board, G.S.O. and publishing company is being studied.

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## NEW ZEALAND: KEEPS A.A. SERVICE STRUCTURE FLUID

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General Service workers in New Zealand try to make no move without substantial membership backing, and to do nothing that cannot be easily undone. This promises to work for some time to come, Ian and Irvan reported.

Without legal incorporation, they are guided by simple bylaws largely about delegates to the New Zealand G.S. Conference and its Steering Committee (a kind of G.S. Board). Appointment of three non-alcoholics—well-known men with time to devote to A.A.—has been an unqualified success.

The four largest cities have Intergroups, and the G.S. Office (one

room, one A.A. employee) opened in Wellington, the capital, in 1968.

Each geographical area (three) has area assembly meetings, all members welcome. These include a meal and a public meeting in the evening, often featuring a guest speaker, usually a doctor.

Groups compete for the assembly to be held in their home towns.

Most literature is imported from Australia and New York. It includes Conference-approved material as well as other alcoholism publications. The national A.A. paper is called *Mainstay*.

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## NORWAY: A.A. HAD STORMY TIMES

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What happens when government funds of considerable size are available to support A.A.? Such a quandary faced Norwegian A.A.’s in 1952-53, Haakon and Erling told us, and many members wanted the money accepted.

When the Norwegian Board sensed danger and declined the outside contributions—holding out for the A.A. Tradition of self-support—almost half the membership seceded. Slips and chaos resulted.

However, time healed the wounds, surviving groups returned, and today A.A. in Norway has no debts—even though it has an almost empty cash box!

Recent publication, in Norwegian, of “Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions” took most of the capital on hand. Translations of the Big Book and eight pamphlets had already been published there.

Years ago, A.A.’s despaired of getting hospitals to accept alcoholics and set up their own 15-bed clinic, then turned it over to the authorities for operation in cooperation with A.A.

So far, little has been done about public information, but they plan to initiate some activities soon.

## SOUTH AFRICA: A.A. GROWS BY PROVIDING SERVICES

"We have to carry literature in six languages—Afrikaans, English, Isixhosa, Sesutu, Swahili, Zulu—plus some in French, German, and Portuguese," said Glen and Andries.

In all, there are 78 items, 29 of them printed in South Africa, some in the office on an offset press.

The Big Book in Afrikaans ("Alkoholiste Anoniem") came out in 1961. Bill W.'s waiving of his royalties has greatly assisted A.A. in South Africa and in South West Africa. Planned next is translation into Afrikaans of much more Conference-approved literature.

In 1968, 40,000 items were distributed, mostly to the white minority. The question of reaching alcoholics among the larger non-white population causes great concern, but there are hopeful signs that some efforts are at last being successful. Shipments for 1969 are up 25% over 1968.

Ever since 1951 responsibility for such services rested mainly with groups in one province, Transvaal. As of this March, however, it is shared on a national basis through the newly-elected General Service Board and the functioning G.S. Office and Conference.

A P.I. Committee has just been set up, as requested by the annual Conference.

## UNITED KINGDOM: A.A. REORGANIZES SERVICES

As a result of a 1968 recommendation of the United Kingdom G.S. Conference (which started in 1965), the Redcliffe Gardens Central Service Office in London is to become the General Service Office for England and Wales, maintained by the 1957-established G.S. Board of A.A. in Great Britain and Ireland, which also will be responsible for the *News Letter* (U.K. equivalent

of the Grapevine) and accountable to the Conference.

"Groups in Scotland and Northern Ireland previously formed their own intergroups for most aspects of A.A. services," Allan and Wick said, "but Scotland will be actively associated in the working of the new structure and hopefully Ireland too, in due course."

A Board-owned publishing company publishes and distributes A.A. Conference-approved material throughout the sterling area.

Otherwise the Board (eight A.A.'s with six-year terms, plus six non-alcoholics) maintains liaison with many official and unofficial national bodies, advises on interpretation and observance of the Traditions, and services the General Service Conference. It also shoulders primary legal and financial responsibilities.

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In addition to the delegates' reports, Dr. Jack, Eric, Maurice and Bayard (trustees from our Board) shared their General Service Board responsibilities. Chuck and Warren (delegates from the North American General Service Conference) shared their experience. Ruth, a trustee, and the Grapevine staff reported on their publication, and the G.S.O. staff shared their service activities.

## FUTURE WORLD MEETINGS

Agreement to hold another World Service Meeting in New York in three years was reached by delegates to the first, after unanimous endorsement of the value of such a session.

Subject to ratification by the Conferences and Boards of the countries involved, other tentative decisions made include:

1. Formation of Literature, Publishing, Policy, Finance and Agenda-Admission Committees, member-

ship to be assigned by lot.

2. Approval of rotation principle for selection of delegates (A.A. in each country to determine its own electoral method).

3. Agreement that cost of the World Service Meeting should be shared as equitably as possible.

Our hearts are especially filled with gratitude for all that is A.A. around the world. The hand of A.A. is in many places. May it reach even more.

## SPECIAL GIFTS TO G.S.O.

CALIFORNIA	
San Luis Obispo:	
2nd Annu. 22nd Dist. Conv.	\$200.00
IOWA	
Hamburg: Waubonsie 4-State Picnic	26.00
MICHIGAN	
Lansing: Central Mich. Inter-Area Council of A.A.	69.85
MISSOURI	
Jefferson City: State Conf.	33.43
NEW HAMPSHIRE	
State Assembly	100.00
NEW YORK	
Schenectady: 6th Annu. N.Y. State Conf.	600.24
OHIO	
Cleveland: Ohio Gen. Ser. Conf.	100.00
S./S.W. Ohio & No. Kentucky Gen. Ser. Area 8	100.00
1969 Ohio State G.S.C.	1,114.38
SOUTH CAROLINA	
Florence: Waccamau Area Group	9.60
WEST VIRGINIA	
Huntington: 17th W. Va. Conf.	87.90
UTAH	
Summer Meeting-Area 4	50.35
CANADA	
British Columbia: Pacific N.W. Conf.	910.80
Manitoba: <i>Lac du Bonnet</i> - 9th Ann. Banquet	100.00
Ontario: <i>London</i> - Western Conf.	200.00
Ontario: Nippising and Parry Sound Dist. Comm.	59.80
Ontario: Toronto-Ontario Regnl. Conf.	200.00
Saskatchewan: <i>North Battleford</i> - Sask. Delegates Kitties	28.87
International Advisory Council of Young People in A.A.	300.00

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