



BOX 4-5-9

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

June-July 1968

Vol. 13 No. 3

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33rd ANNIVERSARY

Know why June 10, 1935, is a very important day in your life? What happened—or did not happen—that day in Akron, O.?

You could find out by attending the annual A.A. Founders' Day in Akron June 14-16 this year, celebrating the 33rd anniversary of an event that has led to every A.A. recovery since. (Not the meeting of Bill and Dr. Bob on Mother's Day that year.)

If you can't make it, you can find the answers (and new hope and help) on Page 71 of "A.A. Comes of Age," the A.A. story which has now been updated. The new (1967) printing takes up where the old edition (1957) left off.

A new introduction by Bill clarifies the story line. Footnotes throughout bring all figures and dates up-to-the-minute.

UNITY ASSURES OUR FUTURE

"Without A.A., you and I would not have too many tomorrows, and in A.A. if there is not unity, A.A. will not survive," said Tom B., G.S. Board regional Trustee from Western Canada.

"So in our Fellowship, unity, survival and tomorrow are really one and the same thing."

Those statements keynoted the 18th annual General Service Conference, April 22-27, in New York this year.

(The 1968 *Conference Digest* mailed with this issue of *Box 4-5-9* summarizes the Conference proceedings.)

Tom's remarks captured so much of the spirit of the Conference—indeed so much of the 1968 spirit of all A.A.—that we're sharing with you here highlights of his talk.



He called the Conference itself "one of the greatest vehicles for understanding, communications and hence unity, that we shall ever have in A.A."

Describing the Traditions as the fruit of A.A. experience, Tom said, "much of this experience was of a tragic nature. Many of our early people rode off in all directions, in hot pursuit of alcoholic souls, motivated by a very sincere desire to help.

"But many were on an exercise of self-glorification. Anonymity was thrown to the winds, money was solicited, and in some cases 12th-Step work became virtually professionalized. We were about to fly apart at the seams.

"Other organizations who came before A.A. in the drunk business had already met with disaster," Tom reminded us.

"Early A.A.'s were aware of those disasters, and knew some guidelines would have to be evolved for us to avoid the same fate. So the lessons learned from our own tragic experiences, plus the demise of other organizations, were incorporated into our Traditions.

"We have made progress in our relations with other people in the alcoholism business, and in our ability to survive criticism.

"The last 30 years the picture of alcoholism has changed drastically. A.A. has moved from a 'leper colony' status to being an accepted and respected part of the community.

"But," Tom warned, "this increases the need to adhere to our principles of unity. More and more we are going to hear from our friends, 'Couldn't you people

(continued on page 2)



ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR GROUP MEETINGS

ANYBODY HERE KNOW WHY JUNE 10, 1935 IS AN IMPORTANT A.A. DATE? It was a life-saving day for us, as it marked an A.A. milestone reached by Bill and Dr. Bob, in Akron, Ohio. More details in this issue.



7,500 PUBLISHERS AND BROADCASTERS have again been asked to respect A.A.'s Anonymity Tradition through a letter mailed from G.S.O. I believe we would all enjoy reading about it on page three of this issue.



A.A.'S GENERAL SERVICES ARE GROWING OVERSEAS, so A.A.'s from fourteen regions will hold a world service meeting next year—the first in A.A.'s history.



IF YOU WANT YOUR A.A. EYES REALLY OPENED, glance through the 1968 *Conference Digest* just received with this issue of *Box 4-5-9*. It's about A.A. problems and answers, as covered at the recent 18th General Service Conference.

A G.S.R. Speaks



Welcome to our corner—whether you are old or new at this service.

If you're like many of us, you would appreciate a tip now and then on *what* to do, and *how* to do it.

Now is a good time to start. With this copy of *Box 4-5-9*, your group also receives the 1968 *Conference Digest*. Primarily, these are tools for one particular kind of A.A. "trusted servant"—*your* kind, the G.S.R.'s. So here's a suggestion. Get a cup of fresh coffee and settle down by yourself for an hour. Take your time—and *enjoy* reading these two bulletins from beginning to end.

Don't *study*, just read. After each article, pause a moment to reflect.

So the items about group unity remind *you* of *your* group? Can you in your imagination identify with the Loners, the Internationalists, the alcoholics in prisons and in hospitals all over the world? Can you empathize with how lonely they must feel at times—and the great gratitude they experience when *they* realize they are really not alone—that in heart and spirit they are united with all the rest of us in the great worldwide A.A. family?

Where would ANY of us be without each other? In this spirit, surely all of us Third-Legacy workers will find good and loving ways to share what we feel and know with the other members of our group.

Please be sure to let us know just how you do it, and the results. If we go at it one step at a time, with patience and love

UNITY (continued from page 1)

relax your anonymity, get out into the open now?"

He spoke of pressure from government as "tempting morsels for individuals and groups."

It will take deep understanding of our Traditions to avoid the pitfalls, Tom cautioned.

"I have witnessed the collapse of A.A. unity in several communities, not brought about by drastic breaks of Traditions, but by Traditions being ignored or stretched slightly."

None of these is really a unique case, he said. A knowledge of our history is our best approach in all such cases.

Tom also emphasized the need for the group conscience in A.A. to be an informed group conscience, and urged all members to keep improving their knowledge and understanding of all facets of A.A.

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WORLD DIRECTORY NOTICE

A printing breakdown delayed delivery of our new *World Directory* which G.S.O. hoped so much to get to all groups early in April.

They'll go out about May 1, however. Meanwhile, "...serenity to accept the things we cannot change" is needed.

FIRST BIRTHDAY FOR NEW BOOK

No other A.A. book has ever received the widespread instant acceptance given to "The A.A. Way of Life," the reader by Bill W., which was one year old May 1.

Over 29,000 copies of this book were shipped out in its first year.

It is being used more and more at discussion meetings, according to letters we get at G.S.O., since it is keyed to such topics as willingness, trust, fear, tolerance, acceptance, admission, aloneness, dependence, finances, etc.

COMING UP IN GV

"My Name Is Mike" tells the story of an A.A. in far-off Taiwei, Taiwan, who, in a moment of crisis, picked up a November 1966 *Reader's Digest* and was saved from a drunk or worse by reading "An Alcoholic's Letter to His Son." The week that Mike's manuscript arrived, several requests came to the Grapevine to reprint that same *Digest* piece. So, in the June issue we give you "My Name Is Mike" and "An Alcoholic's Letter to His Son," both powerful reading and one more example of those wonderful A.A. coincidences.

Coming in *July*: A new "Letters" section in the front of the magazine. In a past Grapevine, J.P.R. wrote of "mental confusion" and the response has been heart-warming. Many of these letters will appear in the new July letters section.

IS YOUR DOCTOR A FRIEND OF A.A. ?

These ideas have been suggested by doctors themselves (many of them in A.A.) at the request of the Public Information Committee of the G.S. Conference, since Dr. John L. Norris, nonalcoholic chairman of our G.S. Board, has often emphasized the importance of doctors' working with A.A., and vice versa.

1. *Identify ourselves* as A.A.'s to doctors who treated us as drunks.
2. *Pay the doctor* (make amends).
3. Satisfy yourself he *knows* about alcoholism, then *trust him*.
4. *Avoid interfering*.
5. *Thank him* for his help with *any* alcoholic, especially yourself.
6. *Thank the hospital*. Write the administrator a "Thank you for saving my life" note. He can show this to his trustees who don't want alcoholics admitted.
7. *Write the heads* of psychiatry, medicine and nursing, where and when students can go to open meetings.

SEE G.S.O. STAFF AT WORK— AT YOUR OWN MEETING!

Want to see (in color) your G.S.O. Staff at work? Now you can, without leaving your own group. The NEW (third) G.S.O. filmstrip is not cartoon, but actual photographs.

You also hear each Staffer tell what she does for all of us on the accompanying record, plus that thrilling mass "I Am Responsible" declaration from Toronto. Price: \$4.50.

8. *Select carefully* members who do hospital 12th-Step work or arrange institutions meetings.
9. *Keep in touch* with any physician who refers a patient to A.A.
10. *Give doctors A.A. telephone numbers* they can use 24 hours a day.
11. *Give physicians A.A. literature*, over and over again.
12. *Arrange special meetings* for medical personnel.
13. *Watch your language*. Making fun of doctors publicly, or criticizing them does not help.

**MIAMI BEACH!
HERE WE COME!**

The Convention Bureau of Miami Beach, Fla., asked for it—and they're gonna get it. A tidal wave of alcoholics will roll in soberly the weekend of July 3-5, 1970, for the International A.A. Convention celebrating A.A.'s 35th anniversary year.

Walter T., Fort Lauderdale, who presented his state's bid for our king-size gathering, has now been named Host Committee Chairman. Co-chairman and many subcommittee chairmen will be named later.

It's far too early for reservations, but G.S.O. people conferred recently with officials of the Fountainebleau and Eden Roc hotels, and the Miami Beach Convention Hall (seats 15,000).

Whether Republican or not — suggest you watch TV coverage of their Convention in August and see our delightful facilities.

**How A.A. Starts
—In Wales, too**

Don sobered up in Liverpool A.A., but upon return to his Wales home had to go it alone. He set out, of course, to carry the message to alcoholics. Finally, one fellow showed interest.

Don visited his new friend daily, in the hospital and other patients eagerly listened.

Two or three patients got released, and soon a budding A.A. group was meeting at homes, reading the Big Book, and working the Twelve Steps.

Eight months later, 12 members were solidly sober, and the hospital invited Don to hold meetings there.

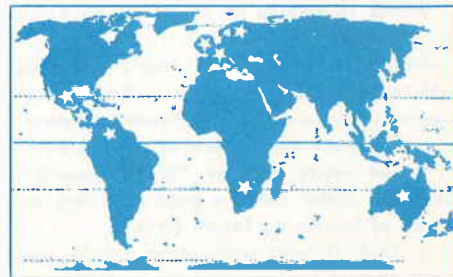
(Our thanks to Dan Mc., Rockville Centre, N.Y.)

First World Service Meeting

A.A.'s from 12 or more regions of the world will participate in the Fellowship's first *World Service Meeting* in New York in the fall of 1969—according to present plans.

Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom, France, Belgium, Germany, Finland, Norway, Central America, Mexico, Colombia, South Africa and perhaps other zones of A.A. population will send two delegates each. Two North American A.A.'s chosen at the 1969 General Service Conference will also attend.

Our General Service Board began this planning in 1967. Bill W., at the Board's request, wrote the above-named places—all of them have had their own General Service set-ups for several years—and all responses have been enthusiastic.



Hopefully this will give Bill W., the General Service Board, and the North American Conference an opportunity to share their service experience with the newer boards and service offices overseas. Through such a meeting, A.A. should reach many more sick alcoholics around the world.

SPECIAL GIFTS TO G.S.O.

CALIFORNIA:

Long Beach: So. Calif. Coastal Assembly, Dist. 2-3-4,
Panel #2 \$ 9.00
Orange: Laguna 5-6-12
Workshop 15.00
Santa Barbara: 23rd District
Steering Committee 76.17

FLORIDA:

Miami: District #8 9.00

GEORGIA:

Statesboro: St. Simons Island
A.A. Weekend 50.00

ILLINOIS:

Park Forest: Park Forest Grps. 20.00

KENTUCKY:

17th Annual Kentucky State
Conf. of A.A. 137.00

MAINE:

Portland: District #1 20.00

MASSACHUSETTS:

Eastern Mass. Conf. 200.00

NEW JERSEY:

High Bridge: Califon-High
Bridge First Area Round-up . . 15.00

OHIO:

Cincinnati: Ohio State General
Service Conference 1511.88

WASHINGTON:

Seattle: District #14 State of
Washington 7.00

CANADA:

Ontario: Northeastern Regional
Conference, No. Bay 416.84
Toronto: Men's Meeting 50.00

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OLD BLUE PLATE NOT THE SAME

"Not liking what we were seeing and hearing, some of us decided to talk it out. Instead of complaining, we hoped to get action. We did, as a result of a membership meeting in a home on a non-meeting night," writes Bob, Blue Plate Group, Conn.

He has sent us the agenda used for this business-type membership meeting, and it's great. It is built around Unity, Recovery, and Service. Here's some of the "action" they got:

"We formed our first Beginners' Class. Sixteen new members at the first one, and the results are most gratifying to all.

"We installed a 'house committee' of three to accept total responsibility of such service. New spirit—new enthusiasm and *new* interest in the group by all.

"We decided to continue these membership (business type—group inventory) meetings. Many are asking why they didn't get to the last one!

About Anonymity

Helping to insure the anonymity of *all* A.A. members is one of our jobs here at G.S.O., as you know.

So our Public Information Committee has just mailed to 7,500 newspapers, magazines, radio and TV stations a letter explaining our Anonymity Tradition and two reasons it is so important to us and our families—and to all those sick alcoholics who have not come to A.A. . . . yet.

Local P.I.C.'s and Central Offices also got copies. According to the letter, "anonymity at the press and broadcast level" is our assurance to newcomers that their membership in A.A. will not be disclosed, nor will they ever be expected or required to disclose it. . . . Problem drinkers still seem to hesitate to seek

help in A.A., despite increasing knowledge about the disease of alcoholism.

The second reason anonymity at the press or broadcast level is important, the letter says, is "it helps discourage drives for power, profit and prestige which could divert us from our primary purpose. . . . Members do not use membership for personal gain or self-aggrandizement—to further their careers, promote products or services, or to give weight to their arguments in public controversy."

Copies of the letter are available for any group who wishes to distribute or discuss them. Also, reprints of Bill W.'s famous Grapevine article, "Why Alcoholics Anonymous is Anonymous."

Tips for Sober Vacationing

About to embark on your first vacation trip in A.A.?

Being nervous about it won't help. But oldtimers and newcomers alike find it useful to make some levelheaded preparations from the experience of many A.A.'s.

1. Get ready with an "Easy Does It" attitude. Make today a good A.A. day instead of borrowing future frets.

2. Talk it over with other A.A.'s, get their suggestions.

3. Get a *World Directory* and make local A.A. contacts wherever you go. Use the A.A. calendar in this issue, and if you get near New York, please come visit your General Service Office.



4. Slip some Grapevines and pamphlets in your bag for a private, quiet "reading meeting" each morning. (Or maybe this is the time to turn the jacket inside out on "A.A. Comes of Age" and really read it, as you've been meaning to!)

5. Take your personal A.A. address book with you, and every day write at least one postcard to members back home,

for your sake, not theirs.

6. Plan an itinerary that is NOT a boozier's dream. No need to include memory-laden old watering holes and drinking buddies every time.

7. Plan non-drinking activities you'll enjoy remembering—churches, museums, theaters, etc. Too much idle time can be



bad, but so can fatigue, and hunger, of course.

8. Make sure you have at least one companion who knows you're in A.A. He's on your side, can secretly "sponsor" you.

9. Plan what to do on drinking occasions. Decide in advance which nonalcoholic drink you're going to order.

10. Many of us feel better, if we simply tell the truth about being recovering alcoholics. Where you're going there may be a sick alcoholic asking God to send him help somehow, please.

A.A. CALENDAR

JUNE

14-16 — Miss. State A.A. Conv., Meridan, Miss. Write: Chm., Box 429, Meridan.

14-16 — Mo. Roundup, Jefferson City, Mo. Write: Secy., 600 E. Capitol Ave., Jefferson City.

14-16 — Founders Day, Akron, O. Write: Chm., A.A. Akron District Off., 41 S. High St., Akron.

15-16 — Summer Regional Conf., Denver, Colo. Write: Conf. Secy. 885 So. Ogden St., Denver.

21-23 — Area Anniversary Meeting, Maryville, Tenn. Write: Secy., Box 296, Maryville.

28-30 — 21st Pacific N.W. Conf., Portland, Ore. Write: Secy., Reservation Chm., 17605 W.E. Roethe Pl., Milwaukie, Ore.

JULY

4-7 — 12th Fla. State Conv., Clearwater, Fla. Write: Conv. Chm., Box 925, Clearwater.

19-21 — Ohio State Conv., Cleveland, Ohio. Write: Chm., Box 5406, Cleveland.

21- — State A.A. Picnic, Newport, Me., Write: Secy., 60 Parker Street, Brewer.

26-28 — 5th Annual N.Y. State Conv., Syracuse, N.Y. Write: Conv. Secy., Box 390, Syracuse.

AUGUST

2-4 — Ark. State Conv., Little Rock, Ark. Write: Reg. Comm., 510 Jones, Little Rock.

2-4 — International Group — Young People in A.A. Conf., Toronto, Ont., Can. Write: Young People in A.A. Conf., Box 715, Sta. "F", Toronto.

14-17 — 24th S.E. Conf. & 21st N.C. State Conv., Charlotte, N.C. Write: S. E. Conf., Box 3000, Charlotte.

23-25 — Colo. State Conv., Denver, Colo. Write: State Conv. Off., 2870 So. Dexter Way, Denver.

31—Sept. 1 — Oregon State A.A. Conf., Medford, Ore. Write: Conf. Chm., 1844 Woodlawn Dr., Medford.

30—Sept. 1 — Chautauga Tri-State Assembly, Ohio, Pa., N.Y. So. Canada.

SEPTEMBER

6-8 — 9th Conn. A.A. Get-together, Moodus, Conn. Write: Chm., Box 2072, Waterbury, Conn.

13-15 — Kansas A.A. State Conf., Overland Park, Kans. Write: Kans. A.A. Conf., Box 4402, Overland Park.

14-15 — Annual Bisbee Bar-B-Q, Bisbee, Ariz. Write: Box 4101, San Jose Branch, Bisbee.

20-22 — 18th Annual Ariz. State Conf., Phoenix, Ariz. Write: Conf. Secy., 6231 W. Flower, Phoenix.

27-29 — 6th Annual Eastern Mass. Conf. Lenox. Write: Eastover, Lenox, Mass.

27-29 — 16th Mich. State Conf., Detroit. Write: 16th Mich. Conf., Box 2005, Dearborn.

27-29 — Ala.-N.W. Fla. State Conf., Birmingham, Ala. Write: Conv., Comm., Box 587, Bessemer, Ala.

27-29 — No. Area Conf., Waukegan, Ill. Write: Conf. Chm., 1421 Glen Rock Ave., Waukegan.

28-29 — European Round-up, Walzenhausen, Switz. Write: Chm., Post Box 32, Walzenhausen.

A.A. BOOKS IN VIETNAM

"I have received my books in first-class shape," writes Mac C. from Vietnam, "and so far have read completely 'The A.A. Way of Life' and am half way through both the Big Book and 'A.A. Comes of Age.'"

"They are all really exceptional and beyond all expectations. They have answered many of my questions and made me better acquainted with A.A. as a whole.

"How close we do all become to each other, how much like a large family! I feel a kinship and sense of belonging as I read.

"I have received my first letter, and have high hopes of others. I would gladly tape messages to anyone...."

SKID-CROW

That's how one news service titled a story from Perth, about crows hooked on cider oozing from apple dumps in Donnybrook, Australia.

A town councillor and the shire clerk said they saw crows so inebriated they couldn't perch.