



AA EXCHANGE BULLETIN

NEWS AND NOTES ON ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS WORLDWIDE

VOLUME 3

Published by General Service Office of A.A., P. O. Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York 17

NUMBER 8

GROUPS ASKED TO CONDUCT CENSUS

1958 Conference Report Mailed To All Areas

Copies of the Final Report of the 1958 General Service Conference of A.A. were mailed last month to all Conference members, including present and former Delegates and Area Committeemen throughout North America. A limited number of copies are available to interested groups at \$1.00.

The 28-page report, more compact and detailed than its seven predecessors, contains complete summaries of all actions taken by the Eighth Conference, as well as statistical data on G.S.O. operations during 1957.

Because it lists the names of Delegates and other Conference members the Report bears the notation, "Confidential—For A. A. Use Only."

Earlier, each group had received two copies of a special *Conference Digest*, issued immediately following the Conference.

A feature of the Final Report is a special section, "Sense of the Conference," summarizing the closing remarks of co-founder Bill W. in which he suggested that "promise and progress" were the keynotes of the Eighth Conference.

NEW IN A. A.

New registrations at G. S. O. during June:

- 84 Local groups
- 13 Lone Members
- 1 Prison group
- 3 Hospital groups
- 4 Internationalists
- (13 groups were "inactivated.")

G. S. O. Briefs

'PARTNERS IN A. A.'

More than 10,000 copies of the new Conference-approved pamphlet, *Partners in A. A.*, have been purchased by the groups since this new literature item was first offered in May. The 48-page pamphlet has been described as "an informal handbook for members and groups."

'UPPER FRATERNITY'

As a result of inquiries from a number of group secretaries in the U. S., General Service Office has attempted, thus far without success, to obtain information relating to a so-called "graduate course in sobriety" being offered by a person or persons calling themselves The Upper Fraternity. This project is in no way related to G. S. O.

SPECIAL G. S. O. ORDER BLANK FOR LITERATURE PACKAGES

Special order blanks for the three new "literature packages" announced in the July *Bulletin* are enclosed with this issue. The three packages provide discounts from the regular group price for Conference-approved literature.

Package #1 provides an \$8.52 assortment of 63 copies of 19 different pamphlets for \$7.50.

Package #2 offers four A. A. textbooks with a total group price of \$14 for only \$13. Package #3, a combination of #1 and #2, offers literature with a total value of \$22.52 for only \$20.

Groups are urged to use the special order blanks to assure prompt handling of their requests for these packages.

The Brussels Fair? A. A. Is There! Lebanese News? Loner Seeks Letters!

Belgium, France, Puerto Rico, Alaska, Lebanon. Reports on A. A. in many lands stream into G. S. O.

Walter O'K. writes from the Brussels Fair to express his appreciation for all that Helene C. is doing to carry the A.A. word in Belgium and throughout Europe. In Paris, Walter noted, he was welcomed by Don B. of the local group.

From San Juan, Puerto Rico, comes a Spanish translation of the special *Conference Digest* distributed to the groups in May. The Delegate for P. R. used this method to get wider

distribution of the Conference story.

A member of the Totem Group, Elmendorf Air Force Base, Anchorage, Alaska, writes to ask permission to help an Eskimo boy translate part of the *Big Book* in his native tongue, so that the A.A. message can be carried more directly to other Eskimo alcoholics.

And from Beirut, Lebanon, so vividly in the news lately, comes a request from an American Loner for the names of other A.A. members in the Middle East with whom he might correspond.

'Non-Active' Members' Count To Be Stressed

As requested by the General Service Conference last April, the month of September has been designated as "A.A. Census Month." All local groups are urged to make a realistic count not only of members currently participating in group affairs but also of members "presently sober in A.A. who are not known to have affiliated with other groups."

The Conference recommended that each Delegate stress the importance of an accurate census of the membership in reports to the individual Areas in North America.

A special census form will be included in the September *Bulletin*. It is hoped that a sufficient number of groups will complete and return these forms to enable G.S.O. to approximate a "true count" of the number of men and women who may be said to have achieved sustained sobriety in A.A., including those no longer active in group affairs.

It is suggested that group secretaries and General Service Representatives may wish to alert their groups to this census several weeks in advance.

INDIVIDUAL
"BULLETIN"
SUBSCRIPTIONS
NOW AVAILABLE
\$1.00 A YEAR

THE A. A. EXCHANGE BULLETIN

Published monthly by General Service Office of A. A., P. O. Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York 17, N. Y.

G. S. O. Staff Editors: Jane (Group Relations, Internationalists), Ann (Hospitals, Prisons), Eve (Public Information), Hazel (Conference), Anita (Group Relations), Lyb (Groups, Loners outside U. S. & Canada).

Group Experience

Most of us pattern our daily lives on a very intangible thing called *experience*. We prize it. We regard it as our most reliable teacher, as our most trustworthy guide in avoiding pitfalls—or climbing out of them. The more experience we have access to, the better we seem to be able to manage our personal affairs constructively.

When A.A. groups first came into existence a little over two decades ago, they had no experience to guide them. When a problem arose, it had to be solved the hard way, through trial and error—and errors were probably not infrequent. Many groups did not survive.

The situation is different today. Over the years the experience of both successful and unsuccessful groups throughout the world has been accumulated and analyzed at General Service Office. It has been acquired by observation, by correspondence, by personal contact with thousands of large, small and medium-size groups.

When a question of fact, or of interpretation of A.A. Tradition, arises within a group, the members can usually get help in solving—or at least clarifying—their problem by writing to G. S. O.

Some typical questions and problems are shown in the box on the facing page.

All answers have one distinctive characteristic. They do not represent the so-called wisdom or the questionable personal opinion of any single G. S. O. staff member or any group of staff members. They represent, completely and exclusively, A. A. *group experience*.

Much of this experience has been outlined in the "Twelve Traditions for Group Survival" adopted by the Fellowship at Cleveland in 1950. Specific elements of this experience have also been culled from the records—written and unwritten—of the ways in specific groups have met specific problems.

The result is a broad, deep reservoir of help and guidance available to every A.A.

The responsibility for tending that reservoir—for making this collected group experience something any group, any member, can share for the asking—is one of the most important that G. S. O. discharges within A.A. today.

Delegates More Active In Conference Affairs

Sixty-two out of the 82 Delegates to the Eighth General Service Conference last April have already reported to G. S. O. on their post-Conference follow-up activities and plans.

This percentage, far higher than in the comparable period of previous years, is regarded as an index of expanding interest in the Conference and of the heightened sense of responsibility felt by current Delegates.

Wes P., South Florida Delegate, reports that he and John S., chairman of the South Florida Committee, have already talked to approximately 750 members in their state and handed each one a special written summary of the Conference.

Fran R., Alaska's first Delegate at the 1958 Conference, presented her report at the 2nd Annual Area Assembly in Anchorage in mid-June. The Assembly has already budgeted its Conference expenses for 1959.

Earl P., Western Missouri Delegate, delivered a report at the Northwest Missouri annual Fourth of July picnic at St. Joseph. Rain curtailed attendance but not the enthusiasm of those present.

A. A. CALENDAR

AUGUST

- 1-3 —15TH ANNUAL ARKANSAS CONFERENCE—Marion Hotel, Little Rock
- 21-23—STATE & SOUTHEAST REGIONAL CONFERENCE—Asheville, N. C.
- 22-24—TRI-STATE ASSEMBLY—Chautauqua, New York
- 29-31—1ST ANNUAL SOUTHERN ROUND-UP—(Contact: Box 212, Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada)
- 29-31—VIRGINIA STATE ASSEMBLY—Hotel Roanoke, Roanoke, Virginia
- 30-1 —6TH EUROPEAN ROUND-UP—Wiesbaden, Germany (Contact: Postamt No. 1, Box 3267, Frankfurt/Main, Germany)
- 30-1 —11TH NW. CONVENTION—Florence Hotel, Missoula (Contact: P. O. Box 638 Missoula)

SEPTEMBER

- 5-6-7—COOKS FOREST, PA.—(Contact Pittsburgh Central Office)
- 13—2ND ANNUAL NEW JERSEY CONVENTION—Seton Hall University, South Orange
- 27-28—MICHIGAN STATE CONFERENCE—(Contact: P. O. Box 35, Flat Rock, Michigan)
- 27—ANNIVERSARY MEETING—The Hague, Holland

OCTOBER

- 11-12—MISSOURI STATE CONFERENCE—St. Louis, Mo.
- 10-12—5TH GEORGIA STATE CONVENTION—Bno Air Hotel, Augusta (Contact: P. O. Box 3454 Augusta)
- 11-12—MOHAWK-HUDSON CONFERENCE—Hendrick Hudson Hotel, Troy, N. Y.
- 18-19—9TH STATE CONVENTION—Hi Way House Motel, Phoenix

NEWS & NOTES FROM THE FIELD

DISCUSSION GROUPS

Discussion meetings in small groups should be planned just as carefully as large open meetings. This was the consensus of panel speakers featured at the Central New York State Conference at Elmira, N. Y., early in June. The panel was one of 17 which attracted a record registration of 287.

Other suggestions:

Chairmen of discussion meetings should select a topic in advance and prepare a brief introduction to the discussion.

The chairman should never read articles. "This is boring and puts people to sleep."

Certain "standard" announcements (definition of A.A., invitation to stay for refreshments, personal responsibility for personal opinions, etc.) should be made without fail at all meetings. (They can be typed on a special program "reminder sheet" for discussion leaders.)

Periodic presentation of financial reports gives members a feeling of responsibility for group services.

Whenever possible, responsibility for special meeting assignments, (for example, the reading of the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions) should be distributed among the membership on a monthly rotating basis, to provide "a greater feeling of belonging."

COMMON CENTS

The Founders Dinner Group, Des Moines, Iowa, is following the Conference recommendation that four cents per member per week be collected for support of world services . . . One member is in charge of the penny bank each week . . . The average contribution to date has been five cents . . . "If you can stand the pun," writes Ray H., we are getting our contribution by just using common cents!"

DIRECTORY

Bob M., Milwaukee, wonders if traveling A.A.s can purchase personal copies of the World Directory . . . Of course they can . . . Incidentally, the copies sent to the groups are not intended to be the property of any one individual but are for use by the entire group . . . Much interest has been shown in the loose A.A. maps enclosed with the '58 Directory . . . Watch the *Bulletin* for news about these maps . . .

PILLS

If a member has a "slip" on pills while technically retaining sobriety, should the "pill slip" count against time accumulated toward an anniversary in A.A.? How does your group handle this problem?

All A. A. Roads Lead To Leeds For This Traveler

From England, a much-traveled Yorkshireman named Jimmie R. reports finding the "most wonderful warmth of common fellowship" in A.A. meetings in England, Scotland, Wales, Holland, France, Belgium, Norway, Sweden and Finland." And he concludes by announcing formation of a new group in his own community of South Leeds!

In Buenos Aires, Argentina, Hector G. writes that a popular and influential priest plans to prepare a special series of newspaper articles on A.A., with emphasis on institutional A.A.

"A new stage in the history of A.A. in Ireland" was reached at the first All-Irish Convention last March, according to a report from Dublin received just recently. Nearly 200 persons attended the two-day sessions which were saluted editorially by the Dublin Evening Mail: "We congratulate this excellent organization and wish it ever greater success."

Newsletter

Phil C., an Internationalist whose home port is Sydney, Australia, is one seaman who puts his leisure hours to good use. Phil writes articles on A.A. which are later printed as a newsletter by his sponsor.

A non-Caucasian group has been formed "at last" in Capetown, South Africa, according to word from Joe R., aboard the S. S. African Rainbow. Joe writes that a letter addressed to him recently traveled more than 20,000 miles before reaching him!

A. A.—Akron to Africa

Ralph M., new secretary of the Rondebosch Group, Cape Province, South Africa, has a unique distinction. He hails from Akron, Ohio, birthplace of the first A.A. group, where he was a patient in the A.A. ward at St. Thomas Hospital. It was not until he reached South Africa, however, that he was able to achieve stable sobriety.

'Our Experience Suggests...'

Appointments

Our Intergroup Committee recently voted to make the position of paid secretary "appointive" rather than "elective." Some members feel this is wrong but find nothing in A. A. literature to document their position. How do other Areas handle such matters?

In most Areas such paid workers are selected by a steering committee, subject to approval by group representatives. In several well-known Intergroup offices, paid secretaries have served approximately 6, 3, 10 and 9 years. Many areas feel that continuity and experience in service operations is lost if service office workers are changed frequently. Thus there would appear to be nothing inherently "wrong" in making such jobs "appointive" if the appointments serve the interests of the local Area and are subject to confirmation by group representatives.

'Bosses'

An old-timer in our community has been described to me as the "A.A. boss man" here. I understood A.A. had no bosses. What are the facts?

The facts are that the only authority, for an individual member, is his own interpretation of the A.A. program. A. A. has no "boss men"—or "boss women."

Fund-Raising

An auxiliary of a club composed of A.A. members in our town is raising money for the club by soliciting advertising for a booklet. Some members are afraid local businessmen will think A.A. is soliciting outside support. Isn't fund-raising of this type a violation of A.A. Tradition?

Even if the letter of A.A. Tradition may not be violated by the project described, there are those who may think that the spirit of the A.A. Tradition of self-support is certainly being distorted. Two useful guides in such situations are the pam-

phlet, "A.A. Tradition," (pages 47 and 58) and Co-Founder Bill W.'s memorandum of January 7, 1949 on fund-raising. Both are available from G.S.O.

History

Where can our group obtain a history of A.A.? We are particularly interested in learning more about the early days of the movement.

Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age by Bill W., surviving co-founder of the movement contains the best available description of the birth, development and expansion of A.A. It can be purchased from General Service Office at \$4.00.

Party

Our group is planning a combination supper, talent show and dance and scheduling it for ten o'clock, after the end of a neighboring group's meeting. We plan to sell tickets to cover expenses, with the excess—if any—to be donated to our Central Office. A few folks say we are breaking the fourth Tradition (autonomy) and the fifth ("primary purpose") Tradition. We see nothing harmful to A.A. in our plans for this social affair. Are we right?

There is nothing in A.A. Tradition against a party of this type or against selling tickets for such an affair so long as A.A.s do not endorse, finance, or lend the A.A. name to outside enterprises. Certainly A.A. as a whole would not be affected, nor does it appear you would disturb the welfare of any neighboring groups. Social affairs of this type are not at all unusual in A.A.

Meetings

Until recently our small group held only "open" meetings. Then we voted to have one "open" meeting and one "closed" meeting each week. A week later, amidst some confusion, the group reversed itself and voted to have nothing but

"open" meetings. Some members say that where they came from only "open" meetings were held. Members from other parts of the country say this is ridiculous and that many groups hold both types of meetings. What are the facts?

There is no rigid pattern to the way A.A. groups arrange their meetings. Some hold nothing but open meetings, with only an occasional "closed" business meeting. Others hold both "open" and "closed" meetings on a regular schedule and in some areas "closed" meetings are the only ones available. Each group is completely autonomous and free to determine for itself the pattern of meetings that seems best from the standpoint of the group and the community. It should be noted that "beginners' meetings" are also popular in a number of areas.

Sponsorship

Some in our group say that, when a member has a slip, no further contact should be made with the "slippee." The theory is that a sponsor has already extended himself sufficiently by helping the new man to achieve sobriety and that the next move is up to the latter. Is this a "typical" A.A. approach to sponsorship?

There are so many approaches to sponsorship that none can be called truly typical. Most groups seem to believe that it is important to be "flexible" in this matter of sponsorship. What they mean is that an approach that might be extremely successful with certain newcomers might not work at all with others who came to the same group for help. The *Big Book* has a helpful chapter, "Working With Others," and various patterns of group sponsorship activities are described in the Conference-approved pamphlet, "Questions & Answers on Sponsorship." In a very real sense it remains for the individual sponsor to determine which approach will be most helpful to a newcomer.

Nearest Group 40 Miles Away For This Loner

The following excerpts from a letter written in the North Transvaal, South Africa, suggest how much A.A. contacts can mean to isolated Loners. Stewart G. is the writer:

I have been a "Loner" in the N. Transvaal for ten years and I have learned the hard way that it is essential that I keep in constant touch with the A.A. way of life and principles if I am to retain my sobriety. My nearest Group used to be 250 miles away, but now with the recent opening of the Pietersburg Group it is only 40 miles away, but it is still too far for regular attendance to be practical.

If I may trespass further on your good nature, I would be glad to know if you would be prepared to extend your service to some 22 other "Loners" scattered about the immense emptiness of the N. Transvaal? I can supply their names and addresses as I am trying to work up a personal correspondence service with them all (that wish it and are still trying to live up to our programme).

Privilege

Gerard de V., a Loner in the Orange Free State, South Africa, writes of his recent visit with A.A.s in Pretoria:

What a privilege and how encouraging it is to be able to meet with other A.A.s. Everything is so much easier and happier in the sharing. The day seems brighter and life so much more worthwhile. I honestly can scarcely remember when I felt so good. Each time that a member walked in, one felt a glow of happiness and comradeship.

Correspondence

Irvin W., a former member of the inmate group at St. Cloud (Minnesota) State Reformatory, is now a Loner in a small New York State community. He would welcome correspondence with other Loners throughout the world.

Institutions

INMATE GROUP DISCUSSIONS PRECEDE VISITORS' TALKS

The South Windham Group at the Men's Reformatory, South Windham, Maine, is trying an interesting experiment which it feels is worth sharing with other institutional groups.

Each Thursday night, before the visiting group for the week arrives at the Reformatory, the inmate group stages its own discussion session. "We have found this procedure extremely helpful in hashing out any group business we may have and also for getting rid of any resentments that may be building up within us," Paul P., group secretary, writes.

The group, which recently celebrated its first anniversary, currently has fifteen members.

New Zealand

The Crossroads Group, Paparua Prison, Christchurch, New Zealand, is now issuing a monthly publication, *Crossroads*, and will welcome contributions from all members interested in inmate A.A. The group has increased rapidly and now has approximately 45 members.

Australia

The Magpie Group, Fremantle Prison, Western Australia, cur-

rently has 20 members and is "definitely progressing," Bill B., secretary, reports. The group would welcome correspondence from any individual A.A.s, Bill declares.

Thanks!

Thanks to the Colony Group, California Mens Colony, Los Padres, California, for its valued contribution in support of A.A.'s world services. And the same to the Mill Creek Group, State Prison, Salem, Oregon.

Namesakes

W. E. "Whiskers" J., an Internationalist A.A. with a special interest in institutional groups, sends along word of a previously unregistered group at Haney Correctional Institution, British Columbia, Canada.

To stimulate A.A. growth overseas, Whiskers suggests that groups in the U.S.A. check their World Directories and write to groups located in cities with the same name in other lands. As examples, he cites Birmingham, Alabama, and Birmingham, England and Cambria Heights, New York, and Cardiff, Wales, explaining that Cambria is the Celtic name for Wales.

Hospital Units Needing Literature

E. J. Meyer Memorial Hospital
Group
462 Grider Street
Buffalo 15, New York

A. A. Ontario Hospital Group
St. Thomas
Ontario, Canada

A. A. Group No. 210
V. A. Hospital Ward 12
Fort Douglas
Salt Lake City, Utah

Davidson County Hospital
Group
Ward 14
c/o Dr. Nicholas De Palma
Nashville 8, Tennessee

Rusk State Hospital Group
Box 318
Rusk, Texas

Group No. 2
State Hospital
c/o Chaplain
Box 76
Yankton, South Dakota

Orangeburg Group
Rockland State Hospital
Orangeburg, New York

Long Island Hospital Group
Long Island Hospital
Boston 69, Massachusetts

A. A. Group B-15
Winter V.A. Hospital
Topeka, Kansas

Sanatorium A. A. Group
State Sanatorium for T. B.
Norton, Kansas

Elgin State Hospital Group
Elgin, Illinois

Downey Veteran's Hospital
Group No. 1
V. A. Hospital
Downey, Illinois

A. A. Group
Colorado State Hospital
Pueblo, Colorado

Bide-A-Wee
G. Pierce Wood Memorial
Hospital
Box 901
Punta Gorda, Florida

V. A. Hospital A. A. Group
V. A. Hospital
Tucson, Arizona

Kalorama Convalescent Home
2001 Kalorama Road N. W.
Washington 9, D. C.

Creedmoor Group
Creedmoor State Hospital
Queens Village
Long Island, New York

150 Registered On Mailing List By G. S. Office

Nearly 150 Internationalist (seamen) members of A.A. are currently registered at G.S.O., according to the most recent listing of addresses issued by the Service Office.

Ten countries are included among the addresses: United States, Canada, South Africa, Ireland, Australia, Holland, Iraq, England, Norway and Sweden.

Many members of the Fellowship, including possibly some Internationalists, will be surprised to learn that the listing includes a member of the fair sex, Marie D., whose address is given as New Iberia, Louisiana.

Seven Canadian Internationalists give *H.M.C.S. Cayuga* as their "home address. Two other Canadian naval vessels, *Crusader* and *Naden*, have at least two A.A.s aboard.

Several members list units of the U. S. Navy as their homes.

Copies of the special directory are available to any Internationalist or to landlocked members interested in corresponding with seagoing A.A.s.

Grapevine

A number of Conference Delegates have begun to organize local programs in support of the *A. A. Grapevine*, the movement's monthly magazine, according to a letter to Conference members from Russ C., business manager of the international journal.

Russ reported that test mailings to obtain new subscriptions will be made in three areas before deciding whether or not to ask all subscribers to join the current circulation effort.

The new campaign is based on asking each current reader to obtain at least one new subscription.

DIRECTORY CORRECTION

Auburn Heights (Michigan) Group contributed \$50, erroneously credited to Auburn (Michigan) Group.