A Christmas Greeting
1956
From Bill

To each A.A. group, to every loner, to all those within walls, and to my friends here at A.A.'s Headquarters, I send Christmas greetings and my confident hope that the New Year of 1957 will prove to be among the finest we have ever known.

God has been good to A.A.; the blessings we have already received are quite beyond count. So now let us—each in his own way—give freely in the spirit of Christmas.

As perhaps never before, this season bids us to be generous with our great possessions as well as grateful for them.

Merry Christmas!

Bill

Grand A.A. Tour Covers Europe

What is believed to be a record for visits to A.A. groups and contacts overseas on a single trip was reported to G.S.H. by Hilda and Bob H. of Sarasota, Florida.

During the past Summer this A.A. husband-and-wife team visited members in these European countries: Scotland, Eire, Northern Ireland, England and Wales, France, Belgium, Holland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Austria, Portugal and Spain.

"American members abroad need not worry about losing contact or being lonesome in most of the places we visited," said Hilda and Bob.

New GSH Exhibit Gets Recognition

The Conference-approved A.A. exhibit for use at meetings of professional groups in the health and welfare field won a Certificate of Merit at the 84th annual meeting of the American Public Health Association at Atlantic City, New Jersey, last month.

The exhibit, which is still being used on an experimental basis, describes A.A.'s aims, shows how interested persons may establish contact with the movement, displays a copy of the "Big Book" and other A.A. literature and features statements about A.A. from four recognized non-A.A. authorities.

Group Listings
Due January 10
For New Edition

One of General Service Headquarters' most important yearly tasks, preparation of the annual worldwide Handbook and Directory, is now under way. Registration cards for 1957 listings were mailed last month. The complicated job will occupy the time of a large segment of the Headquarters staff until the new edition of the Handbook and Directory rolls off the presses in April.

This year, the deadline for return of Directory information has been extended to Thursday, January 10. Information received after that date cannot be included in the new edition.

Staff members in charge of this work report that many groups apparently do not appreciate the importance of keeping Directory listings up-to-date. Last year, for example, less than half of the 6,000 groups to whom registration cards were mailed actually filled them out and returned them to Headquarters.

Simplified

"Without up-to-date information, we must necessarily list old and incorrect information, or else not list the group at all," said a staff member.

Registration cards, which this year have been simplified for the convenience of those who will provide the necessary data, have gone to Loners, Internationalists, Central Offices and Intergroups, and Clubs and Clubhouses as well as to local groups.

Many Unaware
Of 'Literature,'
Letters Reveal

Many A.A. members have no conception of the full scope of Conference-approved literature available to them in their local groups through General Service Headquarters.

That's the conclusion drawn by Headquarters staff members on the basis of letters from many A.A.s which indicate that they have never seen the G.H.S. literature order blank which lists more than a score of books, pamphlets and other special items prepared and distributed by A.A.'s worldwide service agency.

REPRINTS

During the past five years several million copies of Conference-approved pamphlets have been distributed to groups throughout the world, suggesting that members who have been exposed to this type of literature have found it helpful. A number of pamphlets, those whose circulations are in the hundreds of thousands, have been reprinted five or more times.

The "Big Book" (Alcoholics Anonymous) and "The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions," recognized as standard A.A. texts, both rank as continuing "best sellers."

Many groups regularly set aside funds for the purchase of pamphlet literature. In some cases it is distributed without charge while other groups sell such items to members or other interested persons.

CHANGE

On Alcoholics Anonymous Worldwide

Vol. 1

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

Number 8

December, 1956
A.A. Is Adopted In V. A. Program For TB Patients

NEW GROUPS
T. B. Hospital Group
Fresno, California
V. A. Hospital Group
Roseburg, Oregon
Boksburg-Renini Group
Boksburg, Transvaal
South Africa
Sunbury Hospital
Sydney, N.S.W.
Australia
Queen Mary Hospital
Hamilton, New Zealand
Stuttgart Group
U. S. Army Hospital
Stuttgart, Germany

The tuberculous patient who suffers from alcoholism is doubly burdened and consequently must be "doubly treated."

That's the viewpoint expressed in a preliminary report on the operation of an A.A. program in the Madison, Wisconsin, V. A. Hospital, reported recently in the Veterans Administration Information Bulletin.

The program, which was based on surveys showing that an estimated 15 to 20 per cent of the hospital's patients could be served by an intensive alcoholic treatment plan, got under way in October, 1955, when a person familiar with A.A. therapy was added to the staff on a part-time basis.

In establishing such a program, the report notes, "it was possible to profit a good deal from the successes and failures of others. Many of the customary approaches such as education, exhortation to stop drinking, pledges and psychotherapy, have not been notably nor consistently effective. Alcoholics Anonymous, on the other hand, has gained widespread acceptance and recognition as an unusually effective agency in the treatment and sustained sobriety of the alcoholic. For this reason, it was decided to concentrate on A.A. as the preferred method of treating the alcoholic."

Paying tribute to the cooperation of Madison A.A.

(Continued on Page 3)

A.A.'s debt to cooperative, understanding hospital administrators is underlined dramatically in comments received recently at G.S.H. The comments were contained in replies to a questionnaire on the status of A.A. programs in various institutions.

"The A.A. program gives the staff as well as the patients who are not alcoholics a better understanding of the problem so that they are better able to deal with individual cases as they arise," Dr. Bernard T. Brown, Director of Onondaga Sanitarium, Syracuse, N. C., declares.

"In my opinion, it (A.A.) is one of the most beneficial things we have ever found for our alcoholic patients," according to O. R. Roder, Medical Superintendent at Ypsilanti (Michigan) State Hospital.

Dr. John T. Shea, Superintendent at Foxborough, Massachusetts; State Hospital, writes: "During the period that the group has met at this hospital, we have noticed an improvement in community relationships, as well as assistance in reducing the number of patients returned, because of their affiliation with A.A."

At Northport, Long Island (N.Y.) V. A. Hospital; Miss Grace Fried, Chief of Social Work Service, comments: "Our experience with the group has been a very positive one. We have found that the patients who regularly attend the meetings of the A.A. group find them very helpful and in our treatment of this group of patients we recognize the benefits that they obtain from their association with the group."

The Rev. George M. Cornder, Chief Protestant Chaplain at Toledo (Ohio) State Hospital, writes that during the past ten years almost 1,500 patients were "contacted" by the Hospital A. A. group and that more than 62% of this group have not been hospitalized again because of alcoholism. "We believe this speaks for itself as to the value of such a program at our hospital," Rev. Cornder writes.

Dr. O. A. Kilpatrick, Director of Hudson River State Hospital, Poughkeepsie, N. Y., declares: "I am happy to say that in my opinion our A.A. meetings are now filling a definite gap in our alcoholic program at this hospital."

GI's Giant Step Helps In Japan

Bob B., stationed with the U. S. Army in Osaka, Japan, recently helped provide a practical demonstration of A.A.'s worldwide "Twelfth Step work."

When G.S.H. received a request for information from an Army chaplain in Japan, it was soon determined that the chaplain was stationed not far from Bob's last known address. Bob was asked to get in touch with the chaplain, which he did, discovering that the latter was seeking one to explain A. A. to English-speaking doctors and nurses on the staff of a Japanese hospital. A date for the talks was set without delay, and arrangements were made to provide literature on A.A.

The real drama was uncovered, however, when G.S.H. learned that Bob had recently been transferred to a new location in Japan and that, to handle the G.S.H. request, he had to give up a Sunday to travel 180 miles to meet the chaplain!

The first A.A. Convention in Scotland is being arranged for next April in Dunblane Hydro, Perthshire, according to word from Edinburgh.

NEW GROUPS

Fifty-two new groups and 16 Loners were registered at General Service Headquarters during the period from October 19 to November 16. All five continents were represented.

Finds Hope Underground

Here is a touch of drama in real life, culled from recent correspondence received at G.S.H. To the A.A.

Please could you send me the address of the nearest A.A. meeting to my home.

I found one of your pamphlets on the subway. After reading it, I am sure I need the help of the A.A.

Sincerely,

Mary F.

PUERTO RICO

Members of the correctional group at Rio Piedras will celebrate their fourth anniversary December 17. A special edition of the group bulletin, "Realidad," will commemorate the event.

BULLETIN EDITORS

Ann. . . Conference Groups, Loners
Eve. . . Group Relations
Hazel. . . Hospital & Prison Groups, Loners
Anita. . . Group Relations Ass't.

Library Information
Merry Christmas
From G. S. H.

To our A.A. friends everywhere, the merriest of greetings!
May your holidays be happy, full of true joy and bright visions for the New Year.

YOUR GENERAL SERVICE STAFF

MORE THAN 300

NEW GROUPS

Last Chance Group
State Reformatory Lincoln, Nebraska
Prison Camp No. 704
Greenboro, N. Carolina
New Hope Group No. 2
State Reformatory Monroe, Washington
Milwaukee County
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Hopeful Group
Provincial Goal
Davenport, Manitoba, Can.
Marland Hill Group
New Plymouth
New Zealand

More than 300 attended the recent Fourth Annual Conference of the Big Brothers of A. A. in Ohio, S. M. Patterson, non-alcoholic advisor to the Ohio Penitentiary Group reports.

"The meeting was terrific," Mr. Patterson notes. "The Big Brothers movement has made great progress in Ohio during the past four years. There is more hope to replace despair, courage to replace fear and self-confidence rather than helplessness in the hearts of men behind the walls."

Attendance at the Election Night (November 6) meeting at the Medical Facility Group of Vacaville, California, Prison set a new high of "well over 200." The Lighthouse Group, Marquette, Michigan, State Prison, recently celebrated its seventh anniversary.

The Serenity Group, U.S. Disciplinary Barracks, Port Gordon, Georgia, recently celebrated its first anniversary.

Hugh S., Amberst, Nova scotia, Canada, has a dual role these days. He continues to be registered as a Loner but reports that a small Sunday night group seems to be developing in his community, and that he is encouraging it along.

Montana Group

Set For Action
To Spur Service

Members who attended the Montana State A.A. Conference in October have created a special advisory committee designed to strengthen A.A. service to alcoholics throughout the State. Tony F., secretary of the Allied Montana Groups, has informed G.S.H.

The proposed action program includes preparation of an up-to-date State A.A. directory, sponsorship of informational meetings open to the public and continuing contacts with members of the Montana Medical Association and other A.A. "allies" in the area.

HOBBY

Dan H., Listowel, County Kerry, Ireland, has an interesting A.A. hobby. He is compiling special scrapbooks on A.A. in which programs of large conferences and conventions are major features.

Members of the Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin, Group recently helped celebrate the tenth anniversary of Howard E., the American Indian who became the first member of the Oneida Group, the original "all-Indian" group in the U. S.
AUSTRALIANS GOING STRONG
AFTER EARLY TRIAL & ERROR

On the morning of January 26, 1942, Bobbie B., who constituted the one-woman "staff" of The Alcoholic Foundation (now known as General Service Headquarters), opened a letter bearing an Australian postmark. It was one of the first to reach the tiny New York headquarters from overseas.

Thus started the chain of events which led to growth of a flourishing A.A. movement in Australia which, since its founding, has been linked closely to A.A.'s worldwide service agency.

Today approximately 4,000 members in 164 local groups "down under" are registered at G.S.H. There are, in addition, 12 hospital groups, six in correctional institutions and 27 lone members. These figures, it is suggested, may be conservative.

STRUCTURE

Structurally, most of the groups are affiliated with one of three Central or Intergroup offices located in Sydney, New South Wales; Brisbane, Queensland; and Perth, in Western Australia.

Growth of A.A. in Australia was not without its trials and tribulations, according to Dr. John S. M., who wrote the original letter of inquiry to New York and who has been visiting in the States in recent months. While his primary interest in writing in 1942 was that of a non-alcoholic psychiatrist, Dr. John has since "reconsidered." He has been a member for the past ten years and more.

About 12 months elapsed from the writing of the historic letter to the first attempt to form a group in Sydney. And the attempt, Dr. John recalls, was a case of "the blind leading the blind."

DECISION

"We knew nothing about A.A. or how it worked. All that we had was the Big Book, just skimmed through, a lot of hope and one patient. Ben B., who remained sober for four months and has since been lost sight of, Ben, however, carried the message to Rex A. who, despite a number of slips, has now been sober for more than six years."

Following "two or three years of trial and error when we fell into every possible pitfall and would take no advice from anyone," the surviving pioneers made a crucial decision.

EXPERIENCE

"We decided that since we had tried everything over the years, except the Twelve Steps, the only thing left to do was get sober and stay sober and try to follow the Steps faithfully instead of attempting to 'rewrite' them as we had previously done. It took us another two or three years to become consolidated, and in this we were helped by the advice of visiting Americans and also by the ever-watchful Bobbie."

Dr. John concludes: "From such a start, and it could not have been worse, was A.A. founded in Australia. The early experience was necessary to teach us A.A. and to give us a solid foundation. Out of it has grown a nationwide movement which is ever increasing in strength and vitality and for this we are eternally grateful."

40 IN '45

The Sydney group (New South Wales) was registered at G.S.H. in 1945 with 40 members. By 1948, groups had also been registered in Queensland, South Australia, Victoria and the estimated total Australian membership was 250.

In 1956, there were 72 groups registered in New South Wales alone, with an estimated membership of 1,350. Thirty one groups in Queensland had 820 members and Victoria registered 27 groups with 525 members.

FARMER

Ernest C., who recently celebrated his third anniversary in A.A., is a "merino sheep farmer" in Mount Stewart, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa.

The tenth anniversary of the start of A.A. in Ireland was marked at a special dinner in Dublin November 28th. One of the Fall highlights of Dublin A.A. activity was an open meeting in September which attracted more than 100 persons to hear talks by Connor F., known as the Founder of A.A. locally, and Susan, from Bulawayo, Southern Rhodesia.

In Cork, Ireland, the local group reports that plans are under way for a second meeting on Monday nights. Cork members recently acquired a "permanent home," which the members decorated, furnished and carpeted.

YOUTH

Who's the youngest A.A. member with a full year of continuous sobriety? A group in Colorado puts forth a strong claim for a 15-year-old young lady who recently celebrated her first A.A. birthday. She was introduced to A.A. by a young member in her twenties, now her husband.

The Highlanders Group, San Francisco, recently presented an honorary membership card to Charlotte P., another young lady who attends meetings regularly with her parents, both members. Mary is one year old! "Her tender age should tend to lower the average age of the membership worldwide," Leroy R., secretary, suggests.

Hector R. is a new Loner in Gentbrugge, Belgium.