



BOX 4-5-9

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

Vol. 13 No. 6

Holiday Issue 1968

Holiday Spirit Prevails in A.A.

"The happiest holidays we've ever had," report more and more members in recent years about the plan many A.A.'s have adopted for observing Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's.

How do they do it?

They use a 24-hour Alkathon (round-the-clock A.A. meeting). From Arizona to Greenwich Village, from Ottawa to Dixie, from California to Connecticut, this is a popular innovation. In this way, members sober several years not only enjoy holiday visits with each other, but also provide pleasure and help for the lonely newcomer shaky about his first sober holidays.

Christmas - First Meeting

As a by-product, publicity about Holiday Alkathons often carries the message to many sick alcoholics who haven't tried A.A. yet.

The Sunnyslope Group, Phoenix, Ariz., shared its Alkathon experience with us through Charles D., 1968 General Service Conference Delegate. Seven years ago Sunnyslope A.A.'s were discussing the holiday blues and the urges to drink some members experience at this time - especially during their first sober years.

So the Arizonans decided to hold a round-the-clock A.A. meeting at which members could drop in at any hour of the day or night.

It was so successful other groups wanted to join in.

Now, the host group shares its Christmas Alkathon with 60 nearby groups each year, and total attendance reaches about 600, from six states. There are quite a few Arizona

members now sober for years whose first A.A. meeting was a Christmas Alkathon.

Each participating group is responsible for 40 minutes of the 24-hour session (12 noon, Dec. 24 until 12 noon, Dec. 25), during which the group puts on whatever type of meeting it chooses (speakers, panel, discussion, or whatever). Refreshments are constantly available throughout the Alkathon meeting.

More Holiday Parties

Newspaper clippings show us that these "happy sobriety sprees" have also been sponsored by 130 groups in the Riverside-Redlands-San Bernardino, Calif., area (Inland Empire Central Office), using the premises of a

Presbyterian Church and the United Steel workers. Sometimes this big A.A. bash includes a party with floor show and dancing, and movies on alcoholism furnished by a municipal court program.

In Branford, Conn., the group listed in the local paper two telephone numbers anyone could call for free transportation to the local library where the king-size A.A. holiday doings went on.

New Year's was the occasion for an Alkathon party-and-meeting at a Clubhouse for A.A.'s in Washington, D.C. An amazed newspaper reporter who attended wrote. "No drinkers could enjoy themselves as much as these people do now."

The Workshop in Greenwich Village, N.Y., like several clubs run by A.A.'s in the Southern U.S.A. and Canada, serve holiday dinners, buffet style, during round-the-clock open house.

Dear Friends

With this, Lois and I send warmest greetings and affection to all our friends, worldwide.

For A.A., this is a very special time - a time for remembering God's gifts to each of us, a time to remember our responsibility to all who suffer alcoholism, a time to remember that to freely give is freely to receive.

May we A.A.'s be worthy of the Grace of the Prince of Peace for all the new year to come. Merry Christmas!

Bill

In Gratitude to Our Trustees

By Bill

This is the 30th year of A.A.'s trusteeship—the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous. It is our chief agency for service.

Something like one-half of my own A.A. life has been spent in close and constant collaboration with several generations of our Trustees, assisting in the creation and guidance of those active arms of service which now comprise our (World Headquarters) at New York City.

Notwithstanding many a growing pain and many an anguished decision that had to be taken in former times, I look back upon my thirty years of experience as something for the deepest of satisfaction and gratitude.

Early Meetings

When I recall those very early meetings with our first five Trustees who then presided over a treasury nearly almost empty, when I think of our one-room office, and our one paid assistant there, (who often went unpaid), when I remember that our total equipment for "carrying the A.A. message" consisted of one typewriter, one phone, one pamphlet, and a book called "Alcoholics Anonymous" which could still be taken over by the printer for an unpaid bill and when, by contrast, I contemplate our World Service structure today and remember that its indispensable administration to our needs has over the last thirty years cemented our global unity, and has brought recovery within reach of hundreds of thousands—well, I am filled with wonder, indeed with awe, that God has been so good to us of A.A.

Because my own role in this providential unfoldment is so often exaggerated, I would like here to emphasize that our World Services are really the aggregate work of a great many dedicated people.

The first to appear on the world Service scene were our Trustees. Perhaps two score or more of them, al-

coholic and nonalcoholic, have served us in the years since. Then came the wonderful succession of A.A. Staff Members, and the many volunteers who have done so much for us.

The Conference Is Born

In 1951 the first Delegates to A.A.'s General Service Conference put in their appearance. This firmly linked our World Services to the A.A. Fellowship. Several hundreds of these have since served. Backing them up are the many Committee Members and General Service Representatives of which there are today thousands. Lastly, and very importantly, there are the A.A. group themselves whose understanding, good will, and funds, are freely given to the vital maintenance of A.A.'s World Services.

To all of these trusted servants I send my unending gratitude for everything that, under God's grace, they have wrought for us in the thirty years that are now A.A. history.

THANKS FROM WALLA WALLA

"Dear G.S.O.. We have 81 members in the Willshare group, a gain of 26 since May. A total of 79 outside members have come in to share meetings with us. People travel here from the coast—over 300 miles. One group came all the way from Trail, B.C., Canada.

These people not only thought of their own welfare but also the welfare of others in arresting this disease.

"As it says in Chapter 7, 'Practical experience shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics. It works when other activities fail.'

"Yours in fellowship, Bert J., Secretary."

TRUSTEE ELECTION NOTICE Canada West, Northeast U.S.

Resume of one candidate from each state or province in these Regions should be received at G.S.O. no later than Jan. 1, 1969. See Oct.—Nov. Box 4—5—9 for details.

Cliques in A.A. Can Be Good



Yessirree, cliques are a fact of A.A. group life, says the Georgia A.A. Assembly's newsletter.

For any G.S.R. (or prospective one) already in the clique that "runs" his group, or who wants to be in it, Virgil W., former G.S. Conference Delegate from Georgia, tells how to get, and stay there.

"You begin by attending meetings of the group regularly, taking an active interest in group activities, making constructive suggestions (especially to G.S.R.'s and G.S. Committee Members), accepting responsibilities in Area and state activities, and by working on committees.

"Show a continual live interest in all A.A. affairs and before you realize it you are knee-deep in A.A. activities, enjoying yourself and your active membership more fully.

"You will find yourself a member of the clique," says Virgil, "and you'll be surprised how anxious the other clique members are to have you."

This reminds us of an old Grapevine piece which told how to find out who is in the group's controlling clique. "Go early," it said, "and see who's making the coffee, setting up chairs, putting out the literature and ashtrays." To join the clique, it urged, "Stay late—and grab a broom."

CAN YOU READ YOURSELF SOBER?

Some alcoholics get the A.A. message which starts their recovery not from a messenger in the flesh, but from ink and paper.

Example: before A.A. had an office, or even a name, the manuscript of our basic book of experience, "Alcoholics Anonymous," existed only in mimeograph form. Mimeo copies were circulated among a few people for suggestions. A nonalcoholic woman in Los Angeles showed it to some officers in the city Probation Department—and guess what? Right. Drunks sobered up—12th Stepped by the printed word.

Pete S., Conference Delegate from Utah, reminded all of us of these facts in a presentation called, "Literature As It Affects Recovery in A.A."

He told of a woman alcoholic (see "Women Suffer, Too" in the Big Book) who also owes her sobriety to that mimeographed message. Then she . . . but read the story yourself, on p. 222.

If you know a doctor, you might mark certain words on these pages for him: pp. 307-9, 413, 423, 451-452, 490, 504, 512, and 558.

Does the "God business" bother you? See p. 248. The Steps? p. 559. Know someone discouraged by a slip? Show him pp. 268-269, and 493-506.

In England, Australia, Alaska, and South Africa, too, the message first arrived in printed form, Pete noted.

"That over a million and a half pamphlets were distributed in 1968 is a matter for rejoicing," Pete said. "One pamphlet can mean one recovery, or several."

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Checks payable to A.A. World Services, Inc., Box 459, Grand Central Post Office, N.Y.C., N.Y. 10017.

A.M.A. President Commends A.A.

At the 28th International Congress on Alcohol and Alcoholism, Dr. Dwight L. Wilbur, San Francisco, president of the American Medical Association, said, "A.A. has done a better job in treating alcoholism than any other group, including professionals."



Dr. Dwight L. Wilbur

He made the statement at a press conference just prior to addressing the opening session of the Congress, which attracted 1,800 professionals and experts from 40 countries to Washington, D.C., in September.

Held by the International Council on Alcohol and Alcoholism, the Congress was sponsored by five American agencies. A.A.'s General Service Board was listed as one of 14 "co-operating" bodies. A.A.'s role is described in the December Grapevine.

At another press conference during the Congress John L. (Dr. Jack) Norris, M.D., nonalcoholic chairman of the Board, and co-founder Bill W. released the findings of A.A.'s first continent-wide sobriety census, reported in the Oct.-Nov. issue of *Box 4-5-9*, and also in the December Grapevine.

GRAPEVINE GLEANINGS

December: Results of first A.A. sobriety census—ages, length of sobriety, etc.; behind-the-scenes at Washington Congress; Helpful Hints for Holiday Parties; Touchy Subject (God for newcomers?); The Other Christmas (what if we all discussed sobriety only, refused to tell our drunk

—the Press Does Too!

According to the clippings received at the General Service Office, at least 50 newspapers printed the news of A.A.'s first Sobriety Survey.

An example is the *N.Y. Daily News*. In a Sept. 21 editorial headlined, "Admirable A.A.," it said "A.A. gets dramatic results far oftener than not in its efforts to help alcoholics bring their affliction under control and keep it there.

"If you have a family member, relative or friend with a serious drink problem, your best bet . . . is to steer him or her somehow into contact with the nearest A.A. group."

IS YOUR GROUP LISTING CORRECT?

To be listed accurately in the *World Directory*, U.S. and Canadian groups must return completed Group Information cards to G.S.O. *no later than Dec. 1, 1968.*

As traveling A.A.'s and many members often rely on the *Directory* to find your group, it is important that your listing be up-to-date. Please cooperate!

CONTRIBUTION DEADLINE: DEC. 31

To be credited properly to your group for 1968, contributions for support of A.A.'s world services must be received by G.S.O. *no later than Dec. 31, 1968.*

stories?); Animal Crackers; Coffee Addicts.

January: Celebrity Speakers—pro & con; Al-Anon (do we consider the family on 12th Step calls?); Three persons' stories — Dallas, San Diego, Syracuse, N.Y.; The Art of Mooching (as if loan companies don't know!); an outer space invaders discover magic new drug.

A.A. CALENDAR

NOVEMBER

- 22-24 - Enid, Ok., N.W. District Conf., Write: Conf. Chm., Box 444, Enid.
- 22-24 - Honolulu, Hi., 7th Ann. Hawaii Conf. Write: Conf. Chm., Box 2384, Honolulu.
- 23 - Dublin, Ireland, 22nd Ann. Dinner - 1st Dublin Grps., Sentry, Dublin. Write: Ann. Chm., Dublin Grps., c/o The Country Shop, 23 St. Stephen's Green, Dublin 2, Ireland.
- 23 - Cincinnati, Oh., Cincinnati 27th Ann. Banquet. Write: Banquet Chm., 405 Oak St., Cincinnati.
- 23-24 - Badjeros, Ont., Canada, Georgian Bay Conf. Write: Conf. Chm., Box 367, Shelburne, Ont.
- 30-Dec. 1 - Summerside, P.E.I., N.B./P.E.I. Roundup. Write: Roundup Chm., Box 1323, 388 Water St., Summerside, P.E.I.

DECEMBER

- 24-25 - Phoenix, Az., 7th Ann. Alcothon, Write: Secy., 2901 W. Campbell Phoenix.
- 31 - Phoenix, Az., Phoenix Ann.-New Years Eve Banquet & Dance. Write: Secy., 6615 N. 10th Pl., Phoenix.

JANUARY

- 10-12 - Houston, Tx., 7th S.W. Tx. Gen. Serv. Area Conf. Write: Conf. Chm., 1401 Castle Ct., Houston.
- 11 - Palm Beach County, Fl., 23rd Ann. of A.A. Write: Ann. Chm., Box 1522, Jupiter, Fl.
- 24-25 - Durham, N.C., 2nd Tar-Heel Mid-Winter Conf. Write: Conf. Chm., Box 2271, Durham.
- 24-26 - Reno, Nv., W. Gen. Serv. Assembly. Write: Chairman, Box 2057, San Rafael, Calif.

TWELFTH STEP CALL - LONG DISTANCE

(We received here at G.S.O. a telephone call from Scotland, asking us to help a member of a Scottish group then in Africa. We wrote Gerald S. in Nigeria. Here's his reply.)

Dear G.S.O.: Mission accomplished, I hope. Looked up Mac. Took him to supper and we talked to 11 p.m. Visited him next day on his job. His thinking seems straight and I can only hope and pray that this is his time. He promised to write. I said a friend contacted me through you. He does have a Big Book and I shared my Grapevine with him. Thanks for the opportunity, as it helped me.

-Gerald S., Lagos

NO STRIKE IN A.A.

"My sponsor and I work at the same shop, he a company man, I a union man. Seven weeks ago the union went on strike.

"Before the strike my sponsor and I had gone over 30 miles together every week to our A.A. meetings. The longer the strike went on, the harder the feelings were between the company and the union. But my sponsor

and I kept going to our meetings together, calling each other for support to help each other stay sober.

"Now the strike is over, and I'm sure people wonder how and why we got along together so good.

"Does A.A. work!"

-J.J.H., Corry, Pa.

SPECIAL GIFTS TO G.S.O.

- CALIFORNIA:
Pismo Beach: 1st Annual 22nd District Conf. \$ 50.00
- FLORIDA:
Clearwater: 12th Fla. Conv. 195.00
- INDIANA:
Indianapolis: Indiana State Convention 500.00
- LOUISIANA:
Baton Rouge: La. 1968 State Convention 200.00
- MICHIGAN:
Lansing: Central Mich. Inter-Area Council. 61.00
- MINNESOTA:
Fergus Falls: Spring Banquet,

THANK YOU ALL

Are we at G.S.O. on your mailing list? We get many A.A. newsletters, bulletins, magazines, etc., and we need and enjoy all of them. This is a big Thank You for every issue. Please keep them coming.

Lake Region Area Grps.	50.00
MISSISSIPPI:	
Meridian: 22nd Miss. Conv.	150.00
NEW JERSEY:	
N.W. N.J. Picnic.	50.00
NEW MEXICO:	
Albuquerque: 11th Annual N.M. State Conf.	476.93
NEW YORK:	
Chautauqua Lake: Ohio, Pa., N.Y. Canada Tri-State Assembly ..	100.00
Syracuse: 5th Annual N.Y. State Conv.	495.42
OKLAHOMA:	
Oklahoma City: 1968 State Conf.	600.00
OREGON:	
Portland: Pacific N.W. Conf. ..	600.00
SOUTH CAROLINA:	
Georgetown: Waccamaw Area Groups	34.00
TEXAS:	
Houston: Amusement Comm.	10.00
WEST VIRGINIA:	
Clarksburg: 16th W. Va. Conf. ..	50.00
CANADA:	
Alberta: Calgary: Western Provinces Sharing Session ...	100.00
Ontario: St. Lawrence Area: Proceeds of Gratitude Meeting	38.50
Toronto: International Advisory Council of Young People in A.A.	300.00

Holiday Greetings



... From the Staff

Bob
Waneta
Beth
Mary Ellen
Cona Louise
Midge
Hazel
Ann