

# BOX 4-5-9

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

Vol. 15 No. 6

Holiday Issue 1970

## Celebrating Holidays the A.A. Way

When Joe raised his hand at a discussion meeting last week, the leader called on him.

"I'm a new member," Joe said, "as you all know—sober only a few months.

"Although I *try* to stick to the 24-hour plan, I keep wondering about my birthday, Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Eve. In the past I always drank myself stupid. What do A.A.'s do about the holidays?"

A cheerful murmur of recognition arose in the room, and at least a dozen folks who had faced the very same problem raised their hands.

Joe made a list of all their suggestions and experience. He shared it with us so we can share it with you. Here 'tis:

1. **Holiday Alkathons.** Round-the-clock sessions co-sponsored by several groups, alternating various kinds of A.A. meetings with refreshments and sometimes entertainment. Everybody welcome to drop in. Some groups keep a buffet loaded with holiday food.

2. **Plan extra-meetings.** Visit groups you've never seen.

3. **Take someone newer** than you are to each meeting you attend, and speak first to a stranger at each group.

4. **Accept an extra A.A. chore** or two—telephone duty, dishwashing,

leading or speaking at a meeting, or visiting alcoholics in a hospital or a jail.

5. **Try to remember** it is more important to give time, love and kind thoughts than it is to give lavish presents.

6. **Twelfth Step work.**

7. **Don't work up holiday** worries in advance. Remember: "One Day (or Hour) at a Time."

8. **Don't get too tired** or too hungry, and try not to be alone. Go where other A.A.'s are.

9. **Carry the Grapevine** and an A.A. pamphlet with you to read at odd moments.

10. **Avoid any drinking occasions** you are nervous about. (Use some

of those excuses you used to use, remember?)

But if you have to go, eat first; arrive late; keep candy handy; drink a sweet soft drink; and make some excuse to leave early. If possible, take an A.A. member with you.

11. **Keep your A.A. telephone** list with you at all times. If you think of drinking—or just get uptight—postpone everything else until you've called another A.A. with Holiday Greetings.

12. **Go to church.** Any church.

13. **It may be a good time** to catch up on reading and letter writing.


14. **Go to a funny movie**—or at least do something that is fun. You deserve it!

*Dear A.A.'s*

*To all our friends in every A.A. land, Lois and I send our warmest holiday greetings.*

*At this time of year, each of us in A.A. feels a closer kinship, a special sense of gratitude for God's grace and blessings in our lives.*

*In the year to come, let us be worthy of continuing to receive the incomparable gifts that have been ours.*

*Bill* 

## New Kinds of Groups

Many good results—and a few problems—have come from some new kinds of A.A. groups and meetings tried out the last few years.

Maybe one of these could produce a new burst of A.A. activity in *your* community and help us all find ways to make meetings more interesting.

For example, one A.A. experimenter writes: "Surely we can *add* new things to our present A.A. life without abandoning wonderful tried-and-proved old ways, can't we?"

Bill R. writes us about the "Survivors" group in Fresno, California, where oldtimers "openly discuss their character defects and what to do about them." Bill says it has been a "wonderful spiritual experience for a lot of us, but not too popular with others."

Question: How do you limit sessions to oldtimers, without excluding newcomers, since by tradition, A.A. is open to anyone who wants it?

Flourishing here on the East Coast, we hear, are new Big Book groups, devoted to the study of "Alcoholics Anonymous."

If you know of other new kinds of groups, please write us so we can share it with the rest of A.A.

### THE LINK OF FELLOWSHIP

The map of Southwest Asia shows a wee country called Kuwait, on the Persian Gulf. It is squeezed in between Iran, Iraq and Saudi Arabia, and its capital has the same name as the country.

There you will find one of our Loners, Gerry, with whom we have been in touch since 1968. Gerry has been in Nigeria and Dahomey in Africa and still corresponds with Fraser, now in the Congo, whom he met in Lagos. We were able to put Gerry and Fraser in touch with other A.A.'s who were nearby, in the hopes that a group would result, but new assignments set them traveling again, and they're still going it alone and trying to carry the message to others, even if it's only through letters.

If you've ever read *Loners Meeting*, you'll see why one member said, "Loners may get to talk A.A. less, but maybe they think it more—and more deeply—than we gabbers do."

Sample from Kinshasa (Fraser) to Kuwait (Gerry): "We're a long way apart, and most likely will never meet, but somehow I don't feel that I will be alone anymore. It's great to know you are there and making a go of it. . .

"The main thing is that I have not had a drink and do not think of that as a solution, and the only way I manage to do it is by the help of people like yourself. So keep rooting for me, my good friend."

Now Gerry is moving to Dubia on the other end of the Gulf, but not before making contact with a new arrival in Kuwait, Tony, and so the chain of fellowship is forged and stretches round our A.A. world.

### ADD TO ROTATED STAFF ASSIGNMENTS:

Until further notice, Hazel R., will be serving as acting secretary to the Board's Literature Committee.

### DRUGS OR ANONYMITY TROUBLE YOUR GROUP?

"The very best!" said everyone who recently re-read two Grapevine reprints:

"Problems Other Than Alcohol—What Can Be Done About Them," and "Why Alcoholics Anonymous Is Anonymous," both by Bill W.

They seem even more timely today than ever. So they are being made available from G.S.O. in leaflet form, nominally priced.

### WE LOVE VISITORS!

"Thank you sincerely," reads a letter from One Slip Road, G----, N.H., "for your hospitality when I visited Park Avenue South. I returned home with warm praise for the G.S.O. family and a broader understanding of service."

We love such letters, but even more, we loved greeting the 784 visiting A.A.'s who turned up last



RECEPTION ROOM

year from North America and 15 other A.A. lands.

When *you* are in New York, do come see your new quarters at 468 Park Avenue *South*.

See the trophy (Lasker Award) and manuscript displays; meet the faces behind the names you have corresponded with.

See where your literature comes from; and let us get to know *you!*

## EL SALVADOR INCREASES LITERATURE OUTPUT

A.A.'s in El Salvador have had their own "Oficina de Servicios Generales" since 1969 to serve their own groups.

Literature available (in Spanish, of course): "This is A.A.," "Is A.A. for You?," "A.A. in Your Community," "The A.A. Group," "44 Questions and Answers," and "The Twelve Steps," plus the Big Book.

Publication is by arrangement with A.A. World Services, Inc., publishing arm of the North American General Service Board, New York, which helped the Salvador office get started.

Recently A.A.W.S. granted permission for the Central American Office to reprint "A.A. Tradition—How it Developed," "The Jack Alexander Article About A.A." and "The Alcoholic Employee."

The "Oficina" distributes a bi-monthly bulletin to El Salvador's 353 groups.

At present the Salvador office is staffed largely by volunteers. It's address is: Apartado 132, San Salvador, El Salvador.

Mexico City and Medellin, Colombia, also have General Service Boards and offices and both print and distribute Conference-approved A.A. literature.

## Convention Bids for 1975

Cities wanting to play host to A.A.'s 40th Anniversary International Convention (July 4-6, 1975) are to submit formal bids to the G.S. Board no later than *Jan. 20, 1971*, through the delegates from their area.

North American Conference delegates have been asked to submit bids for the Trustees' review at their Jan., 1971, meeting and subsequent presentation to the Conference in April.

The Conference's "Site Committee" will choose three possibilities to be visited by the Convention Chairman before the Board's final selection.

We're delighted so many cities have shown interest. Bid questionnaires should be completed in consultation with Convention bureaus and hotels before the *Jan. 20, 1971, deadline*.

## Directory Deadline: Please Help!

Remember when *you* needed help with your drinking problem, but didn't know where to turn?

What if you telephoned or wrote us, and we told you there was no

### DEADLINE:

Cards must arrive at G.S.O. (P.O. Box 459, New York, N.Y. 10017) no later than *Dec. 1, 1970*. Can we count on you?

A.A. in your community?

THAT can easily happen to a sick alcoholic in your own block. . .

. . . If your group does not send in *correct*, up-to-date Information Cards for the *1971 World Directory* (Part I: U.S. and Canada).

The lives of traveling A.A.'s often depend on Directory *accuracy*, too. IT IS VERY IMPORTANT!

It's the *only* thing that keeps you *all* in touch!

### NEWS OF BILL

Though not well enough to come to New York, Bill is up and around on most days. He goes out of the house for short walks and has gone out to lunch and dinner as well.

His emphysema continues to be troublesome, and we would think that his activities will have to be strictly limited for a considerable time. At the request of his doctors, Bill is not going to be able to autograph any books or pictures for the time being.

We will continue to keep you posted on his condition, as we are in daily telephone communication with both Bill and Lois.

### N.Y. SPANISH GROUPS GET TOGETHER

When A.A. groups work together, great things get done.

Latest example of this in our mail is UNIDAD new Spanish-language bulletin by and for members of 16 Spanish-speaking groups in New York (U.S. has 55, Puerto Rico, 35).

It tells of two new groups and a weekly Spanish radio program about A.A.

### A.A. TRUSTEES: 1 AT-LARGE, SIX REGIONAL, 1 GEN. SERV.

The last *Box 4-5-9* carried news about the fact that six A.A. trustees are to be elected next spring. Vacancies to be filled next April are those for the Canadian "at large" trusteeship, plus the following five regions:

1. **Eastern Canada** (Atlantic Provinces, Ont. and Que.);
2. **East Central U.S.** (Ill., Ind., Mich. and Ohio);
3. **Pacific U.S.** (Alaska, Ariz., Calif., Hawaii, Idaho, Nev., Ore. and Wash.);
4. **Southeast U.S.** (Ala., Fla., Ga., Ky., La., Miss., N.C., Puerto Rico, S.C., Tenn., Va., and W. Va.); and
5. **Southwest U.S.** (Ark., Colo., Kan., N.M., Okla., Tex and Utah).

## A.A. CALENDAR

### NOVEMBER

- 20-22 - *Enid, Ok.*, N.W. Dist. Conf. Write: Conf. Chm., 416 S. Tyler, Enid.  
 29 - *Lockport, Ill.*, 4th Annu. Joliet Area Jamboree. Write: Chm., 113 Sunset Strip, Joliet.

### DECEMBER

- 24-25 - *Phoenix, Ar.*, 10th Annu. Alcothon. Write: Chm., 6500 W. Glendale Ave., Glendale, Ar.

### JANUARY

- 22-24 - *Ocean Springs, Miss.*, Gulf Coast Round-up. Write: Chm., Box 845, Ocean Springs.  
 22-24 - *Durham, N.C.* Tar Heel Mid-Winter Conf. Write: Chm., Box 2271, Durham.  
 29-30 - *Blytheville, Ark.*, 14th Annu. Tri-State Coon Supper. Write: Chm., Box 401, Blytheville.

### FEBRUARY

- 26-28 - *Wichita, Kan.*, 7th Annu. All "Gal" A.A. Conf. Write: Chm., 3805 S. Broadway, Wichita.

### MARCH

- 5-7 - *Santa Maria, Ca.*, 4th Annu. Pacific Region Service Assem. Write: Chm., 3790 Hadley Way, Santa Maria, or 4th Annu. Pacific Region Service Assembly, Holiday Inn, 1407 E. Main St., Santa Maria.  
 26-28 - *New Orleans, La.*, Annu. New Orleans Conv. Write: Chm., Box 73042, Metairie, La.

## TAPE-LENDING LIBRARY FOR HOSPITAL GROUPS

Five first-person stories taped by alcoholics, some of whom found A.A. in hospitals, will be available by December 15 at G.S.O. for borrowing by A.A. groups in hospitals - *free*.

This new institutions tape library consists of 10 sets to be loaned on a first-come, first-served basis.

## ANOTHER BEQUEST DECLINED

A bequest of \$5,000.00 to "National Alcoholics Anonymous" was recently declined.

Since 1945, our G.S. Board has turned down such gifts totaling many thousands of dollars.

At the request of the G.S. Conference, however, the Board accepts a contribution of not more than \$200 in any one year from an A.A. member, or a similar single bequest in the will of a member.

No gift from a non-A.A. source is ever accepted, however, in accordance with our 7th Tradition (self-support).

## SPECIAL GIFTS TO G.S.O.

CALIFORNIA	
Santa Maria: 3rd Annu. 22nd Dist. Conv. . . . .	\$ 200.00
IOWA	
17th Waubonsie Park Picnic . . . . .	10.00
MICHIGAN	
Gen. Mich. Inter Areas Council of A.A. . . . .	77.50
17th State Conf. . . . .	354.49
MISSISSIPPI	
State Convention . . . . .	100.00
MISSOURI	
East Mo. Conf. . . . .	73.50
NEBRASKA	
Omaha: Intergroup Dinner . . . . .	18.90
NEVADA	
State Conference . . . . .	100.00
CANADA	
B.C.: Penticton. Okanogan Valley Round-up. . . . .	112.12
Manitoba: No. Man. Round-up. . . . .	121.25
Ontario: Toronto Men's Meeting . . . . .	32.01
Sask.: Saskatoon Intergroup Round-up. . . . .	80.24
Sask.: Saskatoon New Year Eve Dance. . . . .	64.73

## HOLIDAY GRAPEVINES

DEC. ISSUE: Santa Claus takes umbrage at a December, 1969 article suggesting he might have a problem, and he writes the Grapevine a nasty letter.

Other Christmas articles relate personal experiences of A.A.'s in the festive season, and point the way to the true meaning of Christmas.

"Helping People Is a Ticklish Business" by Alan Keith-Lucas was received with tremendous interest and enthusiasm when it was first published in the GV in June, 1962. Because of continuing requests, we are reprinting this thought-provoking article.

JAN. ISSUE: "Tell Your Doctor"—by an A.A. doctor. "Happiness Is Not for Me."

Box 4-5-9 is published 6 times a year by the General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous, 468 Park Ave., South, N.Y.C., N.Y. 10016

SUBSCRIPTIONS: Individual, \$1.00 per yr.; Group, \$2.50 for each unit of 10 per yr. (Check should accompany order.)

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

## HAPPY HOLIDAYS



*Wanita* *Cora Louise* *Bob* *Midge*  
*Elaine* *Ann*  
*Beth* *Mary Ellen* *Hazel*