



BOX 4-5-9

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

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Holiday Issue 1973



FIRST CHRISTMAS



What about *your* town? Is there "room at the inn for strangers"? There will be in Phoenix, Ariz., Greenwich Village in New York, and many other places where A.A. meets. In your town, will there be an all-day-and-night alkathon with plenty of hot coffee and snacks for the lonely newcomer's first Christmas? Or New Year's Eve? Or Thanksgiving?

"Tea and coffee available" may not sound much like that morning in the Bethlehem stable, nearly 2,000 years ago, when there was no room at the inn for strangers. But to many A.A. members, it signals a warm welcome and the birth of love, whatever the surroundings.

That is the message between the lines of an announcement we got about a special open A.A. meeting — not in a stable, but in the Gallery Lounge of the Grosvenor Victoria Hotel, Buckingham Palace Road, London.

They called it "First Christmas Morning Group." Doors opened at 10:00 a.m., December 25, 1972. "Multiple speakers, tea and coffee available," said the notice. Any A.A. who spent his first sober Christmas alone, maybe even hungry, will get the point.

Pine boughs or holly, Chanukah candles or Druids' mistletoe, ginger ale or Roman candles — they can all remind us to demonstrate our gratitude for the A.A. way of life by giving it freely to all who come. Happy holidays!

A.A. Cooperation With Court And A.S.A.P. Programs Saves Lives

More and more alcoholics are finding recovery in A.A. every day, because so many A.A. groups have learned how to carry the message by cooperating with the various court classes and similar judicial programs designed to help alcoholics. Many of these projects focus on the person convicted of drunk driving — for instance, those set up through Alcohol Safety Action Programs.

It is a thrilling new experience, most A.A.'s report, although at first it was scary for some. A few members are reluctant to do Twelfth Step work in unfamiliar ways. But, as Bill W. said, when chances to help an alcoholic come along, most of us find we can

"talk easily about A.A. to almost anyone."

In New Jersey, Colorado, and other states, special sealed and coded envelopes are used so that A.A. secretaries don't have to sign their names or initials in affirming that someone attended an A.A. meeting.

After all, we in A.A. don't care who sends alcoholics to us, do we, as long as they come? Most of us got "sentenced" or "forced" into A.A. some way — by our own inner pain, by family or friends, by a doctor, judge, employer, or counselor.

So we let judges, hospitals, or anyone else refer alcoholics to us. Naturally, we can't *guarantee* any-
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Dear Friends . . .

Once again in this season of gratitude, it is time to pause and give thanks for the many blessings bestowed upon us in A.A., who have walked through the valley of the shadow into the brightness of a new day.

Let us give thanks for the precious sobriety which has enabled us to live again in the world of men as useful citizens, to regain some of our lost hope and repair our shattered dreams, and to share courage, hope, and strength with one another.

May we all continue to walk in the light, yet remain willing to reach back into the darkness for our brothers and sisters who still suffer.

*Midge Valerie Betty Bob June Phyllis
Julia
Cara Louise
Wynne Wanda*

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A. A. COOPERATION

(continued from p. 1)

body is going to stay sober, but we can try to help the guy or gal "sentenced to A.A." instead of to a work farm or jail.

As Marian D., Denver, Colo., wrote: "We [A.A. and the courts or any other agency] can work together toward a common goal of helping the alcoholic, providing he or she wants help. But we cannot interfere with each other's jobs otherwise."

We cannot tell the judge how to sentence, can we? That would not only be "affiliating," it would also be butting in! By the same token, we have certain experience, strength, and hope to share which courts cannot supply.

Marian continued, "Once aroused from that complacency ('Let someone else handle that'), we can now scurry around to read the 'Twelve and Twelve,' study our Traditions, then read 'Cooperation but Not Affiliation' and 'A.A. in Your Community,' to see what A.A. does *not* do."

G.S.O.'s Guidelines on Court Programs help, too. They were written when court "classes" about A.A. started, over seven years ago. Such a class is usually held in the courtroom once a week and is run mostly by A.A. members. But those "sentenced" are told they are *not* attending an A.A. meeting, just a court class about A.A. After a few weeks of this, the problem drinker can decide on his own whether or not he wants to join an A.A. group.

Ralph F., Lincoln, Nebr., says his community was one of the first

to get an A.S.A.P. grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation. "With our large open meetings, no problem. Court referrals come, are interested or not, as you would expect. In fact, they have stirred us old A.A.'s up toward the effort to provide interesting, informative meetings that are meaningful to all.

"Many of the court referrals are staying and then seeking out smaller, closed groups, so they can participate more fully in A.A. A.A. has benefited and been able to carry the message to many more suffering alcoholics. It is my belief we need to inventory ourselves, and we have arranged a meeting of interested parties to look at the problem and also at our own motives."

Usually, when a group of mature, experienced A.A. members meets thoughtfully with authorities, problems can be solved in ways that do not violate our Traditions.

Just as A.A. has learned to take A.A. meetings into jails, hospitals, rest farms, and halfway houses, we now have the opportunity to learn new ways of cooperating with other agencies to help sick alcoholics recover.

FOR THE RECORD: A.M.A. STATEMENT

Most of us are familiar with the statement issued by the American Medical Association in 1964, recognizing alcoholism as an illness. The following statement, passed by its House of Delegates in 1971, more precisely defines current A.M.A. opinion:

"The American Medical Association identifies alcoholism as a complex disease with biological, psychological, and sociological components and recognizes medicine's responsibility in behalf of affected persons. The Association recognizes that there are multiple forms of alcoholism, and that each patient should be evaluated and treated in an individualized and comprehensive manner."

WHOM DO YOU TELL YOU'RE IN A.A.?

New members join A.A. every day, and new reporters join newspaper, TV, and radio news staffs every day. So keeping people informed about the A.A. Tradition of anonymity *in the public print and broadcast media* is an educational task we can never let up on.

Fewer than one percent of A.A.'s have ever broken our Tradition of not revealing our full names or faces in newspapers, magazines, TV, and radio shows when we are identified as A.A. members. That is remarkable, when you consider that for years everybody said all alcoholics were egotistical personalities, always demanding limelight and praise!

Our Anonymity Tradition was learned the hard way. A.A. experience showed over and over that alcoholics shun a source of help that gives out publicity on its members. In addition, too many alcoholics who sought *public recognition for A.A. membership* sadly wound up drunk, and it killed some. As many psychiatrists understand so well, ego trips are very dangerous for alcoholics.

One of our earliest founding fathers, Ebby, who sponsored Bill W., told Bill that the program of recovery would have to include giving of oneself quietly in service to help others *without the reward of pay, prestige, or glory*. Our Twelfth Step and our Eleventh and Twelfth Traditions are based on that idea.

Our Anonymity Tradition has nothing to do with the *private, face-to-face* revelations of our alcoholism and membership in A.A. that we make in Steps Five, Nine, and Twelve, and when speaking at meetings. Certainly, most of us tell our families, close friends, co-workers, doctors, and clergymen about the new way of life we are trying, and why. We do not hide our membership out of shame or fear.

Don't miss the new leaflet "Understanding Anonymity" (5¢).

VISITORS TOUR G.S.O. TO LEARN ABOUT A.A.

More and more professional men and women want to learn about A.A., so we're delighted to welcome such groups here at G.S.O.

Third-year medical students from New York Hospital were recently guests for an office tour and an A.A. meeting. Mr. Larry Kripps, National Council on Alcoholism, and Dr. Nicholas Pace, medical director of General Motors and president of the New York affiliate of the National Council on Alcoholism, accompanied the fledgling M.D.'s.

From the Center of Alcohol Studies, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, N.J., Mrs. Anne Baxter, director of the Alcoholism Personnel Training Program, brought 24 students. Each visitor was given an appropriate selection of A.A. pamphlets.

Other guests at G.S.O. in the past few months have included: Mr. Ken Eaton, deputy director of the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, Washington, D.C.; Col. W. D. Barry and Maj. John M. Squires, U.S. Army; Capt. James A. Baxter, U.S. Navy; Dr. Gerald Wall, nonalcoholic trustee of the New Zealand A.A. General Service Board; Leon Gamza, program coordinator for Ayerst Laboratories; and five young French psychiatrists touring U.S. mental health facilities.

WHAT TO DO ABOUT MISUSE OF OUR DIRECTORY

The quickest, best way to stop misuse of the A.A. *World Directory* is to inform the misuser through lots of letters from A.A. members who object. That's the essence of A.A. experience so far.

Our *Directory* is clearly marked "CONFIDENTIAL: for A.A. members only. Not to be used as mailing list for any purpose outside A.A." Also, with every copy of the new 1973 *Directory Part I: United States and Canada*, we send out

Guidelines on who is entitled to use the *Directory*, and for what purpose. The Guidelines were adopted by the 1973 Conference.

Fortunately, flagrant cases of *Directory* misuse (to sell jewelry, publications, coffee pots, paper cups, etc.) are rare. When anyone does abuse the confidence of the *Directory* by using it for commercial solicitation, we fire off a letter from G.S.O. as soon as we hear of it. Almost always, our request is instantly complied with.

Still, the best possible way to stop such misuse is for 20 members or more to bombard every misuser with letters, polite but firmly disapproving. For protecting the con-

fidentiality of the *Directory*, each of us can say, "I am responsible" — and act on that. Okay?

WHY YOU MUST GET PERMISSION TO REPRINT ANY A.A. MATERIAL

Anyone is welcome to use the spiritual principles A.A. is based on, of course. *But A.A. literature is a different matter altogether. It is legally protected by copyright laws, and no part of it can be reprinted by anyone, for any purpose, without written permission of A.A. World Services, Inc.* (P.O. Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, N.Y. 10017). There is
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* **You are THE member** of your group who gets all mailings from G.S.O., keeping the members of your group in touch with other A.A.'s throughout the world. So . . .

1. *Please* be sure we have the correct name and address for every general service representative, district committee member, and area officer, so our mailing list will at all times carry correct information for reaching your group.

This is especially important when new G.S.R.'s, committee members, and area officers are named!

2. When you receive the quarterly record of your group's contributions to G.S.O., please pass it along to the group's treasurer. Thank you!

* **From Las Vegas, Nev.:** "Our first G.S.R. workshop, held this weekend, was the most enlightening and rewarding (spiritually) experience I have had in the Fellowship. It taught me the need for open-

G.S.R. Corner

mindedness and working with others." —Helen N.

* **From Scarsboro, Ont.:** "Why are some groups in our new *World Directory* named after people? The 1972 Conference agreed that 'in respect of our Twelfth Tradition (principles before personalities), an A.A. group ought not be named after any person, A.A. member or nonalcoholic, living or dead.'" —John H.

You are absolutely right, John. But we have no power to force any group or member to do anything, remember? Group autonomy is an important Tradition, too. The *Directory* says: "Groups . . . are listed at their own request. A directory listing does not constitute or imply endorsement of any group's approach to or practice of the traditional A.A. program."

* **From Schenectady, N.Y.:** "After four years as G.S.R., I understand why rotation works so well. One year, you see a delegate handling a huge convention. The next year, he or she is just another member. A healthy omen for our Fellowship." —Ed F.

A. A. CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JANUARY

- 4 - 6 - *Kaimesha Lake, New York*. Second N.E. Region Reunion. Write: Conf. Chm., P.O. Box 267, New City, N.Y. 10956.
11-13 - *Beaumont, Texas*. S.E. Area Conf.

FEBRUARY

- 15-17 - *Auckland, New Zealand*. 1974 Conv. of A.A. Write: Secy., 8 Sloane St., Glen Innes, Auckland, New Zealand.
16 - *Philadelphia, Pa.* Philadelphia Intergroup's 34th Anniversary Dinner and Dance. Write: Intergroup Office, 2202 St. James St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19103.
22-24 - *Des Moines, Iowa*. All Women's A.A. Conf. Write: P.O. Box 249, Des Moines, Iowa 51301.
22-24 - *Louisville, Kentucky*. 23rd Kentucky State Conf. Write: Host Comm., P.O. Box 13114, Louisville, Ky. 40213.

REPRINT PERMISSION

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no charge for this permission.

Even if a local A.A. central or intergroup office just wants to list the Twelve Steps or the Traditions on a meeting list, or if an A.A. newsletter or convention program wants to reprint the "I Am Responsible" declaration or an announcement from *Box 4-5-9*, formal written permission must be obtained *in advance*.

To reprint the Preamble or anything else from the Grapevine, written permission must be obtained from A.A. Grapevine, Inc. (P.O. Box 1980, New York, N.Y. 10017).

Here's why: Unless *everybody* who reprints does show (by a footnote or other appropriate reference) that permission of the copyright owner has been obtained — *A.A.W.S. (or the Grapevine) loses its legal copyright protection*.

If that is lost, there would be no way to prevent *anyone* from unauthorized "borrowing" of A.A. literature, printing it in some distorted context, and possibly making lots of money on it, to boot!

That's why we earnestly request the cooperation of all A.A. members, groups, and offices anywhere who want to reprint *any* A.A. material protected by our copyright, or our symbol.

MARCH

- 1 - 3 - *Boise, Idaho*. Seventh Annual Pacific Region Assembly. Write: Chm., Box 232, Boise, Idaho 83701.
15-17 - *Corpus Christi, Texas*. 20th A.A. Midwinter Jamboree. Write: Chm., P.O. Box 3201, Corpus Christi, Tex. 78404.

APRIL

- 5 - 7 - *Cork City, Ireland*. Irish Conv. Write: A.A. Conv. Chm., c/o Tourist Office, Cork City, Ireland.
5 - 7 - *Jackson's Mill, West Virginia*. Second Annual W.Va. Spring Roundup. Write: Chm., P.O. Box 825, Clarksburg, W.Va. 26301.
26-28 - *Chattanooga, Tennessee*. First S.E. Conf. of Young People in A.A. Write: S.E. Advisory Comm., P.O. Box 49622, Atlanta, Ga. 30329.

Please, no cash! — through the mails, that is. Sent in check or money-order form instead, your welcome contributions or literature payments are sure to reach us, helping all A.A.

A QUESTION FOR YOU

Should A.A. groups, offices, or committees distribute non-A.A. material on alcoholism?

Three times recently, this question has come to our attention. At the 1973 Conference, its Public Information Committee recommended acceptance of the updated "Public Information Policy of the General Service Board," with the provision that this sentence be underscored:

"We must recognize that our competence to speak about alcoholism is limited in subject matter to Alcoholics Anonymous and its recovery program."

But recently a local general service assembly mailed to groups, along with minutes of its assembly meeting, a leaflet about a new detox center.

In another case, a local A.A. newsletter carried a notice from a non-A.A. alcoholism program urging strong A.A. participation in a general push — thereby suggesting that A.A. is actually affiliated with other agencies.

It would be most helpful if you would study our Traditions and let us know what you think.

CLOSED MEETING TOPICS FROM THE GRAPEVINE

December: Read "Holidays" (p. 2) if this season is a problem — or a special A.A. joy. To explore a vital means of recovery, read and discuss "The Eleventh Step — It's One of the Twelve" (p. 4). A section on oldtimers (pp. 12-21) opens up a wide area for discussion.

January: "Anger" (p. 2) is always a lively topic. Is it best to turn anger inward, blow off steam, or seek the source of our anger? "There are no musts in A.A." — but "The Discipline Factor" (p. 7) is worth talking about. "Invasion" (p. 9) considers the impact on A.A. groups of referrals from court and other programs. How can we help them?

SPECIAL GIFTS TO G.S.O.

CALIFORNIA	
Colton: Inland Empire Mid-	
Southern Calif. Dist.	\$106.94
Santa Monica: Sixth Annual	
22nd Dist. Conv.	250.00
INDIANA	
Ft. Wayne: Indiana State Conv. . .	693.00
MISSISSIPPI	
27th Miss. State Conv.	267.17
MISSOURI	
St. Joseph: W. Div. of Mo. Conf. .	300.00
NEW JERSEY	
Highbridge: Voorhees State	
Park Picnic.	61.63
NEW MEXICO	
New Mexico Area Assembly.	400.00
NEW YORK	
Syracuse: Central N.Y. Area	
Comm.	400.00
OHIO	
N.W. Ohio-S.E. Mich. Intergroup .	100.00
Louisville: N.E. Ohio Gen. Serv.	
Comm.	46.95
TEXAS	
Midland: Lakeside Conf.	200.00
VIRGINIA	
Winchester: Four-State & D.C.	
Get-Together	100.00
WASHINGTON	
Marysville, Dist. #12	28.19
WISCONSIN	
32 Annual Fall Conf. N. Wis.-	
Upper Mich. Area	500.00
CANADA	
Alberta: Calgary; 1973 Oldtimer	
Banquet.	232.69
N.B.: Fredericton; Dist. #5	
Roundup, N.B.-P.E.I. Assembly .	165.57
Ontario: St. Lawrence Dist.	199.00
Toronto; E. Toronto Men's Mtg. .	149.25
WEST INDIES	
Trinidad: Conv. Trinidad-Tobago .	51.80