



BOX 4-5-9

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

Vol. 19 No. 5

October-November 1974

RECORDS DEPARTMENT ASKS YOUR HELP

"Here are a new list of officers, a literature order, and our usual monthly contribution. Thank you. A. B., Green Group."

What reaction do you suppose that kind of mail gets at G.S.O.? All too often, plain dismay. Our Records Department has no Green Group listed. The postmark did show city and state, but no group listed there has any G.S.R. or other officer with the initials A. B. No address is given for the group, and the letter has no return address on it.

The literature cannot be shipped, of course. We don't know how to credit which group for the contribution. We can't even write

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DIRECTORY COOPERATION BRINGS FRINGE BENEFITS

The new A.A. directories for the U.S. and Canada will be far more complete and accurate than ever before, thanks to an obligation undertaken by delegates at the 1974 General Service Conference.

Delegates have now assumed primary responsibility, assisted by area G.S. committees and G.S.R.'s, for furnishing G.S.O. accurate information for the directory on each group they represent.

As reported in the June-July *Box 4-5-9* and in *Conference '74* — proceedings of the April Conference sessions — the A.A. *World Directory* is now to be issued in four parts yearly: *A.A. Directory International* — all countries except

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Big Book Study Groups Grow In Numbers and Popularity

More and more members who want to study the book "Alcoholics Anonymous" are setting up A.A. groups for that purpose.

"It's a thrilling thing to see newcomers inspired by the Big Book, to see 'slippers' sober up, and to see oldtimers become enthusiastic A.A.'s again," writes one member of a new group in California.

Results of these efforts speak for themselves in scores of reports arriving at G.S.O. In Rochester, N.Y., for example, such a group was started about two years ago, with ten members. Between 125 and 150 showed up for the first-anniversary meeting, Jack B. tells us.

The group is organized precisely the way other local groups are, and meetings are open to interested nonalcoholics (many spouses attend). Twelve copies of the Big Book are on hand, and each week a chapter is read aloud and discussed. (Some such groups also study "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions," and "Came to Believe" has been added to the "curriculum" of the Big Book Study Group, which started in Olympia, Wash., in 1971.)

Jack says it is often brand-new members who seem most eager to study the book, but some are members sober many years who had never read the book.

A seven-year-old group in Green Valley, Md., decided a little over a year ago to change from open

discussion meetings to study of the Big Book, which they have been through three times. At each meeting, a member begins to read where the previous week's reading ended. He or she reads until someone raises a question for discussion. Afterward, the reading is resumed by the next member, and so on around the room among the 15 or so present, according to Hal M.

"Group study is more fruitful than solitary reading, since each of us has only one frame of reference — his own," he explained.

The idea was echoed by Tom G., Winnipeg, Man., who says his group's aim is to *read* the book, not interpret it nor editorialize on it. A notice on the group bulletin board in Winnipeg invites as many as 25 interested members to sign up for the series of 17-19 weekly meetings on Sunday mornings. Other members are welcome as observers.

Each participant commits himself (or herself) to take the Steps suggested, "to live in recovery, not in illness." A careful attempt is made to help each re-create the exact experience recorded by A.A.'s first members in the Twelve Steps.

In 1965, a handful of members of various groups, sober four or five years, started a Big Book group in members' homes in Raleigh, N.C., Dave C. reports. (Since then, three similar groups have organized

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BIG BOOK GROUPS

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nearby on the same plan.) A new chairman presides each month as the members read the book, stopping for discussion when anyone desires.

Originally, many members came only out of curiosity, including some who bragged they had never read the book. When a newcomer to the group heard an oldtime slipper say, "I don't know how the A.A. program works," the neophyte answered quickly, "There's a whole chapter on it in the book. Why don't you read it?"

When attendance reaches 50 or 60, facilities are ready for dividing the crowd into smaller sections, Dave tells us.

To the surprise of some older members, young newcomers particularly enjoy studying chapters in advance. And beginners otherwise reluctant to speak at meetings do not hesitate when asked to talk two or three minutes on a specific Step. At least once a year, one meeting is devoted to each of the Twelve Traditions.

Ben M., Rochelle, Ill., wrote us that a major purpose of their Big Book Discussion Group is to set the record straight and to correct misstatements frequently heard about the A.A. program.

His fellow members, sober from a few months to 15 years, agree their joint study of the book not only has helped them maintain sobriety, but has also deepened their spiritual understanding and enabled them to better apply A.A. principles in daily living.

Among results of some Big Book study groups reported are: a sober family (man, wife, and four teen-aged offspring — two sons, two daughters); a sober "high bottom" professional man who had not been able to sober up in four years "around" A.A.; a now-sober heavyweight boxer formerly imprisoned several times for violence; and many 10-20-year sober members with revived interest in A.A.

The book "Alcoholics Anonymous" is apparently being rediscovered as a source of recovery ideas for some members, and a basis for good group meetings — so many that we have not had room to mention all of those known to G.S.O.

'MEETINGS' IN BIG BOOK?

"You say on page 4 there's only one mention of A.A. meetings in the first 11 chapters of the Big Book," said Hal M. in an early-morning telephone call from Washington, D.C., the first day after the Aug.-Sept. issue of *Box 4-5-9* went out.

"My group has found four, before page 164," he said.

Has anyone else spotted them? We'll list them next time.

DR. JACK TO CIRCLE THE GLOBE FOR A.A.

Two voyages will soon take to A.A. centers around the world John L. ("Dr. Jack") Norris, M.D., nonalcoholic chairman of the Fellowship's General Service Board since 1961. Mrs. Norris ("Ellie") will accompany him.

Starting the North Europe tour in London, Oct. 16-18, Dr. Jack and Don A., regional trustee from Chappell Hill, Tex., will represent U.S. and Canada at the third A.A. World Service Meeting.

Dr. Jack will also go to the 1974 English A.A. Convention in Chichester, Sussex, Oct. 18-20.

Next Norris stopovers will be: Helsinki, Finland, Oct. 21; Stock-

holm, Sweden, Oct. 24; Oslo, Norway, Oct. 26; Dublin, Ireland, Oct. 28. He will return to New York for the G.S. Board and committee meetings.

Dr. Jack will attend the North American Congress on Alcohol and Drug Problems, San Francisco, Calif., Dec. 12-18, and the G.S. Board meetings Feb. 1-3, 1975, in New York before flying to Bangkok, Thailand, for the 31st International Congress on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Feb. 23-28, with stops en route in Honolulu and Tokyo. In the succeeding five or six weeks, he will visit India, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, France, Belgium, and again England.

Besides talking with A.A.'s in each country, Dr. Jack hopes to confer with governmental, medical, and business leaders in nations with expanding alcoholism programs. He will attempt to emphasize to such officials the unique role local A.A. groups and offices can play in helping problem drinkers.

NEW INTEREST IN TWELVE CONCEPTS FOR SERVICE

Since the Twelve Concepts have been found valuable by several local A.A. groups and committees, the '74 General Service Conference asked that *Box 4-5-9* publish the Concepts, in short form. They are:

1. Final responsibility and ultimate authority for A.A. world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship.
2. The General Service Conference of A.A. has become, for nearly every practical purpose, the active voice and the effective conscience of our whole Society in its world affairs.
3. To insure effective leadership, we should endow each element of A.A. — the Conference, the General Service Board and its service corporations, staffs, committees,

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Delegate Corner

A CONFERENCE REPORT GETS ACTION

Many a delegate to the General Service Conference has sometimes wondered whether one of his or her reports back home was worth much. Did anybody really listen to it, or care? Were members just polite about it? Did it result in concrete action?

Now comes a letter from Bellevue, Wash., to indicate that delegates' reports on the Conference may lead to very meaningful private actions, unknown to the delegate.

"Dear People: We just had our state delegate over to our intergroup meeting, and Ted K. did a wonderful job filling us in on what was discussed at the delegates' meeting.

"One thing he said made me get active in the financial department. I am sorry to hear we ran in the red again. I have included a check for \$28 for my seven years' sobriety. Sorry it's so long coming, but this takes care of one little obligation. I hope we can remind more members to do the same and it may help. Please put me on your mailing list for the '4-5-9' paper. Sincerely, Bruce A."

'LITTLE ASSEMBLY' – SERVICE MEETING

An experiment in Oregon brought participation by over 100 members, instead of the usual 24, when the state committee tried a weekend "little assembly." Some results included: a P.I. sharing session on a letter for doctors, ministers, and agencies working with alcoholics; much interest in a display of all A.A. pamphlets, as many were not aware of them; and this advice to G.S.R.'s – "Have a strong skin, and talk to your group about what you have learned. Be persistent; water will eventually wear down rock." Those attending their first assembly had not been aware of what it takes to make A.A. operate, and they wanted to learn more. . . .

"The most effective way we have found for the G.S.R. to report to his group is through a service (business) meeting held once a month, sometimes just before or after the regular meeting. At these, intergroup, institutions, and other things are also discussed. One G.S.R. does a monthly written report, with enough copies for each member. Groups which hold such meetings are the healthier ones in the area."
—Dean K. Oakland, Calif.

G.S.R. Corner

C.O. Corner

BETTER COOPERATION INSIDE A.A.

A definite trend toward improved understanding and cooperation between local A.A. central offices (intergroups) and area G.S. committees came to light at the 1974 General Service Conference in New York.

Which A.A. service structure performs which services? Figures compiled at the Conference show that, from area to area, there are many variations. This is in line with the A.A. local-autonomy Tradition, to meet local needs.

In about 70% of the U.S. and Canadian areas, no overlap or duplication of services was reported. Many local C.O.'s and G.S. committees work jointly to provide such services as public information, institutions work, and cooperation with the professional community. Joint publications help to clarify for local members who does what.

A long, detailed list of ways such cooperation has come about was compiled. This experience can be shared by looking at p. 15 of *Conference '74*.

ELECTION NOTICE

Three new A.A. trustees are to be elected to the General Service Board at the 15th General Service Conference, Apr. 21-26, 1975, in New York.

Names and résumés of nominees (one from each state or province involved) must reach G.S.O. no later than Jan. 15, 1975. New trustees will fill these slots for four-year terms:

Northeast U.S. regional trustee (Conn., D.C., Me., Md., Mass., N.H., N.J., N.Y., R.I., Vt.), to succeed Junior A., Needham Heights, Mass.

Southwest U.S. regional trustee (Ark., Colo., Kans., N.M., Okla., Tex.), to succeed Don A., Chappell Hill, Tex.

Canada general service trustee (all provinces), to succeed Tom G., St. Boniface, Man.

Qualifications needed are leadership ability, deep understanding of A.A. structures, resoluteness, time available, sound sobriety. General service trustees can also bring special business or professional skill and experience, it is hoped. For full description of their duties, see pp. 99-100 in "The A.A. Service Manual." Write G.S.O. if you need more information.

At the July board meeting, present regional trustees reported seeing among new members a surge of interest in A.A.'s Legacy of Service.

Trustee Corner

STAFF ASSIGNMENTS

Cora Louise B.: Conference (U.S. and Canada); secretary, Committee on the Conference Agenda; correspondence, Pacific Region U.S.

Susan C.: Lone Members; *Loners Meeting*; secretary, Conference Report and Charter Committee; correspondence, W. Canada.

Beth K.: service coordinator; secretary, A.A.W.S.; secretary, trustees' and Conference Literature Committees; *Box 4-5-9*; service material; films; tapes; correspondence, S.E. U.S.

Betty L.: World Service Meeting; overseas; assistant, 1975 International Convention; secretary, trustees' Nominating Committee; secretary, Conference Committee on Trustees; correspondence, W. Cent. U.S.

Ann M.: staff coordinator; assistant secretary, G.S. Board; secretary, trustees' Policy Committee; secretary, Committee on Conference Policy and Admissions; correspondence, N.E. U.S.

Phyllis M.: public information; secretary, trustees' and Conference Public Information Committees; *P.I. Bulletin*; correspondence, E. Cent. U.S.

Waneta N.: 1975 International Convention; secretary, trustees' and Conference Convention Committees.

June R.: institutions; secretary, trustees' and Conference Institutions Committees; *Round Robin*; correspondence, S.W. U.S.

Mary Ellen U.: cooperation with the professional community; Spanish correspondence; secretary, trustees' and Conference Committees on Cooperation with the Professional Community; newsletter *About A.A.*; Spanish *Box 4-5-9*; correspondence, E. Canada.

OTHER ASSIGNMENTS

Midge McF.: administrative assistant; secty. Archives Committee.

Yolanda L.: assistant, Spanish and English correspondence.

G.S.O.—Fall 1974

BOB P. JOINS G.S.O.

Bob P., Riverside, Conn., former general service trustee, became general manager of G.S.O. Sept. 2, reporting to Bob H., president of A.A. World Services, Inc., and chairman of General Services.

Here are excerpts from Bob H.'s announcement about Bob P., who had his last drink July 4, 1961:

"He served as an A.A.W.S. and Grapevine director 1965-1972, and a member of the General Service Board 1968-72. He has been chairman, secretary, and program chairman of the Greenwich (Conn.) Group. For several years, he was a representative to the New York Intergroup Association and chairman of its Public Information Committee. He has also served as chairman of the G.S. Board's Nominating Committee and on its Long-Range Planning Committee.

"In addition to Bob P.'s years of A.A. service, he brings with him a broad business background — including extensive administrative, organizational, budget, and public relations experience — with two large oil companies, a national trade association, and two national professional organizations. He was a lieutenant commander in the U.S. Naval Reserve, and is a deacon in his church.

"Niles P. continues as assistant general manager, but on a part-time basis, in accordance with our original agreement with him.

"These changes, as well as those being announced elsewhere in this issue, are, of course, the result of our continuing growth and the necessity to expand our personnel in order that we may cope with the constantly increasing work load. I know that those of you who meet Bob P. during the coming years will both like him and appreciate his dedication and abilities, and that his life, in turn, will be enriched by the contact and correspondence with so many of you."

MORE CHANGES AT G.S.O.

Welcome aboard to our newest G.S.O. staff member.

Susan C. joined the Trafalgar Group in Manhattan early in 1969, served first as coffee maker, later became secretary, then chairman of beginners and Step meetings. She was a regular volunteer at N.Y. Intergroup.

Susan attended Colby Junior College (New Hampshire), Syracuse University, and Columbia, where she got an M.A. in guidance. She also attended universities in California and Chicago.

She was chairman of a teachers' association in one New York county, and in her 14 years' professional experience has also been a personnel director and a research-development staff member for a large educational corporation.

Yolanda L., of the Gramercy Group, has joined G.S.O. to assist the staff with the growing amount of English and Spanish correspondence. Originally from Cuba, she has lived in Brazil (where she became fluent in Portuguese) and Colombia, as well as the United States. She joined A.A. in New York, has held a number of group offices, including G.S.R., and has been an active volunteer on the phones at intergroup. *Bienvenida, Yolanda!*

Valerie S. resigned this summer to go into religious work. You'll be missed by many A.A.'s, Valerie dear. But we wish you well and know you can serve humanity in your chosen new career.

OPEN HOUSE AT G.S.O.

Saturday, Nov. 9, G.S.O. will hold open house for all A.A.'s who can get here, 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

It's the same date as the annual dinner in New York honoring co-founder Bill W. (See A.A. Calendar on Bulletin Board page.)

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OPEN HOUSE

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Come to the sixth floor at 468 Park Ave. South (between 31st and 32nd Sts., one subway stop south of Grand Central), tour the offices, and meet the G.S.O. and Grapevine staffs.

Delegates, area G.S. committee members, and G.S.R.'s in the Northeast Region are asked to let us know how many are coming, so we'll have some idea of how many to plan for. Thanks.

LATEST LITERATURE NEWS

"The A.A. Member and Drug Abuse" is the new title of our pamphlet on sedatives, stimulants, and the alcoholic.

No new member should be deprived of the good sense in this pamphlet, and no twelfth-stepper can afford to be without it in talking to today's new prospects. Price: 10¢ each. . . .

"Las Doce Tradiciones Ilustradas" is now available at 30¢ each. That's right — it's the Spanish version of the popular pamphlet "The Twelve Traditions Illustrated." . . .

For orders from A.A. groups, the price of the booklet "Came to Believe" has been lowered to \$1.00. The retail price, on sales to individuals (by G.S.O. or by groups) remains \$1.25. . . .

For public information speakers, two new discount packages are available through G.S.O. Package #1 contains 1,000 copies of "The Fellowship of A.A." and three of "Speaking at Non-A.A. Meetings." This one sells for \$15. Package #2, which sells for \$17, contains 1,000 "Fellowship" pamphlets, 40 "Profile of an A.A. Meeting," 40 "Alcoholism Is a Management Problem," 40 "If You Are a Professional," and three "Speaking at Non-A.A. Meetings." . . .

Any group or individual can save money in several ways when ordering A.A. literature from G.S.O. As the A.A. Conference-Approved Literature order form

shows, several items can be bought at discount in quantities. There are also discount packets available for institutions groups and committees (as well as the P.I. packages just described).

Additionally, you can save "handling" charges (packing and postage) by sending payment with your order. G.S.O. pays such costs on prepaid orders, but has to charge handling costs for all charge orders (credit costs money!).

Because of the high cost of bookkeeping, G.S.O. cannot accept charge orders in any amount under \$10.00.

So — always enclose a check or money order with your order, for the fastest, least expensive way to get A.A. message-carrying literature.

CLOSED MEETING TOPICS FROM THE GRAPEVINE

October: coping with a depression or a "Dry Drunk" (p. 5); how "protection" keeps active alcoholics from hitting bottom (pp. 6, 10). *November:* the Traditions and A.A. — or personal — survival (four articles, starting on p. 2); the intellectual and A.A. (professor's story, p. 10); ways of practicing the Third Step (p. 32).

SCHEDULE OF GENERAL SERVICE BOARD MEETINGS

Members of the General Service Board and its committees are to gather in New York for weekend meetings Nov. 2-4, 1974; Feb. 1-3, 1975; Aug. 2-4, 1975; and Nov. 1-3, 1975.

In addition, they are to attend the 25th annual G.S. Conference in New York April 21-26, and the Fellowship's 40th Anniversary International Convention July 4-6, 1975, in Denver, Colo.

Attention, program chairpersons: If you are looking for widely experienced, knowledgeable, able A.A. speakers for your next state or regional get-together,

half the expenses for any trustee invited will be paid by the board.

TWELVE CONCEPTS

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and executives — with a traditional "Right of Decision."

4. At all responsible levels, we ought to maintain a traditional "Right of Participation," allowing a voting representation in reasonable proportion to the responsibility that each must discharge.

5. Throughout our structure, a traditional "Right of Appeal" ought to prevail, so that minority opinion will be heard and personal grievances receive careful consideration.

6. The Conference recognizes that the chief initiative and active responsibility in most world service matters should be exercised by the trustee members of the Conference acting as the General Service Board.

7. The Charter and Bylaws of the General Service Board are legal instruments, empowering the trustees to manage and conduct world service affairs. The Conference Charter is not a legal document; it relies upon tradition and the A.A. purse for final effectiveness.

8. The trustees are the principal planners and administrators of over-all policy and finance. They have custodial oversight of the separately incorporated and constantly active services, exercising this through their ability to elect all the directors of these entities.

9. Good service leadership at all levels is indispensable for our future functioning and safety. Primary world service leadership, once exercised by the founders, must necessarily be assumed by the trustees.

10. Every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority, with the scope of such authority well defined.

11. The trustees should always have the best possible committees, corporate service directors, executives, staffs, and consultants. Composition, qualifications, induction

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