



AA EXCHANGE BULLETIN

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

December 1963

Vol. 8 - No. 8

• 305 East 45th Street, New York 17 • Mail address: Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York 17 •



How We Can All Help Carry The Message Overseas

Word has reached us that Eddie F., a transplanted American living in El Salvador, will not be spending Christmas with his family this year. He died suddenly in November of pneumonia. If this doesn't sound like a very Christmasy beginning to this story, read on and we think you'll see that it really is. Christmas, the annual commemoration of the birth of Christ, means giving, not only of the gifts in imitation of the Wisemen, but of oneself in love, as we have been taught in A.A. Eddie was an exemplar extraordinary of this kind of giving. Coming to El Salvador from San Francisco in 1955, Eddie had tough going at first in bringing the message of A.A. to the Salvadoreans, but his devotion and his singleness of purpose brought results: The 1963 Directory listed 2,599 members in El Salvador.

Not too long ago Eddie wrote: "There were more than 2,500 attending the Second Anniversary of the Concepcion Group. It was a public meeting. It was a Central American meeting. Forty came from Honduras and about 20 or 30 from Guatemala. Among other flags I was happy to see Old Glory, although I was the only Yankee present.

"Two prominent doctors who spoke at our first public meeting four years ago, spoke today - two old and good friends. It took about ten minutes to read the list of groups which had sent representatives. The visitors from the other Republics laid it right on the line that El Salvador A.A. was responsible for this new growth.

"Honduras now has 400 in about eight groups or more. Guatemala has eight groups. We all agreed that there are no frontiers in A. A. - we're all one big family.

"Meeting at the National Gymnasium was a big step forward. I used to dream that someday we'd have

enough members to need it - well - today was the day. You can imagine how I felt to see those tiers upon tiers of people. It was such a short time ago I couldn't get one alky to meet with me!"

Central American A. A. loved "Mr. Eddie" as they called him. Through his efforts they gained a basic understanding of A.A.'s Tradition of "principles before personalities," and indeed of all the Traditions which are so meaningful to A.A.'s everywhere. Through his guidance, El Salvador escaped many of the growing pains that other pioneering areas have had to undergo.

Much help from many sources has been given the newly forming groups in Central America. The 87 Spanish-speaking Loners now registered at G.S.O. will be groups someday, as Latin Americans really work at the Twelfth Step. Many volunteers throughout the United States and

(continued on page 2)

A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS

AND

THE BEST OF A.A. NEW YEARS

FROM

ALL OF US

AT

G.S.O. AND THE GRAPEVINE

(continued from page 1)

Canada and in other parts of the world have given of themselves in time and money to help. Orders for Spanish literature have come in and gone out in a steady, flowing stream.

Our Spanish order blank lists 14 items. Offers of correspondence and visits from travelers have meant much to these groups and members in making them feel a part of A. A. round-the-world. Here at G.S.O. we try to keep abreast of overseas growth with pamphlet literature and books. At present we leave over 60 books and pamphlets in 13 languages to help Loners and newly formed groups.

The Spanish Boletin prepared at G. S. O., goes out monthly to Spanish-speaking groups world wide. Working with us as partners, groups abroad are developing their own resources. Scores of pamphlets are being prepared and distributed by local groups and service centers.

German, French and Spanish newsletters are going out under the auspices of local Intergroups, groups and individual A.A.'s. To meet the needs of A.A. overseas, an International Committee has been formed. An offshoot of the Trustees' Policy Committee, it will study service needs of all members outside the United States and Canada. It will meet regularly with the two Staff Members at G.S.O. who are currently working on the overseas assignment. Right now the Committee is considering suggestions received from overseas groups for ways in which these groups feel that G.S.O. may be of greater service. (The Committee will welcome suggestions and ideas from A.A.'s and groups everywhere.)



HOSPITAL AND PRISON LISTINGS

Our new Hospital and Prison Group Directories will be ready by the time you receive this issue of the "Exchange Bulletin." They list all such groups world-wide and tell whether correspondence is allowed with other inmate groups or outside groups, whether tapes are available for exchange and whether the group issues a publication. Today there are 561 Prison Groups, 479 Hospital Groups, 68 Institutional Committees and 472 Hospital and Prison sponsors.

Latest News from Abroad:

1) The group in Duesseldorf, Germany, is celebrating its first Anniversary. It thanks some devoted non-A.A. doctors who helped to pioneer its existence, and the Munich Group for the help that it gave in its beginnings.

2) The first all-Swiss A. A. meeting took place on two days over the weekend of November first. The French and German-speaking A. A. will meet together, and the all-Swiss Bulletin now appears in French and German. There will be a reception for the Press and Radio, so that the results of the meeting should mean many more A.A.'s for Switzerland.

3) A first Public Meeting held in Paris the latter part of November, will feature as speakers Jef Kessel, our non-A.A. writer friend - whose series of articles in "France Soir" paved the way for A.A.'s present growth in France - and Dr. Pierre Bensoussain, a doctor who through his former connections with the American Hospital in Paris and his visits to the United States and G.S.O. has helped immeasurably in carrying the message in France. These two will be the non-A.A. guest speakers, but, of course, the exciting part of it all will be the participation of French A.A.'s, many of whom have now been sober for more than two years.

4) Two Italian A. A.'s are presently trying to carry the message in Italy. To help them, G.S.O. is now embarking on a program of Italian translations. Another help: a member of New York A.A. is writing an article about the Fellowship for an Italian magazine.

5) The tenth Anniversary of A.A. in Belgium was held on November 3rd in Brussels. They were planning to have a grand dinner at the Restaurant Sarma, and they were meeting at the Salle Albert ler, Palais des Congrès, Mont des Arts. Every sign of a fine A.A. get-together.

Everyone of us who can speak or write fluently in a language other than English can help in carrying the message to our alcoholic friends-to-be overseas. Let us have your name, address, and your language or languages. Then, we can call on you for correspondence or possibly for help in the review of proposed translated material. The International Committee will look forward to hearing from you. Hazel R. of G.S.O. is presently serving as secretary of the Committee and Allan B., our able Public Information Chairman, is helping to get the new Committee off to a good start by chairing the new sessions.

NEW STAFF MEMBER

On the first of January we will be welcoming a new Staff Member at G.S.O., Waneta N., of Detroit, Michigan. We will give you more information about her in the January Bulletin, but to give you a little idea of her A.A. background: she has served as an Intergroup secretary in Detroit since 1961, and has been active in A.A. affairs in Detroit since 1957, serving her group in many capacities until she took on the Intergroup job.

SPECIAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO G.S.O. OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 1963

ARKANSAS: Arkansas Assembly	\$100.00
CALIFORNIA: 12th Annual Southern California Conference	\$2,056.70
CONNECTICUT: Connecticut A.A. Get-Together	\$100.00
FLORIDA: Seventh Annual Florida State Convention	\$2,000.00
IOWA: Waterloo - Cedar Falls Intergroup Meeting	\$ 10.00
NEVADA: Area Meeting	\$ 75.00
NEW HAMPSHIRE: New Hampshire State Assembly Annual Outing	\$ 50.00
PENNSYLVANIA: Cook Forest Conference	\$200.00
SASKATCHEWAN WISETON - Area 4	\$106.75
VIRGINIA: Virginia State Conference	\$ 50.00
* * *	
GERMANY: Wiesbaden Round-Up	\$104.00

SHARING THE TAPED WAY

From Rabual in the Territory of New Guinea comes this word, "We received a tape from Joe S. of Helena, Montana, this week and played it at our meeting last night. It was appreciated by all, especially as we had two new members present. Evidently Joe had received a tape we recorded quite a while back, and was so delighted he reciprocated, asking us to continue the friendship in this manner. You can imagine our delight, too. It is really wonderful for us to be able to listen to A.A. members so far away and with so much more experience than we have had. All members are anxiously awaiting the G.S.O. taped talks ordered last week."

Since these talks have been made available we have distributed more than 1,000 reels. We hope that they are fulfilling the need for which they were designed, namely, to "carry the message" to small groups that do not have the change to exchange speakers, and to Loners who never have the chance to "go to a meeting." To remind you, there are eight seven-inch reels. The speed is 3¾; they are two track.

NEW DELEGATES FOR THE 1964 CONFERENCE

Twenty Areas have chosen their Delegate to the 1964 General Service Conference held here in New York every April. They are:

ARNO A., St. Cloud, Minnesota - Northern
 WILLIAM B., Montreal, Quebec
 BOB C., New Brunswick, Atlantic Provinces
 HEFLIN D., Newnan, Georgia
 SHARON F., Ellsworth, Kansas
 RALPH G., Amarillo, Texas - Northwestern
 BILL G., Portland, Oregon
 RAY H., Maumee, Ohio - Northwest Ohio & Southeast Michigan
 DARRELL M., Los Alamos, New Mexico
 JUDY M., Lewistown, Montana
 ROSS M., Winnipeg, Manitoba
 CETH M., Charleston, South Carolina
 CLAUDE M., Juneau, Alaska
 CLIFF M., Hamilton, Ontario - Western
 ROBERT R., Montreal, Quebec
 GEORGE S., Kenmore, New York - Western
 JOHN T., Regina, Saskatchewan
 FRED W., Newport, Rhode Island
 BRUCE W., Waukegan, Illinois - Downstate
 ROBERT Z., Green Bay, Wisconsin - Northern Wisconsin & Upper Michigan

TEA WITH THE GOVERNOR Barlinnie Prison, Gloggow, Scotland

"I never thought that some day I would be invited to have a cup of tea with the Governor of Barlinnie Prison." So said a member at the end of a meeting held in the prison to tell the inmates something about A.A.

Assembled in the prison chapel were over 80 prisoners together with the Governor, two of the Chaplains, one of Doctors and several Prison Staff. Also present were eight members of A.A.

Three of this party spoke very briefly of their stories and how A.A. had helped them to solve their "drinking problem." One of the speakers was an ex-inmate; another was a doctor and the third, a business man. All the speakers stressed the fact that A.A. works for those who really want it and that the new way of living was so attractive to them that A.A. was the only solution for their problem.

"Our experience has been one of most helpful cooperation from all the Staff at Barlinnie from the Governor downwards, and we who go there regularly wish to put on record our grateful thanks for all their help."

WHAT MAKES A COMMITTEE MEMBER?

What does a General Service Committee Member do? Where does he fit into the Conference picture? This letter from an active Committee Member in the Central East Ontario Area tells us:

"I have asked myself, 'What do you do as a Committee Member?' Briefly, it's this: it is necessary for me to create and maintain the interest of all groups, to be a good listener as well as a pusher, and most of all to strive to 'carry the message.'

"There are 14 active groups in my district with a total active membership of over 200. As a Committee Member I have felt it a 'must' to get around to all groups in the district to point out how they can be of help in service work, and also to give them an idea of what goes on, from group to district meetings to Ontario General Service meetings and on to world services in New York. There are four Institutional meetings to be served, two groups in Millbrook Reformatory, one in Ontario Hospital (Whitby), and speakers are allowed into the Ontario County Jail (Whitby) weekly.

For the past three years, this Area has held monthly committee meetings at which all G.S.R.'s, Area Committee Members, the P.I.C. Chairman, Finance Chairman and Institutional Chairman attend.

These meetings have been remarkably successful in keeping our lines of communication open and also assisting in maintaining our Second Legacy (Unity).

"Our attendance of G.S.R.'s averages about 80%. Considering the distance to travel, winter hazards, etc., I feel that this is good. Minutes are sent to the Delegate and also to Ontario General Service. A Public Information Committee has been formed and although there is still lots to be done here. I feel that much has been accomplished in making the public aware of what A.A. can do.

"This year, the Area held its second Conference. I had the privilege of being the Committee Chairman for the first one last year and assistant chairman this year.

"We are interested in improved A.A. contact in all localities, such as a telephone answering service in the Peterboro area, A.A. listing in the telephone book in Oshawa, and an announcement 'If you have a drinking problem, call...' inserted in the Oshawa-Whitby newspaper.

"Area problems arise and I feel that I can be of assistance in obtaining the experience of others who have solved similar problems, to pass along."

WHATS THE ANSWER?

A member has written who is concerned about the growing number of Open Discussion groups in our Fellowship. This kind of a group welcomes A.A.'s and non's alike to a discussion meeting. Our questioner feels that publicizing this kind of open meeting may scare off newcomers who won't feel comfortable about discussing their problems in front of non's. What do you all think of this?

THINGS A.A. CANNOT AND DOES NOT DO

One of our New York members got to thinking and came up with the following list of things that A.A. cannot do. He had been asked to speak about A.A. before a non-A.A. professional group. These points are worth sharing we think. Nowadays when so many of our non-A.A. friends are using A.A. as a referral source (blessings on them!), it's good to review just what we can do and what, traditionally we cannot do to help the newcomer.

1. A.A. cannot furnish initial motivation
2. Cannot diagnose
3. Cannot give medical advice or medication
4. Does not give professional spiritual advice
5. Cannot do professional screening
6. Does not give tips on detoxicants
7. Does not engage in psychotherapy
8. Cannot offer professional referral
9. Cannot perform social service jobs, i.e., provide housing, clothing, financial aid, family counseling
10. Cannot provide a guarantee of sobriety
11. Does not send a bill

UNDELIVERED MAIL CARRIES NO MESSAGE

Have you ever figured what an incorrect group address can cost – in money – in human suffering?

If you fail to correct your group's address, it may mean that some poor drunk may not get help when he needs it. It may even mean the difference between a happy life and his destruction.

* * *

In money? Well, multiply twelve cents by the number of wrong addresses in our Records and you have a tidy sum. Every mailing of the "Exchange Bulletin" costs four cents per envelope. For each envelope returned for wrong address, the Post Office wants another eight cents – there's a twelve cents total.

* * *

All this leads to an emphatic request to all who receive G. S. O. mailings: PLEASE LET US KNOW WHEN YOU CHANGE YOUR ADDRESS. PLEASE!