

# BOX 4-5-9

formerly the A. A. EXCHANGE BULLETIN

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

Feb.-Mar. 1967

Vol. 12 No. 1

• 305 East 45th Street, New York 10017 • Mail address: Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York 10017 •

## Your Letters Bring Vitality To G.S.O.

The C \_\_\_\_ Group was about to die, according to letters we got here at G.S.O. Poor attendance, no new members, mainstays drinking..

Then one morning we got *the* letter telling us how A.A. came alive there ..and we'll share this wonderful experience with you.

*That's why the mail we get each day from A.A.'s all over the world is so important. We pass on the experiences you tell us about, to help other A.A.'s and groups.*

Here's what happened in C \_\_\_\_:

"Someone opened the door then timidly shut it, twice. A member noticed this, went out and returned with this young woman.

"She started talking, and A.A. came alive in C \_\_\_\_\_ for the first time in more than a year!

"Everybody helped her tell her story, forgetting all about our own problems.

"It was a miracle. Our attendance has shot up. People who used to come only

rarely now come each week. And we're full of ideas to reach out for more new members... an A.A. listing in the telephone directory, etc. ...

Dear Sur's

My grandfather has been a Member of A.A. for 11 years. I am 12 years old and have been going to meetings for the last 3 months. I have found it very entrusting.

If there is any thing I can do just write back.

Yours truly,



(Above) Not a typical letter perhaps - but not so unusual in G.S.O.'s mail contact with 12,000 A.A. groups on this continent and abroad.

If you know a group going through a stale period just now, why not try reaching out the hand of A.A. to help some new members?

If other activities have brought A.A. to life in your group, please write us about it! Or, just tell us what problems you're up against and we'll share our files.

### What Happens To Your Letter

We circulate almost all the mail—your letters and our answers—so Ann, Beth, Cora Louise, Eve, Hazel, Midge, and Waneta all see every piece. That way we try to keep posted all the time on what are the most pressing problems now facing most A.A.'s—and how the group conscience keeps finding happy solutions for them over and over.

The letters are then placed in a special file called "Group Experience" and broken down in more than 100 different ways.

For instance, we recently got a letter from an A.A. who goes to a clubhouse run by A.A.'s for A.A.'s. Some members,

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR GROUP MEETINGS

(Items of Special interest to be read by G.S.R. or Secretary at your group's next meeting.)

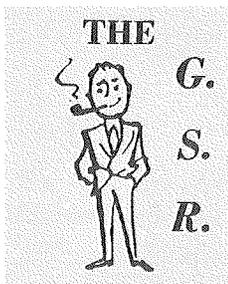
HERE ARE SOME BULLETINS THAT APPEAR IN "BOX 4-5-9" - JUST BEEN RECEIVED FROM G.S.O. - OUR GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE IN NEW YORK...

HOW FAST IS A.A. GROWING? ACCORDING TO A CHART IN THIS ISSUE OF "BOX 4-5-9," WE ARE GROWING AT A RATE THAT DOUBLES THE NUMBER OF GROUPS EACH TEN YEARS. (THE CHART APPEARS ON P.3)

IF CLUBHOUSES ARE A PROBLEM - OR IF A.A.'S ARE PLANNING TO START A CLUB - THEY WILL PROBABLY BE INTERESTED IN A NEW "GUIDELINES" FILE THAT G.S.O. HAS PREPARED FROM THE EXPERIENCE OF A.A.'S THROUGHOUT NORTH AMERICA.

A.A.'S BIG BOOK IS AN OUTSTANDING BEST SELLER. SINCE IT WAS FIRST PUBLISHED, 599,300 COPIES HAVE BEEN DISTRIBUTED AND READ BY COUNTLESS THOUSANDS - PERHAPS A MILLION - MEN AND WOMEN - WITH A PROBLEM OR AFFECTED BY SOMEONE ELSE'S PROBLEM.

HOW OUR POLICY OF "COOPERATION BUT NOT AFFILIATION" APPLIES TO AL-ANON AND A.A. WAS DISCUSSED RECENTLY AT A MEETING OF G.S.O. STAFF MEMBERS AND AL-ANON HEADQUARTERS STAFF. CONCLUSIONS: A GROUP IS AN A.A. GROUP OR AN AL-ANON GROUP: IT CAN'T PRACTICALLY BE BOTH. (Story on P.2)



# District Meeting Ideas

(What One G.S.R. Does)

Bill T., Conn., is a wonderful G.S.R. When we asked you G.S.R.'s to tell us how you do your highly important A.A. service, many of you sent us fine reports.

For space reasons, we can share part of only one with you. Here is some of Bill's:

"We show the filmstrips, and 'Bill's Own Story.' Our next objective will be getting each Group Information Card properly filled out and returned in time.

"We always tell each group of any new literature, and at each G.S.R. meeting we take up for discussion one part of the 1966 *Conference Report*. My group had our Delegate come tell us all about it."

In Bill's district every group is visited regularly by the G.S. Committeeman—and guess who was just elected to that job? Right!

G.S.R.'s there hold monthly district meetings to explore together ways the groups can help each other. They arrange anniversaries, special meetings, visiting other groups, keeping the local telephone answering service going, etc.

## NEW GUIDELINES FOR CLUBS

How can clubs operated by A.A.'s for A.A.'s stay out of trouble, solve most problems, and perform a real service to A.A. in the community?

G.S.O. has just compiled new guidelines on these questions—based on many experiences.

ALTHOUGH THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS "AN A.A. CLUB," obviously clubhouses for A.A.'s are here to stay—and they can be a real asset. Do write for the new "Guidelines" if you want to help the club in your community. This material is free, of course.

It shows how and why the A.A. group has always been the primary mainspring for carrying the message, but some members also wanted to have a place for A.A. social gatherings, etc.

How to start a club and keep it financially self-supporting—all these and many other helpful matters are thoroughly covered.

## A.A. Cooperates With Courts

We've had an overwhelming response to our letter asking for information on how A.A.'s in local communities cooperate in the "Court Classes for Alcoholics."

Thanks to all of you who so promptly "shared your experience," we are compiling a list of suggestions on how A.A.'s can "carry the message" this way—in keeping with our Traditions.

## GRAPEVINE PREVIEWS!

### February Issue

"Bottled-in-Bond was Aging Me"; "The Will and the Way"; "Anyone Seen My Dragon?"; "12th Step Call That Didn't Work"; "A Night in Paris"—with a chauffeur, too!; and "Amends Are Rough on the Ego!"

### March Issue

Leading off the March GV are three articles on speaking at meetings, plus an editors' survey. Also, "Perils of Pauline"; for St. Paddy's Day, "Back to Calif. with the Big Book on his Knee" (Pop was a pigeon); "Is Your Name Charlie"; "Homing Device for the Inner Man" (three ways to take the 10th); and "How to Kick Boobtoobitis."

## A.A. and AL-ANON

### 'COOPERATE'

We have a letter saying, "The G\_\_\_\_\_ Group was originally Al-Anon, but A.A.'s would refuse to budge even when requested.

"Now all meetings are joint and it is tremendous."

The group wanted to be registered both as an A.A. group at G.S.O. and as an Al-Anon Family group with the Al-Anon Hdqrs. They planned to send contributions to both.

So G.S.O. Staff Members recently met with the Al-Anon Hdqrs. Staff and complete agreement was reached, easily. Both Al-Anon's traditions and A.A.'s show different requirements for membership, different primary purposes, and the

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## SPECIAL DELIVERIES

### TWO A.A.'S MEET IN TURKEY

"Your services were the answer to many prayers," writes John D. from Ankara, Turkey. "Thanks to your letter, Bryan and I immediately contacted each other and had our first A.A. meeting in Ankara. With our wives we have laid plans for full-scale A.A. and Al-Anon here.

### CASH THROUGH MAIL

Post Office has always advised *No Cash Through Mail*. G.S.O. joins them because often it is not received and the group is not credited with contribution.

P.S. Also Zip Code, growing in importance to assure prompt delivery.

"Telephones in Turkey cost at least \$275 for installation alone, so list my phone (#12-58-51) as the A.A. number in Turkey.

"Bryan and I live and work within a mile of each other, yet had to be brought together by you. Never discount the importance of what you are doing. How desperately we A.A.'s need each other!"

### GROUPS MEET VIA TELEPHONE

An inter-city telephone hook-up linked A.A. groups in Chino State Prison and Van Nuys, Calif., Jackson Hole, Lander and Evanston, Wyo., for a one-hour round-robin meeting on a recent Sunday evening. It cost them altogether only \$75, according to Bob H., who had the idea and made the arrangements.

"Many of these smaller groups had never heard an outside speaker," Frank F., Van Nuys, P.I. chairman for the San Fernando Valley Central Office, wrote us.

Each group opened its own meeting before the telephonic connection was made, then the three Wyoming groups each gave 10 minutes of A.A. talk from their members. An inmate A.A. in Chino told about the institution and its group, and finally a young newcomer in Van Nuys told of her gratitude for a new way of life after a hopeless existence 16 months ago.

Highlight was the closing—when a 50-man chorus of A.A. members in the prison sang "The Lord's Prayer."

Bob H. says any two groups in the U.S. can do this on a Sunday night for around \$25. If you want further information, write G.S.O.

**LETTERS VITAL** (from page 1)

it seems, spend so much time in the card and TV rooms they never get to meetings . . . and wind up drunk!

Can we help?

We certainly cannot just sit here at G.S.O. and dream up answers. But thanks to all the other A.A.'s who have written us how *they* solved these problems, we can pass on the good experience of many, many others.

**More Sharing**

A Central Office writes us that it gets no support from the groups in its area. How can they raise some money without asking for public non-A.A. donations?

Hundreds of you wrote us when we asked in the *Exchange Bulletin* if you think a "home" group is important. So when we are asked that question, we can share with the questioner the experiences of hundreds of other members.

A member in Canada wrote us that they have another problem—how to remind guest speakers that there may be visitors present who are offended by off-color stories and profanity. Again we find our answer in our files.

So do keep your wonderful letters pouring in. An experience you share with us may save the life of another A.A. member or group. And enable us to truly say "I Am Responsible. . ."

**'Sponsorship - - The Hand of A.A.'**  
**1967 CONFERENCE THEME**

Is A.A. sponsorship getting stronger or weaker? How can it be improved? Is it a group problem or individual problem? Does it affect an entire area?

Those questions are on the agenda of the 1967 General Service Conference (Hotel Roosevelt, New York, Apr. 17-22).

It would be very helpful to all Conference Delegates and to G.S.O. if each group would discuss those and the other agenda items, so we can get a true reflection of the thinking of the whole Fellowship.



Since Delegates from five regions in the U.S. and Canada will nominate members for the General Service Board, this will be a historic Conference. Never before has the membership chosen so many trustees at one time.

Other topics are: (1) How can groups become better informed about A.A. as a whole?

(2) How can we live up "Service" meetings? Make the G.S.R.'s job more meaningful and attractive? (3) How can areas make better use of the experience of past Delegates?

**U.K. Holds First Service Conference**

"The primary result was one of unity," says the heartwarming letter describing the First Conference called by the G.S. Board of A.A. in Great Britain and Ireland.

"We invited delegates from Scotland, Northern Ireland, England, and Wales, and response was good. Fifty met, including an observer from Eire.

"Responsibility to assist the sick alcoholic, wherever and whenever" was

clearly felt, he says, and better communications were planned.

"We are like a child who has started to walk but will not be running for five years. We shall need all the guidance we can be given. You have been most helpful. . ."

Their next Conference will be Oct. 27-29, 1967.

As our fellow A.A.'s embark on this great service step, we join in wishing them continued success.

The North American G.S. Conference met on a trial basis for five years before it was accepted by the Fellowship in 1955.

Directory Date	Active Membership	Groups
1935	2	
1940	1,400	50
1945	12,986	556
1950	96,475	3,527
1955	131,619	5,927
1960	151,604	8,211
1961	162,037	8,615
1962	176,474	9,305
1963	189,702	10,070
1964	209,434	10,956
1965	217,967	11,752
1966	232,105	12,444

**HOW  
A.A.  
GROWS**

How fast is A.A. growing? Is growth more rapid than it was? Or less rapid? Members who see newcomers arriving week after week know that A.A. is constantly expanding. And the statisticians tell us that groups are multiplying at a rate that *doubles the total every ten years.*

Membership figures are based on groups' own estimates. Group counts are the result of G.S.O.'s actual contact with groups worldwide.

**ABOUT BILL'S NEW BOOK**

*The last manuscript pages for Bill W.'s latest book has now been gone over thoroughly by the Conference and Board Literature Committees, Trustees, Staff, and A.A.W.S. Directors. Bill made the last revisions—and the whole manuscript is being readied for the printer. The publication date aimed for is 1967—possibly in time for the April meeting of the General Service Conference.*

**A TAPE FOR G.S.R.'S?**

*"Members of our Assembly agree we need a tape of a good talk on the development, assumption of responsibilities, and course of action of the G.S.R.," writes Red P., Petaluma, Calif. "Is there such a tape?"*

*We have none at G.S.O., Red, but maybe some other area has one. If so, please let us know, somebody!*

# Latin American A.A.'s Study

## Slips and Sponsorship

Why do A.A. members have slips and what can be done about it?

That was the chief topic discussed at the fourth Latin American A.A. Convention in Costa Rica. Members from Central America, Mexico, Panama, and the Caribbean listed these causes for slips:

1. Irregular meeting attendance.
2. Older members' talking too much.
3. Bitter discussions in the presence of newcomers.
4. Bad sponsorship.
5. Indolence.
6. Violations of anonymity.
7. Resentments.
8. Self-sufficiency.
9. Problems in the home.
10. Emotional immaturity.
11. Meetings too long and monotonous.
12. Group serv-

### SPECIAL GIFTS TO G.S.O.

<b>ALASKA:</b>	
Anchorage - Fifth of the Month Club . . . . .	\$250.00
<b>CALIFORNIA:</b>	
El Monte - So. Calif. Panel One Committee . . . . .	100.00
Long Beach - Harbor Area Service Committee Annual Traditions Banquet . . . . .	305.34
Los Angeles - A.A. Women's Dinner . . . . .	50.00
So. California Conv. . . . .	4,221.30
<b>COLORADO:</b>	
Pueblo - State Quarterly Conf. . . . .	200.00
<b>CONNECTICUT:</b>	
New Haven - State Service Comm. . . . .	150.00
<b>FLORIDA:</b>	
Clearwater - District 1 Gratitude Month Meeting . . . . .	24.24
Ft. Lauderdale Gratitude Dinner of Broward Co., Dist. 7 . . . . .	728.10
Palm Beach - Co. Gratitude Dinner . . . . .	873.50
Titusville - Brevard County Gratitude Dinner . . . . .	56.25
<b>GEORGIA</b>	
Atlanta - Intergroup Banquet . . . . .	200.00
<b>LOUISIANA:</b>	
Alexandria - 9th Annual St. Conv. . . . .	210.00
Shreveport - 21st Annual Tri-State Conv. . . . .	250.00
<b>MICHIGAN</b>	
Saginaw Central Intra Area Council . . . . .	48.50
<b>MINNESOTA:</b>	
Fairmont - So. Minn. Conf. . . . .	200.00

ants that do not meet their responsibilities, arriving late or not at all. 13. Coming to A.A. by force, not by personal decision. 14. Sponsors' lack of knowledge and ignorance of the literature of A.A.

To help avoid these problems, they recommended closed meetings for frank discussions of problems that cannot be brought up at open meetings.

The true causes of all the troubles, the members decided, is ignorance of the A.A. program.

Thank you, fellow A.A.'s in Latin America, for sharing your experience and insights with all of us. How does your group feel about their ideas?

<b>NEBRASKA:</b>	
Laurel - Nebraska State Reunion . . . . .	131.00
<b>NEW HAMPSHIRE</b>	
1st State Conf. . . . .	50.00
<b>NEW JERSEY:</b>	
Vineland Second Annual So. N.J. Convention . . . . .	125.00
North Jersey 10th Annual Conv. . . . .	200.00
<b>NEW YORK:</b>	
So. Eastern N.Y., Gen. Serv. Conf. Comm. . . . .	500.00
<b>OHIO:</b>	
Cleveland - Northeastern Ohio Gen. Service Com. . . . .	201.37
<b>OKLAHOMA</b>	
Okla. State Conf. Oklahoma City . . . . .	85.29
<b>PENNSYLVANIA:</b>	
Eastern Penn. G.S. Conference . . . . .	1,217.00
<b>SOUTH CAROLINA:</b>	
Abbeville - So. Carolina St. Conv. . . . .	300.00
Georgetown - Wacamaw Area . . . . .	14.00
<b>VERMONT:</b>	
Windsor - Vermont Roundup . . . . .	50.00
<b>VIRGINIA:</b>	
Blackstone - A.A. Retreat . . . . .	200.00

### A.A. & AL-ANON (from P. 2)

danger of affiliating with "other" enterprises.

If A.A. groups affiliate with Al-Anon, or vice versa, it would betray the respective primary purpose of either Fellowship. Many A.A. G.S. Conferences have pointed out that A.A.'s and Al-Anons can cooperate without affiliating.

So groups will be considered either A.A. or Al-Anon, as they decide - but not both.

### A.A. CALENDAR February, March and April

#### FEBRUARY

- 11 - Broward County A.A. Intergroup Banquet, Pier 66, Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.
- 17-19 - Sixteenth Kentucky State Conv., Phoenix Hotel, Lexington, Ky. Write: Host Comm., P. O. Box 1121, Lexington Ky.
- 17-19 - Colorado Annual Stampede, Greeley, Colo. Write: Stampede Chm. Box 209, Greeley, Colo.
- 18 - Twenty-seventh Annual Intergroup Banquet, Four Chefs, Philadelphia, Pa. Write: Banquet Comm., A.A. Intergroup, 2202 St. James St., Philadelphia, Pa.
- 18-19 - Third All Women's Conference, Executive Motor Inn, 13th & Washington, Kansas City, Mo. Write: Treas., 3334 Kames Blvd., Kansas City, Mo.
- 24-26 - El Paso Jamboree, Rodeway Inn Motel, El Paso, Tex. Write: Jamboree Sec., P. O. Box 6589, El Paso, Tex.
- 25-26 - Intergroup Roundup, Harvey's Cumberland House, 8th St. & Cumberland Ave., Saskatoon, Sask., Can.
- 26 - Cornwall Conf. Write: Chairman, Box 371 Iroquois, Ont., Canada.

#### MARCH

- 4-5 - Annual Spring Conf. of the Northern Calif. Council, Richmond, Calif. Write: No. Calif. Council, Rm 84, 166 Geary St., San Francisco, Calif.
- 17-19 - Ontario Regional Conf., Royal York Hotel, Ont., Can. Write: Conf. Chairman, 2 Gerrard St., Toronto, Ont., Canada.
- 24-27 - Seventh Australian Conv., Royale Ballroom, Exhibition Bldgs., Nicholson St., Carlton, Australia. Write: Sec., Box 2541 W., G.P.O. Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.
- 25-27 - Conf./Conv., Red Cross Hall, Durban, Natal, So. Africa. Write: Sec., Conv. Comm., P.O. Box 2400, Durban, Natal, So. Africa.

#### APRIL

- 28-30 - Tenth All-Ireland Conv., Mt. Brandon Hotel, Tralee County Kerry, Ireland. Write: Sec., 4 Monavalley, Tralee County Kerry, Ireland.

