



# AA EXCHANGE BULLETIN

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

January 1964

Vol. 9 No. 1

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

## SHARING OUR A.A. EXPERIENCES IN THE NEW YEAR

**T**his letter from the Starlight Group in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, is most appropriate for a New Year's issue:

"Last night we had one of our most interesting and informative meetings at our Starlight Rooms... We would like to share this idea that we stumbled upon accidentally, because a couple of members became brave enough to admit they knew nothing about the Third Legacy. As a matter of fact, knew very little about how the First and Second Legacy came about and the real meaning of them.

"We have a past Conference Delegate (CEC C.) in our group. And at the risk of sounding pushie, he volunteered to prepare a talk on the three Legacies. We accepted. Next week's meeting was set aside for this talk.

"We had a good turnout and Cec took us right back to the beginning of A.A. He then proceeded to bring us along right up to the present setup of General Service. He used several articles from the 'Grapevine' and had other members read them. One was how the Twelve Steps were written, an article by Bill. Another was an interesting article by a member from Southern California where he compared the Traditions to a Convoy. He also talked about the 'Grapevine' and the problems G. S. O. had in getting it started.

"The meeting accomplished several things: First, a fuller and almost complete understanding of the Legacies; Second, a closer feeling between us and G.S.O.; Third, a keener interest in the 'Grapevine'; Fourth, it made our group sit up and take notice.

"Many new members asked questions, *proving* there is an interest in G.S.O. and our world Fellowship. We were all excited about something that had been at our fingertips all along but didn't realize how to use it. We *certainly didn't appreciate it*. Above all, it proved to us that right in our midst we had a past New York Delegate that we *hadn't been using*.

"The reason for writing this letter is this. Your office can pass this idea to other areas. Older members can prepare a half-hour talk on the three Legacies. Feel free to ask Cec to outline the exact route he took if you wish. Here is an opportunity for the older member to get into the act — feel wanted and useful.

"I am chairman right now of a Beginner meeting series — and I've already asked Cec to speak to us on our fourteenth and final wrap-up meeting on the three Legacies. 'Grapevine' sales ZOOMED. We order 18 for our group of 41 registered members. This is the first time the entire 18 disappeared on their arrival. Starlight sends in our contribution from our group fund... many members insisted on paying the three dollars back to the group fund.

"I had the privilege of finishing this wonderful meeting by reading our present Conference Delegate's report. Mac C. quoted Bernard Smith on why we need General Service. I've been sober one day at a time for over three years and for the first time, I have the whole story. I'm better informed and I know that I express the feelings of the entire starlight Group."

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### GRATEFUL HEARTS AT G.S.O.

All of us at G.S.O. want to thank the senders of the very beautiful cards and letters that we have received at Christmastime. They mean so much to us and are such a pleasant reminder of the fact that A.A.'s are a family that stretches round the world. Special thanks to all of you. We do wish that we could acknowledge each card, but we just can't—and get our G.S.O. work done too.



## NORTHERN STARS

Usually women have a rough go in finding A.A. in small communities but we've just heard about an all Women's group in Yellowknife, Northwest Territory. Yellowknife has a population of about 3,000. Mary, the Polaris Group secretary writes: "Our group here is quite small, but a very good one, at present all women. At times we find it hard to call on men wanting help, but one of these days it will pay off and that's all that counts."

## MORE ABOUT WANETA

The December Bulletin told you a little about our new Staff member, Waneta N. from Detroit. She will start at G.S.O. on the 6th of January and will be taking over many of the assignments that Ann had been attending to in 1963. Ann will be on leave of absence in 1964, taking a breather after 16 years of G.S.O. activity.

Waneta speaks and reads Italian fluently which will be a great help to us in the preparation of A.A. literature to be used overseas. She learned Italian as part of her preparation for an operatic career. Waneta will come to New York with her mother and they will take an apartment together. All of us are looking forward to welcoming her — as you will, too, when you visit G.S.O. next.

## CALIFORNIA INSTITUTIONAL COMMITTEE

### HARD AT WORK

The Intergroup Institutional Committee of Southern California, which consists of six functioning Institutional Committees, is working hard to carry the message to the institutions that it has pledged to serve. A letter from the secretary tells us:

"We meet at a different committee's locale every two months. Last month we held our meeting in San Diego and the new group formed by Ventura County joined us to make six committees. January will find us hosted by the Harbor Area Institutional Committee.

"We have a new Honor Farm for the Orange County Committee to serve and at the Intergroup meeting a new project at Chino called the Distribution Center, was given to the six committees to serve."

*(There are discount packages of literature available at G.S.O. for distribution to Institutional groups. If you are interested, please write in for it.)*

## G.S.R.'S LAUNCH TWO NEW PROJECTS

An active G.S.R. in Miami, Florida, writes about some of the projects on which the groups are presently working. She says, "We had a good G.S.R. meeting this afternoon at which time we decided to start doing some real work on several new projects.

"Enclosed is an order for 100 birthday envelopes. That may seem quite a lot, but our Delegate gave us an idea we are going to try. When a member has a birthday we're going to give him (or her) a nice birthday card in which will be enclosed an envelope for his birthday contribution. You know — a gentle hint!

"At the same time we decided to really try to get a 'Sponsorship for Loners Club' going. I handed out some twenty slips with the names and addresses of Loners as listed in the World Directory. At our next monthly meeting we'll have each G.S.R. report on the results of his correspondence. Would you please send us the monthly list of new Loners?

"Also beginning next month we're going to have a Sharing Session at our monthly meeting. We plan to continue these as long as interest holds."

*(Additional copies of the Sharing Sessions' folder are available here at G.S.O.—free for the asking.)*

## A FIRST!

As far as we know, it's the very first time that a group has ordered subscriptions for the "Exchange Bulletin" for all group members. We think the Lincoln Park Group in Chicago is being of real service to its members, providing them with news of what's what at their General Service Office. A good idea for all groups! Too often the "Exchange Bulletin" gets no circulation among the members of a group who are least informed on world A.A.

## SHARING FROM THE INSIDE OUT

Every month brings us many fine magazines and newsletters published and distributed by A.A. groups in hospitals and prisons.

They are really outstanding in content and format. We find that we get many ideas from this sharing with groups on the outside as well as with other groups inside.

If we needed any proof that A.A. is exactly the same in or out, and wherever in the world one alcoholic meets with another to share experience, these expressions of faith and hope would do the trick.

## THE BIRTHDAY PLAN

Plastic boxes to hold Birthday envelopes (as pictured) are available at G.S.O. for \$1.50. The creation of an A.A. member in Pennsylvania, these holders have been much sought-after since he made them available in quantity. Many groups and members have found the "Birthday Plan" an effective way of sharing General Services costs.

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Speaking of birthdays, we had a welcome card from the Hilltop and Unity County Groups in the Wyoming State Hospital. It was a card that they sent out to discharged patients on their A.A. anniversary date. There are birthday greetings from the group members, the Steps, "Just for Today" and the Serenity Prayer. We thought it was a fine idea.

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### AND MORE ON BIRTHDAYS . . .

A member in Pensacola shares this with us: On the date of his 20th Anniversary in A.A. he received a wonderful letter from his daughter. Part of it follows:

*"Dear Dad, This is just a little note to wish you on your A.A. Birthday the same brand of happiness which*

### DISCUSSION IDEAS FOR CLOSED MEETINGS

The GRAPEVINE has some good ideas for closed meetings listed in the January issue. They are:

1. What about New Year's resolutions?
2. Has the A.A. program helped me to change my attitude toward the work I do for a living?
3. Do I still run away from some things, perhaps using A.A. itself as a kind of "hideout" from unpleasant truth?
4. A.A.'s First Step is "the first step, not only towards sobriety, but towards self-understanding and the knowledge of life."
5. Am I as intent about working the A.A. program as I use to be about getting a drink?

These questions are all answered in articles appearing in the current issue, and are good ones for any closed meeting, don't you think?



*you have been pouring out for others for many years. I want to congratulate you for achieving your twentieth anniversary in A.A. and I hastily add 'by the Grace of God' because I know you will accept it in no other way. . ."* She goes on to speculate about whether she should give him a pedestal, a bouquet of flowery words of praise, a pair of bootstraps, or a nice halo with matching wings. Deciding that none of these are appropriate for an A.A. member, she concludes:

*"So many people look at sermons more than they listen to them. You see, people have been talking about you behind your back — nice things, as if I didn't know. If I toss it off lightly with, 'Well we sorta like him too,' they know what I mean and I think you do too.*

*"So, on your A.A. Birthday, I'll wrap all my presents of praise and gratitude and give them to God, to A.A. and to your friends. And to you, I'll wish you the happiness you give to others. With love."*

*Our A.A. friend says, "Not only was it the nicest tribute a daughter could ever pay to her alcoholic dad, but it was a well-deserved tribute to A.A."*

### MESSAGES ABOUT JOHN FITZGERALD KENNEDY

From round the world have come moving letters about the untimely death of our President. Here is one:

From Birmingham, England: "We have just been watching the funeral service of President Kennedy on TV and I want you to know how much we enter into the grief of the American people. I know that I speak for all A.A. members in this country when I say that I feel a personal loss at the passing of this fine man.

"We in A.A. owe a great debt to America for this wonderful gift of a new life in A.A. and President Kennedy whom we saw so often on TV was a symbol of youth and hope to us all. We admired his gay high courage and his keen quick brain. We in A.A. have our special feeling of kinship with all our brethren in the U.S.A. and we join with you in this hour of sorrow."

## ? JANUARY QUESTION BOX ?

Many letters ask about building the attendance of a group. This is a problem that seems to be of top A.A. interest. Everyone wants to know the best way to "carry the message" to the newcomer.

Do any of you have some good ideas to share?

## A SPONSOR'S SPONSOR SPONSOR PARTY

The secretary of the Freedom Group in Kenosha, Wisconsin, wants us to find out if anyone has had an idea for a party such as the one that she gave for her sponsor. He was celebrating his Tenth Anniversary. She then asked the first member he had contacted in A.A., then his sponsor who had been his only sponsor in ten years; next, his first pigeon who had eight years of sobriety, then his second pigeon who had five years behind her. Then others whom he had worked with and members who had helped him, right down to his present pigeon.

She says: "I believe this is a good idea for all our old-timers who have contributed so much to A.A. and a good way for us pigeons to show our appreciation. Most of all the look of happiness on the faces of all members who are not only sober but enjoying it, is something really worth seeing." The idea may not be an exact reflection of the 24 Hour Plan or "principles above personalities," but it does express another important asset: Gratitude!

## NEW YORK, NEW YORK

In November, A.B.C.-TV here in New York presented a program called "The Wisdom to Know the Difference." Our Public Information Committee cooperated to the fullest in the presentation of this program which was one of the finest that we have yet seen about A.A. It was a filming of a discussion meeting. The figures were shown in silhouette and individuals were not recognizable.

Questions, prepared beforehand, were answered spontaneously. At the end of the meeting, Dr. John Norris, Chairman of our Board of Trustees, and Austin McCormick, another nonalcoholic Trustee, were interviewed.

The program proved to be a fresh and vital one and offers a good format for other cities and TV stations.

## SPECIAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO G.S.O. NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 1963

CANADA:	Western Ontario Conference . . . . .	\$200.00
	North & Northwest Ontario Regional Conference . . . . .	\$ 50.00
	British Columbia-Yukon Assembly. . . . .	\$200.00
DELAWARE:	Third Delaware Assembly. . . . .	\$ 10.20
FLORIDA:	Gratitude Dinner. . . . .	\$300.00
	A.A. Groups of Palm Beach County . . . . .	\$625.00
	G.S.R.'s District #8 . . . . .	\$ 20.00
IOWA:	Eastern Iowa Conference. . . . .	\$ 9.30
OHIO:	Gratitude Sunday - Northeastern Ohio Area. . . . .	\$175.00
	State General Conference . . . . .	\$580.66
RHODE ISLAND:	State Assembly. . . . .	\$ 75.00
VIRGINIA:	Virginia State Committee Memory Fund. . . . .	\$100.00
SOUTHERN RHODESIA:	Central African Convention . . . . . in memoriam. . . . .	\$ 30.00

## LONERS AND INTERNATIONALISTS

At the same time you are receiving this Bulletin, the 617 Lone Members and 305 Internationalists (seamen members) that are registered with us here at G.S.O. are receiving copies of "Loners Meeting" and the "Internationalists Round Robin" that go out to them monthly. These consist mainly of excerpts from their own letters, providing a means of sharing that individual letters often cannot do by themselves. To all those who are staying sober this harder way, a Happy A.A. New Year! Let's hear from you often in 1964, so that we may share your thoughts.

## A. A. CALENDAR

March 21-22: Seventeenth Annual Conference,  
Northern California Council of A.A., Stockton, California.  
Write: Secretary, NCC, 166 Geary Street, Room 84, San  
Francisco, California.

March 27-30: National Convention of A.A. in Australia.  
For correct address, write to: A.A. World Services Inc.,  
P.O. Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York 17, New York

Toronto, Ontario

A.A. International Convention

July 2, 3, 4, 1965