



AA EXCHANGE BULLETIN

NEWS AND NOTES ON ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS WORLDWIDE

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THE BIRTHDAY PLAN

This year at the General Service Conference in April, the Delegates recommended adoption of the Birthday Plan. The Plan gives the individual AA member a chance to help foot the bill for AA world services. It supplements the group contribution of \$3.00 per member.

The Birthday Plan was conceived during a coffee break at the Oklahoma State Convention in 1954. Ab A., the Oklahoma Delegate, and another AA were talking about the need for voluntary contributions to GSO and trying to figure out what could be done about it. "We wondered", Ab said, "Wouldn't a lot of AA's be glad to contribute a dollar a year to GSO for each year of AA life, up to a top limit of \$10.00?"

"I received a great inspiration from this idea and couldn't get it out of my mind," Ab said later when he got back home to Tulsa. He then talked about the idea to some members who were no longer very active. Without exception they were all enthusiastic. By 1956 the idea had caught on all over the state. Now for the past five years Oklahoma has been among the top states in per capita contributions to GSO -- with an average of over \$3.00 per member.

Why are voluntary donations to GSO so important? There are some reasons. Last year, for example, only half the groups listed at GSO contributed to GSO services. Fifteen per cent of all AA members are in groups in prisons and hospitals. Another 13% are outside the U. S. and Canada where not only is money scarce but where, in some countries, it is illegal to send it out. Other groups are new - still struggling to survive. And the chief reason, perhaps, is that so many AA's don't yet know enough about GSO to feel a sense of responsibility to it.

So the Conference recommends the Birthday Plan, confident that it will keep growing to help pay for AA world service needs. GSO has sent special envelopes for Birthday Plan contributions to area Delegates and Committee Members. These envelopes are available without cost for any individual member who wishes to use the Birthday Plan. If you are interested, see your Delegate, Committee Member, or write GSO direct.

GSO TO CLOSE JULY 3rd AND 4th

We are sorry to miss an opportunity to visit with those who might come to GSO on July 3rd or 4th, but our office will be closed both days.

The New York AA Intergroup Office is open every day. Out-of-town members can drop by 133 East 39th Street, N. Y. C., or telephone ORegon 9-3355, for information about the time and place of meetings in the metropolitan area.

"Some people think the bluebird of happiness is just another swallow."
From Cleveland, Ohio, AA "Central Bulletin"

AA - HOSPITAL COOPERATION

Following a pattern successful in other cities, ST. MARY'S HOSPITAL, in CINCINNATI, OHIO, has opened a ward for alcoholics. "Good Shepherd Hall" has facilities for the care of 16 patients: a 10-bed ward for men, a 4-bed ward for women and 2 private rooms.

The hospital officials are working in cooperation with AA in Cincinnati. An application for admission must be made through the AA Central office and the prospective patient must be accompanied by an AA sponsor. Visitors generally will be restricted to AA members and clergymen whom patients have requested.

According to Sister M. Elizabeth, the administrator, treatment will be under the direction of a physician. The patient will be required to certify that he wants and needs sobriety, and his admission will be restricted to one time only. (Available from GSO are two pamphlets useful in getting the cooperation of hospital officials: "Hospital Administrators Evaluate AA", and "Patterns of AA - Hospital Cooperation.")

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The STAUNTON, VIRGINIA, GROUP is getting a big "assist" from the doctor in charge of dismissals at Western State Hospital. The group holds a Wednesday night AA meeting at the hospital. When a patient attends one of these meetings and is interested, his name, date of discharge and destination is sent by the doctor to the Staunton Group Secretary, one week before the patient's discharge. The Secretary finds, in the AA World Directory, the AA group nearest the patient's destination. Then he writes to the secretary of that group with the request to contact the newcomer as quickly as possible.

The Staunton Group reports that from five to ten letters are sent out every week. In the short time the program has been going there have been some grateful replies from groups throughout the state.

1961 DIRECTORY CORRECTIONS

The following errors in the 1961 AA World Directory have been reported:

- Page 120 - PONTIAC, Michigan, was omitted and all Pontiac groups are listed under PLYMOUTH, Michigan.
- Page 121 - Oakland County Alano Center, Inc., the name of the Club in Pontiac, Michigan, was omitted.
- Page 210 - CENTERVILLE GROUP, listed in error under South Carolina, should have been listed on Page 212, under South Dakota.
- Page 244 - LODI, Wisconsin, is listed in error under LAKE GENEVA, Wisconsin.

FROM THE AA GRAPEVINE - The question is often asked, "Which would the Grapevine prefer - individual subscriptions or group bulk orders?" The answer below is a GV dream. A "model" group would:

- A. Have 100% individual subscribers.
- B. Have a substantial group order each month for newcomers, visitors, etc., available as is all other AA literature.
- C. Subscribe to the Grapevine Group Sponsorship Plan, whereby a group selects one individual each month (a minister, doctor, no longer active member, etc.) and presents him with a GV subscription.

- D. Encourage potential or active writers in the group to send in manuscripts to the GV editorial office, making clear that final selection is a matter for the GV editorial staff.
- E. Have a "model" GV group representative who would work toward these goals.

AA IN JAPAN

A Japanese AA group, GSO learned recently, has been going strong, unbeknownst to us, for over four years at a hospital in Nishinomiya City, located between Kobe and Osaka. This happy piece of news has just come to us from Clarence B., an AA from Fort Wayne, Indiana, who is at present in Kobe.

On leave from his job with the Fort Wayne Committee on Alcoholism, Clarence returned to Kobe last February with his Japanese wife in order to help her sick father. On hearing that Mukogawa Hospital was treating alcoholics, he went to investigate and found, to his delight, that an active AA group of twenty members was already in operation there.

In 1957, he reports, it was Dr. Shegeki Morimura, the hospital director himself, who carried the message. After studying AA principles and methods during a U. S. visit, Dr. Morimura brought AA back to his hospital.

Regular meetings are held every Sunday afternoon. The members are former patients, or "graduates", along with some of the active patients. The oldest in point of continuous sobriety is one man with four years. About ten members have been sober for two years or more.

Despite a lack of AA literature or the opportunity to share AA experience with other groups, this group has grown. It has an English copy of "AA Comes of Age", which the doctors read aloud in translation. The group also has a translation of "The Twelve Steps". Clarence has given the members the Big Book and some GSO pamphlets and these are now being translated into Japanese.

The doctors understand AA Tradition well enough to realize that AA cannot affiliate with any other institution. In fact they hope the group can be recognized as a regular AA group and become affiliated with GSO. When the group "becomes a member under the AA roof", they feel it will be less dependent upon the hospital staff. (GSO has already added the group to its world listing and offered to help with translations.)

Wives and other family members attend all meetings. One would not expect this in Japanese society, it seems, but the family in Japan has the same interest and hope as the family in Fort Wayne. Clarence's wife, who is fluent in English as well as Japanese, has been acting as his interpreter. Together they have passed along some information about Al-Anon Family Group activities and the Japanese families are eager for more.

Clarence closes his letter with some personal observations: "Before seeing this group, I'd had many conversations with AA's and others interested in alcoholism as to why no AA in Japan and I'd always received the same answer -- that the culture, customs, religions and attitudes in Japan prevent the alcoholic here from having the ability to accept AA. However, since I myself spent several months as a patient at Logansport State Hospital, in Indiana, I can assure you that I find alcoholics here in Japan the same as I found them in the states. On the faces of these people who regard themselves as AA I find the same newborn expression, the same joy of life that comes to a sober and happy AA. I, a stranger of different race, have also found complete acceptance in this group because we have this one big thing in common. We share the problem of alcoholism and the joy of recovery through AA. My brief experience here has convinced me that AA can and will be just as successful in Japan as elsewhere."

