

August 1974

# Around AA

Items of AA information and experience

## 24th Conference Looks Both Inside and Outside AA

The 24th AA General Service Conference (U.S. and Canada), held April 22-27 in New York City, took as its theme "Understanding and Cooperation ... Inside and Outside AA." Bill W.'s "Let's be friendly with our friends" suggestion was echoed in the keynote speech and in an opening-day presentation that first recalled our late co-founder's tribute to Dr. W. D. Silkworth, then saluted other nonalcoholic friends of early AA, the Rev. Samuel M. Shoemaker and Sister Ignatia.

Co-founder Dr. Bob was described as the first "two-hatter," carrying the message as an AA member and using his professional skills as a physician to help thousands of alcoholics. The situation of present-day two-hatters and the Fellowship's general relationship with the professional community were among the many topics discussed in small workshop gatherings and on the floor of the Conference as a whole.

The 91 area Delegates were joined by the Trustees, AA World Service and AA Grapevine Directors, and GSO and GV staffs to make a total of 132 voting Conference members. Among the conclusions they reached (as summarized briefly in the Conference issue of *Box 4-5-9*) were:

**Institutions** — reminded the Fellowship of need to carry the message to confined elderly alcoholics, and suggested more cooperation with halfway houses and detox centers.

**Two-Hatters** — recommended that better understanding be sought of the role of the two-hatter through discussion at assembly and area general service committee meetings.

**Central Offices — General Service Committees** — reported a trend toward more and better cooperation and coordination between intergroups and area general service committees.

**Public Information** — recommended the film "Bill's Own Story" be made available to Al-Anon Family Groups.

**Literature** — accepted the report of a subcommittee on putting some new stories in the Big Book to meet today's needs.

**Grapevine** — recommended that groups give gift subscriptions on anniversaries and AA birthdays, and pointed out that the magazine does not necessarily endorse opinions expressed by AA contributors.

**Finance** — recommended more emphasis on the "Penny a Day for Sobriety" idea; recommended area contributions toward Conference expense be raised from \$150 to \$200.

**Electoral Procedure for Regional Trustees** — approved a procedure providing that the number of voters from the Trustees' Nominating Committee and the Conference Committee on Trustees may not exceed the number of Delegates from the voting region. Also recommended a five-year moratorium on discussion of these procedures at the Conference, "to let time and experience teach us."

**Directory Listings** — agreed at a special session that all AA groups should be

listed. This is in accordance with the definition of a group in the *World Directory*,

## New Health Magazine

AA members concerned with their physical well-being may be interested in a new magazine, *Alive and Well*, written by doctors for the public, with improved health education as their goal.

The lead article in the first issue deals with the propensity of Americans to take drugs to solve their problems and suggests an honest look at these problems as a better solution.

In another short item, note is made of a resolution recently adopted by the House of Delegates of the American Medical Association (reported in "About Alcoholism," July GV), urging insurance companies and prepayment plans to remove limitations on coverage for the treatment of alcoholics. The resolution reiterates that alcoholism is a disease and not a moral issue.

*Alive and Well* carries no advertising. This enables each author to state his opinions. All articles are bylined, and each author is responsible for what he writes.

For a free sample copy, write the magazine at Box 8092, Waco, Tex. 76710.

## Good PI Work

Ready cooperation with the news media showed that AAs in the Buffalo, N.Y., area are well aware of the value of public information, according to Hal Crowther's column in the Buffalo *Evening News*. He quoted radio reporter Susanne Cook, of Station WKBW, as saying, "You'd expect alcoholics to be difficult interviews for anyone."

But experience led her to change her mind. "Some of the men at Alcoholics Anonymous meetings are doctors, teachers, even judges, people with a lot to lose if a reporter violated their trust. I went to AA meetings all over the city for my *19th Hole* series — and I ended up with more interviews and more volunteers than I could use. Many of them still call and ask me to come to their AA functions."

## AA Luncheon — Military Style

I was just browsing through the June 1973 Grapevine and came upon the list of AA luncheon get-togethers. In the military, it is almost impossible to have a luncheon as such, so we get together on the base with our little brown bags and have an AA bull session.

We started out on Wednesday noon, but after a short time expanded to Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. These bull sessions have the approval of the base chaplain and medical staff; they are more than pleased with the idea. It has proven to be a wonderful way to introduce new members to the program.

These noon-hour get-togethers have been such a success, it might be an idea for other military bases. But, then, we *could* be Johnny-come-latelies; other bases may have similar ideas.

—Sgt. R. W. K., *Shearwater, N.S.*

## Borrowing an AA Principle

In an editorial on "The Value of Sharing" in *Labor-Management Alcoholism News* (published by the National Council on Alcoholism), editor William S. Dunkin wrote, "Many of the principles of AA can be successfully applied by anyone .... One of the most refreshing things about attending an AA meeting is to be able to listen to individuals who are completely willing to share, not only their successes, but more importantly, their mistakes and failures."

Saluting pioneers in the field of industrial alcoholism programs, he noted, "Most of these early program administrators were willing to share whatever information they had with one another and with others who were trying to get programs started. They shared not only their successful ideas, but also their 'mistakes,' in the hope that others might avoid repeating them."

The editorial recommended the same approach for present-day program directors, offering NCA's help in this sharing. "Program directors must be willing to learn from one another. They must be teachable... Any such sharing will ultimately redound to the benefit of employed alcoholics and their families."