



Our Relations with the Public

Third in a series by staff members at AA General Service Headquarters, reviewing the work done during 1953. These reports were presented at the 4th General Service Conference in April.

DURING the past year 1,169 inquiries came into General Service Headquarters, two-thirds of them from members of the clergy, medical profession, industry and students. The remaining third were from relatives and friends of alcoholics and from individual alcoholics. Each inquiry was answered and with each letter from one to three of our pamphlets were enclosed.

A highlight in our public relations occurred late in 1953. Staff members met with the publishers of a book writ-

ten by an AA member in which our Tradition of anonymity was grossly violated. The outcome was the re-writing of the last sixty pages, which had to do with AA. All mention of AA as such was deleted with the gracious consent of both author and publisher.

TV Guide, a national television magazine, made a statement to the effect that The Alcoholic Foundation had sanctioned a telecast which violated our Tradition of anonymity. A letter was written them calling attention to

this erroneous statement and it was printed in a following edition as a retraction.

A visit to General Service Headquarters was made by a Venezuelan who was connected with that country's coffee industry. As representing the Venezuelan Ministry of Justice, he had been commissioned to inquire into the problem of alcoholism in this country, with a view to coping with it down there. Since AA was the first organization he approached, it was immediately evident to him that the known alcoholics in his country could spearhead a recovery program by starting groups. We got in touch with the Minister of Justice, sent him literature and put him in touch with the AA group in Caracas. They are now working in close cooperation.

A series of four articles appeared in the New York *Daily News* toward the end of March. The author submitted these articles to us beforehand and incorporated all our suggestions in the final proof. The New York Intergroup Office reported that inquiries from alcoholics doubled a peak day and tripled an average day the first week. The Intergroup received all these inquiries direct because we asked the author to give the local address for referral.

In February, an article appeared in a Mid-Western magazine which resulted in hundred of inquiries coming to Box 459 since that was the address given in the article. Each inquirer was answered and referred to a group in his area.

Staff members handled over a hundred inquiries, largely from AA groups, sent to *Good Housekeeping* magazine on Margaret Lee Runbeck's article, "A Letter to a Woman Alcoholic," which appeared in the March issue. These inquiries asked for reprints of the article. Permission was subsequently received for the article to be reprinted by AA Publishing, Inc. as a pamphlet.

We also received a visit from a Captain in the New York City Police Commissioner's office. He was investigating every agency in the city which helps alcoholics and planned to make a report. He explained that his report would place information in every precinct as to where alcoholics might be referred, including AA. He was very enthusiastic about AA and expected to visit the local Intergroup Office also.

Throughout the year a number of manuscripts were sent to us for the checking of vital statistics, a service in line with the functions of our public relations section.

A member of General Service Headquarters staff attended a meeting at the offices of the National Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church. Representatives were present from other agencies on alcoholism and from the Church's departments of promotion, Christian social relations, and their magazine, "Forth," as well as two professional public relations men who volunteered their services. Work was reviewed of the 1951, 1952 and 1953 North Conway, New Hampshire Conferences on alcoholism and plans for

the September 1954 Conference outlined. The North Conway Conferences are sponsored by the New Hampshire State Department of Health Division on Alcoholism for the clergymen of the New Hampshire State Council of Protestant Churches. When asked how AA related to these church programs, we explained that tradition-

ally AA is always pleased to cooperate with any non-controversial program but of course does not affiliate. We suggested that the slogan used to relate AA to State and industrial programs would also apply here: "AA always on tap, never on top."

by Marian, formerly Public Relations Secretary, now "rotated" to a new job.



(There are eight requisites for contented living; health enough to make work a pleasure; wealth enough to support your needs; strength to battle with difficulties and overcome them; grace enough to confess your sins and forsake them; patience enough to toil until some good is accomplished; charity enough to see some good in your neighbor; faith enough to make real the things of God; hope enough to remove all anxious fear concerning the future.

Goethe



A man walked out of an AA hall where a speaker was addressing a meeting. Someone in the corridor asked if the speaker had finished his speech. "Yes," was the reply, "but he hasn't stopped talking."

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