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The national monthly journal of Alcoholics Anonymous, devoted to those seeking further knowledge on the problem of alcoholism, with the hope that it will help all alcoholics every where. Individual opinions expressed here are not, necessarily, those of A.A. as a whole

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The Seven Freedoms of the New Way of Life

THE New Way of Life is a life of freedom. The alcoholic seldom realizes what a slave he is. Temporary confinement in jails, hospitals and rest homes are the least important of the curtailment of his freedom. He is a slave not only to drink but to his defective self as well. The New Way of Life gives back to the A.A. member his freedom if he follows it faithfully. Having lost his freedom, he can now properly appreciate it. What freedoms does he gain or regain?

1. Freedom from hate.

The alcoholic usually becomes a bundle of resentments. Through the New Way of Life, he comes to understand that his fellow man is beset with difficulties, too. He learns human sympathy and tolerance. He comes to realize that it is the lot of our common humanity to be weak, that this frailty calls for help, not hatred. He learns that it is more fun to create than to destroy. He learns that many of his resentments were inspired by the unworthy motive of debasing others to his own unenviable level.

2. Freedom from guilt.

A guilty conscience goes hand in hand with drinking. A clear conscience may not cure alcoholism but it helps. Our recovery can start only after we have made amends to those we have wronged or proved our willingness to do so. We must be able to live with ourselves before we are good company to others. The A.A. Program, literally followed, frees us from a sense of guilt.

3. Freedom from want.

Most A.A. members find themselves more prosperous than they ever were when they were drinking. The typical alcoholic is a person with considerable talent and he can turn his aptitudes into good pay checks when he has been sober long enough to regain the confidence of his associates. When he "dries out," however, it is necessary, for his permanent recovery, to begin paying back the sums he probably borrowed in his drinking days. It's next to im-

possible to dodge creditors and whisky at the same time. Therefore, for a time the new A.A. member may not enjoy this reacquired earning capacity fully. For a time, he may have to economize to pay back old debts, but the results will be richly rewarding. By and large, however, the New Way of Life will provide a freedom from want never known before.

4: Freedom from fear.

Most alcoholics suffer from one or more of a variety of anxieties. To escape from these fears

has been an aim consciously or unconsciously of much drinking. Sometimes these have been compulsive fears. Sometimes they have been bafflement at the unknown. Sometimes they have been vague general fears of what the future holds in store. Sometimes specific ones. The New Way of Life may not provide complete freedom from fear. It certainly will not do it all at once. But in placing our lives in the hands of God as we understand Him, we find that our anxieties are reduced, that we have the necessary courage to cope with them. They become manageable. We come to see that the big thing, our escape from certain insanity, or death, makes our fears seem small by comparison. New courage comes with the New Way of Life.

GREAT EXPECTATIONS: A New Year's Greeting

(From Dr. Bob and Bill)

A new chapter begins.. Maybe we shall borrow its title from Dickens. Why not call 1948 "the year of great expeditions"?

We may rightly expect that thousands of our kind will be released o' their soul sickness; at the year's end most of us will acclaim 1948 the happiest yet. Should misadventure befall any of us we shall remember that joy is to be found in the midst of any difficulty, if we can abandon ourselves to God's will.

What great gifts there! Who indeed could expect more?

So, at the beginning of this fresh chapter—the good year of 1948—may we all look thankfully at each other exclaiming, Great Expectations and Happy New Year!

5. Freedom from self.

When sober, the alcoholic often displays many commendable traits of altruism. When drinking, his personality becomes entirely egocentric. He pushes aside and does not consider the well-being of his family, the good will of his friends, or his own good name. Two things only matter to him, his ego and his alcohol. They, more and more, become one so that in truly chronic alcoholism, the alcoholic feels that his drink is essential to the support of his ego, almost to life itself.

It is perhaps in the disciplining of the ego that the New Way of Life has scored its most spectacular success. By iterating and reiterating the idea of service to others, it draws the

(Continued on page 6)

EDITORIAL:

On the 2nd Tradition

By Bill

"For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority — a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience."

Sooner or later, every A.A. comes to depend upon a Power greater than himself. He finds that the God of his understanding is not only a source of strength, He is also a source of *positive direction*. Realizing that some fraction of that infinite resource is now available, his life takes on an entirely different complexion. He experiences a new inner security together with such a sense of destiny and purpose as he had never known before. As each day passes, our A.A. reviews his mistakes and vicissitudes. He learns from daily experience what his remaining character defects are and becomes ever more willing that they be removed. In this fashion he improves his conscious contact with God.

Every A.A. group follows this same cycle of development. We are coming to realize that each group, as well as each individual, is a special entity, not quite like any other. Though A.A. groups are basically the same, each group does have its own special atmosphere, its own peculiar state of development. We believe that every A.A. group has a conscience. It is the collective conscience of its own membership. Daily experience informs and instructs this conscience. The group begins to recognize its own defects of character and, one by one, these are removed or lessened. As this process continues, the group becomes better able to receive right direction for its own affairs. Trial and error produce group experience, and out of corrected experience comes custom. When a customary way of doing things is definitely proved to be best, then that custom forms into A.A. Tradition. The Greater Power is then working through a clear group conscience.

We humbly hope and believe that our growing A.A. Tradition will prove to be the will of God for us.

Many people are coming to think that Alcoholics Anonymous is, to some extent, a new form of human society. In our discussion of the 1st Tradition, it was emphasized that we have, in A.A., no coercive human authority. Because each A.A., of necessity, has a sensitive and responsive conscience, and because alcohol will discipline him severely if he backslides, we are finding we have little need for man-made rules or regulations. Despite the fact that we do veer off at times on tangents, we are becoming more able to depend absolutely on the long-term stability of the A.A. group itself. With respect to its own affairs, the collective

conscience of the group will, given time, almost surely demonstrate its perfect dependability. The group conscience will, in the end, prove a far more infallible guide for group affairs than the decision of any individual member, however good or wise he may be. This is a striking and almost unbelievable, fact about Alcoholics Anonymous. Hence we can safely dispense with those exhortations and punishments seemingly so necessary to other societies. And we need not depend overmuch on inspired leaders. Because our active leadership of service can be truly rotating, we enjoy a kind of democracy rarely possible elsewhere. In this respect we may be, to a large degree, unique.

Therefore we of Alcoholics Anonymous are certain that there is but one ultimate authority, "a loving God as he may express himself in our group conscience."

There's One In Every Group --

This is the silent type. He never misses a meeting but never makes any contribution to the discussion at hand. When asked his opinion, his stock, hot potato answer is: "Well, it's a serious matter. What do you think?" Newcomers take his silence for sober genius until time proves otherwise.



Alcoholics Anonymous

Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism.

The only requirement for membership is an honest desire to stop drinking. A.A. has no dues or fees. It is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy, and neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to stay sober and to help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.

The A.A. Program of Recovery is incorporated in The 12 Steps, the A.A. book of experience, Alcoholics Anonymous, and other literature, including The 12 Points of Tradition, are available through any group or the Central Office, P.O. Box 459, Grand Central Annex, New York 17, N. Y.

THERE ARE NO PROXIES FOR SOBRIETY

from Washington, D. C.

I came to A.A. three years ago (February 24, 1945) because I did not know what else to do, and because I had heard it was some sort of screwball outfit where dried-tip drunks helped others of their ilk to stay sober.

Staying Sober Was My Problem

That was what I wanted to do—*stay* sober! I knew how to get sober. I had done that many times. And just that many times, I got drunk again, eventually. Not because I wanted to live a drunken life. Simply because I did not know *how* to stay sober continuously.

I came to A.A. in despair and defeat. I have not swallowed a drink of anything containing alcohol since that day—so, of course, I have not been drunk since that day.

As a result, I now have, upon the whole, more harmony in my life, and less bafflement, more tranquillity and less disturbance, than I ever had before. I yet have much *more* to gain. Nevertheless, I *have* gained much.

I did not come to A.A. looking for God. I came to A.A. because I was utterly weary and disgusted with the chronically miserable life of a practicing drunkard. Anything that would get me away from that was what I wanted. No one forced A.A. upon me.

Readiness Varies

A person has to be ready for A.A. and want A.A. before A.A. *can* be effective for him or her, he has to take hold of A.A. before A.A. *can* take hold of him—or her. Some are ready to take hold of A.A. the first day they walk in. Others are not. An alcoholic who believes he is still not licked by alcohol, still has some power over alcohol—even just a little power over alcohol—cannot honestly take the 1st Step of the A.A. Program. And certainly no one can get on the Program as a whole who cannot even start on the 1st Step.

I was in a hospital after my last drunk, when I decided that if I ever got out I would go to this A.A. thing, of which I knew little. But, one thing I did know, even then, and even in that fog. I knew that if this A.A. business worked, it *had* to have some power which then was alien and unknown to me. I also knew that I had decided plenty of times in the past that I would drink no more, but that the determination had always proved to be worthless.

Live and let live

And so, I came to A.A. to find out what power it had, and to try that power whatever it was. I had a grim desire to live, and I had full knowledge that I could not keep on living and keep on drinking. I came to A.A. to learn how to *quit* drinking for keeps.

Personally, I feel very deeply and intensely about what I consider to be the poisonous fallacy of the "another little slip" theory. I know too many who have died drunk after coming to A.A., because they took the easy and the dishonest course, of thinking, and then, naturally, going, the slippity-slip way. That way involves kidding one's self, and trying to kid A.A. and God. It won't work. Ultimately it ends in that last little slip—six feet underground.

The slip setup is made to order for Barley-corn. He has a trump card there that can take the 12 Steps away from any alcoholic who accepts that slip card trump. And when Barley-corn calls that last little slip, he also calls the morgue. Then it is too late to call A.A.

Honesty First

Some of the grandest A.A.s I know got drunk after they had come to A.A. They were not then ready for A.A. They were unable at first to be honest with themselves. but they did not *keep on* drinking and *keep on* shrugging it off us "just another little slip." They faced the fact that they got drunk because they are alcoholics and drank alcohol; and that they drank alcohol because they had not *got on* the Program. They realized it was not a matter of "slipping," but a matter of *not starting*.

Then they got sober, got on the Program, and stayed there—but not until they quit trying to slip a fast one over on God, on A.A. and on themselves. The Program is based upon self honesty. It becomes a miserable flop and farce for the individual who tries it with self-dishonesty. It becomes a success for that individual when he adopts self honesty.

A.A. was *not* started to add a new excuse for getting drunk to the alcoholic's already abundant lexicon. The quicker a newcomer forgets that he ever heard the word slip in A.A., the quicker he will line himself up to really get on the Program.

I did not come to A.A. looking for God. I came looking for nothing at all except to stay sober. Nevertheless, I have found, in and through A.A., a Supreme Power which I think of as God—the God of my understanding; of my effort at understanding. It is a Power that works, and that is what I have found in A.A.,

to which I came defeated, desperate and in despair three years ago. I have also found other gratifying things, but they are of lesser importance, and they are contingent upon that basic find in A.A.—for each of us, the God of his and her seeking and understanding.

Program Is Practical

And yet, we are not professional goody-goodies. We are not starry-eyed dreamers, nor are we an outfit of zealots, crusaders or reformers. We are pretty practical, common-sense persons, on the whole—that is, about everything except alcohol. At last we realize that we have no sense at all regarding alcohol; we face that fact; we ask God to restore us to sanity; and we pitch in and help God do that job by doing the best we can, ourselves, in trying to live the principles of our 12 Steps of Recovery.

We have no fairy tales to tell anybody in A.A., and no magic wands to wave. We have no hocus-pocus, no quackery and no trickery. But we do see in A.A. lives turned into paths as happy as any fairy tale ever told. We do see lives actually transformed as dramatically as any legendary magician's wand has ever wrought in song or story. We do see changes every day that no pills or potions, no nostrums or gibberish, have ever been able to accomplish—for alcoholics.

Miracles Apparent

We see those things occur us the result of our 12 Recovery Steps. But only the individual can *accept*, for himself or herself, the 200 simple words of those Steps, and their simple meaning. No one else can accept them for him. A.A. does not work by proxy.

Only the individual can *take* the steps for himself or herself. No one else can substitute. It cannot be delegated to another.

The accepting and the taking of the Steps, and their continued application, can change an alcoholic life from misery and degradation—be that already an accomplished fact, or be it, so far, only a potential, not yet actually reached—to one of essential human decency, dignity, worthiness . . . and . . . peace.

It works. That is what I have found in A.A.—*Pete D.*

Easy does it

Families First In Readjustments

From Clearwater, Florida

"How good an A.A. are you at home?"—that's the question the wife of a five-year member asked me in Minnesota last summer. It opened up a new trend of thought.

When I came into the organization I had no home—although in the 20 previous years I had had 20 different ones. I still have no home but a hotel room. My husband divorced me while I was in a sanitarium and took the custody of my three children. I had been sure that such a thing could never happen to me; furthermore I was banished from Kansas City and exiled to Chicago. My lawyer, who had been in A.A. three months, made it plain that it was up to me to make a success of what was left of my life—to adopt a "sink or swim" policy. Halco was my first home in Chicago. The resentment was too much for me, and I had not learned to accept my limitations. I spent two miserable weeks on the near north side with daily trips to the A.A. office because I did not trust myself. Everyone was kind to me—Grace gave me the small sum of money that had been sent in her care from Kansas City, saying, "Here it is. If you want to get drunk, go ahead." I have never had a drink since.

I moved to Evanston because there were no bars, the possibility of a job and more women members. Everyone knew the worst about me to begin with, but gave me the benefit of the doubt.

I was black and blue, both mentally and physically—I was resentful—I had no training for work—I was practically middle-aged and I knew that it would be easier to die than to go on struggling, but I could not leave that heritage to my children. I began to understand that it was up to me to do something hard. I had never realized my selfishness. I was ignorant of the reasons for my actions and I began to absorb some of the philosophy other A.A.s had worked out.

People asked me to their homes; they look me in and were gracious about it: I still envy people whose partners see them through. I have real admiration for those partners because I am sure it is easier to be an alcoholic than to live with one. I no longer blame my husband or my children for not wanting to live with me—I could not even live with myself—at times it is still difficult.

However, I know now that the real cause of all my troubles lies within myself. I have learned to accept my limitations and to go on from there without rehearsing grievances and dwelling on symptoms. If, by being a horrible example, I can help anyone I am humbly grateful. Alcoholics Anonymous has granted me a reprieve—I appreciate my blessings and if, knowing the answers, I take the first drink, it will prove I am actually



"Now let me tee you all about A.A."

ready for the insane asylum.

My children have come back to me—last summer I had all three of them together—they know what I am attempting—they respect me for trying. I used to be too wrapped up in my own misery to realize that I was destroying their sense of security and leaving them no one on whom to depend. When my son was 15, he told me he did not think it was a disgrace to be an alcoholic but that it was a disgrace not to do something about it. Adolescents have a way of looking at things squarely. You can't fool them. Last spring my 16-year-old daughter wrote me that her favorite teacher had told her about an open meeting she had been to in Kansas City and what a wonderful organization she thought A.A. was. Cynthia wrote "I did something you may not approve of—I went against the anonymity and said my mother belongs and if there's anything you'd like to know about it I'll be glad to tell you." I am thankful she feels that way. When I went to her graduation in June that teacher and her alcoholic husband were at an A.A. meeting I attended.

I try not to look for perfection in my children—after all who am I to even dare hope for anything approaching such a state? I have to remain emotionally undisturbed and to keep away from bitterness and self-pity. When the children are with me I have to rejoice in their presence and resign myself to the fact that I can't have them always. I have to create a home of the spirit in which we all have a part. I want them to know they can depend on me and all my efforts are bent toward that goal. A.A. has given me renewed faith in God—I have learned to surrender my problems and to wait for His guidance. I have been priv-

ileged to help a few people with their drinking problems. What more could I ask?

Dr. Edward Livingston Trudeau, the American physician who spent virtually all his adult life adjusting to tuberculosis, wrote some profound words which apply equally appropriately to alcoholics: "To cease to rebel, to stop fighting back, to be content with half a loaf when you can't have a whole one—these are hard lessons but all of us must learn them. I have found that the great word is 'acquiescence'."

By writing letters to my offspring I try to make them realize their part in my life and what a boost their approval gives me. At present one is in Paris—one at Harvard and one in Washington, but they know I am on the beam. I can't give them a home but I can give them understanding, even at long distance. I believe in them all thoroughly. I settle small differences as they arise and refuse to look for slights or to give them. I am trying to teach the children to stay big without stooping to pettiness and to look for privileges of service rather than their rights. I expect the best from them and have been amply rewarded.

It's not enough to solve the problem of the moment—you have to solve yourself as a problem and make the answer come out right.

The phrase from one of Cole Porter's songs—"Use your mentality, wake up to reality" fits aptly into the life of an alcoholic—be thankful you still have a home in which to practice your A.A. principles.

It's easy enough to throw out the life line to a drunk who yells for help but it is infinitely harder to lead a balanced life with a family when you live up to your responsibilities.—Polly A.W.F.,

The GROUP

(This is a discussion page. Ideas advanced here are only suggestions, put forward to help furnish group discussion topics, without any intention of reaching fixed conclusions or dogmatic "rights" and "wrongs." All readers are invited to submit group discussion topics.)

ON THE SUBJECT OF DEPENDENCE

From Portland, Oregon

The word, God — with the pronoun Him — is used seven times in the reading of the 12 Steps, but after that, many a good A. A. member-chairmen alike—in addressing groups, omit use of the word altogether.

This open lack of recognition is often due to the foolish and harmful fear of being thought a "religious sissy," or of hurting the so-delicate feelings of the smattering of sceptics and agnostics to be found in every group.

This fear is both foolish and harmful because, without an inward sense of and an open acknowledgment of God, as being "the Power greater than ourselves," we tend to rely increasingly on meetings and on group therapy to keep us dry.

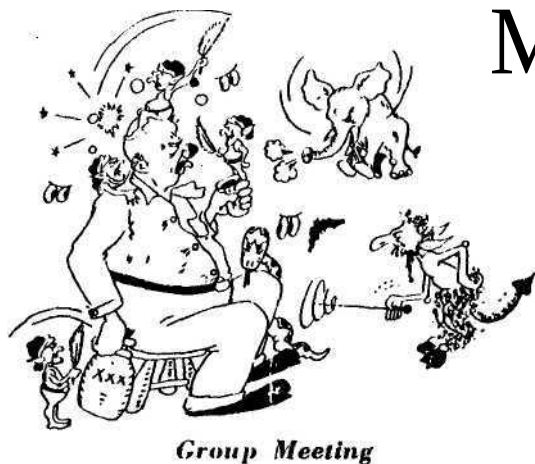
The importance of meetings and group therapy can never be overemphasized, but we should always keep in mind that the A.A. that is going to keep you or me dry, and enable us to form a new pattern of living, is not in the meeting—in our fellow members—nor in the A.A. Book—but in ourselves, as personally responsible individuals, always seeking to improve our conscious contact with God who is our first and last source of wholly dependable help.

All of us, especially the newcomers, should endeavor to keep constantly aware of this. None of us are angels—or even reasonable facsimiles—and old or new, every member of A.A., no matter where he goes, will sooner or later hear things he doesn't believe in, see things he doesn't approve of, and meet people he just can't seem to get along with, but if he is wise he will refrain from criticism, and let none of those things interfere with his own working of the Program.

Otherwise, he will be seeking more "congenial" groups for the rest of his life!

As water flows into our homes through pipes from a central reservoir, so God channels his power to us through other human beings, but until we recognize and acknowledge Him as the only true source of the help we receive in A.A., we shall always be more likely to "resume drinking," especially if away from home, and where A.A. meetings and group therapy are not available.—Leo C.

First things first



Spencer, Iowa, Group Issues Statements on Local Policies

"We, of A.A., have no constitution, charter or by-laws. Experience has shown us that it is imperative, however, to establish something in the nature of general policy covering our relations to one another.

"The Spencer Group has two such policies which our advisory committee thought wise to re-emphasize and to establish in this pamphlet so that there may be no misunderstandings.

"(1) It is the approved policy of the group that no member who has attended his first meeting shall be allowed to attend a future meeting on the day upon which he has had one drink. This is not to say that he has been expelled from membership. he may always come back to any future meeting but he must be sober when he attends the meeting.

"(2) Recognizing that many misunderstandings and arguments are caused by financial matters, it has been established as the firm policy of the Spencer Group that personal loans between individual members of the group are not approved. A.A. is not, and we think should not be, set up as a loan office.

"However, we realize that some men on first coming into the group are in desperate financial straits. For these men the group has provided a simple method of obtaining funds necessary for the basic necessities of life. Such a new member should explain (or have his sponsor explain) the situation to the secretary, the advisory committee or to our financial advisor. If his needs are legitimate, that is for food, lodging, or perhaps necessary clothing, those needs may be met from the group's treasury as a loan to the individual. Group loans, in small amounts, it is understood, are to be confined to this category. Any larger money expenditures (such as possible hospitalization or medical costs) must be approved by vote of the entire membership, just as any expenditure must be authorized."

MEETING Page

GROUP MEETINGS IN IRELAND

From Dublin, Ireland

Our member meetings are run as follows at present:

1. Correspondence read; reports of any contacts made.
2. In weekly turns:
 - (a) Reading of three or four selections from the current *A.A. Grapevine*, followed by discussions.
 - (b) Reading of a chapter of *Alcoholics Anonymous* followed by discussions on it.
 - (c) Round-table debates on a series of alcoholic questions.
 - (d) Impromptu discussions on alcoholic subjects—names of speakers (who can choose own subjects) drawn from a hat.
3. Any general group business.
4. Appointments for speakers for next public weekly meeting.
5. Recital of *The Lord's Prayer*.—S.O'C.M.

Any Suggestions For Younger Ages?

From Forest Hills, N. Y.

A.A. has traveled a long way since its inception. but one thing is becoming noticeable, and is certainly gratifying.

This is the increase in the number of members, especially those in the younger age groups.

However, in the case histories in the original book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, and in much of the literature distributed the emphasis seems to be on so-called "low bottom drinkers."

It has been suggested that the book and the literature either be amended, or revised, or that new literature be prepared, citing some instances that will appeal more to this younger element, who fortunately, have not as yet traveled so far on the downward and painful road.

Please understand, this is merely a suggestion, and it is the thought of this group that other groups might have some ideas on this subject.

If your group has any suggestions along these lines, why not have them published in *The Grapevine*, and in this way some means may be devised that will help some younger person who is not sure as yet that he or she is alcoholic, or that he has alcoholic tendencies.—Florence S.

A.A. Digest—Excerpts from Group Publications

Squad One, Washington, D. C.—"Eliminating, but not judging, those alcoholics who are not serious, it is possible that slips can be divided into two classes: (1) Those which happen during the first weeks or months and occasionally continue for a longer period. In this case it is probable that the member has not yet been blessed with the vital spirit of A.A.—the spiritual experience, the personality change, the brand new happy altitude toward God, toward life and toward fellowmen; (2) Those which happen to a member who has been so blessed. In this case it is probable that the briefest and best answer is given by our book—'Something has happened to his spiritual status.' "

Blue Monday, Wooster, O.—"Each person on this earth has magnetic power. We have the power to draw friends and also to make our choice of friends. If we are drunk we are a strong magnet and draw many other drunks our way. If sober we draw sober persons. There is some power beyond the lives of men that draws them to nobler, higher living. When we live by God's will a stronger magnet than our own leads us through each day."

The Screwball, Nacogdoches, Tex.—"There's a lot more to 12th Step work than picking someone out of the gutter and urging A.A. upon him. Every good deed, every kind attention, every worthy act is the result of your experience in A.A. and can rightly be termed good 12th Step work, as we see it."

Twelve Stepper, Omaha, Neb.—"The good A.A. knows that the motive power of A.A. is the Higher Power. He has a firm intellectual conviction that this Higher Power deals with us through the ministry of A.A. He observes the two-fold rule of anonymity, never giving the name of another member without permission of that person, and realizing that we are but the messenger boys for carrying the word, the channels through which flow A.A. ideas."

Alky Argot, Wisconsin State Prison.—"It seems to me that we must love ourselves not as a master but more as a servant. If we have accepted the 3rd Step we find the key to the self-centered evil in our lives. Using this key is a permanent life-time protection against ending up in a bouquet of table flowers. We are now working for the betterment of ourselves with an ally whose advice is medicine for the soul. Now we can be free by breaking the vicious circle of our egocentricity and substituting a new nucleus in His all-embracing love,"

Alanews, Dubuque, Ia—"It is during those first weeks, or months, of a man's sobriety that the ladies face their most difficult test. A male in the drying up process is not a very companionable person. The fact that the little woman may be suffering from fainting spells, malnutrition, muscle twitching and nervous prostration is a set of minor inconveniences not to be mentioned lest it disturb his majesty. After all, he has no remembrance of the past 20 years. All he remembers is his regal role of the past three weeks. It's tough, girls, but you've got to remember that at this stage the old boy considers a woman as something that boils at nothing, freezes in a minute, highly explosive; in inexperienced hands, something that can't be avoided because she exists wherever man is found. We know a lot of you have put up with 20 years of hell. And we praise the Lord that you are and were kind to us, especially during those first few months. Few of us, maybe none of us, would have made the grade if it had not been for your long suffering, your tolerance and understanding. None of us deserves any special consideration for going sober, but the fact that you are and were considerate is one of the reasons. We especially hope that all of the wives of the new men will profit by your example. We know that none of you will get much of a reward on earth but the great St. Anonymous has informed us that there's a special heaven waiting for you."

Aridity Review, Spencer, Ia—"Speaking of slips, which we don't like to do, we are always going to have them. We must remember at all times that our membership is comprised solely of alcoholics and everyone knows that God only knows what an alcoholic is likely to do. It is important for our own safety that we do not let the other fellow's slip upset us too much. Sympathize with him, yes; try to help him get back on the beam if, as and when he decides that he wants to come back. But, we must never let a friend's slip send us haywire to a slip of our own or what good will we be to him when the time comes when he again needs our help?"

The Paradox, Kansas City, Mo.—"One A.A. was recently heard to say that he did not have the multiplicity of troubles hanging over him that is customary for most neophytes to bring to A.A. for solution. His wife had left him, the mortgage company had taken his home, the finance company had picked up his car, he had lost his job, his health was ruined and he was overdrawn at the bank. Drinking was his only problem."

Seven Freedoms

(Continued from page 1)

alcoholic's thoughts away from self. By providing him with a way to support his thoughts with action, it enables him to build up new behavior patterns of unselfishness, he learns what is at the center and core of nearly all the great religions; namely, that the human personality is inviolable, has dignity, is worthwhile, and must be respected. In learning to respect others, he learns a genuine respect for himself. In serving others, he serves himself.

6. Freedom from frustrations.

In this area, progress will be slowest and least encouraging. Nevertheless, I am convinced that if the A.A. program is to succeed over a considerable period of time, the alcoholic must learn to resolve his conflicts. We must frankly and fearlessly face the fact that we are neurotic, which is only another way of saying that in one way or another we are frustrated. Alcoholism is one of the ways of neurotic behavior, one of the out-croppings of frustration. Impatience is another when carried to an extreme. A.A. provides two ready-made answers which are very helpful in combatting frustrations. "Easy does it" and "first things first." Frustrations are stubborn things to fight. It is for this reason more than any other that the alcoholic is only reprieved, never pardoned. He must follow the New Way of Life and continue to follow it. The New Way of Life may not free the alcoholic of all his frustrations but they will become manageable. From the source of all strength will come strength and wisdom adequate for his needs.

7. Freedom from despair.

The New Way of Life offers hope. The alcoholic begins to be happy again, and to enjoy life. These are indicative of hopefulness and are good. It is good, too, for the A.A. member to march forward again to new accomplishments through his regained self confidence.

The New Way of Life offers a spiritual freedom from despair which is greatest of all. One is freed from the death in life which is living without purpose. He is freed from his faith in nothing. He is freed from the cynicism that nothing has meaning, and that death is a complete and final defeat. The New Way of Life affirms that life is worth the struggle, that happiness is worth the effort, and that God is good.

In our prayers, we have often said, "Thank God, I'm sober." Let us add, "Thank God, I'm free!"

(The above is a copy of a speech given at an open district meeting at Brewton, Alabama, October 30, 1947, and repeated at Mobile, Alabama, November 10, 1947, by Bill M.- Editor)



(Ol' John's Stuff)

Jack London's autobiographical novel, *John Barleycorn*, concludes with the following paragraph: "They (the younger generation) will know of the saloon only in the pages of history, and they will think of the saloon as a quaint old custom similar to bull-baiting and the burning of witches." (Publication date: August, 1913)

* * *

Walking his beat in a big city park one moonlit evening, a policeman noticed a stooped-over drunk teetering perilously on the edge of a small lake. The drunk seemed to be admiring his reflection. "Hey," warned the Law, "stand up from there!"

The inebriate didn't raise his head.

"You," said the Law, "get away from that lake."

Slowly turned the drunk. He pointed at a face in the water. "Offisher, who's zat feller?"

The constable moved alongside. "Him?" he asked. "That's you. Now, see the cop? That's me."

Enraptured by the beauty and poetry of it all, the drunk clapped his hands. "S'wunnerful," he exclaimed. "And who izzat feller with the pale, round face? See 'im? He's peekin' over our shoulders."

"That," sighed the gendarme, "that is the moon."

"Moon?" marveled the drunk.

"Moon," firmly insisted the copper. "Luna."

Suddenly, a great truth dawned. "Wheee!" shouted the stew, joyously, "Ain't we high up!"

* * *

HOW TO TELL THE BAD NEWS

The following (humorous) account has been adapted to the experience of a well-to-do alcoholic who wakes up in a sanitarium after a slip.

Mr. A.: Ha, Keeper! How are you, old boy? How are things at home?

KEEPER: Welcome back, sir. Things are bad enough since your slip. The Magpie's dead.

MR. A.: Poor Mag. So he's gone. How came he to die?

WESTERN NEW YORK GROUPS PLAN TWO-DAY SEMINAR

Discussion seminars will feature a two-day regional conference of Western New York groups to be held January 24 and 25 at Rochester, N. Y., winding up with a dinner at which Bill W. will be the principal speaker.

The program announced by the Rochester Group will open Saturday morning, January 24, with registration at the Hotel Powers. The seminars will get underway at 10 a.m. of the first day and run concurrently through both open and closed meetings, with findings of the groups to be reported at a closed meeting Sunday, January 25, at 3 p. m. Data compiled will be the basis for the official report of the conference, copies of which will be sent to groups

and the A.A. Foundation. A wide variety of questions of great interest to all A.A.s is slated for discussion.

The announcement of the conference stressed the point that "this is a participational rather than invitational" type of meeting with all groups having a part in conducting the sessions. For example, the Saturday night open meeting will be arranged and conducted entirely by non-Rochesterians.

Hotel reservations should be made direct with the Hotel Powers. Inquiries and dinner reservations should be addressed to the secretary at 79 Brooks Avenue, Rochester 11, N. Y.

KEEPER: Overeat himself, sir.

MB. A.: Did he? A greedy bird. What did he overeat of?

KEEPER: Horsemeat, sir; he died of eating horsemeat.

Mil. A.: How did he come to get so much?

KEEPER: All your father's horses, sir.

Mr. A.: What! Are they dead, too?

KEEPER: Yes, sir; they died of overwork.

MR. A.: And why were they overworked?

KEEPER: To carry water, sir.

MR. A.: To carry water! What were they carrying water for?

KEEPER: To put out the fire, of course.

MR. A.: Fire! What fire?

KEEPER: Your father's house; it burned to the ground.

MR. A.: My father's house burned down! How did it get on fire?

KEEPER: I think it must have been the cigarette, sir.

MR. A.: Cigarette? What cigarette?

KEEPER: The one you dropped when you arrived drunk at your mother's funeral.

Mil. A.: My mother dead!

KEEPER: Poor lady, she never looked up after it.

Mr. A.: After what?

KEEPER: The loss of your father, sir.

MB. A.: My father gone, too?

KEEPER: Yes, good gentleman, he died as soon as he heard of it.

Mr. A.: Heard of what?

KEEPER: Why, the bad news, begging your pardon, sir.

MR. A.: What! More miseries? More bad news?

KEEPER: Yes, sir, your bunk account is over-

drawn, your credit is lost, and you are not worth a penny. Your wife asked me to tell you the news, sir. She took off with the iceman immediately after signing your commitment papers. Poor lady! She couldn't stand that song you were singing last night.

MR. A.: What song?

KEEPER: "Another little Drink Won't Do Us Any Harm." Welcome back to Bugley Hall, sir.

* * *

New Version of An Old Chestnut

One sleety winter evening, visibility zero, the doors of a saloon flew open and three drunks staggered in. The first stumbled into a telephone booth and began making long distance calls. The second lurched to the bar and began searching through his vest and the lining of his hat for hidden dollar bills. The third tripped over the doorsill and crash-landed flat on the floor.

"Name it, gentlemen," invited the bartender, as soon as the first dollar bill came out of the hat.

"Two whiskies," ordered the drunk at the bar. "One fer me, an' one fer my friend in the phone booth."

The barkeep cocked an eye at the drunk on the floor. "An' how about your companion?" he inquired. "Doesn't he need another drink t' straighten up?"

The drunk with the cash considered the idea, then shook his head, wisely. "Not him, pal. Don't give 'im a drop. We're keepin' him sober; he's drivin' our car."

* * *

There is no happiness so perfect that a drink won't ruin it.

AA's Country-Wide News Circuit

Regional Meeting January 31—The first assembly session of the newly designated Central-Atlantic Region group of Alcoholics Anonymous will be held at the Statler Hotel in Washington, D. C., on January 31. Bill W will head up the speakers at the dinner which will follow regional meetings and a forum. The new region embraces Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia and arrangements are being made for about 1,000 visitors. Tremendous growth in the number of groups in the region caused members of the Washington Group, which began in 1939, to feel that it would be wise to combine its annual dinner with a regional meeting and ask the cooperation and participation of all groups in the region. The assembly is scheduled for the entire day of January 31 at the hotel with the forums and gatherings in the morning and afternoon. The dinner in the evening will climax the day.

A.A. Pilots Friendship Train—The Milwaukee Railroad had the choice of its crack engineer to carry the Friendship train as far as Dubuque, Ia "And whom do you think got the honor?" asks Hildagarde of the A.A. *Tribune*. "Old Dingbat who had been fired under Rule G and who is now back at the throttle because of A.A."

Institute Shows Results — Effects of the recent Institute held at the University of California at Berkeley, Cal, are already beginning to be felt in the San Francisco Bay Area and the Bay Area Groups are very happy over it. Two municipal court judges have come out recently with public statements regarding the "drunk" problem, one of them, Municipal Judge Twain Michelsen of San Francisco saying "eighty per cent of the county jail population consists of inebriates." Judge Michelsen said he fully intended to free all men brought before him on drunkenness charges, unless they seemed in need of medical care. In this way, he said, he hoped to focus public attention on the problem. He reached his decision after a tour of the "drunk tanks" in San Francisco police stations on which he was accompanied by the executive secretary of the San Francisco Committee for Education on Alcoholism. Judge Christ B. Fox of the Oakland Municipal Court is turning the consideration of the problem of drunks appearing before him over to two probation officers, one of whom spent

last summer at the summer session of the Yale clinic. Judge Fox said that while he cannot sentence men to A.A. he can at least guide their footsteps that way. . . . The Richmond Group reports that it is fortunate in having a very liberal minded newspaper publisher who has given a full column, written by a member of the group, every Thursday afternoon. This has appeared for seven months and the group has been advised that it will appear as long as copy is provided. . . . The Richmond Group also furnished the main luncheon speaker at the Kiwanis Club luncheon recently and the same speaker will be scheduled for several other civic group meetings.

That Wagon Again—What is probably the first police raid on an A.A. group was the distinction received by the Tidewater Group at Norfolk, Va., recently. A few members of the group were sitting around the still unopened new quarters one evening discussing improvements to be made when the police vice squad received information that the "joint" (the quarters had been illegally used by preceding tenants), recently padlocked, was open again. The police burst in on the preoccupied albies, proclaiming a raid. They were considerably more embarrassed than the A.A.s . . . The move to these new quarters at 505 and 517 Colley Avenue, Norfolk, is the second in 17 months as the result of the growth of the group. Ironically both the first quarters and the new ones were lavishly equipped with the most adequate facilities for dispensing alcoholic beverages. The bars left by previous tenants provided quite a familiar atmosphere for the incoming group and serve well as coffee bars.

Social Calendar Full—San Antonio, Tex., A.A.s had a full social calendar for fall, with the women of the auxiliary inaugurating a series of Sunday evening suppers. The first was an all-Mexican affair with a spaghetti supper, a barbecue and others following. For the fall party for the children and members, there was professional entertainment including a skilled hypnotist who put several members "under." . . . For the first time in the history of the club there was a one year birthday party for both a husband and wife with a beautiful cake served during the social hour. . . . Recent speakers at the

meetings have included the Rev. Everett H. Jones, Episcopal bishop of San Antonio, Star Dailey, U. S. Congressman Paul Kilday and others. . . . For the fall party one of the members arranged and had printed 200 copies of a song book for social gatherings and the holiday season.

Many Cakes Cut—An increasing number of one year sobriety anniversaries is making the West Palm Beach, Fla., Group, proud of its "step away from infancy." Recently four were celebrated in one night with the cutting of the symbolic, cake and presentation of books to the men and flowers to the women. A little later a party was given for one member, originally from the pioneer Greenwich, Conn., Group who was celebrating his eighth year. . . . A policy of visiting group speakers has been inaugurated in cooperation with Ft. Lauderdale and Miami.

Visitor Finds Growth—On a recent trip through Eastern Canada, New York and Chicago, a member of the Beacon Hill Group, Victoria, B. C., Can., found steady growth in the various groups he was able to visit, according to the Beacon Group publication. In Winnipeg he found a membership of well over 100 with two groups, Winnipeg No. 1 and the Assiniboine Group. The latter, showing good progress since its formation a year ago, recently held a successful week-end at a well known holiday resort a few miles out of Winnipeg. . . . The Capital City Group of Ottawa is now meeting in St. Patrick's College after holding their meetings for a long time in the Justice building, headquarters of the famed RCMP. . . . The group in Montreal Canada's largest city, is really going to town with several English speaking groups and a recently-formed French speaking group. An open meeting in Montreal recently attracted more than 250. . . . The club room at 1170 Yonge Street, Toronto, is well patronized, too.

Open Meeting Series—The combined groups of Rochester, N. Y., recently inaugurated a series of open meetings in the auditorium of the Brick Church Institute, 121 North Fitzhugh Street, with outstanding A.A. members as speakers. A New Rochelle speaker was heard at the second meeting. At *The Grapevine's* press time it was reported that the third meeting would

be in with the Western New York regional conference. . . . Another new group has also been formed in Rochester.

Ministers are Guests—Two closed meetings are held each week by Spartanburg, S. C., to each of which two of the local ministers are invited. Invitations will be continued until all ministers in the city have been asked. Members feel that they need the ministers' help while the ministers in turn have been asking for help from A.A. on numerous occasions. . . . The group is also sending a year's subscription to *The Grapevine* each month to one doctor and one minister until it will be in the hands of all doctors and ministers in Spartanburg. . . . The group has just moved into new quarters at 109 Wall Street in the heart of the city which provide a meeting room, four small rooms which are used for showers, telephone and coat room, game room, kitchen and another large room which is the club room. . . . Family night is enjoyed the first Friday of each month and members of the group go out for a supper get-together once each month.

Big Open Meeting—the Montgomery, Ala., Group recently invited all others to a big open meeting in the city auditorium where a member of the Jacksonville, Fla., Group, was the speaker, introduced by an Andalusia member. The club room at 16½ South Perry was open throughout the day and immediately after the program there was an informal social session with refreshments in the club room.

Secretary Dies—Death of its secretary for many years, Bill M. was reported recently by the Indianapolis, Ind., Group. All regular services and activities are continuing without interruption and with as little change as possible, the mail address, P.O. Box 1474 and phone FR 2743 remaining unchanged. One of the members has been serving as temporary secretary until a permanent selection can be made.

Films Shown—An overflow crowd of 400 attended a recent special meeting of the South Bronx Group at Jerome school, 222 Alexander Avenue, New York, N. Y. In addition to three outstanding speakers the film, "I Am An Alcoholic" and last year's picture, "Problem Drinkers," were shown

with sound. A motion picture executive, a non-alcoholic friend of A.A. donated the equipment and operated the machine.

Asheville Into New Quarters—Formed in March, 1944, and now numbering 60 members, the Asheville, N. C., Group recently moved into its new club and celebrated with open house. Included in the new home are a spacious lounge, comfortably furnished club rooms, coffee bar, large log-burning fireplace, a pool table and two bowling alleys.

New Groups Announced—Inauguration of several new groups has been reported to *The AA Grapevine*.

Because their work on night shifts prevented them from attending their regular evening meetings, 11 members from the seven Grand Rapids, Mich., Groups have formed their own daylight group, the first meeting being held November 26 in the YMCA where the members met for lunch, followed by the first session. Members of other groups in the city have been invited to attend the meetings and from the enthusiasm shown the daylight group gives promise of becoming important. Meetings are held Wednesdays from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and afford an opportunity for many A.A.s who lunch downtown as well as visiting members to attend a midday meeting.

Two members of the Aberdeen, S. D., Alno Group were instrumental in forming a group at Britton recently. Starting November 6 with the Aberdeen Alno Society coming up about 20 strong, the group recently had eight new members. At the first session the Methodist minister and state attorney were present. The address is P.O. Box 82, Britton, S.D.

The organization meeting of a group at Vernal, Utah, was held at the Uintah County courthouse November 30 with representatives of A.A. from Salt Lake City, Provo, and Spokane, Wash., on hand to help. The first gathering, an open one, was helped by local radio broadcasts and newspaper publicity.

Six members were present from Lake Wales and four visitors from Tampa and Barlow when the Lake Wales, Fla., Group got under way early in November. This group is affiliated with the Polk County Group in Bartow, which will continue to aid the new organization. . . . The county organization was aided greatly by the *Lakeland Ledger's* favorable publicity. . . . At a recent Barlow meeting there were 55 present and it was necessary to move from the club rooms to a furniture display room. The Adelia Group of Tampa was in charge with visitors from Sebring.

The new group recently formed in Ypsilanti, Mich., has announced that it is holding closed meetings on Wednesdays at 8 o'clock at the Kaiser-Frazer chapel, Willow Run. Mailing address is P.O. Box 210, Ypsilanti, Mich.

Nearly 50 members of the Dubuque, Ia, Group, along with similar caravans from other cities went to the Amvets hall in Manchester recently to attend the first meeting of the group's there.

Emulate Mates—The Associates, so named because of the members' desire for close association to their A.A. mates has been formed in Santa Rosa, Cal., following the pattern of the Family Group in San Francisco. Meetings are held once a week in separate quarters, but in the same building as the Santa Rosa Group. After the meetings the two groups join for a social hour. Influenced by the article "Husband Sees Rich Rewards for Non-Alcoholics" in the April issue of *The Grapevine*, the members met early in May and drew up a series of "steps" similar to those of the Family Group, including the recognition of alcoholism as a disease and through study and meditation to aid the other in maintaining sobriety, to apply the 12 Steps to every day living, to give moral and material support to families of the group, and to substitute tolerance and understanding for resentment and fear.

Broadcasts Bring Response — Reaction from listeners to a series of broadcasts begun November 23 over station WCSH are reported as gratifying by A.A. members in Portland, Me. Heard at 1:15 Sundays, the series calls for nine broadcasts. . . . Portland A.A.s are also pleased with their progress in the last six months. A new club room was acquired about that time and has been furnished mostly by gifts. Coffee facilities, telephone and radio are available. . . . Meetings are held twice a week with an average attendance of about 30.

Watertown Reports—From "this high, dry and windy country," the Watertown, S. D., Group asks, "How about recognition of our group? We are 16 strong with periods of absolute sobriety ranging from one to 16 months." The address is P.O. Box 398, Watertown, S. D. . . . In this area the open meeting of the Bismarck-Mandan Chapter held recently received a large amount of newspaper publicity which has been helpful in making contacts.

No Customers—From San Diego, Cal., comes an account from a column in the *Daily Journal* which says, "A few evenings back as the Continental room of the Hotel San Diego was being prepared for a banquet, a barman

burst into the scene, hurried to the darkened bar off to one side and complained to waitresses within hearing that he hadn't been notified, had no chance to get extra help and had to try to service 500 people alone. An assistant manager heard his grumbling. 'I guess you don't know what banquet this is,' he told the barman. 'You can put your bottles away.' It was the annual dinner of A.A. The bar remained dark all evening."

Anniversaries Adding Up—The Orchard Grove Group was organized eight years ago as the first group on the west side and the second in Cleveland, O. A roundup of the old timers who contributed much to Cleveland's A.A. growth was held in Lakewood Community Center recently with the Lakewood and Lakewood-Clifton Groups collaborating to make a memorable meeting.

The fifth annual banquet sponsored by the Life Group of Grand Rapids, Mich., set a new attendance record of 165 at the Rowe Hotel where a turkey dinner was enjoyed and a member



from Chicago talked. In addition to representation from the seven Grand Rapids Groups, A.A.s came from Muskegon, Battle Creek, Kalamazoo, Allegan, Greenville and Saginaw. A member from each group was invited to speak briefly by the chairman, and the growth of A.A. in Western Michigan and unity of spirit were the favorite topics.

"Wichita did it again," it is triumphantly reported from that city in Kansas with regard to the third anniversary which drew about 350 persons, representative members from eight states. Included in the two day session were speeches by the founder of the Des Moines, Ia, Group, the founder of the Amarillo, Tex., Group, a woman member, and Dr. R. M. Gouldner, prominent non-A.A. Wichita physician and surgeon who has assisted the group.

In observance of its second anniversary the Wakefield, Nebr., Group met at the American Legion hall, after which there was a social hour with refreshments. At the evening banquet a steak dinner was served to

89 members, wives and guests, while an nine-piece orchestra provided music. . . . In connection with the observance it was recalled that the first meeting in the vicinity was held July 12, 1945, with four members and three visitors from the Sioux City, Ia, Group. After five meetings were held the group was disbanded, the members affiliating with the Sioux City Group. On January 17, 1946, meetings were resumed with five members from Pender, two from Wayne and two from Wakefield. Eight members from Sioux City assisted in getting the Pender-Wakefield Group started. Of these members six are still active and one has died. For about a year meetings were held in homes, after which meetings were held in Wakefield as being most centrally located of the towns represented which include Rosalie, Bancroft, Pender, Wakefield, Wayne, Pilger, Madison, Stanton, Norfolk, Pierce, Wausa, Bloomfield, Crofton, Hartington, New-castle and Ponca. Total active membership is 36, with four of more than two years' standing, three with 18 months or over and six a year or longer.

About 125 A.A. members and guests gathered in Lutheran Parish church, Waverly, Ia, to honor the Waverly, Tripoli, Allison, New Hampton and Clarks-ville members celebrating their second year. Dinner was served by the church women, while a member from Cincinnati was chairman and introduced a Minneapolis member who gave the address of the evening.

The Alconon Group of Ft. Wayne, Ind., had its first anniversary banquet at the YMCA. Seating space being limited, invitations were confined to those groups who had cooperated in an exchange of speakers and visitors. The speaker of the evening was a member from Indianapolis. Among those present were members of the Defiance, O., Warsaw, Lagro, Logansport, Muncie, Kendallville and Albion Groups.

Exchange Leadership — "Reciprocal A.A." is a new plan being tried by groups in the Long Beach, Cal., area, meaning that on a given date another group is requested to take over the meeting with leader, co-leader, speakers and others from the visiting group. Since there are some 80 to 100 groups within easy driving distance it is regarded as being possible to set up a long time program avoiding too frequent appearance of the same speakers. . . . The East Bay

(Continued on next page)

Group, which reports this plan to *The Grapevine* now has grown to 34. Since there are only 103 chairs available at the Naples hotel dining room and attendance is usually more than that, a set of "wall stretchers" or a division of the group may soon be necessary.

A.A. In Veterans Facility—What *The Grapevine's* correspondent believes to be the first group formed in a Veterans Bureau Facility was started recently at Mountain Home, Tenn., with the full cooperation of Col. Lee B. Harr and the staff doctors. The Johnson City Group helped in the organization which includes members from Maine to California. Meetings are held in the staff doctor's consulting room.

Cleveland Over 2,000 Mark—The result of the annual census conducted by the Cleveland, O., district office shows that there are now approximately 2,300 persons in Greater Cleveland actively participating in the A.A. program. This total is comprised of group membership figures submitted to the office by secretaries.

Boston Birthday—The Boston banquet celebrating the seventh anniversary of A.A. there drew a capacity attendance—800—at the Hotel Copley Plaza on Wednesday evening, Nov. 19. This sellout of banquet tickets was an indication of the strides A.A. itself has made. In the same hotel, 510 attended last year and 225 in 1945. A.A. co-founder, Bill W., discussed the 12 Points of Tradition. He told his audience "we will avoid any exclusiveness, material wealth, tempting alliances, controversy, professionalism, promotion and public pressure. We are weaker than the average and we need not take such risks. You and I, as alcoholics, can sit down and talk over our problems with our brothers and sisters—and that's all. The less we have to do with organization and prestige, the better."

Other speakers included A.A.s from Maine, New Hampshire and Connecticut. Special guests were the newly appointed members of Massachusetts Governor Bradford's Commission of the Study of Alcoholism which will serve for four years.

Helen B., the Boston secretary, reported a membership of 1,450 associated with the Boston office. Since March of 1946 when the Boston Central Service Committee of A.A. opened, membership of A.A. groups has mounted from 13 to 59 in Massachusetts, Maine and New Hampshire.

Massachusetts Notes—The East Milton Group held a pre-Christmas party on Sunday night, Dec. 14. There were presents, etc., and as a feature,

an "all-A.A. orchestra" provided the music for dancing . . . Southbridge, Group has become associated with Central Service Committee in Boston. Meetings are held Monday nights at 8:30 and is an outgrowth of Worcester No. 1 Group . . . Waltham Group has opened up with meetings on Friday nights at 8:30 at 712 Main St. . . . Attleboro Group has shifted its meeting hour from 8:30 to 8 p.m.

Reciprocity Move—Salem, Mass., Group put on an open meeting that packed the large hall in Town House Square on Friday night, Nov. 28, when the members of Manchester, Conn., Group conducted the meeting. Salem A.A.s had previously gone down to Manchester to put on a meeting there. The Rev. Fr. James P. Timmins of Manchester, a non-alcoholic but long a supporter of the A.A. group there, was the guest speaker in Manchester.

New Hampshire Jottings—East Jaffrey, a new group started several weeks ago, held an opening meeting in the Town Hall on Wednesday night, Dec. 3, with Massachusetts visitors providing all the speakers. Malden, South End, Woburn, Somerville, Quincy, Arlington, Medford, Cambridge, Fitchburg and other Bay State group members made the trip by auto to lend support. The group meets on Saturday nights at the Firemen's Hall at 8 p.m. . . . Nashua Group is holding its meetings on Sunday nights at 8 p.m. at the Church of Good Shepherd hall.

Boston Experiments—The Central Service Committee at Boston is letting delegates thresh out the method of running the All-Group meetings on Wednesday nights at 30 Huntington Ave., Boston, next year. Earlier this year, the old practice of having each group associated with Central Service conduct a meeting was followed and then some experiments were tried: "a married couples' night," "a women's night," and several "old-timers' night." Then the delegates switched to the appointment of individual A.A. members to have complete charge of the program and selection of speakers. This made for variety in speakers and enabled the meetings to get away from single group sponsorship. It was finally decided to finish out this year with selected chairmen or chairladies and then vote on what plan would be used next year.

Real Birthday Celebration—The members in Newburyport, Mass., had a gala time for themselves on the night of Nov. 30 when surrounding groups popped in to help the local members celebrate the first A.A. "birthday" of four of the Newburyport Group.

The Pleasures of Reading

The Musorgsky Reader, translated and edited by Jay Leyda and Sergei Bertensson (Norton, \$6).

Modeste Petrovich Musorgsky is known to most American music lovers by only a handful of works—his opera *Boris Godunov*, his orchestral revelry *Night on Bald Mountain*, and his *Pictures at an Exhibition*, either in its original piano form, or its various orchestrated versions, the work of later arrangers. Few would regard this limited output as the work of the greatest genius among Russia's many composers, yet he was just that.

The strangest figure among Russia's famous Five, Musorgsky's life span (1839-1881) covered the most exciting period in the development of Russia's own music. Yet his own life was singularly uninteresting. He did not have the flair of Tchaikowsky or Rimsky-Korsakow; there was no great romance to lend color to his fame; no spectacular escapades or junkets abroad in his life, and none of his pupils achieved sufficient fame to spread the gospel of their master. He had only two loves—himself, and the little brown jug of vodka.

Musorgsky received a military education, and became an officer of the Czar, but his restiveness soon caused his resignation, and his two later attempts at governmental service failed. His fondness for drink and his many excesses soon marked him as a Bohemian whose dominant passions and savage inclinations could brook no rest. The same brute qualities are exemplified in his music, he was a poet in music, expressing in his greatest melodies the passions and miseries of Russian humanity, but he never took the trouble to master the orchestral refinements of his art. Thus, his two operas, *Boris Godunov* and *Khovanshchina*, did not meet with favor until smoothed and polished by his friends. The same is true of his *Night on Bald Mountain*, and a lesser-known orchestral intermezzo. Though his compositions displayed daring originality and a gift of charming melodies, his harmonizations were not always skillful.

In this book, the translating editors tell us of Musorgsky's first faltering steps in the Balakirew circle, his growing distaste for military life, his progress in composing *Boris Godunov* and *Khovanshchina* and selling the poems of Heine and Goethe, as well as Russian contemporaries, to songlike melodies. Then come his fatal illness, and his tragic end. Through all this documentary evidence the dominant atmospheres are those of gaiety, oppression, and hysteria. In his own letters, Musorgsky did little or no complaining or whining. That was left to the others of the Five. More courageous was Musorgsky, whose life was the hardest -- for he was a sick man, penniless, unappreciated, and a slave to the little brown jug.

Here, then, is Russia's greatest musical genius, in a portrait which should appeal to all who feel drawn by the forces which control human destinies. Even those who are tone deaf, and never look a drink in their dreary lives, might feel something of the emotions which stormed and raged within this strange, elemental, bearded Russian malcontent.—*R.E.B., Greenwich tillage, N. Y.*





Now that the "Best Hiding Place" fun is ended, let's put our heads together and dream up another contest! To start things off, your Bottoms Up editor offers a subscription to *The A.A. Grapevine* to the reader who comes up first with THE idea. Then, we'll give another subscription to the winner of the contest! All set? Send your ideas for the new contest to the Bottoms Up Editor, *The A.A. Grapevine*, Box 328, Grand Central Annex, New York.

* * *

The last thing on earth we want is for this column to become the "grim and earnest" department of *The Grapevine*. We believe that most A.A.s like to laugh perhaps a little more than other people. Think of your whacky drinking experiences and send them along to us for publication here. We want to make this column YOUR column. So give out with those funny experiences!

* * *

An Akron, Ohio, A.A. writes in of a quick-thinking drunk in an Ohio police court. Seems that this party—a bill-dipping female—had been arrested for driving while drunk. She pleaded not guilty. Her defense was that she wasn't "driving" anybody's car. She said that she simply ran out of gas before she ran out of whisky and that the car stalled. Two men total strangers—were pushing the car when the cop arrested her. She admits she was steering the car but how could she be driving the car? The judge agreed with her.

* * *

Down in Virginia there's a story of a struggle by a drunk to get to Chicago. He started out at Charlottesville, Va., via the Chesapeake & Ohio railroad; arrived safely in his stateroom. After depositing his bags, he proceeded to the club car for a small drink. A lively party was in progress and our traveler joined up. At a late hour he returned to his stateroom; made ready for bed by getting into his pajamas. A knock sounded on the door. It was one of the boys from the club car who wanted someone to have a nightcap with him. Our friend promptly left his quarters and joined his pal in another car. The nightcap developed into a drinking party and our traveler passed out. Next morning he awakened in the men's room of the other car. He was still clad in pajamas. When he made his way to what should have been his car, he discovered that he was near Cleveland and that his clothes, bags, car and all were on the way to Chicago! Having no clothes, he sat down to figure out how he could leave the train in Cleveland. Finally, a bright idea came out of his

muddled head. Why not order an ambulance by telegraph? This arrangement was made and our traveler arrived at the rear entrance of a Cleveland hotel amid the clanking of an ambulance siren. We didn't learn whether he ever got to Chicago or not.

* * *

John D., of the Greenwich Village, N. Y., Group, who is a navigator for a trans-Atlantic airline, tells us of a startling discovery in Paris. He walked into Harry's Bar to watch the other boys have a drink. Looking over the joint, he found a huge beer pitcher which had been used for beer drinking bouts. An inscription beside the pitcher announced the current beer drinking champion. On closer observation, he was attracted to a red and yellow object nestling at the bottom of the pitcher. It was the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*.



* * *

H.G.H., of the Mt. Sterling, Ky., Group, explains high finance in the Blue Grass country: "For years I made regular trips to Lexington. On each visit I look 'just a bottle of beer' and ended up drunk. Each visit I would return home with a load of useless stuff as gifts for myself, the wife and children. The trip was always an expense and I never had anything to show for it. When I joined A.A., in Lexington, I made the trip every Thursday. I worked out a plan. I figured that \$20 was the cost of the weekly trip, judging from past experiences. My first A.A. visit called for expenditures of \$2 for railroad fare and about \$2.50 for meals. But I also spent \$4.50 for toys for my two grandchildren. When I returned home, the old lady was agreeably surprised to see me sober, and could not say: 'Why did you bring all that junk home?' When I told her that it cost me nothing, she asked if they were giving things away in Lexington. I explained that my usual expense was \$20; that this trip had cost less than \$10; therefore, that this trip didn't cost me ANYTHING! I can see that I will have the best financial year of my life."

* * *

. One of the mail boys at The Alcoholic Foundation says he saw A.A. go into action by accident. He was wrapping A.A. pamphlets for a regular mailing and a few copies accidentally landed in his overcoat pocket. When he arrived at home, one of the pamphlets fell from his pocket to the kitchen floor. His alcoholic uncle, who was visiting, picked it up and read it. All this happened several months ago and the mail boy swears that his uncle is still sober!



Sobriety is a Friend Worth Cultivating

From Topeka, Kansas

Through A.A. we first met sobriety and now it is the one thing we strive to always keep in mind. Not only in a personal and in a literal sense but also as a symbol—a symbol of everything that is good in life.

We like to think of sobriety as a cornucopia, a horn of plenty, held in the hand of that Higher Power from Whom all good things must flow. We like to think of it as the glowing torch held aloft by liberty; a guiding light. For to us sobriety is liberty; liberation from the chains of alcohol. It is also the token of a thousand other things; honesty, tolerance, humility and the Golden Rule. It is the very heart of A.A.

We did not begin to live the A.A. Program and the 12 Steps until we first were sober. We did not know how to ask for help and feel the handclasp of "the Man Upstairs" until sobriety introduced us to Him.

But best of all we like to look upon sobriety as a companion who walks with a hand on our shoulder, who even dictates as we write. He is our friend and councilor.

There are, however, several conditions that we should observe and fulfill. The first, that we should grow with and into A.A. and give our whole-hearted cooperation and unselfish support to all of its undertakings. Second, in order that our friend sobriety may live and thrive we should feed him on the thoughts and ideas that are offered at our weekly meetings. For us to miss a meeting is for our friend to miss a meal. By losing our A.A. contacts we might even starve our friend to death. We bring sobriety to the club room on other occasions, and he always gets a thought sandwich and a cup of ideas.

Sometimes of an evening when we may be feeling a little uneasy, jittery or blue, sobriety taps us on the shoulder and says, "Buck up, old man, I'm getting hungry, let's go up to the club for a snack." There he meets other sobrieties, tolerances and humilities and has a good time, while we sit and chat with fellow A.A.s.

We could go on telling many things about sobriety and we learn something new from him each day. For instance, we sometimes envision him as a warrior; this clubroom the field of tournament—here we have seen arrogance in its death throes, have observed self-pity weep and die. In this place selfishness, insincerity, dishonesty and a host of their ilk have met their doom. From here we have seen king alcohol slink away like a whipped cur. Here is the prize ring where sobriety meets all challengers and here is "the champ."—P.O.L.

Mail Call for All AAs at Home or Abroad

Letters to this department are invited on any subject pertinent to A.A. Due to space limitations you are asked to hold your letters to a maximum of 350 words.

Only initials will be published unless the writer authorizes use of his first name as identification for A.A. friends.

The A.A. Grapevine will not divulge the full name of any writer but will forward A.A. communications addressed to the writers of letters published here.—The Editors

Lei's Mind Our Manners

From Si. Mary's, Ohio

Why is it that the dominating alcoholic tendency toward procrastination seems to remain with many of us long after we have started making an attempt toward the new way of life? We have in mind right now the guy or gal who is contacted by mail to lead a meeting in another town. The secretary sends the invitation, encloses a stamped addressed postal card for reply. No reply is forthcoming, even to a telegram when the time is getting short. So the secretary, in desperation, contacts someone else. After rearranging his schedule to fit our needs, the substitute shows up only to find that the person originally contacted is there, blithely explaining to the secretary that he "just couldn't get around to answering." For the briefest moment our old inclination is to answer, "Nuts."

Somehow we can't figure how this breach would pass Emily Post under the good manners chapter. It indicates laziness, inconsideration for others, and can be just plain embarrassing to everyone. If we are uncertain at the time we are contacted, at least we should answer the invitation and explain that.

We didn't mean to editorialize but this situation has developed so often that it might be timeful to call it to attention. Get on the ball when you get an invitation to lead and let the chairman or secretary know your situation. Believe me, he will appreciate it.—T.H.

Scientific Fact

From Shawnee, Okla.

Life is such that a man has a choice of doing right or wrong regardless of his teachings, knowledge or conscience.

If his desire to quit drinking is greater than any desire; if he prays for Divine guidance in this matter and if he studies and practices all the Steps to recovery from alcoholism as set forth in the program of Alcoholics Anonymous, we all wonder why he slips.

For we learn in A.A. that, although we quit

only for today, that, fact nevertheless makes the program "fool proof," seemingly or theoretically, if we live it every day.

But no matter what the treatment may be for alcoholism, some human beings by their very nature are prone to forget. After a year or more of sobriety certain ones of us get curious to see if we can handle a few drinks, even though it has been proved beyond all doubt that we cannot.

Nevertheless, this doubt has come over some, including myself and it was not because I did not study and practice the program and attend the meetings regularly and willingly.

Furthermore, many who have slipped cannot tell you exactly why they look that first drink. Perhaps they forgot for the moment what they had learned in A.A. More probably they shut that information off temporarily, even though it was not really forgotten.

There is one thing that cannot be forgotten if we are not to "slip"—the fact that an alcoholic cannot successfully take that first drink. This is not a suggestion. It is a scientific law regarding human behavior as it pertains to an alcoholic.—W.L.G.

Some of the Answers

From St. Petersburg, Fla.

Knowledge of "answers" never made anyone slip—it was failing to practice the answers known.

There is no premium on ignorance in A.A.—that is why we have the Big Book, which contains all the answers needed.

A.A. does not postulate a gloomy, tedious life of self-fighting—far from it! We have merely learned the common sense value of substituting new and better pleasures for our old, and highly dangerous ones, acquired in abandonment to alcohol.

Instead of poisoning the brain, we cultivate and nourish its productivity.

Instead of courting a dismal hangover, we awaken refreshed and gay.

Instead of inviting financial disasters, we spend our funds judiciously, with an eye for sensible saving.

Instead of repealed borrowing, we are far more apt to lend.

Instead of inward condemnation and petulance, we have access to A.A. fellowship, and "at-oneness" with a Higher Power, fully able to aid and cheer us, at all times. To know these answers is not to know all the answers—that's true—but it must be a lapse of sanity to choose

the worst, when the best is always available to an honest alcoholic: in A.A. membership.—Walt K.

Seeing Is Believing

From Defiance, Ohio

During attendance at the seventh anniversary of Toledo, Ohio, A.A. I heard a very fine speaker from Chicago. In the latter part of his talk he related how he had been asked by a prospective member—"How do I know A.A. will work?" After some thought he replied; he gave an answer concluding that if anyone else had an answer to his question, he would like to hear it. Such an answer look place in my mind and I thought perhaps it might be of interest to *Grapevine* readers.

How do I know A.A. will work? Because others have found that with an honest effort to by-pass for a short time the stumbling block (alcohol) that for years had caused them trouble, they found happiness they never thought possible before.—R.W.C.

A New Hook

From Hoosick Falls, N. Y.

Some time I would like to write a book. The name of it would be: *I've Done, It Again.*

For years on end this was the remark (only stronger) that I would make on regaining consciousness after the breaking point of a binge was reached and I awoke.

As I slowly opened my eyes and took in the surroundings. I knew I had done it again. If I was in the little back room reserved for me for these occasions then I would say, "God, what am I to do?"

Their was then no answer. My friends said, "You should not drink." Doctors told me the same, ministers and psychiatrists tried but they did not understand me, and no one ever said, "You are an alcoholic!"

Sure, I wanted to stop. My wife left and took the children. The boss said this is it or else. I didn't want to be as I was but I could not stop.

This went on and on. as we know what happens to an alcoholic! Then the D.T.'s, shakes and attempted suicide.

Then came the decision! Not a promise as before. I went to a hospital to do something about it.

While I was there, my wife found A.A. for me by inquiring at a "nut house." They said A.A. is working for such as he. He is a sick

person- and that helped her understand. So two fellows came to see me.

Here were two men who told me they had been just as bad or worse. At last here was proof that I wasn't the only guy who drank just the way I did. I thought I was alone, but now I have plenty of company. When I came into A.A., there were 2,000 in the country. Now there are better than 50,000.

After the hospital I began to live. I saw for the first time in 20 years that the grass was green, the sky was blue, the flowers had colors and, above all, that there would be happy expressions in the faces of my little family and people about me.

Much water has gone over the dam since I made my decision, humbly, to a Power greater than I.

Now I wake in the morning with the thought, "I've done it again," but now it's 'I've done another day without drinking.'—W.O.R.

Rose for a Thorn

From Jacksonville, Florida

One month ago, I called A.A.

Words are so weak and inadequate when I try to use them to express my gratitude for the wonderful comfort, strength, courage and renewed hope brought to me by you and your friends through the A.A. program.

There is a sweet, sacred something in the knowledge that we are brothers and sisters under the skin and that we are all of one mind, seeking the same help, one from the other and from God.

From the first meeting I attended the currents of my whole life have changed. Instead of a thorn, there is a rose; instead of a desert, a fertile field.

The 12 Steps are easy for me to accept. God grant me the grace to keep and abide by them each new day.

The loving help, the encouragement and deep incentive received from each meeting attended inspires this little message of gratitude.—A.A.

Newlywed Sobriety

From Muskogee, Okla.

Yes, it is an A.A. marriage, which places sobriety at the head of the list of "musts" for the newlyweds. We found this happiness in sobriety. By the grace of God and Alcoholics Anonymous, we plan each 24 hours on a sobriety basis for we do not wish ever to lose the serenity we have found.—W.C.P.

A Word for Little Rock

from Jonesboro, Ark.

What's all this about Little Rock? I went to them 14 months ago for help and found a group more than willing—with no rules or restrictions, only that I have a sincere desire to quit drinking.

I returned home with a new outlook on life for me and a way to maintain sobriety. We formed a group here in Jonesboro, Ark., in January, 1947. We, as a group, have visited Memphis, Little Rock, and Blytheville.

I don't have any chips on my shoulder. I got help from all of them and realize a lot is being accomplished. Far be it from me to criticize as I am still trying to clear up my own house. I only hope I can do part of what was offered me.—Pete F.

Five Departments

From Hattiesburg, Miss.

Thank heaven thousands of us have come to realize that we were compelled to face life in a crisis; we had to change radically and take life a little more seriously. For a while we may find ourselves spiritually unprepared to surmount a major crisis in life. Some collapse, and have lost their nerve. I have found that I cannot fly through life like a butterfly. I find that life will not permit me to live for enjoyment alone. Yet, I am happy already in my 12th Step work than ever before in my entire life. We should all live a life that allows us to develop our minds, and

our inner selves, resources and potentialities, in order to improve our characters..

I am not advocating the life of a Puritan by any means. For we certainly do not want joy and laughter ruled out of our lives. Remember that the hermit is not the highest type of being, after all. So, get out and take part in some civic club. To safeguard your continued arid state, take all the active part in 12th Step work you possibly can. I made several slips before I found out why I slipped. I was too lazy to take an active enough part. Now I go looking for it and in a very short time have learned to love it. Already I am made happy to see ex-alkies joyous, full of fun and good humor, adjusting themselves to the exigencies of life and to each other.

I love to see them become broadminded, tolerant and outspoken. but remember, fellow alcoholic, to try to avoid the discipline of life, or to solve our problems through escape in day dreams, superficial pleasures, and too much excitement is disastrous. For, after all, there is no such thing as escape. Our problems must be solved or we are defeated. Unsolved problems only pile up on us and produce a tension within us that causes many of us to go through a wingo or bender. Life demands that we grow, especially we alcoholics. We must learn to grow spiritually, mentally, physically, socially and financially. All of these five departments must be developed to insure the utmost success and happiness in life.—L.P.P.

Still Amazed

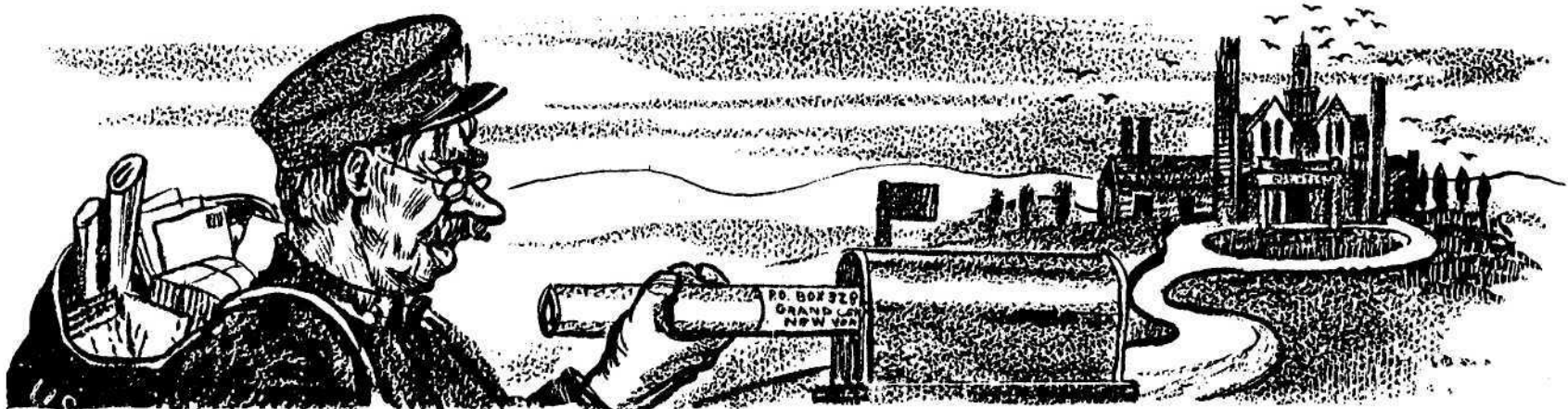
From Tampa, Florida

I entered A.A. in Mt. Vernon, New York, in October, 1945.

As I look back it must have been the grace of God that brought me to that A.A. meeting in Mt. Vernon, as I was as drunk as I ever was in my life and remember nothing of that meeting.

Since that unforgettable night I'm in constant amazement at the blessings God continues

(Continued on next page)



to bestow on me. Every day, when I'm faced with a difficult decision and ask God for guidance to do His will, the right answer always comes to my mind (thanks to God and A.A. tracking).

I find the greatest help from A.A. teaching in the 3rd Step of the program and in trying to live all 12 Steps on a 24-hour plan.—A.A.

A.A. in London

From Portsmouth, Hampshire, England

It's rather difficult to tell you about A.A. here. I live about 90 miles from the London Group, but do get up there occasionally. I leave Portsmouth at 3:30 P.M. and arrive back at 7 next morning. I have to catch a train at 2:15 (milk train) A.M.

The London Group really started in the Dorchester Hotel early in the year with five Englishmen and four visiting firemen from the States.

Here the problem of drink is not approached like it is in the States—for instance, we tried to put a very carefully worded ad in the newspaper and, believe it or not, the only paper that would accept it was *The Financial Times*. The secretary of the London Group is an indefatigable worker (a Canadian) who has travelled about quite a lot seeing prospects. But we are so far apart. We have had several nibbles and have two new members who seem to be making the grade. You people in the States don't know how lucky you are being able to go to a meeting most any night you wish and always being in constant touch with each other. This is the soberest town I was ever in. I haven't seen a drunk and disorderly person in this joint yet and I have been here 10 months.

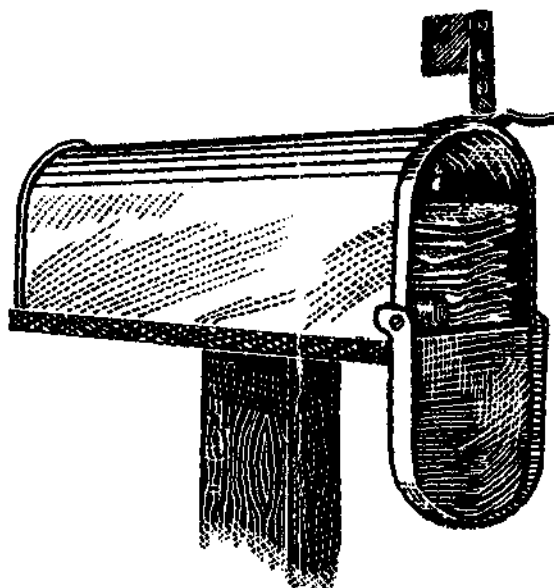
On the rare occasions I get up to London to a meeting I always stress the importance of a regular meeting at least once a week. Now they meet every Thursday at the home of a member who lives nearly in the center of London. They have succeeded in interesting a couple of doctors and a Catholic bishop in A.A.

I hope to attend another meeting early in December and will try and write a more concise letter next time. In the meantime thank you again for all you have done and if possible please remember me to the group in (I think) 42nd Street—they meet, or used to, last December, in a bank building. That was the only group I had a chance to visit on my way home. I came from Bermuda to New York, Baltimore, Washington, night boat to Norfolk, Va. and home on an aircraft carrier. So cheerio! —H.V.W.

All Things Are Possible

From Manhattan

A year ago I reached my first year of sobriety.



I faced more problems and difficult situations than ever before in my life. I can look back now and see that the reason I thought I was having more trouble in spite of staying sober was only because for the first time I was really trying to do something about my life. I was facing situations instead of escaping them.

A year ago I earnestly took the 4th Step and made a searching and fearless moral inventory. I wonder how many in A.A. realize that "sober" not only means "habitually temperate in the use of alcoholic beverages," as defined in the dictionary, but also: "not affected by passion or prejudice, well balanced." I had thought that I was possessed of all these qualifications, in spite of personal difficulties, until suddenly I was shaken out of my complacency. I went into a mental tail-spin for weeks. I was anything but sober in my thinking. I actually believed it was because I had helped or tried to help the "wrong people."

Since then I have come to realize there are no "wrong people." I can't blame my wrong thinking on them. True, I had tried to play God and used poor judgment many times. But the very people I blamed and criticized were just as necessary to my growth as the many others who have helped me in and out of A.A. Now instead of criticizing others for "lack of quality in their sobriety," I praise them for the progress they have made. I know now we can't judge others by our own standards. Progress is relative. As Bill says, "I must never be angry at the unreasonableness of sick people." I will go even further and say, "We must never be angry at people." We can't afford to be. For whenever we hold any bitterness or resentment towards anyone, we are bound by our own limitations. We block our own growth.

It has taken me two years to learn to apply Christian principles in all my affairs. Two years of much wrong thinking, discouragement,

bitterness, self-righteousness. But now as I go into my third year of A.A., I can truthfully say, for the first time in my life, I have no enmities. Life now seems worthwhile. Tackling one problem at a time will lead to growth. Incidentally, we can't be content with just a little growth here and there. This is definitely a never-ending program. All changes have to be made from within. I know it can be done. I know that with God all things are possible; and with A.A. it's a cinch.--M.O.

'THE GOOD MEN DO LIVES AFTER THEM'

from Los Angeles, Calif.

Received your reminder saying that our subscription has expired. My husband, who was the subscriber, has passed away, and I would like to take this opportunity to tell you that being a member of the wonderful A.A. organization brought, him 27 months of happiness and peace of mind. Naturally it gave those gifts to me, too.

I am trying to carry on the 12th Step work where he left off. Being a non-alcoholic, I do not have very much scope, but at least I can help to steer the faltering footsteps of those who need and want the Program towards A.A. where a sponsor can then take over.

I shall always be grateful to Alcoholics Anonymous, not only because my husband got his sobriety, but because it has given me a new sense of values. When we attended our first meeting, I discovered that the program was applicable to me.

I hope that the program eventually reaches every hamlet all over the universe. Its great message of hope is badly needed by everyone in this material world of ours.—H.C.T.

* * *

From Lynchburg, Va.,

My father died June 23. He always enjoyed receiving *The A.A. Grapevine* while he lived.

My sister and I will be grateful always for what A.A. meant to him in the last year of his life, and to us for him. He was always the sweetest, kindest, most loving of fathers, but was harassed all his life by alcoholism until he met A.A. It brought him peace and serenity and made that year a benediction to us who had suffered with and for him many times. We grieve over his passing but his happiness in his last few months gives us much solace.

A.A. has our interest and affection. We shall always feel we are part of the group for his sake.—D.W.

14 Pointers To A.A. Success

From Manhattan, N. Y.

If I am to stay sober, I must:

1. Cultivate continued acceptance of the fact that my choice is between unhappy, drunken drinking and doing without one small drink.
2. Cultivate enthusiastic gratitude that I have had the good fortune to find out what was wrong with me before it was too late.
3. Expect as being both natural and inevitable that for a period of time (it may be a long one) I will recurrently experience: a conscious, nagging craving for a drink as such; a sudden, but compelling, impulse just to take a drink; a craving, not for a drink as such, but for the soothing glow and warmth a drink or two once gave me.
4. Remember that the times when I don't want a drink are the times in which to build up the strength not to take one when I do want it.
5. Develop and rehearse a daily plan of thinking and acting by which I will live that day without a drink, regardless of what may upset me or how hard the old urge for a drink may hit me.
6. Not allow myself to think: "Isn't it a pity or an injustice that I can't take a drink like so-called normal people."
7. Not allow myself either to think or to talk about any real or imagined pleasure I once did get from drinking.
8. Not permit myself to think a drink or two would make some bad situation better, or at least easier to live with. Substitute the thought that one drink will make it worse, one drink will mean a drunk.
9. Minimize my situation. Think, as I see here and there a blind or otherwise handicapped person, how joyful such a person would be if his problem could be solved by just not taking one little drink today. Think gratefully of how lucky I am to have so simple and small a problem.
10. Cultivate and woo enjoyment of sobriety. Catalog and recatalog: how good it is to be free of shame, mortification and self-condemnation; how good it is to be free of fear of the consequences of a drunk just ended, or of the coming drunk you have never before been able to prevent; how good it is to be free of what people have been thinking and whispering about you, and of their mingled pity and contempt; how good it is to be free from fear of yourself.
11. Catalog and recatalog the positive enjoyments of sobriety, such as: the simple ability to eat and sleep normally, and to wake up glad I am alive, sober yesterday, and glad I have the privilege of staying sober today; the ability

MUSINGS FROM THE BACKBAR

From Akron, Ohio

"I wonder what all these pigeons have in common that keeps them sober. What's the common denominator for sobriety in A.A.?"

My friend Joe, with whom I shared a downtown office at that time—buck in 1945—looked up from what I thought was his work to ask the question. It was typical of our day, spending half our time talking A.A. And I might add, for a good liberal education in A.A., just share an office with one of its more rabid members.

It probably was discouraging to our boss, but most enlightening to us. At that time Joe was about four years old in A.A.; I was five.

Anyhow, there was his question:

WHAT IS THE COMMON DENOMINATOR OF A.A. SOBRIETY?

Before continuing to read this, you might kick that one around in your mind for a minute or two. Then see what you think of the answer we finally came up with.

We decided that the only way we could arrive at an intelligent conclusion was to examine personalities. We wrote on a sheet of paper the names of some 15 men who had been not only successfully, but contentedly sober, for four years or more, and some of them at that time could look back on 11 years of sobriety.

After each name we put down the activity that seemed most important to the owner's sobriety.

A. was a "meeting-goer." At least five nights a week he attended a meeting somewhere.

13. was the semi-religious type, a great believer in prayer. Of the Roman Catholic faith, he was forever attending retreats, going regularly to mass, and never missing confession.

C. got his greatest inspiration out of reading. Upon hearing of an inspirational book he'd be off to a bookstore to buy it.

D. spent hours in meditation and introspection. The 10th Step was the greatest of them all, in his book.

E. haunted the A.A. hospital ward, seldom missing a day talking to the patients, some-

to face whatever life may dish out with peace of mind, self respect and a full possession of all my faculties.

12. Cultivate a helpful association of ideas. I associate a drink as being the single cause of all the misery, shame and mortification I have ever known: I do this ad infinitum. I associate a drink as being the only thing that can destroy my new-found happiness, and take from me my self-respect and peace of mind. I do this ad infinitum.

13. Cultivate gratitude: gratitude that so much good can be mine for so small a price; grati-

times getting there two or three times a day.

F. was the "get out and do it" type. He was the typical George of "Let George do it." If money was needed to help a needy member's family, F. look up a collection. If someone was needed to shop for coffee and doughnuts for a meeting, F. got out his market basket.

But it proved nothing. C., for example, hadn't been inside a church for years. F. hadn't read three books in his life. A. did precious little meditating, and D. managed to get to a meeting about once every two weeks.

Yet every last, living one of them was successfully and happily sober!

Was the common denominator faith? Or humility? Or charity? Was it strict adherence to the 24-hour plan? Was it work? Or, on the other hand, fear?

As we pondered each answer we would find one or more on the list was not particularly wealthy in that virtue.

Finally one of us came up with it, and to this day I have not found a more satisfactory answer:

Everyone of them put his sobriety ahead of everything else in life!

Everyone of them put first things first!

If there is a single key to sobriety as practiced in A.A., I believe that is it.

Nearly nine years ago my wife joined A.A. for me. It didn't, as you well know, take. I didn't come in out of the wet for two more years. In fact, during that two years I completely forgot there was such a thing as A.A.

In that first introduction I spent two hours or so one night in Doctor Bob's office—and he did all the talking.

Then two years later I was hospitalized, started to attend meetings. And strange as it may seem, the only thing that came back to me out of two hours of Doctor Bob's conversation was that one phrase:

"Put first things first!"

And if you can convince yourself that sobriety is the very first thing in your life, you can pretty safely look ahead to a full life.

I'm not just guessing at it. I know!—E. W.

tude that I can trade away just one drink for all the happiness sobriety gives me; gratitude that A.A. exists and that I found out about it in time; gratitude that I am only the victim of a disease called alcoholism, that I am not a degenerate, a moral weakling, the self-elected victim of a vice or a person of doubtful sanity; gratitude that because others have done it, I can in time bring it to pass that I won't want or miss the one drink I am doing without.

14. Seek out ways to help other alcoholics and remember the first way to help others is to stay sober myself.—J.S.B.

Reference Library — THE ECHOING GREEN

(Following is an excerpt from *The Echoing Green* by Eleanor Estes; copyright, 1917 by Eleanor Estes; reprinted by permission of the Macmillan Company.)

One evening Poppa said, "All right, Edie, you get the hell out of the kitchen and Jemmie and I will do the dishes, eh, Dutch?" Jemmie nodded. Poppa was going to wash and Jemmie dry. This was the first time she could remember. Poppa washing the dishes. It was an unusual occasion. Poppa was in a good humor and talked about the darkies and hummed "Massa's in de cold, cold ground," and as he talked and washed she wiped the dishes, and as she wiped each dish she carried it to the pantry to put it on its proper shelf. "Why don't you stack them on the table and then carry the whole pile to the pantry at once?" Poppa asked her. "You'd save steps."

"Cuz," said Jemmie.

"Cuz why?"

"Cuz I like to do it this way," she said. She did not like to wait while Poppa washed the next dish. The walk to the pantry filled the gaps.

Poppa certainly was in a good humor, he smiled at her and said, "You're just like I am. Like to do a thing a certain way, and do it that way, that's all there is to it. See? Our forefingers are made the same, that is why."

Jemmie smiled back at him. This was the scene she had always evoked in her imagination, Poppa good-natured, and she and he alone, and she'd say as quick as she had said to Momma about the button, she'd say, "Poppa, please don't drink any more." It would not be necessary to go into any long speeches such as she sometimes planned in the nighttime. All she would have to do was to say these few words. It shouldn't be so hard, she assured herself, while Poppa went into the apple pies on the Housatonic. Here she was, eleven years old. And was Alice afraid of anything? No. So she shouldn't be. Besides there was last winter with the button. She had had this thing on her mind so long that she should tell someone about the button she had swallowed, and the longer she had not told it, the harder it was to tell. But in the end she just opened her mouth and let the words out, "I swallowed a button. Will I die?" There she was just walking along the street with Momma, going over to Aunt Gabbie's one cold night last winter, and suddenly blurting out about the button. With passionate relief she heard Momma say, "Oh, but that button has been gone long, long ago." It hadn't stayed inside her at all, like Jemmie thought; her mysterious system had got rid of it years ago, probably the next day after she swallowed it, according to Momma. At these liberating words she had been suffused with immeasurable love and gratitude. "Look," she thought, "all I have to do is tell Momma,



and fear just goes away." What she should do, if she was scared of anything, was tell Momma right away, not wait four years. It had been on the tip of her tongue, but she just had never been able to say it, like now, "Poppa, don't drink." Three words, or you could even leave out "Poppa" and it could be, "Don't drink." Two words. They hollered in Jemmie's mind, the unsaid words; it was a wonder Poppa did not hear them without her opening her mouth.

Well, here she had a chance to tell him alone in the kitchen, like her and Momma alone there in the nighttime. So now, as she placed a glass on the pantry shelf, she said to herself, "When I go back for the next dish, I'll tell him." And her heart thumped against her ribs. but he said, "Dutch, how many kisses do you owe me?" So she smiled and said with a pert upward thrust of her face, "Twenty-nine." "Uh-uh, cheating," he said. "It's one hundred and twenty-nine." And so that game was on, with the pretended dispute about the number of kisses, and though she played the game in frantic anguish, thinking to break into it with what she had to say, the dishes were all washed and dried and put away, and the words were still not said.

She went outdoors to the front porch, feeling sad; a dismal sense of failure engulfed her. Somehow she was beginning to think she just never could talk to Poppa about not drinking. Maybe when she was eighteen she could, even sixteen, maybe next year when she would be

twelve. "Yes, that's it, when I am twelve I'll have the courage," she thought. Then she sank into sadness, it seemed such a hard thing to do. "If I were Alice I would have the courage," she thought. "I'd just blurt it out and it would be said."

No Froth on the Tea At Dublin's First Birthday

From Dublin, Ireland

A dinner was held at the County Shop November 27, when 33 members, their wives and friends got together. Many of us looked around furtively to see if anyone was noticing us pouring water into our glasses and one or two absentmindedly attempted to blow the froth off the tea. But a leal happy evening, which spun out far later than we had realized, was spent by us all. We led off with a cable from C. and a special message written to our own group by Bill. These had a grand reception. Then our founder spoke of A.A. and in particular of the invaluable advice, aid, information and practical assistance received from The Foundation -so far away, yet so closely in touch.

Our doctor advanced the proposition that alcoholism is not heredity from a family sense but is from a racial point of view. He said Poles and Irish were the two peoples most addicted to alcoholism.

A musical performance finished with Auld Lang Syne, and the party reluctantly dispersed.

The keynote of the party was the surprisingly happy atmosphere- and the "we must have more of this" altitude. Our thanks to A.A. for giving 33 men and women an opportunity of having their return to society and for recovery itself.

It wasn't a large number judged by American parties, yet we all felt that behind those 33 of us hovered the spirit of happiness engendered by all the 50,000 in A.A.

A happy Christmas and New Year—and may we have the pleasure of seeing a lot of you in Dublin in 1948.— S.M.

