

September 1952

*Editorial* Sing a song of September, and (beside harvest moons and the gentler side of summer's weather) there must ring one clear, compelling bell-note. . .back to school and back to work. Vacations are over, the old order returneth, the grim facts of nine long months replace whatever fancies held us through June, July and August.

Within AA, there is the return of the regulars to the old familiar meeting places; and there are plans for annual functions; and a feeling of greater security. We are all back together again.

And for many of us, perhaps, there is a September need to listen to a bell-note ... a call back to school within ourselves. Back to fundamentals and back to the simplicity of the AA program as it began, as it got the first hundred sober.

Fourteen years ago this September, the three R's of recovery from alcoholism were being readied for print. Three years before, two coffee cups in two wavering hands in an Akron, Ohio kitchen ... Now, in 1938, Doctor Bob and Bill have put into written words some of the experience, some of the answers that 98 alcoholics and themselves had used. They had proved by their own miraculous and continued sobriety that "there is a solution."

Two chapters ... and then by January, 1939, nine more ... and case histories of those recovered, those rehabilitated, drunks. "Personal Stories," they modestly called these first testimonials... . and a scant half-dozen were in the 400 multi-litho paper-bound "experimental" copies of the book that were timorously shown to doctors, sociologists, clergymen.

By April, 1939, the die was cast. The infant was born, the beacon lighted. The book *Alcoholics Anonymous* came off a printing press. A mere 5,000 copies in search of "the million who don't yet know," Hard covers, yellow-and-red jacket, black type on 398 white pages. Reality from a desperate dream of that little band of 100 sober souls who were pledged to carry the message that others might find this new way out.

"Works Publishing, Inc." was listed as the publisher (a name from the simplicity of "Well, it works!") and from that first fledgling edition there have followed 195,000 copies in thirteen more printings.

September . . . back to school . . . back to work. Well, for those who first felt the helping hand of AA through the Big Book, this autumnal month has three R's of special AA meaning ... Readin', Rememberin' and Rededication.

For those West Coast early-birds who grasped the first Big Book to come over the mountains ... for the Yukon prospector who found a copy in an oil drum and started an Eskimo group ... for that staunch and rugged AA individualist who can (and does) say "I'm dry six years and never yet opened the book!" . . . and hopefully, for him or for her whose trembling hands and blurred eyes will tonight first look into the easy pages...

For all, the *Grapevine* herewith inaugurates a monthly service; extracts from the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*.

As alcoholics and as members of AA, we choose for the quotations this title . . . "Lest We Forget."

