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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 everywhere. Individual opinions expressed here are not, necessarily, those of A.A. as a whole.

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Happy Vacation, With a Few Safeguards

ICELAND AND SWEDEN NOW HAVE A.A. GROUPS

The following groups reported their organization during the month of May:

CANADA — Duncan, B.C.; Toronto, Ont. (Rose-dale Group).

ICELAND — Keflavick.

SWEDEN — Boras.

ALABAMA — Eufaula.

ARIZONA — Benson; Kingman.

ARKANSAS — Siloam Springs.

CALIFORNIA — Burbank (Magnolia Park Group); Corona; Crescent City; Dorris; Downey (Paramount Family Group); San Francisco (St. Francis Men's Group and South of Market Group); Santa Maria.

CONNECTICUT — Waterbury (24 Club).

FLORIDA — Lakeland; New Smyrna Beach; Tampa (Our Group).

INDIANA — Indianapolis (12th Step Group); Kendallville (Noble County Group); Ft. Wayne (Wayne Group).

IOWA — Sioux City (Thursday Night Group).

LOUISIANA — Maplewood (Calcasieu Parish Group).

MAINE — Lubec; Rockland.

MASSACHUSETTS — Jamaica Plain; South Boston; Worcester (Group No. 3).

MICHIGAN — Allegan; Cheboygan.

MISSOURI — St. Joseph (Downtown Group).

NEW HAMPSHIRE — Nashua; Portsmouth.

NEW JERSEY — Belleville; Newton.

NEW MEXICO — Hobbs.

NEW YORK — Jackson Heights, L. I.; Jamestown (Alanon Group and Women's Group); New

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SO, you're going to take a vacation, we hope.

Well then, you know, by this time in You know, for instance, that alcohol gasoline and beer. You know that high dives when drunk mean a nose dive; that the fish that bites on a worm isn't as dumb as you are if you start nibbling, because the fish doesn't know any better.

You know, too, that no real golf course, or at least no course that you should be playing, has a 19th hole. The course stops at the 18th, and you should start counting from one again. And the wise A.A., when he stops for the pause that refreshes makes sure that the drink is something that really refreshes, not regresses. (That's no

A.A., certain unchanging facts, we also hope. and salt water don't mix, any more than ad — make it buttermilk if you wish, but just don't make it you-know-what).

Vacation time can be and is meant to be pleasant, relaxing and fun. It won't be for any A.A. who permits it to get him off the beam.

A few simple precautions have helped many an A.A. to get the fullest enjoyment out of a vacation even though far from the home group and temporarily cut off from the usual A.A. connections.

1. Remember that the axiom, "Once an alcoholic always an alcoholic," holds in any locality in the world and is just as true at the seashore as atop the Rocky Mountains.

2. Before leaving, get the addresses of the groups nearest to the place or places you are going to visit.

3. Re-adopt, or carry on, the 24-hour plan.

4. Read a little now and then along the way, or whenever possible, from A.A. literature or kindred books.

5. Drop a postcard, or if more energetic, a letter, to some A.A. back home. You don't even have to mention the subject. Writing a few words of greeting will help to keep the A.A. ties strong for you.

6. While loafing, take a mental inventory of how much you have gained since you stopped drinking.

7. Remind yourself of how much you stand to lose if you take the first drink.

8. Take conscious notice of how pleasant it

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WHERE'D YOU HIDE IT?

What was your favorite place for hiding the bottle? Did you ever have one that wasn't finally discovered?

The A.A. Grapevine is herewith announcing:

MY BEST HIDING PLACE CONTEST

If you were an ingenious and resourceful bottle hider, you may win a handsome two-quart cork or one of the Straight-As-An-Arrow Co.'s shiny new corkscrews.

Confess, or brag about, your best hiding place or places, in a letter addressed to the Bottoms Up Editor, The A.A. Grapevine, Box 328, Grand Central Annex, New York, N. Y.

The cleverest hiding places revealed will be illustrated by A.A. artists in subsequent issues.

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.

EDITORIAL:

On the 9th Step

"Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others."

This one sounds simple. And, true, it does not involve some of the more complicated mental probing required by several of the other Steps.

Having already made a list, in applying the 8th Step, "of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all," the path is clearly defined with all stops plainly marked. All we have to do now is start doing.

But the "doing" is not easy. It takes considerable courage to confess a wrong, even in private, and much more courage to confess it to the person against whom the wrong was committed.

The list very likely includes one or two previous employers whom we deceived in one way or another; friends whose friendship we abused; relatives whose sense of blood obligations we exploited; the mate whose trust, patience and persistent hopes we flaunted. To each we owe a debt, large or small, and merely saying "we're sorry" does not discharge the debt.

In fact, we actually do not have the right to the inward ointment that comes from saying we're sorry, unless we also have within us a sincere willingness to repay in full, whatever effort this may cost, and an equally sincere determination not to repeat the wrongs against anyone.

Most of us, by the time we reach A.A., have been going around for a great many years saying "we're sorry" after each wrong and lightly thinking that these words made everything all right again. We've been annoyed if someone did not seem to accept our apologies as meaning much. How many can hark back and hear himself saying, petulantly, "What's the matter with him? I said I was sorry, didn't I?"

The 8th and the 9th Steps call for something more substantial, more tangible, more meaningful than words spoken casually. If it's money that is owed, it has to be paid back to the limit of ability to pay. If it's a debt of meanness, it has to be paid off with kindness. If it's neglect, as it is so often of one's family, then it can be balanced only by consideration and thoughtfulness. And let's not forget that debts of this kind — of neglect, thoughtlessness, mistreatment — have been piling up for years. They can't be paid off in two weeks.

The qualifying phrase, "except when to do so would injure them or others," should prevent anyone from being righteously bullheaded, or stupidly "noble" about this. We are scarcely making amends if we dig something out of the past in which we had a part that will hurt someone else. The privilege of confession does not extend that far.

A helpful guide in the application of the 9th Step is the reminder that by making amends, where we can, we are doing no one else a favor; a favor is done us if those we have wronged accept our offer.

ONE DOCTOR—AN A.A.—TO ANOTHER

from Austin, Texas

(The following letter is reprinted by special permission of Dr. A.S.T., physician and surgeon of Seminole, Texas. It was written to a doctor in Abilene, Texas, in response to his inquiry concerning the approach to and the treatment of two alcoholic patients under his care.—Editor.)

"Dear Sir:

"Your request for information regarding Alcoholics Anonymous has been forwarded to me from the Fort Worth Group for reply. They probably felt that I, as an M.D., could better explain certain points to another medical man.

"In the beginning, let me introduce myself so that you can understand my altitude, my deep interest in this organization. I am 36 years of age, a graduate of one of the best medical schools. I own and operate my own hospital. I do general surgery and medicine, and have no apologies to make concerning my professional ability and training. I also am an alcoholic. This latter part I believe I have known for several years, but only recently would I admit it. It was only after a week with the group in Fort Worth that I really began to understand alcoholism. The things that I pass on to you are a combination of known facts and my observations.

"I regret to state that you as a non-alcoholic will never restore an alcoholic. I, as a plain M.D., can never do it. Neither medicine nor religion has been able to do the trick. Medical science can and must treat the very sick alcoholic physically. Then, the program of Alcoholics Anonymous takes over. After that, he is in a receptive mood for church activities or service to God as he sees it. I will later outline a suggested treatment for the acute stage.

"Living in Abilene, you have a wonderful opportunity for service if you are sincerely interested in the problem of alcohol. Because you are a non-alcoholic, I suggest that you confine your activities to the physical treatment, but stimulate the interest of your patient in discussing his problem with an intelligent, restored alcoholic who has been saved through A.A. Your town, I understand, is of about 40,000. According to statistics, there are at least 2,000 men and women to whom alcohol is or will be a problem. Think of 2,000 potentially wrecked homes, lost businesses, injured friends. Think of 2,000 potential drunken driving accidents. Think of 2,000 potential unnecessary deaths or hospital commitments. Then think of what you, as an intelligent physician, can do to avoid that.

"In your city, any two alcoholics could start a group. I believe that if these two men could

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Book Publication Proved Discouraging Venture

By Bill

(Second in a series of articles recording the history of A.A.)

During the summer of 1938 we solicited the well-to-do for contributions to fill that grand new receptacle, our Alcoholic Foundation. Again we encountered a strange indifference to drunks. Nobody was interested. We didn't get a cent that I can remember. We were pretty discouraged; apparently providence had deserted us. With the modest fund from Mr. Rockefeller running out, it looked like a lean winter ahead. There could be no book, no office. What good, we complained, was an Alcoholic Foundation without money!

By this time there had been roughed out what are now the first two chapters of the book now known as *Alcoholics Anonymous*. Our friend Frank referred us to a well known publisher who suggested the possibility of advancing royalties to me so the book could be finished. That made us feel fine until it was realized that if I ate up a lot of royalties while doing the book, there could be no more payments for a long time afterward. We saw, too, that my 10 percent royalty would never carry the office expense of answering the pleas for help that would surely follow publication. Nor might a commercial publisher, anxious for sales, advertise it as we would like.

Publishers Without a Book

These reflections led us straight into a typical alcoholic fantasy! Why not publish the book ourselves? Though told by almost everybody who knew anything of publishing that amateurs seldom produced anything but flops, we were not dismayed. This time, we said, it would be different. We had discovered that the bare printing cost of a book is but a fraction of its retail price and a national magazine of huge circulation had offered to print an article about us when our book was finished. This was a clincher. How could we miss? We could see books selling by hundreds of thousands—money rolling in!

What a promotion it was! An A.A. friend and I hastily organized the Works Publishing Co. My friend, Hank P., then bought a pad of stock certificates at a stationery store. He and I started selling them to brother alcoholics and any who would buy at the bargain price of \$25 a share. Our confidence must have been boundless. Not only were we selling common stock on a book to cure drunks—the book itself hadn't yet been written. Amazingly enough, we did sell that stock, \$4,500 worth, to alcoholics in New York, New Jersey, and to their friends. No one of the original 49 subscribers put up over \$300. Almost everybody

paid on monthly installments, being too broke to do otherwise; save, of course, our good friends at Rockefeller Center.

Our agreement with the Works Publishing subscribers was that out of the first book income they were to get their money back; also that The Alcoholic Foundation was to receive the 10 percent royalty I might have had from a publisher. As for the shares of Works Publishing, the 49 cash subscribers were to have one third, my friend Hank one third, and I one third. We also obtained a loan of \$2,500 from Charles B. T., proprietor of a nationally known hospital for alcoholics. A friend indeed, he was to wait years to get his money back.

But, as anyone could then see, everything was all set—everything, of course, but writing and selling the book! Hope ran high. Out of the new financing we could keep a small office going at Newark, New Jersey. There I began to dictate the text of *Alcoholics Anonymous* to Ruth H. (our first national secretary). Rosily we saw scads of money coming in, once the book was off the press. Still more, we expected the new book would turn right about and help finance our poverty stricken Foundation—which, strangely enough, it really did years later.

Finally came April 1939. The book was done. Tales of recovery for its story section had been supplied by Dr. Bob and his Akron brethren. Others were supplied by New Yorkers, New Jerseyites. One came in from Cleveland and another from Maryland. Chapters had been read and discussed at meetings. I had thought myself the author of the text until I discovered I was just the umpire of the differences of opinion. After endless

Non-A.A. Group Formed in Austin

Fourteen wives, mothers and husbands of members of the Austin, Texas, Group, recently formed the Austin Group of Non-Alcoholics Anonymous.

Plans were made to hold a regular meeting on the first Friday of each month and discuss the A.A. program and also go over the 12 steps of N-A.A. These steps, believed by Austin members to have originated in Syracuse, N. Y., are being adopted by several auxiliary groups.

The N-A.A.s are planning picnics, boat rides, buffet suppers and other social events for the group. The first buffet supper at the clubhouse was such a success that some kind of get-together for each week is being conducted. All visiting A.A.s and N-A.A.s are invited to join in on these occasions.

voting on a title for the new work we had decided to call it *The Way Out*. But inquiry by Fritz M., our Maryland alcoholic, at The Library of Congress disclosed the fact that 12 books already bore that title. Surely we couldn't make our book the 13th. So we named it *Alcoholics Anonymous* instead! Though we didn't know it, our movement then got its name—a name which because of the implication of humility and modesty has given us our treasured spiritual principle of anonymity.

Five thousand copies of *Alcoholics Anonymous* lay in the printer's warehouse, except the few we joyously passed around. Each stockholder and each story writer got one free. *The New York Times* did a good review. We hastened to the national magazine to tell them we were ready for their promised article. We could see A.A. books going out in carload lots!

Things Weren't Rosy at All

What a debacle! At the office of the great monthly periodical we were gently told they had entirely forgotten to let us know, nine months before, that they had decided to print nothing about us. The editors had concluded that drunks were too controversial a subject! This stunning announcement left us in a daze. The whole Alcoholics Anonymous movement could buy less than a hundred books, as it had only one hundred members. Besides, we had given away 79 free ones! What were we to do with those other thousands of books? What could we say to the printer, whose bill wasn't half paid? What about that little loan of \$2,500 and those 49 subscribers who had invested \$4,500 in Works Publishing stock? How could we break the awful news to them? How could we tell them that since we had no publicity we could sell no books? Yes, that A.A. book venture was, I fear, very alcoholic!

Thus was the good book *Alcoholics Anonymous* born into bankruptcy. Some of the creditors got restive; the sheriff actually appeared at our Newark office. The promoters were very low—financially and otherwise. The house in which my wife and I had lived at Brooklyn was taken over by the bank. We took up residence in a summer camp loaned us by an A.A. friend, Horace C. and his family. My friend Hank fared no better. Things certainly looked bleak. Still only three active A.A. groups, we had acquired besides a bankrupt A.A. book, one unpaid but loyal secretary, a tiny Central Office that might have to close any day and an Alcoholic Foundation with no money in it. That was the score after four years of Alcoholics Anonymous.

(To be continued)

LEST WE TRAVEL PATH OF WASHINGTONIANS

From Outwood, Kentucky

As a member of A.A. for two years I have enjoyed and received much help from *The A.A. Grapevine*. Bill's articles are always tops.

I would like to add my humble opinion to certain questions which are discussed in our publication.

1. We must keep our anonymity as far as possible if we expect to be effective.
2. Stay clear of those who wish to popularize A.A. in such a way that eventually may lead to its becoming a racket. We do not need to appeal to the public in any way for funds. To commercialize A.A. is to destroy it.
3. Avoid as much as possible holding meetings in churches or any religious houses. The average alcoholic cannot be won through any creed or sect. He is skeptical of religion.
4. We are not out to dry up the world. As alcoholics we are sick people. The vast majority of people can still take their liquor or leave it. Those people do not need A.A. and may never need it. Let's be tolerant with the non-alcoholic. As long as we "stick to our knitting," live by our 12 Steps, and offer our help only to those who are powerless over alcohol and whose lives have become unmanageable and who are willing to go to any extreme to obtain sobriety, just so long will A.A. be effective.

We do not wish to travel the same road as the Washingtonians.

It is gratifying to see how A.A. has grown. I think this is due to its sincerity, the non-profit motive, and the fact that most A.A.s are trying to live the 12 Steps. There is a heap of brotherhood in this organization which could be destroyed by commercialization in the very minutest form.—*E.K.D.*

The Pleasures of Reading

Kilvert's Diary, 1870-1879. By the Rev. Francis Kilvert.
(Macmillan, \$3)

Here are excerpts from the diary of an English clergyman who served certain small villages in Central Wales in the placid seventies. Though it undoubtedly is one of the most unusual, engaging, and artistic literary journals in the English tongue, it is unlikely to become popular, for it was not written in the style to which readers of this era of trashy fiction have become accustomed. Rather, the excitement of its pages is along literary lines.

This young curate (he died at 39) had a poet's temperament, but he loved life and his fellow humans. The cleric who wrote these ubiquitous entries was poetic in mind, and jolted down, in a very high and unrheterical sense, prose poetry. For his are notations of the spirit — completely articulate, and intensively responsive.

He recorded every day what was moving to his eyes, ears, and feelings, but most particularly to the former two senses. His eye was sharp, and so, too, was his wit — on occasion. He tells of archery on the broad lawns, of picnics on the shore, of his music box, and of his tomcat, Toby. He describes his many friends among the country gentry (he was just a wee bit snobbish, one thinks), and speaks of the more ordinary villagers, and the inevitable poor folk, though he pretends to "a peculiar dislike to meeting people."

Mostly he is engaged in recording the more radiant surfaces of life, as they were pressed against his own beaming spirit, rather than in even mentioning the seamier side of life. His is a record of things lovely and most present to him which become, for succeeding generations, much later and far-distant. To us, from afar, these are remembrances of things past; serene and lucid images of the halcyon days when Victoria reigned.

The diarist was a great walker, roaming about the countryside to hear the tales his superstitious flock told of the "Giant of Painscastle," and the other weird legends in which they believed implicitly. He loved the wildflowers — primroses, violets, and wood anemones which bedecked his church.

While the descriptions of nature in the raw dominate this one volume, edited down from three books by William Plomer, the most moving entries deal with the lives of the Welsh country folk. His word-pictures of the Welsh woods and mountains are utterly charming.

With truly poetic soul he observed physical beauty of all kinds — in the landscape, the sky, and in men and women, but his prose sometimes is full of contradictions. It can be genuine poetry, yet open to dual interpretation, as, for example, in one entry describing a young girl awakening in the morning.

The Rev. Mr. Kilvert had a tender and generous feeling for his parishioners, but he always saw them with clear eyes. The creed of this least prudish of clerics was "the gentle path." However, he does not drip the mawkish sentimentality of the Victorian era. Some entries might have been slightly less inclusive. There isn't much sense in running an entry such as this one: "Neuralgia very troublesome."

There the diary sounds somewhat like that of a not-too-precocious schoolboy. The first entry was made when the diarist had just turned 30. Whether he was capable of more formalized writing, as some critics have suggested, is beside the point, for, as an intimate chronicler of his times in a Welsh backwater, he was original, entertaining, and craftsmanlike.—*R.E.B., Greenwich Village, New York City.*

HAPPY VACATION, WITH A FEW SAFEGUARDS

(Continued from Page 1)

is to get up in the morning without a hang-over.

9. Let your imagination play occasionally on how many more opportunities now lie ahead for a useful and interesting life.

10. And remind yourself, chum, that you didn't do it all by your own little self.

Simple and perhaps crude as these suggestions may be, they work.

Nearly everyone is smart enough to rub on

some kind of oil before he goes out to loll on the beach. He knows that he'll get sunburned if he doesn't.

Why not apply even that slight degree of intelligence to the other aspects of vacation time?

Cases of mishap and misery for the A.A. on vacation can often be traced to a failure to set up safeguards against the effects of changing the daily routine. Anyone is likely to be more vulnerable to distractions and disturbances when he is operating out of his usual orbit.

But, it is a fortunate fact that one can hold to

his usual orbit of thinking wherever he is. The mind is not earth-bound.

There need be no mishaps for any A.A. who sincerely wants to stay on the beam. Or, if that statement sounds dogmatic, at least it is true that he can minimize the dangers almost to the vanishing point by taking a few precautions which in themselves should add to the pleasures of a vacation.

As somebody once said, it's not so much a matter of learning something new as it is of being reminded of what we already know.

DREAMS SECOND RATE COMPARED TO A.A.

From *Ossining, N. Y.*

I've stopped dreaming now. I found the truth in Kipling's poem, *If*, in the line that reads: "If you can dream and not make dreams your master." For years dreams led me far afield, aided and abetted by alcohol. The aura of bigness was my secret companion — my mate in loneliness.

I dreamed of wealth — of title — of happiness — and I became lonelier. As I did it, I became more the willing and obedient slave of alcohol — of course not knowing what was wrong with me. I blamed everything on my loneliness — self-pity because not a soul wanted anything to do with me or would have anything to do with me, except the habitués of the bars. I was alone — with the boon — the solace — the conniving fixer of all loneliness — alcohol. That is what I thought then.

I could not face tomorrow because I knew today's dreams would not come true. Yesterday's had not materialized so how could I expect today's would come true tomorrow? But I kept on dreaming any way. It was fun — or so I thought. Maybe it helped me cling to that bit of sanity I had to retain if I were to circulate among normal folks with whom I came in contact in a vague sort of a way. I don't know — and I really don't dare now.

But it was a year ago when I wound up what I like to think of as my last swirl in the whirlpool. I was Mr. Big Shot for three weeks. Of course I ran out of money, but that didn't matter as anyone in A. A. knows. I borrowed to the limit. My "credit rating" was excellent in all the local bars. From all my "friends" — the bartenders — I secured funds to continue my dizzy whirl. They admonished me with "Why don't you stop this? You are too nice a guy to be doing it." They were well-meaning, no doubt. But they let me have what I wanted when I needed it.

But I was still dreaming. I was a different person in every town which I visited. I ran the gamut of occupations.

That I could talk, either sensibly or insensibly, was due, I suppose, to the fact that I had 20 years of newspaper experience in back of me. Oh, yes, I was impressive. I could cite facts, figures, places, and important people, whether I knew them or not. I was Mr. Big Shot.

But I was still dreaming.

Today I don't dream any more. I think of tomorrow in terms of yesterday. That is, I know I can't correct today what I did wrong yesterday so why should I worry about the mistakes I might make tomorrow? But I always had. I had never heard of doing anything else but that, until I came into A. A. Now I am learning how, and willing to learn more. I am trying to make today's foundations as firm as possible so that



"No, Bottlesby, I wouldn't class you as the solitary type of drinker".

tomorrow I won't have any regrets.

A simple formula, in effect, but difficult for most of us to grasp because we are re-educating ourselves on how to live, whether alone or with others. I don't have that loneliness any more because what I am doing today is something concrete and worthwhile for me — and others. I have no time to dream as I once did, because the things I am doing or planning to do will affect someone beside me.

The dreams are no longer ethereal, alcoholic-inspired visions. They are plans — not hallucinations of how big I am — how good I am — how I am the Great I Am!

A. A. and its gentle but persuasive method of rehabilitation gives you an appreciation of life without the fanfare — without the promises you never keep and could not keep — without the ostentatious show of ego.

You are now a segment of a sane and happy group of people who are getting a value from life for something given. You no longer try to take all — you no longer do it alone — you've lost self-pity — self-centeredness. You are no longer selfish. You are selfless.

It is wonderful and miraculous, isn't it? Especially when you think back a year, nine months or even less.—Eric E. T.

Reference Library:

Alcohol—A Management Problem

(Editor's Note: The following article, reprinted by permission, appeared on the editorial page of the May 9th issue of Printers' Ink.)

This is a difficult column to write. Many people may misunderstand it—and in so many different ways.

So, at the start, I had better make it clear that I am not a prohibitionist. I lived too long under the shadow of the Great Experiment. But I find that anybody who tries to take a square look at the problem of alcohol in business is likely to be accused by the extreme wets as a prohibitionist and by the extreme dries as a secret encourager of drunkenness. I hope I am neither.

More than a year ago I spent an evening with a group of company heads. One of them began to talk about his sales manager, who was engaged in drinking himself out of a job and a home. Within an hour, every man in the group told of similar experiences he was having or had had with men of promise and achievement whose great weakness was that they could not take alcohol or leave it alone.

Since that time I have talked with a great many executives. I have found that almost all of them, too, have the some problem in their own companies. I doubt if any of us, except those who have made a deep study of alcohol and business, realize to what an extent this problem spreads through all business.

What bothers me is that so many executives do not or cannot see that this is not as much a personal problem of the man who is losing his fight with alcohol as it is a management problem. I am surprised that so many business men have so little understanding of or interest in modern medical and psychological findings about the causes of alcoholism. I am appalled at the number of business heads who encourage junior executives to be what is called "good entertainers" and then have no compunction about casting aside the alcoholic when he becomes a problem instead of an asset.

Some executives approach The problem by nag-

New Groups (Continued from Page 1)

York City (Riverside Group); Richmond Hill, L. I.
OHIO—Attica.
OKLAHOMA. — Ada.
PENNSYLVANIA—Charleroi; Johnstown (St. Thomas Group) ; Lancaster.
SOUTH CAROLINA—Cheraw.
TENNESSEE—Tiptonville.
TEXAS—Lampasas; Plainview.
VIRGINIA—Emporia.
WASHINGTON—Mt. Vernon (Group No. 2).
WISCONSIN—Janesville.

ging the alcoholic, which, of course, is the surest method of driving him to the fancied consolations of drink. Others ignore the problem, saying, "John is a good guy. He'll work himself out of it." Others look at the problem as simply one of a desperate craving on the part of the alcoholic which has its roots in some mysterious twist of metabolism that has no relation to a man's childhood frustrations, his home problems or his fear of business failure.

I have found, on the other hand, a small minority of executives, particularly in larger companies, who have gone at the problem in the right way. They have hired trained medical men to work with alcoholics. I have found a few others who go out of their way to cooperate with that great organization, Alcoholics Anonymous. In some cases these are men whose own careers have been saved by A.A.

The first approach to the problem is, of course, to have an understanding of the alcoholic and his background. With that understanding, which

can only come after a little tactful, persistent probing, comes sympathy. And with sympathy comes the first stage to reclamation.

Too few executives understand that with very few exceptions the alcoholic cannot save himself by himself. That is the basis on which Alcoholics Anonymous works.

Let's recognize the tremendous tax alcoholism levies on business. Then let us get an appreciation of its causes. Then let us cease to treat the alcoholic as a kind of stubborn, wayward outcast. And if we are the head of a small company, and cannot afford to lure the best medical help, let us put the alcoholic in touch with the best medical advice or with the nearest member of Alcoholics Anonymous.

And, above all, let us remember the words of Sir Thomas Browne: "No man can justly censure another because no man truly knows another."

C. B. Larrabee

President and Publisher, Printers' Ink

A. A. Digest — Excerpts from Group Publications

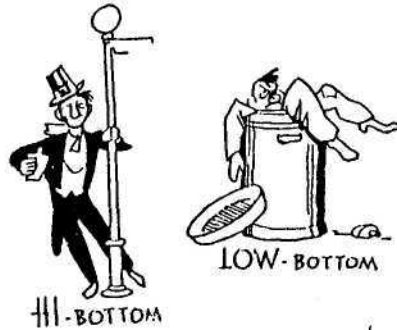
The Paradox, Kansas City, Mo.—"What we are going to be in the future depends on what we do now. The future is a reflection of our thoughts and acts in the present. Sobriety, tolerance and creative thinking will build for us a peace of mind never to be found in a bottle."

Camel Club Chronicle, Marshalltown, Ia.—"it will help us to make peace with ourselves if we realize that in this battle for self-discovery or recovery we need not emerge either a genius or a saint. It will be enough if we hang two comforting mottoes on the inner walls of our individual souls. First is, 'Respect yourself.' The second is 'Trust yourself.' Respect yourself with all your shortcomings and achievements. Trust yourself to master the undesirable traits of your character and to achieve both relative inner decency and outer confidence. Such knowledge and trust will tend to eliminate our all-too-human tendency to self-contempt. They will be fertile sources of that true love of self, which neither exaggerates its powers nor minimizes its worth."

The Clarion, California Institution for Women, Tehachapi—"There are those who wonder how A.A. can be of benefit inside an institution, in that we are of necessity physically dry. To be mentally dry is another story and it is upon that which we work, trying to remove the character structures which create problems in our everyday life."

The A.A. Beacon, Victoria, B.C., Can.—"The enthusiasm and apparent insight shown by some patients at the beginning of treatment is not due to a true understanding, but is due to an alcoholic euphoria; it may be followed in a few weeks by revolt; only after that can full cooperation be expected."

Alanews, Dubuque, Ia.—"Sponsorship is both an individual and a group responsibility. It is entirely unfair, impractical and even uncharitable to expect one or a few individuals to take care of every potential new member. Yet this happens all too often. When several persons are in need of help at the same time, no individual can give the necessary attention to any of the cases. Even the ordinary case requires special attention, not for a day, but for weeks. In many groups this process of rehabilitation of alcoholics is a continuous job, even if there are only a few candidates each month. When the sponsoring duties are left to, or are assumed by a few individuals, there's bound to be a notable lack of success. Sponsors, like anyone else, have businesses or jobs to attend to, and while they are willing to make any sacrifice called for, it is simply impractical and even imprudent to continue such sacrifices month after month and even year after year. Further, when the work is left to a few the results are often unfair to those who need expert guidance in those critical first weeks. The just don't get the attention they need and deserve."



(Some of the greatest story-tellers of them all have been alcoholics. A column of such stories should be made to order for A.A.s. So this will be the A.A. column of stories, chitchat, tidbits, oddities, tall tales and trivia. We believe that every A.A. has a favorite story. Or several. Remember that the first liar hasn't got a chance . . . but we'll welcome competition. We will allow you the usual 15% for alcoholic exaggeration. Send us your favorite story. Just mail it to: Bottoms Up Editor, The A.A. Grapevine, Box 328, Grand Central Annex, New York.)

Out in Chicago they tell of a new member's unorthodox entry into A.A. This alkie was sleeping off a drunk in the back room of a friend's bookstore. While he was out of this world, an A.A. who had forgotten about not taking the first drink, staggered into the store with a copy of *Alcoholics Anonymous* under his arm. He wanted to sell it for the price of a drink. The storekeeper bought it and gave it to his drunken friend in the back room. The guy read the book and has been a member of A.A. ever since!

One of the editors of *The A.A. Grapevine* is also an editor on a national magazine. Early one morning the telephone rang in the editor's apartment and his wife answered it. "Is this T's apartment?" a voice asked. "Yes," answered T's wife, "but he's still asleep." "Don't bother to wake him," the voice said, "Just tell him I am the correspondent from St. Louis. I'll call him later." The wife, thinking that the voice was from a correspondent for this periodical, said: "I'm sure T will want to talk to you. In the meantime is there anything I can do for you?" "Yes," said the voice, "can you give me the address of Mr. L?" "I'm sorry I don't know him, but I can give you the number of the Intergroup," the wife said. "What's that?" asked the voice. "Oh, that's the office in New York where you can get in touch with almost any alcoholic," continued the wife. The voice let that pass. "Is the office open today?" asked the voice. Thinking the voice meant

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VINO VIGNETTES: *The Hard Way*

It was 9:30, time for the collection. When the chairman asked for a volunteer to pass the hat, I got up and started for the back of the room. At the end row, I shoved the old felt hat down the line. Because it was a rainy night, only about 20 persons were present. I figured we would do well to take in \$5 toward the rent.

I was wrong. The first man to grab the hat put in a \$5 bill. I look a good look at this big-hearted guy. He was plastered. Now we're just a little group and we don't particularly care about finances. Matter of fact, we prefer to be a trifle "in the red." I knew, too, that only a guy half-way in the bag would put in a fin so I made a point of looking him up after the meeting.

He was one of those well-dressed, grinning drunks. You know the kind I mean. Kind of cynical and with an "amused-by-it-all" look. But he was amiable and seemed pleased when I look him aside to speak to him.

"Well, fellow," I said, "You probably don't realize it but you kicked in with \$5 tonight. Here it is. How about making it a buck?"

He grinned at me, look the fin and fished out a roll of bills. he peeled off two \$1 bills and gave them to me.

"Thanks," he said, "I did think I was putting in a dollar."

"How about talking to me?" he asked. "I'm a different type of alcoholic. My wife doesn't want me to stop drinking."

When I returned, he seemed a little drunker. I felt that under the circumstances I couldn't do him much good. You know how it is. You just can't seem to get the story across to a guy while he's in the bag.

"Come on," he said. "Tell me all about it."

I tried to tell him about A.A. but gave up when I saw that he was in no mood to understand. Yet, I felt I'd better do the best I could because the guy wouldn't be there at all if he had no problem. So I said:

"Listen, fellow. If you remember this talk tomorrow, telephone me. Here's my name, address and telephone number."

I never thought I would see him again.

At 8 o'clock the next morning the telephone rang in my apartment. It was my grinning friend. A tremulous voice said:

"Say, am I too early for you? I've been awake since 3 o'clock. Would you come out here and talk to me? I'm nervous but I haven't had a drink today."

"I'll be there," I said, wondering how in the devil the man remembered anything about last night.

When I arrived at his home, I could see this guy was in the chips. A butler answered the door and escorted me to a panelled den where old

grinning boy was fighting a cup of coffee poured by a maid.

"Hello," he said. "Didn't think I would remember, did you?"

"No," I answered, taking off my coat. It occurred to me that this morning was the first Saturday I had been out of bed at 8 o'clock in years!

"You seem nervous. Why don't you take one small drink?" I asked.

"You mean taper off. That's no way to sober up. I'm gonna do it the hard way."

We talked together all morning and I could see that he was getting more nervous all the time. Yet, I couldn't persuade him even to take a glass of beer. This guy could take it. At noon, the maid brought in lunch. He made a strong effort to eat but finally gave up. After lunch, we talked some more. I left him at 3 o'clock. Somehow, he seemed a trifle calmer.

"Thanks for coming," he said as I put on my coat. "Yon won't believe me but I am not taking a drink tonight either."

As I walked away from the house I got to thinking of his history. He was an alcoholic. There was no doubt about that. Had been having trouble for 15 years. He hadn't suffered much financially. In fact, he told me that he made money in the market whether he was drunk or sober. He had experienced ten different "cures." His last effort at quitting the stuff had been an awful failure. A lay therapist had been working with him for ten months. Yes, he had heard of A.A. but figured that it couldn't help him.

He told me that his wife was an alcoholic, too, but that she didn't want to stop drinking. She didn't want him to stop either because she liked cocktail bars and the drinking crowd. His wife's idea was that he cut down on drinking. He tried it but it didn't work. Always ended up drunk.

He said that he had walked into the meeting more or less by accident. He was "touring" Greenwich Village and happened to see the crowd in the room. So he wandered in. He said that he decided to stay after he realized that he was in an A.A. meeting.

I called his home on Monday and was surprised to learn that he had gone to the office. I figured that he had taken a large number of drinks after I left. But he fooled me. I called his office. He was at his desk, apparently trying to work.

"How about lunch?" I asked.

"Sure," he said, "but I still can't eat anything."

At lunch he looked a lot better. He was still nervous but was just *as* stubborn about taking a drink. He asked if I would go to another meeting with him that night. We went and he listened to

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BELIEVES 1st STEP HAS BECOME A "MUST"

From Linda Vista, California

We say or used to say there are no "musts" in A.A. that was true when the book was written because at that time, A.A. was in the formative stage and everything was really trial and error. There was no substantial proof that A.A. would work in more than a few cases. The major portion of A.A. is still trial and error and I hope it will always remain that way because we are dealing with individuals and each case differs.

But the fact remains that although each case differs in the final analysis the basic starting point is the same. Each individual finally has to admit that "he is powerless over alcohol and that his life is unmanageable"; therefore I believe that the 1st Step in the program of A.A. has passed the trial and error stage and that we have come to the place where we can and should say that the alcoholic must swallow that 1st Step hook, line and sinker. He must chew it up and digest it so thoroughly that it is absorbed into his system and becomes a living part of him. If necessary he could and should develop as much of an obsession not to drink as he used to have to take a drink. His "no thank you" must become as automatic a thing to him as his former "don't care if I do" answer to an invitation or urge to drink.

That 1st Step is the keystone of the arch, the hub of the wheel or the corner stone of any structure he wishes to build out of his remaining life. The whole A.A. program, for the alcoholic, revolves around it or is based on it. There is no use in continuing the treatment for any disease until the patient has arrived at a decision that he has the disease he is being treated for, because as long as he is not thoroughly convinced that he has the disease he will not follow through on the doctor's orders. And when he doesn't follow the doctor's orders he has a relapse or recurrence of the disease.

The first step in the diagnosis of his case is for him to really make a decision that he is an alcoholic and that his life is unmanageable. Then he is ready for the treatment to take effect.

The treatment for the alcoholic is the balance of the program of A.A., the other 11 Steps. And the best part of it is that the balance of the program, although it comes slow to most of us, becomes a pleasure and a joy to try and live by.

I, for one, am thankful that I didn't have any sudden spiritual awakening, because if it had been too easy at the start I probably would have done the some thing I had always done before, lost interest or said, "This is a cinch. All I have to do is not drink." If that had happened I would have missed the boat and by this time I would have been drowned and forgotten.

So I say that we have come to the place in

Men of Extinction

(The fourth in a series of portraits of men who enjoyed the finer things in life.)



*D. T. (Smiley) Hamglad,
eminent backslapper and life of every party.*

A.A., where we should tell the new man that he must get that 1st Step and get it good. The evidence is all in favor of that statement and conclusion.— *J.F.H.*

Vino Vignette

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everything that was said, met a few people and went home.

All of this happened about a year ago. He has never taken a drink. For the first few weeks he went to a meeting every night. After two months, his wife joined him at meetings. Now, they're both doing okay.

The other day I asked him what he thought of A.A.

"A.A. helps me but it was absolutely refusing to take a drink that first day that fixed me. I told you the hard way was the only way to stop drinking."

LET'S CONTINUE TO STAND ALONE

From Cleveland, Ohio

the two most widely discussed, and most welcome, too, articles that have appeared in *The AA Grapevine*, were Dr. Silkworth's article on the so-called alcoholic "mind"—and Bill's recent long needed declaration on the dangers of becoming allied with various outside activities.

Good. And so, from an outsider who most evidently has a keen insight into A.A. activities and purposes, I would like to quote.

Because of various circumstances it becomes necessary for the group of which I am a member, to find new quarters (after seven years in our present meeting rooms). So, we visited the pastor of one of the large churches; and in being cordially invited to make use of their facilities, we expressed our sincere thanks but weren't too sure that it might not entail more, expense than we cared to assume.

The assurance that it would cost us nothing at all — while gratifying — was not to our liking either. We said, A.A. prefers to pay its way in all of our functions. This brought the following very significant reply:— "Yes, I know you do, and therein rests one of your greatest strengths; as long as you remain wholly self-sufficient you will be effective. Don't ever let yourselves become involved with any outside agencies—don't ever let anyone else beside yourselves furnish you money or 'advice.' As soon as you do, you lose your 'certain something' peculiar to your fine mission—I have seen many fine purposes dissipated through the good intentions of outsiders."

Thus, from a very wise man, not associated with A.A., but with great experience with other Christian activities—and entirely in sympathy with A.A.—comes seasoned confirmation of what Bill points out to all A.A.s, the danger of everbecoming allied in any way with any other welfare movements.

No manager of a ball team that was constantly winning, would think of breaking up the team for experiment. If they went into a long losing streak — then he might experiment. Hence, in the name of Heaven above, why should A.A. even for a moment ever give thought to breaking up a winner?

There have been hundreds, perhaps thousands of books written on alcoholism — yet only one was ever written by drunks, for drunks. *Alcoholics Anonymous* has proven to be the only book ever written for lay drunks — and that is all we ever were.

Let's, above all, keep our amateur standing.— *DickT.*

A.A.'s Country-Wide News Circuit

Hospitalization Works Well—Since last fall when arrangements were made with Supt. A. F. Branton of Baroness Erlanger Hospital in Chattanooga, Tenn., to admit alcoholic patients under A.A. sponsorship, all who have had hospitalization have come to meetings since their release from the hospital. Due to the shortage of nurses and attendants Chattanooga A.A.s provide someone to stay with each patient 24 hours per day. These can be special nurses, members of the patient's family or members of A.A., the schedule being so arranged that A.A. gets at least eight hours a day with the patient to present the program along with the drying-out process. Expense is borne by the patient and based on ability to pay. The Chattanooga A.A. clubroom at 309 Ferger Building was redecorated recently with new furniture throughout. A telephone was installed (6-9753) and in addition to closed meetings on Tuesdays and open meetings each Friday, the clubroom is open each Monday for the purpose of introducing the A.A. program to prospective members. Newspaper articles in both local papers carried these announcements. In addition Chattanooga A.A.s have made talks on alcoholism to the Pastors Association, at a dinner meeting at the First Christian church and at an open meeting at Head House where they appeared with prominent visiting speakers. Some members of the Chattanooga Group met with Rome, Ga. members at Lafayette, Ga., recently to help start a group in the latter town. City authorities lent the courtroom of the city hall and promised cooperation. Chattanooga members and their wives have a Dutch treat dinner at a restaurant or hotel the first Saturday night in each month.

Miami Activities "Growing"—After admitting "it is possible that no other group has remained dormant as long as Miami (six years)," a correspondent reports considerable activity. The delayed growth is reported as "probably due to failure to recognize the importance of the new member—the consequences being that our turnover has been tremendous." However, four neighborhood groups as well as the downtown group are now operating under an inter-group steering committee made up from a representative of each group. This provides Greater Miami with three open and three closed meetings a week as well as a women's auxiliary club. A hospitalization fund set up to underwrite the expenses of new members has been operating two months with 23 patients receiving benefits; all are meeting their obligations. Along with the expansion has come *The Anona News*, a mimeographed publication.

Michigan Visitors Invited—The Clare-Mt. Pleasant Central Michigan Group extends an invi-

tation to A.A.s vacationing in Michigan to attend meetings at Clare every Wednesday night and at Mt. Pleasant every Thursday evening at 8:30 at St. John's Parish house, corner Locust and Washington. Further information may be obtained from Box 121, Mt. Pleasant or Box 28, Clare. This group was formed a little over a year ago with four members and now has over 20.

School Class Studies A.A.—Recently the secretary of the newly formed Neosho, Mo., Group received a letter from a high school student at Grandby who said that his high school health class had been studying A.A. via magazines and requested literature and information on how A.A. is run, its financial backing and other features. The new secretary wrote in part, "the health point of view on A.A. is a hard one to grasp. We are not doctors nor scientists. We are amateurs, 40,000 strong, who have pooled our information, and who have many times been the guinea pigs for experiments which determined eventually what makes an alcoholic. The conclusions are simply this: Alcoholism is an incurable disease. Any alcoholic can arrest the ill effects and bodily ailments caused by drinking if he abstains. He can never drink normally, and perhaps never completely rid himself of the desire to drink. Alcoholism is the sixth greatest health menace in the United States, and those afflicted should be treated as people who are very ill. To finance our efforts we, as members, voluntarily take care of the expense we go to in order to help other alcoholics. There is, of course, a central office, and it is also kept solvent by voluntary contributions, the sale of the A.A. book and other literature. Should you need further explanation you should write to P.O. Box 459, Grand Central Annex, New York. Maybe this will make you the top man in your health class."

California Suggestions—No charge for ideas is made by the Central Group of Los Angeles, Calif., which has recently passed along a couple. When one member died recently a few others decided instead of buying flowers in his memory to donate four A.A. books to the Public Library. Each book has a suitable inscription on the flyleaf and a copy of the meeting directory pasted in the back. Members feel the volumes will help carry on the work the former member loved so well. Another idea from Central which has worked well is having a meeting conducted by a woman A.A. with all women speakers once every six weeks.

Working With Veterans—"Consider Perry Point" is the conclusion of the Baltimore, Md., Central Group after experiences at the U.S. Veterans' Hospital for the mentally ill about 40 miles from Baltimore. Although Baltimore A.A.s

do not believe that they are alone in sponsoring this sort of program, they hope that others will be interested in the results of their work with patients and personnel. They estimate that about a third of the patients at Perry Point and in other veterans' hospitals are alcoholic. Two A.A.s who joined the Baltimore Group after being released from Perry Point decided to visit friends made while they were patients. These became bi-monthly visits and arrangements were made to hold regular meetings. At first some members of the staff were uncertain as to reaction of the patients but after a few sessions they not only sanctioned the meetings but urgently requested that they be continued, and one enthusiastic doctor considers the meetings part of patients' treatment although they are not required to attend. Meeting attendance has grown from about ten a year ago to around 50 and is continuing to expand. Many who have been discharged from the hospital have joined A.A. groups in their respective localities. Baltimore A.A.s have found that four speakers each limited to 12 minutes, with a few remarks by the physician in charge, makes up a good hour's program. They also believe the spiritual angle should be brought into the meetings, but should be handled cautiously at first as most of the patients are transients and their reactions should be studied carefully. Women speakers have proved useful in showing that drinking is not a male problem alone.

New Papers Received—*The Sahara* is the name of a new publication from Birmingham, Ala., with an illustrated front cover, and a full explanation of A.A. in its first issue. In addition to articles the 10 pages carry a considerable amount of news. Although listed as the eighth issue the May 25th *Alky Argot* of Wisconsin State Prison at Waupun, Wis., is the first issue received by *The A.A. Grapevine*. Consisting of eight mimeographed pages it contains articles, news and humor.

Tulsa Reports "Happy Group"—When about 200 A.A.s with an additional 100 relatives and visitors celebrated the third anniversary of the Tulsa, Okla., Group recently the general opinion was that "disagreements are few and bickerings aren't allowed to occur." Tangible evidence of the spirit is shown in such items as rent paid in advance for a year, \$6,000 worth of furniture and equipment and \$1,000 in the treasury. A.A. came to Tulsa in 1944 when a young business man got a copy of the book and as he had graduated from several institutions from Texas to New York, began attending meetings in Oklahoma City, 125 miles away, twice a week. Then came a luncheon meeting in Tulsa with visiting A.A.s and two other

(Continued on next page)

prospects including the chief of police. Small office meetings, then a meeting with Oklahoma City Group members in a union hall and the group was really launched. Meeting in various homes, with wives aiding in serving luncheons, the group has continued to expand, graduating to larger meeting places, aided by newspaper and radio publicity. By 1945 when the group numbered about 40, a hall was secured and reconditioned as a clubroom which was formally opened with visitors from Kansas City, Dallas, Houston and other cities. Our correspondent writes, "Almost every conceivable business, profession and trade is represented. About 25 percent of our members have never had a slip and probably another 50 percent have sailed a straight course after getting their bearings. We have about 20 women members and some 10 or 12 husbands and wives, both alcoholics. We have classes for new members, membership meetings and open houses. We employ a full-time secretary and clubroom manager and are open 10 or more hours every day. Come out and see us sometime."

R.I.C.E.A. Incorporated—Recently incorporated as The Rhode Island Committee for Education on Alcoholism, a group of the state's citizens, including representatives of the Round Top Group of Providence has laid the foundation for a campaign to "increase public understanding of alcoholism, its nature and its treatment." The unit will be affiliated with the National Committee for Education on Alcoholism. An executive committee has been named and sub-committees are to be chosen.

Neighboring Groups get Together—Members of the Atlanta, Ga., Group held joint meetings with three other Georgia Groups in Griffin, LaGrange and Thomaston recently with from 20 to 30 of the Atlanta Group making each trip. In Griffin and Thomaston the meetings were held in homes of members and in LaGrange at the First Methodist church, whose pastor, Rev. Charles S. Forester, attended the Yale Clinic seminar last summer. The groups in Griffin and Thomaston were both formed recently and being only about 30 miles apart, plan to alternate attendance at each other's meetings. An Intergroup Hudson Valley meeting at Poughkeepsie, N.Y., heard speakers from eight Hudson Valley towns, Kingston, Newburgh, Middletown, Liberty, Peekskill, Ossining, Hudson and Poughkeepsie. The March of Time movie "Problem Drinkers" was shown to the attendance of over 150. Poughkeepsie speakers later went to Liberty to conduct a meeting.

Tells of "Patron Saint"—A talk on the life of Malt Talbot, an alcoholic who stayed dry through prayer for 40 years until his death in 1925 was given by the Rev. Fr. James McCloskey of St. Mary's R.C. Church, Plainfield, N. J., to the

group there recently. From the story the speaker termed Talbot the "patron saint" of A.A. and said his own work with heavy drinkers of all creeds has been made much more successful since he himself has been reading and studying the A.A. program.

Many Attend Open Meetings—Orange County and Harbor Groups sponsored a huge joint meeting in the New Masonic Temple, Long Beach, Calif., recently with the six Orange County Groups, three Long Beach Groups, San Pedro, Wilmington, Signal Hill and Downey joining together. Special invitations were accepted by many clergymen, doctors, welfare and civic officials, police and juvenile officers and others interested in the problems of alcohol in their communities. Reservations for the 750 seats in the hall were made with standing room for others. A university professor was the principal speaker with others giving typical A.A. talks. The Ottawa, Can., Group was host to members and friends at an open meeting at the Justice Building Annex with three members of the group speaking and one giving the story of A.A. and the Ottawa Group, while others told of the advantages of A.A. and ways to combat alcoholism. Several clergymen were among the 100 attending, this being the first meeting to which they were invited. Visitors were present from many places including Hull, Quebec, Arnprior, Ont., Renfrew, Ont., and Smith Falls, Ont. Recently there were visitors from Vancouver, B.C. and from the Beacon Hill Group of Victoria, B.C., both of whom spoke.

Seventh Anniversary in Baltimore—About 250 members and guests attended the seventh annual dinner of Baltimore, Md., A.A. in the grand ballroom of the Lord Baltimore Hotel. Non-A.A. speakers and guests included the Rev. Thomas Guthrie Speers of Brown Memorial church, Dr. Edward Kerman, T. J. S. Waxter, director of public welfare of Baltimore, Warden Price of the state penitentiary, Lonnie Staar of Station WFBR, Dr. John Krantz, head of the University of Maryland School of Pharmacology, Dr. John Evans, Dr. Hood, superintendent of Perry Point Veterans' Hospital and Dr. Ayd, psychiatrist of the same hospital and specialist on alcoholism. Guests were present from Philadelphia, Washington, Wilmington, Hanover, Los Angeles, New York, Richmond, Alexandria and other cities.

Convention Marks Fourth Year—the Richmond, Va., Group celebrated its fourth anniversary by holding a two-day regional A.A. convention. At the first day banquet speakers from Fayetteville, N. C. and from Arlington, Va., were heard by approximately 300 A.A.s and wives from Virginia, North Carolina, Washington and Baltimore. The Richmond Group has redecorated its club quarters at 203 North Jefferson Street. Open meetings are held every Friday at 8:30 and Sun-

day at 4:30. WLEE, Richmond radio station, recently completed a six-months weekly A.A. re-broadcast of programs originating in Detroit. State officials and judges attended the Richmond banquet. Governor W. M. Tuck sent an official representative while state officials present included Hunter Miller, incoming chairman of the state alcoholic beverage control board and Dr. Joseph E. Barrett, state commissioner of mental hygiene and hospitals.

Memphis and Madison Celebrate—In anticipation of the third anniversary of A.A. in Memphis, Tenn., 400 attended an open meeting held at the Hotel Chisca. Among other activities in Memphis is the redecoration of the club room with a brighter and pleasanter effect although Clubroom Director Bess W is reported to have lost 10 pounds in the process. Called the first annual dinner, since it is planned to make it a yearly affair, The get-together of the Badger Group in Madison, Wis., was attended by about 120 members and guests. Speakers came from the Minneapolis and Chicago Groups. Founded in December, 1946, the Badger Group numbered 37 members after five months, and is the second in Madison.

Skid Row Feels A.A. Impact—A San Francisco newspaper article begins "Down along San Francisco's Skid Row, for a little army of approximately 300 persons who were bums once and are men again, the talking mice don't climb out of the necks of bottles any more." Then the article goes on to tell of the transformation of their lives when on January 20 the big sun-flooded club at 235 Minna Street was opened. A one-time Catholic shelter, it became Unit Fourteen of A.A. in San Francisco. By way of creating atmosphere a big American flag and a picture of firm-chinned Admiral Halsey were tacked up to encourage the fighting spirit. The article goes on to tell of the brave struggles made by many who are finding a way out and concludes: "Medicine and the clergy have tried for years to cure these people and failed. Now, with something in their own souls, they are curing themselves. Some day, brother, there won't be any Skid Row."

Report Growing Pleasures—On July 3 the Delray Beach, Fla., Group passes the six-months mark with a growth from the original three founders to at least 16 members and several prospects. Still meeting in homes, they hope to have a permanent place before winter when many visitors from the North are expected. The group pays tribute to the Palm Beach County Group for assistance as well as to the one in Ft. Lauderdale while a visit by Dr. Bob, co-founder of A.A., encouraged the members. Although the Fairmont, W Va., Group is only about seven months old it has already sponsored a district banquet with more than 40 present. There were guests from six neighboring groups present. Plans are being made



"This is what I call LIVING...music...soft lights...romance..."

to make this a quarterly affair with different group as hosts. The Fairmont Group was started by a woman. During the first five months, attendance at the new group meetings in Hollywood, Fla., have grown 50 percent. Much of this success is credited to support from Ft. Lauderdale and Miami Groups while a local pastor has been very cooperative and has spoken at meetings. Many visiting A.A.s from all over the United States have given talks and all others are urged to drop in Monday evenings at St. John's Lutheran church, 1746 Buchanan St.

Church Cooperates—At its 119th annual convention the Episcopal diocese of Kentucky adopted a plan to provide psychiatric treatment for alcoholics in cooperation with A.A. The new wing being constructed at Norton Memorial Infirmary, the diocesan hospital, will be given over to the program. In connection with such activities the Rev. Canon Sydney B. Peters of Bay Shore, L. I., N. Y., who has been active in cooperation with A.A. calls attention to E. M. Jellinek's *Recent Trends in Alcoholism* which says on Page 38, concerning admissions to mental hospitals, "While first admissions for alcoholic psychoses to veterans' hospitals show a small decrease after 1940 with a sharp upturn in 1943, first admissions for alcoholism without psychosis show a sharp decline after 1940, and this continued even in 1943 or became even more pronounced in that year. The years 1942 and 1943 were the last years of the first substan-

tial increase in the membership of Alcoholics Anonymous and it is suggested that the quite considerable drop in first admissions for alcoholism without psychosis to veterans' hospitals may reflect absorption of this part of the alcoholic population into groups of A.A."

Tyler Hears About A.A.—The alcohol problem in Tyler, Tex., was brought realistically before the public at a meeting conducted by the local unit of A.A. Principal speakers were a prominent Dallas business man and a Shreveport newspaper man. It was stressed throughout that members are not reformers. The Tyler unit has listed P.O. Box 1074, for those desiring confidential information or a call by a member of A.A.

New Groups Report—"Another group in Iowa, Storm Lake organized Tuesday night with six members. Spencer and Pocahontas Groups aided. How can the Storm Lakers lose? Their post office box number is 711," says a telegram to *The A.A. Grapevine*, from Spencer, Ia. Since its start in March the Centralia, Ill., Group feels that it is being helpful in the community and the members are acquiring experience which will help them to become even more so. Members of Decatur and East St. Louis, Ill., and St. Louis, Mo., Groups are given credit for assisting and encouraging. Members meet in homes on Mondays and Thursdays with an attendance of up to 15 members. A highly favorable newspaper article recently revealed that A.A. has been operating in the Tenth

Ward in Rochester, N.Y. with Room 7, Riviera Theatre Building on Lake Avenue as the meeting place every night except Saturday and Sunday at 8:30. Newest group listing reported by the Central Office, Oakland, Calif., is that of District No. 7.

Mortgage Burned—The board of trustees of Alanon Association, Inc., club unit for Newark, N. J., A.A.s, paid off in full the second mortgage on the clubhouse amounting to \$2,550 and the occasion was celebrated by a "mortgage burning" and big party.

Cooperation Helps—The Ossining, N.Y. Group, started early in April, is growing steadily, thanks to the cooperation of Westchester and Connecticut Groups and local newspaper support. Nearly 100 were present at the first meeting. White Plains took over the second meeting, the third was a home meeting and the fourth found many Yonkers members present while Stamford followed and a closed meeting preceded the Ossining Group's first out-of-town invitation to lead a meeting at Yonkers. The membership roll now totals more than 20.

Deland Runs Ad—Started with nine members the Deland, Fla., Group had 16 on the roll at the end of five weeks although the town has only 6,000 population. Importance of 12th Step work and quality of sobriety are being stressed. The group has donated the book to the County Stockage and plans to visit there every two weeks. A permanent ad is run in the local paper. A young ministerial student appeared before all local civic groups explaining A.A. The telephone number is 164M and the post office box is 1364. The group hopes to have permanent quarters soon.

Still We Spread—The Calcasieu Parish Group of A.A. with membership from Lake Charles, Sulphur and Maplewood, La., has been formed with other towns nearby listed as Vinton, De Ridder, De Quincy, Kinder and Jennings. Meetings are at the Charleston Hotel in Lake Charles, Room 201 at 7:30 on Thursday. The phone number is Lake Charles 4287 and the post office box 2584, Maplewood. Members of the Alconon Group of Ft. Wayne, Ind., who number about 30 and who have been meeting at the Y.M.C.A. on Wednesday evenings and Sunday afternoons, have announced the organization of a group of five of their former members at Van Wert, Ohio, 35 miles away. Another happy and active group is reported at Bellingham, Wash., where four members got together in January, and at the time of reporting had at least a dozen on the active list. They, too, have had calls from Everett and other nearby groups. A new group called Riverside recently held its first meeting at Blessed Sacrament School, 147 West 70th Street, New York, N. Y.

(Continued on next page)

AN ANALYSIS OF 12th STEP WORK

"Tramps" Do Some Traveling—A double claim to the title of "Tramp Group" is made by our correspondent at Vacaville, Calif., who says his organization uses the name because the members are so widely dispersed and because they meet in different localities. Seven towns are represented from three counties with some driving 70 miles to attend and with an average of 30 miles travelled to meetings—and there is little absenteeism. Originally the charter members belonged to a group in Sacramento, none of them living there. Finally a few organized a group in Woodland and begun to obtain recruits from neighboring towns so that the group now numbers 27 with about three new members a month being added. Wives travel to the meetings with husbands to enjoy the social hour. Meetings follow the usual plan except there is no "Beginners' Class," some going to Sacramento for that part of the program. The group varies widely in age and has three women members. Present growth may force formation of a new group soon although members feel it might be like breaking up a family. Members often attend meetings in San Francisco, Oakland, Berkeley, Sacramento and Stockton.

First Open Meeting—The Staunton-Waynesboro, Va. Group held its first public meeting in the Veterans' Home at Staunton recently with an attendance of about 100. Guest speakers, six in all, were from Lynchburg and Richmond and all of them emphasized A.A. beliefs and principles. This was the first public meeting although the unit was organized several years ago.

Glances at Groups—*The Rope Yarn*, publication of the A.A. Seamen's Club, New York, N.Y., is now appearing in pamphlet form with attractive illustrated cover. Squad One of Washington, D.C. has returned its meetings to Force School, 1740 Massachusetts Avenue N. W. on Monday nights at 8:30. The Pinehurst, N.C. *Outlook* carried a glowing account of a public meeting and dinner given by the Southern Pines Group under the feature "Pinehurst Scoreboard" recently. Kent-Ravenna and Aurora, Ohio, Groups held a joint meeting at Aurora recently with the 8005 Lorain Avenue Group of Cleveland coming by bus, accompanied by two clergymen. Attendance was 150. Entitled "First Sober Fish Fry We Ever Saw but A.A. Members Had Best Time Ever," the *Pilot* of Southern Pines, N.C. tells of the group there going to a fish fry sponsored by the Fayetteville Group with other guests from Lillington, Clinton, Lumberton, Raleigh and other points, Fair Lawn, N. J., reports they now have 14 members. A carnival was held last month by A.A.s of Des Moines, Ia., for the purpose of raising money to furnish a room at the Still Clinic for those needing hospitalization. Attractive printed cards with appropriate A.A. thoughts and others with A.A. information and meeting places as well as directions are being put out by Bayside, L.I., N.Y., A.A.s.

(Second of a series of articles presenting an intimate and detailed discussion of 12th Step work from the newcomer's viewpoint).

In this discussion of sponsorship last month, I noted a simplification: "A.A. works backwards," a formula that calls for further analysis.

That night of January 8 when my sponsor first met me in my hotel room in El Paso he was as scared of me as I was dubious of him. In temperament, in personality, in social conditioning we were pretty much unlike. He was slow, cautious, deliberate, and his professional training was that of an engineer. I was abrupt, impulsive, eager, and my training was that of a superficial newspaperman. I had placed constant emphasis in 15 years of professional life on developing certain personality ornaments which were largely a curious assortment of conceits expressed in obvious mannerisms. I thought fast, made snap judgments, did things rapidly. Because, in my journalistic profession, this technique had proven successful, I held these personality ornaments in high esteem. On the other hand, my sponsor was a man whose work was impersonal, detailed, painstaking—a fractional error on the blueprint could wreck a construction project. I employed sweeping generalities about as much as be avoided them, and I doted on vast ethical and moral indictments whereas he was mainly concerned with specific natural causes and effects.

Test of Patience

Here, then, were two opposite temperaments and personalities drawn together by their mutual enemy alcohol—welded by disaster. On the surface (the way I used to grasp things) one could see an extravagant miracle of redemption born of a fellowship out of a touching common cause, a rather perfect Hollywood scenario. But, unfortunately for this romantic concept, my subsequent relations with my sponsor developed along less glamorous lines. In the long haul, which is the one that counts, what made us work as a team was his patience and my persistence; his contentment with a plodding, gradual progress and my insistence on doing it all at once. I had the steam on the upgrade and he had the brakes on the far side of the hills. "We can keep on the track," he used to say, "if I can curb your more violent impulses."

During the first few trying months, however, it was his horse sense, that durable stuff you find in work horses and never in race horses, which made the combination practical. He didn't attempt to try to cope with my rocketing ego, nor curb it. He has since confessed to several extremely low moments. I think he referred to them as "star-bursts." He didn't express whatever tortured feeling my savage mental gymnastics brewed within him during

the early weeks of our initial skirmish. he didn't mark me off as somebody from another professional world than he, and therefore legitimately outside of his realm of understanding and interest, he kept, a dreadful silence as we crossed several dangerous shoals, although at times I assailed the most sacred citadels of his personal beliefs and convictions.

Quite a Comedown!

It would be nice to say that I never knew a moment's conflict with my sponsor, that all was perpetual harmony between us. It would be pleasant, but dishonest. The truth is quite different. I was a mass of complex emotional disturbances when I entered A. A. Fear, ignorance, vanity, conceit ran the show. Mine was no overnight change. My sponsor, by the nature of the problem, came in for his share of curious involvement. There are things he and I never talked about and they lie way out in the deep part of the lake. We kept our fishing in the shallow waters. That is, he did, and for companionship, I stayed inshore with him.

There were many trials. I was passing through a major crisis—the process of discovering what a big fool I had been for many of the best years of my life. That's no small crisis in itself. Doubts assailed me, I passed down all the treacherous corridors of self-pity, regret-beyond-endurance, futility-of-it-all, and so forth.

For some ten years I had known, in New York City, a fine income as a newspaperman and publicity writer. I was a by-line writer for an important newspaper in New York, and wound up near the top of the heap with a \$30,000-a-year Hollywood publicity job just within grasp.

When I woke up in El Paso I was a typist for a railroad earning 89 cents an hour. (And a very good thing it was I had that job!)

A True Sad Sack

I'd sold everything I owned in this world, starting in a rather grand way with the entire furnishings of my New York apartment right down to the last shreds of my personal luggage, a few items of someone else's luggage, and such cheap jewelry as I had left toward the end. My wardrobe, in the final week, was an old summer sport coat with frayed sleeves and elbows, a pair of brown gabardine slacks with two crude, patches on the right leg—holes made in drunken falls and clumsily sewed together by me. It was winter and I had no overcoat, but for some reason had a swank pair of light tan chamois gloves which were grime-covered—a sad remnant of former gentility. I had no hat. My box-like hotel room was shorn of everything which could be pawned or sold—even

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Mail Call for All A. A.s 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

Island of Sanity

From Salem, Ore.

Most of us in A.A. were like shipwrecked sailors clutching to a piece of driftwood in the middle of an endless sea waiting to be rescued.

Then we saw The Island of Sane Living.

Some of us may have been too far gone to see, others may have thought it was a mirage.

Those of us who made it to The Island were welcomed by many others like us who were more than willing to help us get acclimated to this haven of peace.

After we are there a while we realize that to leave is to perish. Most of us will be contented with our new life, thinking of the hardships we went through on that driftwood floating aimlessly on the sea of life.

Some will leave and come back, others will stay away.

I sincerely hope God will give me the wisdom to stay in this haven called Peace of Mind.

—Bob S.

Do You Like "Alky?"

from Muncie, Indiana

At a recent meeting of our group we welcomed a visitor who joined in our discussion with some fine ideas and news of other groups. However, one expression which he constantly used bothered me a little bit. That was his much used reference to alcoholics or A.A.s as "alkys" (or is it spelled "alkies"?). I am wondering what A.A.s think of this designation.

When I came into A.A. two things happened. I learned that I was sick, suffering from an incurable but arrestable disease — and I began to regain my self respect. I hadn't liked myself very much before. And now after about a year I don't think I like to be referred to by the word "alky." We do not refer to a sufferer from diabetes as a "diabety," we do not label a tubercular person as a "tuby" — why should we latch on to an unpleasant appellation for ourselves?

Yes — I am an alcoholic, but I think of myself another way, and, I think, a more hopeful way—as an "ex-drunk." I know that I can revert to being just plain "drunk" again any time I reach for that first drink.

But, with the help of God, all other A.A.s and

the A.A. program I'm going to stay just plain "ex-drunk"!—J. B.

The Disease Is Sexless

From Binghamton, N. Y.

Here I am again. I cannot help myself, I feel compelled to write you.

Having read some of the articles in *The A.A. Grapevine* by my sister alcoholics and today reading the article by Mary M. from Chicago they leave me somewhat bewildered.

They separate us with sex. We the women alcoholics are far less tolerant than the male. We are labeled different from him. We contain more deceit, resentments and false pride. We are far less tolerated than the male. If it is intolerance in me that makes me feel compelled to write on this subject then I welcome and will accept viewpoints on the matter if they contain God's truth.

Having visited a few groups I have heard these questions raised time and again. "Why is it so hard for us to hold women alcoholics?" "Why is it so much harder for a woman to get honest with herself?" Don't we perhaps fail by these questions?

Why should ideas like this be conveyed because we are women? Thought has no sex and our males (God bless 'em) make the same admissions we do.

When I came into A.A. I heard nothing of this nature to set me apart from the male and perhaps that is one reason why so far A.A. has worked for me.

Don't you think it high time we change some of our views on the women alcoholics? Can't we just remember that she is alcoholic and just as tired of it all as her brother? Should we up our eyebrows and decide this case is different — *She's* a woman alcoholic?

All due respect to my sisters' viewpoints if I cannot agree. I remain very much interested and happy in A.A. It's wonderful what I have found.

—Elsie J. W.

Let's Stay Anonymous

From Clinton, Okla.

We enjoy *The A.A. Grapevine* and think it is doing a great work in helping alcoholics. We would like to see more articles on the importance of anonymity as the unauthorized exposing of names has caused several 'slips' in our groups. I do not believe that holding open meetings where groups of non-alcoholics are allowed to attend is good for A.A., especially in small cities. After all, the non-alcoholic considers sobriety as merely normal and considers the alcoholic as "showing off" when he (the non) is invited to attend the group meetings. The ministers who

have shown an interest in and sympathy with the A.A. work may be invited to make an occasional appearance as guest speakers. Some doctors, too, who are interested in the welfare and treatment of alcoholics may be invited to give talks or attend as guests. Some local officials may be invited in order to better acquaint them with how it actually works. However, care should be taken that all visitors fully understand that the names of all members *must* be kept anonymous.

This is just my observation of the grand work A.A. is doing after my first sober year in 25.

—J. R.

Sobriety's Favorite Dish

From Topeka, Kansas

Take equal parts of honesty, tolerance and unselfishness and a shake of serious thinking; let simmer in a sauce pan of conscience until it thickens to the consistency of a Group Ideal. Add several cups of unity of purpose and generous portions of modesty and humility; a cup of pure unadulterated tears of sorrow and direct amends. Skim frequently of all defects and shortcomings that may rise to the top. Season with spices of personal inventory, prayer and meditation and a dash of anonymity. Bake in a kettle of iron, resolve to have a new life. Serve in a crystal bowl with a sauce of spiritual awakening and garnish with spiritual experience.

(Sobriety always has as his guest of honor "The Man from Upstairs.")—P. L.

Thought Is the Key

From Washington, D. C.

Nothing is ever said that is really new; but I do believe there are two things that can never cease being of interest to any alcoholic, regardless of how old he is in A.A. He is interested first in himself, and the second thing is staying sober. Now in regard to the first I believe it behooves every alcoholic (or any other person) to accept what was said in Julius Caesar by Cassius, "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves, that we are underlings." Following the 4th Step, it seems that if we can just accept our limitations and our assets we will be so much the more at peace with everything. This does not mean that we have to like even the circumstances of the present moment, but we can control our attitude of what happens to us. Man is often willing to change circumstances, but seems unwilling to change himself; but it is this simple realization that man can control his thoughts above everything else that gives hope to any alcoholic. But — and here's what hurts — he must admit that the fault usually lies within

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himself. After this humbling admission he can then proceed to do something about his thoughts, constructively. I wish I could in this short space emphasize emphatically and even dogmatically that, "as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." I will give only one concrete example of this in everyday life. Suppose there is some one specific person whom we do not like. There is nothing we can do to alter that person's personality; but we can alter our thought about him or her, or simply not think of the person at all. I have tried it, and like all of A.A., it works.

Secondly, I said something about staying sober. That's what most of us got into A.A. for. It is really very nice to look forward a year or five; and wish we could say, "I've been sober ten years." But the facts are not such, so the best we can do is to stay sober this particular hour. It takes hours to make a day, days to make a week, and so on; but that is true in all of life. It takes cents to save dollars; it takes words to make a page, and pages to make a book; but we only read one word or one page at a time, depending on our ability. I like this quotation from the Sanskrit literature, "Yesterday is but a dream and tomorrow is only a vision; but today well lived makes every yesterday a dream of happiness, and every tomorrow a vision of hope." —*R. D.*

Welcoming Newcomers

from Wyandotte, Mich.

Being a member of A.A. for a little over nine months, may I offer a suggestion? It is my firm belief most of us make a sincere effort to welcome the newcomer to our respective groups. In most cases this is done by individual members. However, it has been my observation in attending some meetings in and around the Detroit area, that this special welcome has often been sadly neglected.

We in A.A. who are finding a new way of life owe it to the ones who come to us in search of an "out" to their drinking problem, a special welcome from the group chairman on behalf of the other attending members. The first impression for the new member is a lasting one, and so much depends on the reception he or she receives.

Let us then, be just a little more cordial, as a group, in the way we welcome the new folks to A.A. To the speakers, who have a message, and are giving freely of their effort and time, somewhere in the talk, make the new member feel that he personally has at last found a place of welcome and a place once again with his fellowman. —*J. E. R.*

Guides, Only

From Seattle, Washington

When an older member who has sponsored many of his own group slips, his position surely must be more painful than the average. If no

one pays him any mind, he feels neglected and if a former baby gives well meant advice, it galls him. His greatest need is relaxation and group fellowship, now, doesn't give it to him. He hesitates, too, in throwing himself again into 12th Step Work. Generally everything works out all right, but a lot of strain, I think, could be avoided if everyone had the proper viewpoint of sponsorship. Some people are specially gifted in working with others, but after all A.A. does the work. Christ himself never took any credit for any cure, saying "My Father, He doeth the work." We who have often times very little on the ball should remind ourselves quite humbly that we merely pointed out the way — "A.A. did the work." —*J. O'D.*

More Than Chance

From Sydney, Australia

In the December (1945) *A.A. Grapevine* that has just been loaned to me, in an article, "Mail Order Therapy," a member states "I shuddered to think how close I had been to disaster, and was mystified by the chance guidance and timing which had brought that particular message at the moment it came."

Surely if he is a good A.A. and practices our way of life, he never refers his life or events to mere chance. He may, before accepting our way of life, tag it chance or luck if a motor just slides past him, or he finds in a corner a hidden dollar or so, or a hidden bottle! For an alcoholic, from his very first contact with us, chance and timing should cease to be a factor in his life. A Power greater than himself takes over, and his every move is guided and welded together by the Divine Power. So if you believe, you can't lose.

—*R. S. J.*

A Bouquet from Hawaii

From Heeia Oahu, T. H.

Every night I thank God for A.A. and pray for your continued success. You have succeeded where we M.D.s have failed. Maybe with more research and more common-sense and livable mental hygiene, the two of us, A.A.s and M.D.s, can really get this drinking problem settled.

God bless you all back there

—*Muriel D. Cass, M.D.*

Barroom Manners

From Jersey City, N. J.

Before coming into A.A., I had more character defects than you could shake a slick at. They were more numerous than I realized and by far out-numbered my good traits.

Since coming into A.A. I have applied the principles of the program to my daily life and gradually have eliminated many of my worst character defects. But not all!

This fact was brought home forcibly at our meeting last night. One of the speakers uttered a profanity which was a poor example of showing

our love for a Power higher than ourselves. Yes, I have been guilty of the very same thing myself, but shall try very hard to eliminate my former barroom expressions from future talks.

In conjunction with this, another defect that we should eliminate is the telling of "off-color" stories. They serve no point and create a very bad impression in the minds of those who hold A.A. up as a high ideal.

Something usually happens to those who forget. Like forgetting the importance of attending meetings; or forgetting why we must not take that first drink; or forgetting to apply the principles of A.A. to our daily lives; or, forgetting to let your barroom manners die a natural death.

I propose that we all try to remember not to forget! — *B.B.*

The Spiritual Side — Definitely!

From Hoosick Falls, N.Y.

As a so-called "old-timer" in this section I see fellows in A.A. who although "dry" are nervous, irritable and in much the same frame of mind as they were when drinking.

I see other fellows who while they are not getting "churchitis," yet are daily asking for help and trying to live a better life. They are quiet, confident and happy in their existence.

For myself there is no question. I asked for help humbly over five and a half years ago and it is still working.

Last fall I suffered a heart attack at an A.A. meeting. During the height of it I again called for help and received it. Otherwise I would not be here and I would be pretty much of a dope if I questioned in any way the spiritual side of A.A. — *W. O. R.*

Personalities in A. A.

From San Francisco

Some alcoholics confuse personalities with A.A. They let petty, personal differences drive them away from the program. I feel sorry for anyone who lets anything or any personality keep him away from A.A.

Stick to A.A., if drinking has become the major problem in your life, if most of your troubles are caused by drinking, if you can't take one drink and stop, if you have lost a wife or a husband, if you have been in jail, if you are shaking out a drunk or thinking about getting drunk, if you drink when you're happy or when you're blue, or if you just get drunk for no reason at all.

Through A.A. you can learn to look at yourself fair and square and see yourself as you really are. And, by looking at ourselves honestly, we become more understanding of others and their difficulties. We become more tolerant of their opinions.

So it is to our interest to slick to A.A. and our obligation to carry the message to the alcoholic that still suffers. — *Juanita W.*

An Analysis of 12th Step Work (Continued from Page 12)

a pair of prized editorial scissors went the last day for 40 cents to buy a few beers "for courage." The week before, New Year's Eve, I had been run down by a motorist in an El Paso street and when I got up I apologized to the driver for being a nuisance. I got a few comforting drinks out of him for my alcoholic diplomacy and was delighted with my skill in handling this situation. For several days I had been hunting cigarette butts in the sand boxes on each floor of my hotel.

Opposites Attract?

That, then, was the human being my sponsor found in that small El Paso hotel room the night of January 8, 1946. My sponsor is an alcoholic too, and as he has so often said, his main problem was selfishness. Selfishness, reserve, retreat had all played an enormous role in providing the twists which had sent him spiraling into the self-made oblivion of drink. The remarkable contradiction emerges instantly—a mental and physical wreck leaning on a timid, shy, reserved and retiring individual who had always shunned public exposure of any sort, and who particularly disliked *meeting strange people*. There we were, as fine a brace of opposites as the good Lord in his almighty wisdom ever threw together. And we made a perfect team. Is it any wonder my sponsor rather insistently declared in the months to follow that "A.A. works backwards"?

A.A. works backwards in a good many ways, and a lot of them are far beyond me to pin down in so many words.

Here I was, obviously a fellow pretty much confused and lost in life. I had, surely, a lot to learn if ever I was to regain my self-esteem again.

Did I go to my first few meetings, meek and humble of spirit, bowed by the awareness of my life failure, hungry for the crumbs of wisdom I might share with my stronger brethren who at least had started earlier than I to find a way out of the maze? I did not. By my second meeting I was trying to run the show. I was telling others, some of whom had been dry three to six months, what was wrong with A.A. I made a handsome collection of enemies right in A.A.

My sponsor saw all this happen. He rarely spoke at meetings. My brazen attitude abashed him. He held a grim and silent spectatorship at the circus in which I was the featured performer. He heard the lions roaring and trembled but never once tried to restrain me.

There was a lot of wild talk, finally, and then the whole thing calmed down and all of us went about the main business, i.e.—keeping sober. We are all friends today.

We could all have sat down and talked things over reasonably and come to fine reasonable conclusions in the very first place—except!—we were not very reasonable fellows or we wouldn't have

been alcoholics and thus would have had no problem to start with.

Anticipated Progress

The wisdom which guided my sponsor, I have since learned, was that it would all work out somehow in the end, which it did, and that the only way it could work out was the way we saw fit to do it. The easy way, the way we rejected, was, of course, a beautiful simplification but was absolutely no good since it was the *forward* way to do it. We had to do it *backwards* before we liked what we had.

I have wondered since then if what we all went through in El Paso that winter isn't just about the same thing that happens in a good many other A.A. centers around the country.

So that was the picture then—I came into A.A. desperate and hungry for aid. But no sooner than I hit the trail of my salvation along the lines of my familiar old alcoholic thought. My impatience, my intolerance, my ego bucked around in A.A. in those first few months in the same manner it had bucked around during all the wet years.

What did my sponsor have to guide himself with during those turbulent early months? He used a system of checks. Having an orderly mind, he projected a day or a week ahead and judging by my current notions tried to anticipate the ones I should logically reach if I were making proper progress. He didn't try to reform me, he did not attempt to show me the way. He contented himself with estimating my progress, and waiting patiently for the signposts of recovery to emerge over each new horizon.

Along about the end of the first four months or so of our voyage together, I asked my friend, after some complex issue had been cleared away:

"Why didn't you tell me the answer to that? You knew it all the time."

I remember being rather angry. I had gone through some embarrassing gymnastics to reach a very simple solution.

"I don't know that I should have," he answered. "I figured if you found the answer yourself you'd appreciate it a lot more than if I told you."

Like Unraveling Yarn

When my friend found me I was entangled in the skein of my own life thread, like a kitten in a ball of twine. The only way out of that tangle was to unwind each strand and knot separately and carefully—snarl and twist—backwards, slowly. One or two sharp or abrupt forward tugs might easily have entangled the mess pretty hopelessly. That danger of snarl was the danger my sponsor most feared, not only for me, but for himself. About the time I joined A.A. he was on the verge of giving it up!—*Ned A.*

One Doctor to Another

(Continued from Page 2)

be restored, they would form the nucleus of a group that would be an asset to your town.

"The program of Alcoholics Anonymous is one of social and spiritual rehabilitation. The alcoholic is brought to realize and to admit his condition. A bond of comradeship, stronger than anything I have experienced, is forged between alcoholics. In one week A.A. did for me what religion, friends and family could not do. I was bitter against religion; an egotist; a non-believer; one who resented life as it should be lived. In A.A. I saw the happiness on the faces of men and women who had lived as I had lived. Their faith, enthusiasm and understanding wore down my resistance. I came to realize and to admit that there was a Power greater than myself, without which I could not succeed. This same thing has happened to others by the thousands. You could not convince an alcoholic of this unless you were an alcoholic and had experienced the same spiritual rebirth.

"Please remember that a temporarily sober or a reformed alcoholic is a different sort of person. They are often the most generous and most valuable of our citizens.

"The difference lies in the fact that only one drink separates them from civic and social and personal worthlessness. That one drink can change a man or woman from an asset to a liability in a few moments. Then the thought of the next drink is primary and all moral, social and family responsibilities are secondary. Please also remember that this person is not that way because he wants to be; he cannot help it; he needs help. As one medical man to another, I urge you to be more tolerant of him than I was before I realized that I was an alcoholic myself.

"I am requesting that you be mailed some literature on the subject. If at any time you have an individual patient that needs to talk to someone, I will consider it a pleasure to discuss our mutual problems. Furthermore, if at any time you assemble a group of men and women, I would be delighted to fly my plane to Abilene to have a discussion. I had not explained that we gain our own strength of resistance by helping someone with a similar problem.

"Be assured that Alcoholics Anonymous is not an organization of reformers. We do not practice medicine; we are not fanatics; we are neither wet nor dry. We believe in God as the individual understands Him. We have only one thing to sell and that is a happy way of life without alcohol.

"Please be assured that, as a medical man, I believe in it and in the soundness of its approach. Please also be assured that if I can be of any help to you or any of your patients, I will be available."—*A. S.T.*

Bottoms Up!

(Continued from Page 7)

The A.A. Grapevine office, the wife answered: "Mr L and T don't go to the office in the daytime anymore. You see, there are only two girls there in the daytime and T only goes there about once a week late at night." The voice paused quite a long time. Finally it said: "I think I'll go to the ball game. Tell T I called." When Mrs. T reported the conversation to T later in the day, he finally figured that the voice was that of his magazine's reporter in St. Louis who had been summoned to New York on an important assignment!

* * *

Down in Virginia A.A. is growing like mad. A lawyer from there writes that he finally got enough humility to tell this story on himself. Seems he was an assistant prosecuting attorney in his home town at one time. He was cross-questioning a prisoner accused of larceny. "Where were you on the night of May 15?" the lawyer asked. "I don't remember," replied the prisoner, "but I warn't in no bughouse where you were!" The lawyer said the courtroom roared. Everyone knew the lawyer had just returned from a trip to the state insane asylum for drinking.

* * *

A visitor from Switzerland reports that a party of mountain climbers started out to climb the highest mountain in Switzerland. On reaching the top, one of the party said: "This is a wonderful view from here. Where are the glasses?" Two of the climbers answered: "To hell with the glasses, let's drink from the bottle!"

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Note: Subscriptions received prior to July 15 will begin with the August issue.

THE CLIP SHEET—Excerpts from the Public Press

Iowa City, Iowa, *Press-Citizen*: "Indications that the alcohol problem has reached serious proportions for some war veteran students at the University of Iowa appears in plans by more than 100 A.A. members of eastern Iowa to meet here for a discussion of the problem. Especially invited to the discussion are 'young ex-G.I.s' who are having trouble with drink. A spokesman for A.A. said: 'We discovered that a surprising number of young men are left with tough drinking problems as an aftermath of the war.' One young veteran told local A.A.s in effect: 'I see that I'm being left out of social life and am slipping in my class work — simply because of my weakness for drink'."

Washington, D. C., *Times-Herald*: "High praise was paid in Municipal Court yesterday to the District Jail's infirmary and Alcoholics Anonymous by Judge Casey when he observed what he termed 'the remarkable change' in three prosperous looking businessmen brought to him for sentence after one week of the infirmary's drying out treatment. Judge Casey attributed the changes to the 'marvelous job' done during the one week's treatment period and to A.A. which came to the men's aid during the week. 'Now it's up to you and A.A.' the judge said in giving them one year's probation."

Hot Springs, Ark., *New Era*: "A.A. has come to Hot Springs! No fanatical reform organization which seeks to banish alcoholic beverages by outlawing them, this group is made up of men and women who came to the realization that they could not 'take it or leave it alone.' The aim of A.A. is sobriety, not prohibition. As a group it takes no position on controversial subjects. Its membership includes Catholics, Protestants and Jews. They are all as one, standing on common ground, with sincere desire to help others who want to get well."

Passaic, N. J., *Herald-News*: "Let me tell you the reason for A.A.'s traditional anonymity. It is of supreme importance. First, for protection of ourselves, our families, jobs from harmful gossip and criticism. Second, and more important, A.A. deals, not with personalities, but with ideas — to think honestly, to forget ourselves, to look with courage at our problems and stop being afraid'."

New Orleans, La., *States*: "This evening A.A. makes one of its rare public appearances, the purpose being to explain to the public its manner of throwing the life-line to tragic, helpless and all but hopeless members of society. New Orleans has its share, and probably more, of the

300,000 alcoholics in the nation and the 7,000,000 persons in the country who drink more than they should or is good for them. The excessive drinker has a sickness, It is not a sickness that yields to ordinary medical or surgical treatment. it is not one that can be treated in clinic or hospital with a good prospect of success. But it can be treated, and is, with conspicuous success by this organization of anonymous practitioners."

Burlington, Vt., *News*: "The Vermont Tax Department has ruled that payments made to Alcoholics Anonymous are not deductible from personal incomes because 'we cannot strain our law sufficiently' to permit this practice. A.A., says the state tax body, is neither religious, charitable nor educational. This failure of a state unit to recognize an educational organization having the all-out support of the ministry, the medical fraternity and most welfare officials is a result of an entirely understandable ignorance. Happily, A.A. members would be the last persons to protest this ruling. Anything which they contribute for the support of their organization is a mere pittance in exchange for the sober newness of life possible to them only through A.A.'s good offices."

Wilmington, Del., *News*: "'To thine own self be true, and it must follow, as night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man,' was the quotation used by a speaker and member of A.A. when he addressed an open meeting of more than 300 persons here last night. The speaker, a resident of Massachusetts, alighted from a train here when he heard of the local group's meeting and attended as a spectator. However, he was requested to speak when a speaker scheduled was unable to attend. The theme of his talk, 'Honesty with One's Self.' was brought out when he said, 'Sincerity means the difference between those who accomplish their aims in A.A. and those who don't.'"

New York, N. Y., *World-Telegram*: "Sailors, who become A.A.s, have a tough time of it, far tougher than their shore-staying pals here. The landlubbers have the continuing help of other A.A.s, and they can always drop into an A.A. clubhouse for a friendly lift when the going is tough. There are hardly any A.A. headquarters in foreign ports. When the ship docks in far-off places, and nearly everyone goes on a first-night-ashore binge, the temptation for an A.A. is hard to resist. That many of them do resist is high tribute to the A.A. Seaman's Club which schools the 'informed alcoholic' to rely on himself and to stand alone."