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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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## Many Studies Aid Education on Alcoholism

INVESTIGATION of alcoholism is expanding under the impetus of an increasing number of research projects at various educational institutions throughout the country, the creation of state and local agencies, the establishment of clinics and the sponsoring of many different types of activities, both private and public, all devoted to one phase or another of the problem.

Information on the medical, sociological, economical and psychological aspects of the many faceted problem of alcoholism is

### PUT AND TAKE

*(The following points were set forth by a member of the Salisbury, N. C. Group).*

#### WHAT I MUST PUT INTO A.A.

1. Complete sobriety.
2. One hundred per cent 12th Step work.
3. Love for my fellow man.
4. Attendance at the meetings, as essential to my new way of life.
5. Giving all in my power and time to help bring in new members who have an alcoholic problem.
6. Above all, forever as now, remaining an active member.

#### WHAT I GET OUT OF A.A.

1. Peace of mind and contentment. ;
2. The 24-hour program by which I can live a clean and decent life.
3. Happiness in my home and in my daily life.
4. Better citizenship.
5. Better health, physically and mentally.
6. Respect, not disrespect, from my fellow man.
7. Many new friends.
8. Blessings from God, as a result of making a decision to turn my will and life over to His care is I understand Him.
9. The privilege of being an A.A. member forever, and this I know I am, just as long as I say I am.

being accumulated from many sources in a mounting volume of literature. The information, too, is being spread over a widening area through all of the media of communication.

Many of the leading educational institutions of the country are now studying one phase or another of alcoholism, and several groups of scientists are working on independent research projects. Although Yale University's School of Studies on Alcohol comes to mind frequently as one of the pioneers in the field, research projects also are being carried on at such outstanding institutions as Johns Hopkins, Cornell, the University of Virginia, Leland Stanford, Louisville, Rutgers, the University of Texas and many others. In addition, a variety of clinics has been established in various hospitals, such as New York University's project in Bellevue, the studies underway at the Milwaukee Sanitarium, and the project underway at the Veterans Administration hospital at Palo Alto, Calif., to enumerate only a few.

In the meantime, in a more humble and thoroughly unscientific way, education of lay individuals on the problems of alcohol also proceeds by word of the mouth, as for instance during a taxicab ride a New York A.A. took the other day.

On the uptown ride, the A.A. was taking a prospect to the hospital for a "drying out." The prospect, a woman, was in pretty bad shape and was doing a fair amount of wailing and moaning and dramatizing as only a well saturated al-

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### JOHANNESBURG JOINS OVERSEAS A.A. LIST

The following new groups reported organization to the Central Office during the month of June:

SOUTH AFRICA—Johannesburg.

CANADA—Penticton and Port Alberni, both British Columbia.

ARIZONA—Clifton.

CALIFORNIA—Lake Tahoe; Last Chance Group (Los Angeles).

GEORGIA—Americus.

IDAHO—Idaho Falls.

ILLINOIS—Centralia.

INDIANA—East Chicago; Broad Ripple Group, East Side Group, Home Group, Hub Group, North Side Group, Speedway Group, South Side Group, all Indianapolis.

IOWA—Buena Vista County Group (Storm Lake).

MASSACHUSETTS—Amesbury; Nantucket.

MICHIGAN—Grosse Pointe Farms and Oakman Boulevard Groups (both Detroit); South Macomb Group (East Detroit); East Side Group (Monroe).

MISSOURI—St. Clair.

NEW HAMPSHIRE—North Conway.

NEW MEXICO—Dexter.

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## 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 10th Step . . .

*"Continued to take moral inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it."*

Notice that the word "continued" is a past participle. We take it to mean that this Step is an unvarying and unceasing thing. It is a part of the program that must be repeated day by day. It is also a reminder that the program is a living thing — a way of growing.

Remember how hard it was to accomplish the 4th Step — the first moral inventory? Many of us finally got around to make it. When we finished, we felt a lot better. At least our own slate was wiped clean. But some of us let the matter end there. The 10th Step serves to warn that the inventory process — begun in the 4th Step — is only a beginning.

Now let's look at the rest of the things. "When we were wrong, we promptly admitted it," is another of those easy-to-say but hard-to-do things. Most of "us are fairly egocentric; it is part of the illness. In our personal relations, it's a bit harder for us to admit that we were wrong about anything. Early in our sobriety, especially when we were still in the remorse stage, we went overboard on this matter. It gave some of us a sort of pleasure to admit that we were stinkers; that we were going to do better. Are you still feeling the same way?

There are several sound reasons for the 10th Step. In the first place, no alcoholic can afford to nurse resentments. If we know we are wrong about something and do not admit it, we are likely to start building a nest for resentments. In the second place, none of us can afford to be dishonest. We believe that it is dishonest to "think wet and talk dry." We believe it is dishonest to "get by with something" at the expense of someone else. When we are wrong and fail to admit it — even to ourselves—we are back in the old drinking state of mind — dishonest, phony, stubborn and arrogant.

But enough of this preaching. The really important thing is the effect this 10th Step will have on you. It will make you happier, kindlier, more serene. We know a number of A.A.s who practice this Step in their lives. We envy them because they have peace of mind.

Start practicing the 10th Step now. It's a principle of living that can be used everywhere. Begin at home and then carry it to your office. You will be surprised how startled — and pleased — your friends will be when you start taking your share of the blame!

### ASK YOUR SECRETARY

Did you know that The Alcoholic Foundation—A.A.'s general service office—has been sending out a monthly news bulletin for two years? This bulletin goes to A.A. secretaries all over the world and contains interesting statistics, facts, news and doings of A.A. s. If your secretary isn't reading this bulletin to you each month, get after him to do so. It's always interesting! One recent item discloses that reprints of Bill's articles published in *The A.A. Grapevine* may be obtained by writing The Alcoholic Foundation, 415 Lexington Avenue, New York.

## THE FORMULA THAT WORKS

*From Manhattan*

We say here in A.A. that we don't know what makes it work. Well, we don't know *just* what makes it work; but I can think of one thing that has an awful lot to do with making it work.

Did you ever stop to think of the amount of love that is constantly being manifested in A.A.? Not the human kind that man has for woman and woman for man, but spiritual love.

Divine Love is the greatest thing in the world — the healer of all things — and in my opinion, that same Love is the back bone of A.A.

I once read an analysis of love that seemed to me pretty accurate. The word "love" was broken up into eight attributes. You will notice that these eight attributes are not fancy words, but very common, every-day ones. They are:

Patience; kindness; generosity; humility; courtesy; unselfishness; good temper; sincerity.

All these attributes are being constantly manifested in A.A. Some call it group therapy—I call it love.

Can you think of anyone more badly in need of love than the alcoholic?

All avenues to love are eventually closed to him and at last he finds himself on the Street of Regrets. It is along about here, if he is lucky, that A.A. finds him standing on its threshold.

The first attribute of Love to be manifested in A.A. is that of courtesy. Instead of "Scram, bum!" it now becomes, "Welcome, brother!" Our newcomer is invited to sit down and we sit down with him. We tell him our story and he tells us his, amazed, usually, to find the pattern so similar. As this honest and sincere exchange of stories takes place, something else also takes place — a new-found hope — a new-found friend — someone who is interested in him.

He is then introduced to others — all courteous, all sincere in their desire to help him. He is advised to take down some telephone numbers and to call any of these members if he feels jittery, and "talk it over."

He can't help but get the feeling that he is no longer alone. He is walking hand in hand with hundreds of other alcoholics.

He is urged to come back to as many meetings as he can. As he comes to these meetings, he sees further evidences of Love. He sees people get up on the platform and humbly tell stories of their drinking days that are sometimes pretty sordid. For one reason only—with the hope that in so stripping their souls and laying the horror of their drinking days before you, they may help you.

As the days go by, the new comer gradually  
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# Last Seven Years Have Made A.A. Self-Supporting

By Bill

(Third and concluding article in a series recording the early history of A.A. In later issues, the series will be resumed with articles recording recent A.A. development and growth.)

How we ever got the book and our office through that summer of 1939 I shall never quite know. Had it not been for a truly sacrificial act on the part of Bert T., an early New York A.A., I'm sure we couldn't have survived. Bert loaned the defunct Works Publishing Co. \$1,000, obtained by signing a note secured by his own business. This act of faith was followed by two more pieces of good fortune which barely got us through the year. In the fall of 1939 *Liberty* magazine published a piece about us. This produced a flood of inquiries and some orders for the A.A. book. Those few hook receipts kept our little Central Office going. Then came a burst of articles in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*. This started a prodigious growth of A.A. out there and created a little more demand for the A.A. book.

Nor were our friends at Rockefeller Center idle. One day in February, 1940, "Dick" R. reported that Mr. John D. Rockefeller Jr. had been following our progress with intense interest; that he would like, for the inspiration of his guests and for the benefit of Alcoholics Anonymous, to give a dinner. We regarded this as a ten strike.

## 'Launched' at Dinner

In March, 1940, the dinner came off. Mr. R.'s friends turned out in force. An AA. member was placed at each guest table. Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, who had superbly reviewed our book, spoke of A.A. from the spiritual viewpoint. Dr. Foster Kennedy, noted neurologist, gave his hearers the medical outlook. We alcoholics were asked to talk also. At the conclusion of the evening Mr. Nelson Rockefeller, explaining that his father had not been able to come because of illness, went on to say that few things more deeply affecting or promising than Alcoholics Anonymous had ever touched his father's life; that he wished his friends to share this experience with him.

Though great wealth was present at the dinner meeting that night, little was said about money. Hope was expressed that A.A. might soon become self-supporting. But the suggestion was made that until A.A. became self-supporting a little financial help might be needed. Following the dinner meeting Mr. Rockefeller wrote a personal letter to each guest, expressing his feeling about A.A., and concluding with the ob-

serva-tion that he was making us a modest gift. Accompanying each letter was a reprint of the talks given at the dinner and a copy of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*. On receipt of Mr. Rockefeller's letter, many of his guests responded with donations to the Alcoholic Foundation.

This so-called "Rockefeller dinner list" has since been almost the only source of "outside" money gifts to The Alcoholic Foundation. These donations averaged around \$3,000 annually and they were continued for about five years—1940 to 1945. This income The Foundation divided between Dr. Bob and me to enable us to give A.A. a good part of our time during that critical period. Not long since, The Foundation Trustees were able to write the original dinner contributors, with great thanks, that their help would no longer be needed; that The Alcoholic Foundation had become adequately supported by the A.A. groups and by income from the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*; that the personal needs of Dr. Bob and myself were being met out of book royalties.

The significant thing about Mr. Rockefeller's

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## AUSTIN ENTERTAINS AT STATE MEETING

A.A.s traveled far to attend the two-day Texas state Conference held at St. Edward's Gymnasium, Austin, last month.

The principal speaker was Ila P. of New York City, and members of various Texas groups took part in the program, which included also a showing of the *March of Time* film, "Problem Drinkers," and recorded talks by Marty M. and Bill.

The lighter side of life was enjoyed at a turkey barbecue, a Sunday brunch, Sunday night supper, and swimming party. Several of the visitors enjoyed the hospitality of the clubhouse at 405 West 18th Street.

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## Who's Got the Bottle?

Don't forget the "My Best Hiding Place" contest now being conducted by *The A.A. Grapevine*.

Entries have started to come in already, but your best biding place may be the winner. If it is, you stand to win a handsome two-quart cork. Anyway, the staff artist wants to illustrate the hideouts adjudged to be the most ingenious fool's paradise ever devised. Write a letter about it to the Bottoms Up Editor.

dinner, of course, was not only the money it raised. What we did need then, even as much, was favorable public recognition; we needed someone who would stand up and say what he thought and felt about Alcoholics Anonymous. Considering the fact that we were then few in number; that we were none too sure of ourselves; that not long since society had known us as common drunkards, I think Mr. Rockefeller's wisdom and courage was great indeed.

The effect of that dinner meeting was instantaneous; the news press wires all carried the story. Hundreds of alcoholics and their families rushed to buy the book. Our little Central Office was flooded with pleas for help. It soon had to be moved from Jersey to Vesey Street, New York. Ruth H. got her back pay and forthwith became our first National Secretary. Enough books were sold to keep the office going. So passed 1940. Alcoholics Anonymous had made its national debut.

## Rapid Growth Underway

Just a year later, the *Saturday Evening Post* assigned Jack Alexander to do a story about us. Under the impetus of Mr. Rockefeller's dinner and *Cleveland Plain Dealer* pieces, our membership had shot up to about 2,000. Our Clevelanders had just proved that even a small group could, if it must, successfully absorb great numbers of newcomers in a hurry. They had exploded the myth that A.A. must always grow slowly. From the Akron-Cleveland area we had begun to spread into other places—Chicago and Detroit in the mid-west. In the east, Philadelphia had taken fire. Washington and Baltimore were smouldering. Further west, Houston, Los Angeles and San Francisco were taking spark. Growth continued at Akron and New York. We took special pride in Little Rock, Arkansas, which had sprung up with no personal contact with A.A., having caught on through books and letters from the Central Office. Little Rock was the first of the so-called "mail order" groups now commonplace all over the world. Even then, we had started correspondence with many isolated alcoholics who were to form groups later on.

Despite this progress, the approaching *Saturday Evening Post* piece worried us. While our Cleveland experience had given assurance that our few established groups would survive the impact of heavy publicity, what could we possibly do with the thousands of burning appeals that would now swamp our little New York office then staffed by Ruth H., a typist and my-

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## A TIP TO "SLIPPERS," AND NEWCOMERS, TOO

From *Bronxville, N. Y.*

Before we joined A.A. most of our prolonged drunks were in reality just a "slip" — we thought we'd have just one drink.

The foundation of sobriety in A.A. is simplicity itself — it is simply not taking the first drink. You can call it Step No. ½, or 1½ but it is simply NOT taking the first drink, and the ones who succeed in the A.A. program base everything and every good that follows upon this.

If an A.A. embraces just one or all 12 steps, his success still depends on NOT TAKING THE FIRST DRINK. Nobody has yet found lasting benefit from A.A., no matter if he or she be dry one day or ten years, unless before and beneath everything is the continued practice of NOT TAKING THE FIRST DRINK.

In A.A., what is a slip? It is TAKING THE FIRST DRINK.

Who has slips? Mainly, those who may have placed great importance on any one or all of the 12 Steps in A.A. — and still persisted in taking the first drink.

Often those who have slips have mental reservations. Often they think of their own case as different from the others, as being unique. Personalities and circumstances may differ among A.A. members, but one thing does not — and that is the inability of anybody in A.A. to succeed with the program if he does not fully realize that the entire program is based on the foundation and premise of not taking the first drink.

The 12 Steps and other A.A. teachings are made effective only by not taking the first drink; the repetition of this phrase should not be tiresome to those of us who always failed because of "just one."

The new member who, feeling his case is unique and different, comes to meetings "to see what you people have to offer," is doing it the hard way. Why is such an altitude an immediate tip-off? Because it indicates a "show-me" attitude. It overlooks the fact that in most cases A.A. has a great deal more to offer the candidate than the candidate has to offer A.A., but more importantly it shows that the candidate doesn't realize this, hence his path will be more thorny than that of the fellow or gal who steps up and says, "I don't care *what* you have to offer — if it keeps *you* sober, I want it!" If he says instead, "If it will keep *ME* sober I want it," you can detect a lack of humility. He is saying in effect, "Maybe it can keep all of you, and thousands of other alcoholics sober, but boy it's good if it can keep *ME* sober, etc." "Me, I, me, I, me, I"—not the best sign of humility.

One of the things that may confuse the budding or full-blown egotist in A.A. is the state-

# *The Pleasures of Reading*

*The Story of Mrs. Murphy* by Natalie Anderson Scott  
(E. P. Dutton, \$3)

Something sat by Jimmy Murphy's bed at night. Something intangible, without form, face or voice, but frighteningly there.

*The Story of Mrs. Murphy* is a grimly detailed account of the life of an alcoholic from the time he is 25 to his ultimate and complete disintegration at the age of 40. "Booze is your wife, Son," his mother told him. "You are married to booze."

The tragedy of the book lies in the fact that the reader, never for one moment, feels that there is any hope of recovery for this warped ill-starred young man. His downward march through the years seems so inevitable that one looks with pity on the naivete of his family in believing that his brief periods of rehabilitation are anything but a lull before another and wilder storm. There is nothing in his compulsive, unbalanced nature to fight against alcohol or any other addiction.

Jimmy Murphy, when the story opens, is a lad in his 20's, a member of a middle-class, Irish Catholic family. He is vain, over-fastidious when sober, coddled by his indulgent mother and condoned by his brothers and sisters, who feel, in spite of the trouble and disgrace he heaps upon them all, that he is a cut above them. His father, who appears briefly in the first part of the book, has a more realistic view of him but is persuaded by his wife that her prayers and the weekly novenas will accomplish more than harsh discipline.

The members of the Murphy family are warm lovable people and their loyalty toward their black sheep is real and touching. It wears a little thin in Evelyn, the sister who suffers most from his instability; there is increasing friction between them. However, in accord with her mother's dying wish, she is ready to stand by him in the last desperate emergency. Mom's devotion to her ne'er-do-well son is heartbreakingly credible, without becoming sticky or over-sentimental.

There are three young women in the story, and their infatuation for Jimmy endures over amazingly long periods in view of the rough treatment they receive at his hands.

Sue, his fiancee, throwing over her family, her strict religious training and all her standards of behavior, lives with him as his common-law wife and bears him a son, with the mistaken idea that it will awaken a sense of responsibility in his breast. One is glad that she eventually escapes from this thralldom into the waiting arms of a more substantial man.

There is Dolores, a wealthy, beautiful and rather unbelievable siren, who drifts in and out of his life, adding little to the integrity of the story.

There is Kay, a talented young artist, who sticks by him through thick and thin, suffering degrading indignities and real dangers until she discovers a love letter from Dolores to Jimmy. Infidelity is apparently the one thing that she will not take from her erratic and difficult lover and like Sue, she escapes into what one hopes is a more satisfactory life.

Jimmy's essential characteristics are firmly outlined in the first few chapters and he never deviates from them by word or action. He is what he is; charming, unscrupulous, generous, violently cruel at times, variable as the wind, yet steadfastly loyal to the strange fellowship of down-and-outers who are the companions of his long binges. Those who come in contact with him can take him or leave him. Mostly they take him — for as long as they can stand it.

It is an absorbing book and if there are characters and situations in it which are beyond our credence, the devastating power of alcohol over a maladjusted personality is depicted with such force that one has the nightmarish feeling that Jimmy's destiny is inextricably tangled up with one's own, or at least has, by the grace of God, been escaped by a hair's breadth.—*M. N., Manhattan.*

ment that the program is a selfish program. There is a difference in meaning here. A.A. is a program that concerns self, true enough, but the keynote of its operation is certainly not selfishness, lest 12th Step work should never be done — and most of us who have attained sobriety should not be here. Instead we would be nursing "self" in some saloon, or more probably in a booby-hatch — with a plush-lined tongue and a brain composed of last year's jello.

The spiritual side of A.A., which admittedly is what makes it tick for the most successful followers of the program, helps most those who are humble and desperate for help. And what is the help we need? We need help in walking a new road in life — but before we start let us fully realize that the foundation of sobriety in A.A. is simply: NOT TAKING THE FIRST DRINK. You can't slip until you forget that! —*P.B.*

## Blackbirds Helped Convince Customer

About five years ago, when I thought A.A. could be sold to people who didn't want it, I journeyed some 75 miles each way to see a chap who was confined in my old alma mater where I had spent some nine weeks — and learned nothing about alcoholism nor about myself as an alcoholic. I would see that this didn't happen to him, by golly! No, sir! I would spread the glad tidings of great joy and he would come home and never take another drink as long as he lived. This fellow was a smart cookie — a super C.P.A., and working for an important outfit. He couldn't miss, I said to myself. What if gasoline and tires are rationed, get yourself up there. Yes, sir! That's what I said and what I did. Well, naturally, he thought it was swell, but, of course, it didn't apply to him, so five years slipped by until the afternoon that he called me and asked for help.

The five years had not used him very kindly, and as he sat on the sofa in my living room, shaking to pieces, he presented rather a sorry picture. I immediately asked him how he was, and he said, "Fine" and I countered quickly with, "You don't look it," so we got down to cases. We talked at length. (Anyone reading this who has not seen "The Lost Weekend" can just stop here and read something interesting. I should have warned you to start with.) As we talked I heard a slight rustling in my fireplace to which I paid no attention. We talked on. He thought he might be losing his mind, maybe? More rustling in the fireplace. Maybe he was going to have D.T.'s, he thought. He felt like he was going to jump out of his skin, he said. About that time — whoosh! Out of that fireplace flew a black bird that promptly began to fly around my living room. Behind him and hard on his heels came another! Behind him came another — and another — and another, until six of those things were circling around like mad!

He took one look and froze solid with his hands over his eyes to blot out this unreality. Occasionally he would peek out, but it was still going on. I guess he wondered why I was killing myself laughing. He hadn't seen the picture. It wasn't funny to him, not by a long shot. Well, I caught them all, four in the living room and two in the pantry. Alone and unaided I caught them. He was still unable to move. "What a thing to do to a drunk!" he said. I think he still thinks I planned it. One of the boys said he thought the Man Upstairs planned it. Anyway, it looks like we have a pretty good man now. — J.C.H., Ferguson, Greater St. Louis, Mo.



"Henry just drinks to be sociable"

## The Advantages of Being An Alcoholic

Are you glad you're an alcoholic?

The question is answered both "yes" and "no" in A.A. Some members are glad they can't drink socially, others regret it. Two letters answering the question in the affirmative happened to come to *The A.A. Grapevine* recently and are published below. The same columns are wide open to anyone who wishes to present the other side!

### A CHANCE TO HELP

From **Portland, Oregon**

Yes, I am glad I became an alcoholic, and here is my reason for saying that. I would have gone through life as a social drinker or an occasional drinker who often drank to excess, saying and doing many wrong things at the right time. And by my unnatural actions while under the influence of alcohol, I would have hurt feelings or perhaps actually harmed my loved ones and friends. Had I not become an alcoholic, I would have been a very miserable man without peace of mind, and I would have had a constant dread of what might happen next.

Don't misunderstand me. I did all of the aforementioned things and many far worse things over a period of drinking years in my development of the alcoholic pattern of life. And I went far down that road of life (and I mean skid road) before I would admit I was com-

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### LIFE IS FULLER

From **Fresno, Calif.**

I'm glad I became an alcoholic!

To many people that statement sounds fantastic, but to me it's the honest truth. Life has dealt a far from pleasant hand to us alcoholics, one which brings disgrace, sickness, insanity and many times even death. But an alcoholic who has found a new way of life through A.A. is far richer than those poor mortals who have seen only one side of the picture. It's like being deprived of something you wanted desperately all your life, and then, all of a sudden, having it handed to you on a silver platter. People who have always had that silver platter seldom know its worth, but we alcoholics know.

Life offers little that we take for granted now. After having lived in the depths of despair, full of disgust, hate and fear, we appreciate and hang on with all our strength, to every moment of

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# Many Studies Aid Education on Alcoholism

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coholic can. After the A.A. had gone through the patience-testing and muscle-wearing business of getting the prospect into the hospital, he returned to the waiting cab, sank down into the seat and sighed deeply.

"Pretty sick, that woman," said the cab driver as he started the downtown trip. "What's the matter with her?"

"Right now she's drunk," answered the A.A.

"Drunk!" exclaimed the cabbie. "Just drunk?"

"Not 'just' drunk," the A.A. countered. "She's sick, too, mentally as well as physically."

"O, I get it. Sick in the head, eh? But why does she drink that much? Now, take me, Mac, I like a few myself. Maybe I even get light on my day off, but never like that. I never have to go to the hospital."

## It's Greek to Some Folks

"Then you're lucky, brother," said the A.A. "But probably you don't start drinking all over the morning after, do you?"

"I can't look at the stuff for a week after I've been on a good one," the cabbie replied with an emphatic jerk of his head. "Is that what she does—keep right on, eh?"

"She does, and so did I and so do a lot of people," explained the A.A. "That's one difference between us and you."

"Us?" The cabbie turned around for a quick look at his passenger, regardless of the traffic.

"Us—alcoholics," the A.A. went on. "You get drunk and quit the next day. When an alcoholic gets drunk he goes right on—often right on into a hospital."

"Why do that?" came the familiar puzzled query, the query that doctors and men of science, and mothers and wives, and alcoholics have been asking for a long time. "When you get enough why don't you stop? Why start it all over again the next morning? 'Scuse me, mister, but I don't get it. You look like a smart guy and I could see that woman was well educated. Me, I ain't, but I got sense enough to quit sometime."

"You're asking the 64 dollar question, fella, and I certainly don't know the answer to it. All I know is that some can stop and some don't stop. Those who don't are called alcoholics. I'm one and so is that woman."

The cabbie was silent for more than a block. Then he flung back over his shoulder, "I think I get what you mean, Mac. There are different kinds of drunks—is that it?"

And, thus, one more person had learned a little about the problem of alcoholism. He had learned that there are "different kinds of drunks." In a crude way, he had advanced a little along the road of understanding the prob-

lem, and before the ride was finished he learned about the organization called Alcoholics Anonymous which tries to help the one kind of drunk.

By word of mouth, through the little dramas of daily experience, in encounters and contacts with hundreds of people in all walks of life, members of A.A. are helping to pass on information on the subject.

A.A. experience, too, is being drawn upon in a more formal manner by many of the research projects and clinics which are being conducted along the more precise lines of scientific investigation. Members of A.A. and other alcoholics are giving of their experience and their case histories for whatever may be derived from them to the cause of research and education on the matter which is a vitally personal problem to them and a public health problem to the nation.

Whether it's an individual member of A.A. having an unplanned conversation with a taxicab driver, or a researcher in the laboratory proceeding along a carefully planned procedure of study, they are engaged in a common effort in which the experience of each can help the other.

Although A.A. is not connected formally, or in any way as an organization, with any research project or clinic, individual A.A.s are assisting in a variety of activities.



**"In my circle people may drink too much, but they are not alcoholics!"**

The projects themselves reflect a wide range of interest in the general subject. The study underway at Rutgers is defined as a survey of public altitudes towards the alcoholic and alcoholism. The survey has three chief objectives: "(1) To measure the degree of acceptance by the American public of the main scientific findings with reference to alcoholism; (2) to determine the barriers that exist in popular thinking which keep people from accepting these propositions; (3) to ascertain differences in popular thinking as they may be affected by such factors as region, age, sex, education, economic status, religion and nativity."

## Variety of Angles Studied

In Chicago, the Chicago Committee on Alcoholism was created with objectives based upon three premises: "(1) Alcoholism is a serious problem; (2) alcoholism can be treated successfully; (3) the development of addiction to alcohol can be prevented."

At the University of Texas, the line of study parallels that underway at Bellevue Hospital as a New York University project, where primary attention is directed to the bio-chemical aspects of alcoholism.

At the Milwaukee Sanitarium, the topic is reflexes, while at the the Veterans Administration Hospitals at Palo Alto, Calif., Roanoke, Va., and Richmond, Va., several phases are under study including; administrative procedure as it pertains to the legal status of an alcoholic veteran.

At Cornell University, individual alcoholics are studied for long periods, in both the laboratory and as out-patients, and are given both physical and physiological examination.

In Minneapolis, Minn., there is the Midwest Council on Alcoholism, which is primarily interested in helping the alcoholic in the small community. At the University of Minnesota there, the Institute on Chronic Alcoholism conducted its second program with a three-day session in February as a sequel to the Institute held in 1946. The aim of the Institute was stated this year as being "to analyze the actual handling of the chronic alcoholic by various agencies of our society."

From these and many other centers of investigation not mentioned in this cursory summary, much additional information on the subject of alcoholism is being accumulated. In future issues, *The A.A. Grapevine* will undertake to report on the various projects individually as data on their objectives and progress becomes available.

## THE CLIP SHEET—*Excerpts from the Public Press*

Washington, D.C., *Times-Herald*: "Rehabilitation of chronic alcoholics through the therapy of Alcoholics Anonymous was 61% successful in cases referred to that organization last year by the Municipal Court, Judge Waller J. Casey testified before a Congressional subcommittee today. During the first part of this year, the success of this program has increased to 85%, he said."

\* \* \*

Fort Lauderdale, Fla., *News-Sentinel*: "It would be well for families of alcoholics to make an honest effort to discover the cause of the personality conflict within the patient. If he is willing to be helped, Alcoholics Anonymous can help him to victory over this pernicious habit. Then, further exploration should be made through a competent psychiatrist or counsellor. The cause for the patient's flight from reality and circumstances into the realm of unreality should be explored."

\* \* \*

Erie, Pa., *Times*: "Under the Erie plan, chronic drinkers who become repeaters in police circles, are put in touch with A.A. members by Chief Donahue. If the drink victim shows a desire to overcome his drinking, he is released in the custody of A.A. groups. In the case of women drink victims, women members of A.A. take over. If hospitalization is indicated, they are taken to a nursing home here or in Cleveland. Restoration is both physical and mental. It achieves two definite purposes—recreates a useful citizen and reduces jail populations."

\* \* \*

Memphis, Tenn., *Press-Scimitar*: "Definite dates for the most unusual convention Memphis ever has entertained were announced today for Sept. 18-20. It will be the Southeastern Regional Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous, with from 1,200 to 1,500 delegates from ten southeastern states expected to join some 300 Memphis members. There will be speakers from various parts of the country—but, for the first time in Memphis convention history, they won't want their names in the papers. 'We feel that our power in helping fellow alcoholics lies largely in remaining anonymous to the general public,' the chairman of the convention explained. 'We want publicity for our principles, but not for our own personalities. We are proud of what A.A. has done, and proud to be members. We simply feel that should the cloak of anonymity be removed our power to help others and ourselves as well would be weakened.'"

\* \* \*

Indianapolis, Ind., *Star*: "There isn't a member of Alcoholics Anonymous in Indiana or anywhere else in America who at one time or another hasn't

lost almost complete control of his life. But there are thousands who have regained their self-control, self-respect and the respect of their families and communities merely by applying A.A.'s simple form of psychology. Indiana A.A.s operate on the theory that once a person realizes that he has a number of friends pulling for him and giving him the courage he needs to throw off chronic alcoholism, he will think twice before letting them down."

### *Live and Let Live*

*From Peekskill, N. Y.*

Every human being has a tendency to worry about the other fellow. It is a characteristic which none of us seems able to control. To be able to live our own lives without worrying about the other fellow is a virtue few of us possess. I have noticed in myself a feeling of depression when a friend of mine was driving a new car. I felt inferior because my friend had something I could only wish for. Is this not the pattern most of us follow in our lives? And isn't it also true that we many times concentrate on things which are of no concern to us; thus find ourselves in a "jam" because we didn't pay more attention to ourselves?

When a defect of character such as this presents itself, it is only natural that we want to strive to change our pattern. The alcoholic in A.A. finds the slogan "live and let live" a tremendous help in this particular trait of character. He begins by trying to eliminate jealousies or resentments. He then tries to live his own life without depending upon the pattern of another person. He concentrates more on his own problems and weaknesses rather than criticize his friends. (We cannot criticize others when we ourselves are open for criticism.) The alcoholic in A.A. will begin at last to see and feel the benefits of living with himself rather than by living by some other person's pattern.

If we alcoholics are to gain happiness and serenity through sobriety we must to some degree live by ourselves and not be dependent upon the actions or emotions of our neighbors. It is not necessary that the alcoholic become a hermit or a prisoner of himself or that he should not accept advice from friends. He simply should try to live his individual life without patronizing the abilities or successes of his neighbor. A.A. teaches me to try and live with two beings. I have found that by living with these two beings I am living happily.

These two beings are God and myself.—  
*D. H. M.*

## *Cleveland Is Host To 400 Visitors*

More than 400 visitors came to Cleveland June 14 and 15 to participate in the observance of the 12th anniversary of A.A. There were four from Vermont, two from Florida and one from Texas. All of the intervening states were well represented, the largest contingents coming from Michigan, New York, North Carolina and Ohio.

The 83 groups in Cleveland entertained on Saturday with three open houses.

Sunday evening, 900 persons attended a banquet in the large dining room of Masonic Auditorium and the two-hour affair included group singing and short talks by 20 "stalwarts" who included two women who had contributed much to the movement in Cleveland. A meeting followed in the Masonic Auditorium, attended by 1500 persons.

An operation made it impossible for co-founder Dr. Bob S. of Akron, originally scheduled to be chairman of the meeting, to attend.

The chairman explained that the gathering was called on a theme of thankfulness as he introduced the first speaker of the all-Akron cast, Bill D. who was referred to as the "guinea pig" for Doc and Bill. He told how he was "dried up" after waking up in City Hospital (Akron) 12 years ago; and how Doc and Bill had asked him the questions which now are fundamental; how important working with others was in achieving uninterrupted success.

J. Paul S. gave the wives of the early members much credit for their faith and great encouragement, and stated that this was still vital today.

J. Richard S., brother of Paul, completed the program and gave interesting information relative to the Alcoholic Foundation (of which he is a trustee) and added factual information on conditions 12 years ago. In 1935 there were but four members; at the end of 1936, there were ten; and in 1937 there were 40. Now, he estimated, there are 1500 groups with an excess of 50,000 on their rosters.

Another interesting fact disclosed by Dick was that the 69th person of the 75 whom Bill tried to dry up unsuccessfully before A.A., had just come in a year ago—11 years later.

In the course of leave-taking we met a man from Pulaski, N. Y., who stated that he had been the 70th man whom Bill contacted. It took him more than nine years to see the light and he has enjoyed two and one-half years of sobriety today.

The meeting closed with the recognition of visitors from other states, who rose to acknowledge the applause as their states were called.

Cleveland enjoyed being host; many ideas were exchanged with the visitors.

*-H.W.D., Cleveland*

## A.A. Self-Supporting

(Continued from Page 3)

self? How could three people handle the thousands of frantic inquiries we expected? The *Post* article would bring more book sales, but not enough to handle this emergency. We needed more office help — and quickly — or prepare to throw heartbreaking appeals into the wastebasket.

We realized we must, for the first time, ask the A.A. groups for assistance. The Alcoholic Foundation still had no money save The \$3,000 a year "dinner fund" which was helping to keep Dr. Bob and me afloat. Besides, some of the creditors and cash subscribers of Works Publishing (the A.A. book company) were getting anxious again.

### \$1 Per Member from Groups

Two of the alcoholic members of our Foundation traveled out among the A.A. groups to explain the need. They presented their listeners with these ideas: That support of our Central Office was a definite responsibility of The A.A. groups; that answering written inquiries was a necessary assistance to our "12th Step work"; that we AA.s ought to pay these office expenses ourselves and rely no further upon outside charity or insufficient book sales. The two trustees also suggested that The Alcoholic Foundation be made a regular depository for group funds; that the Foundation would earmark all group monies for Central Office expenses only; that each month the Central Office would bill the Foundation for the straight A.A. expenses of the place; that all group contributions ought to be entirely voluntary; that every A.A. group would receive equal service from the New York office, whether it contributed or not. It was estimated that if each group sent The Foundation a sum equal to \$1 per member per year, this might eventually carry our office, without other assistance. Under this arrangement the office would ask the groups twice yearly for funds and render, at the same time, a statement of its expenses for the previous period.

Our two trustees, Horace C. and Bert T., did not come back empty handed. Now clearly understanding the situation, most groups began contributing to The Alcoholic Foundation for Central Office expenses, and have continued to do so ever since. In this practice the A.A. tradition of self support had a firm beginning. Thus we handled the *Saturday Evening Post* article for which thousands of A.A.s, are today so grateful,

The enormous inpouring of fresh members quickly laid the foundation for hundreds of new A.A. groups and they soon began to consult the Central Office about their growing pains, thus



**"Drink is just food to me."**

confronting our Service Headquarters with group problems as well as personal inquiries. The office then began to publish a list of all A.A. groups and it furnished traveling A.A.s with lists of prospects in cities which had none. Out-of-towners we had never seen before began to visit us, so starting what is today the huge network of personal contact between our General Office staff at New York and A.A. groups throughout the world.

The year 1941 was a great one for the growing A.A. It was the beginning of the huge development to follow; our Central Office got solid group backing; we began to abandon the idea of outside charitable help in favor of self-support. Last, but not least, our Alcoholic Foundation really commenced to function. By this time linked to the A.A. Central Office because of its responsibility for the group funds being sent there, and to Works Publishing (the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*) by partial ownership, the trustees of our Alcoholic Foundation had already become, though they did not realize it, the custodians for Alcoholics Anonymous—both of money and of tradition. Alcoholics Anonymous had become a national institution.

Quietly, but effectively, the evolution of our Foundation has since continued. Several years ago the trustees had a certified audit made of The Alcoholic Foundation and Works Publishing from their very beginnings. A good book-keeping system was installed and regular audits became an established custom.

About 1942 it became evident that the Foundation ought to complete its ownership of Works

Publishing by calling in the stock of the outstanding cash subscribers of Works. Several thousand dollars were required to do this and, of course, group funds could not be used for this purpose.

So The trustees, spearheaded this time by our old friend "Chip," turned again to Mr. Rockefeller and his "dinner list." These original donors most gladly made the Foundation the necessary loan which enabled the Foundation to acquire full ownership of our A.A. book (Works Publishing, Inc.). Meanwhile, Works Publishing, being now partly relieved of supporting the Central Office, had been able to pay its own creditors in full. Later on, when out of A.A. book income the trustees offered to pay off the Foundation debt, several of the lenders would take only a part payment — some none at all. At last we were in the clear. This event marked the end of our financial troubles.

### Now Worldwide in Scope

The last few years of A.A. have been phenomenal. Nearly everybody in America knows about A.A. Seemingly, the rest of the globe will soon learn as A.A. travelers go abroad and our literature is translated into other tongues. Today our General Service Headquarters has a staff of twelve. Because of our prodigious growth and the continuous entry of A.A. into more foreign countries, the headquarters will presently need twenty. Popularly known to thousands as "Bobbie," our A.A. General Secretary now serves world A.A. On the Board of The Alcoholic Foundation three of the early trustees, whose contribution to A.A. is incalculable, remain. New faces are seen at the quarterly meetings, each as anxious to serve as the original group. The *A.A. Grapevine*, our national monthly periodical which made its appearance three years ago, is now taking its place among our General Headquarters' Services and is almost paying its own way already. Out of its Works Publishing income, the Foundation has accumulated a prudent financial reserve for the future. That reserve now stands at more than a full year's Headquarters expense, which still remains not much above the very low figure of \$1 per A.A. per year. Two years ago The trustees set aside, out of A.A. book funds, a sum which enabled my wife and me to pay off the mortgage on our home and make some needed improvements. The Foundation also granted Dr. Bob and me each a royalty of 10% on The book *Alcoholics Anonymous*, our only income from A.A. sources. We are both very comfortable and deeply grateful.

This account of the stewardship of Alcoholics Anonymous during its infancy brings us to the present—the year 1947 —with continued A.A. growth and A.A. service the future's promise.

# A.A.'s Country-Wide News Circuit

**Prison Group Gets Hope**—From the Attica, N. Y. State Prison an A.A. member writes as follows: "A new venture has come to Attica Prison; its members—inmates whose shortening of their days of liberty to a great extent can be placed on alcohol and who seek recovery; its object—to prove to these same men that A.A. knows them. The standards are high but there are specific steps to remedy the terrible situation of the prison alcoholic. Thanks to the warden, Dr. Waller H. Martin, various members of A.A. visit each Thursday for an hour with the men, who now number 20, a nucleus expected to increase. Thus far 14 meetings have been held. The hopes of the Attica Prison Group lie today with the methods of A.A. We are helpless without them. The observer can be certain of one thing. A.A. is here to stay. Appreciation for these A.A.s who spend their valuable time with walled-in alcoholics is very great. May this group, who are attempting to lead prison alcoholics away from alcoholism, see their efforts rewarded."

**Memorial Day Celebration**—What may become an annual affair was the observance of Memorial Day by the A.A. Groups of Washington, D.C., at the last open meeting before that date. Colonel F. G., one of the first members in Washington, a veteran of World War I who also saw service with the U.S.A.A.F. in the C.B.I., spoke in memory of deceased members of the group and in particular of two who served in the late war, Lt. Col. H. C. and J. H. M., founder of the Washington Group. On Memorial Day members of A.A. placed a wreath on the grave of the former in Rock Creek Cemetery while a second group went to West River, Anne Arundel County, Md., and left a wreath on the grave of the second in the Christ Church graveyard.

**Public Asks Information**—People in the vicinity of Kansas City, Mo., are becoming more interested in the problem of alcoholism and in the help A.A. offers, judging from the fact that there have been more than 20 requests for speakers answered by the public relations committee during the last eight months. Most of the requests have come from churches but there have also been calls from business men's clubs, women's organizations and one from the Mental Hygiene Association whose membership includes the medical profession and municipal welfare officials.

**Proud Parent**—The Spencer, Ia., Group is proud of the fact that while the group itself is less than a year old it is the parent of two other flourishing groups in the area. Late in May a

group of Spencer A.A.s went to Storm Lake and helped get six members started. That group now numbers 11. In June the Spencer representatives went to Estherville and helped about 10 get going. In spite of the losses to the new groups, Spencer still has about 25 to 30 active members. A group in Emmetsburg is the next step in a campaign to establish a group in every county seat in Northwest Iowa.

**Years Add Growth**—About a year ago the South Bronx, N.Y., Group started with 16 members. At the June celebration of the first anniversary in St. Jerome's School there was an overflow crowd of more than 600! An eight-year member from Manhattan and a five-year member from South Orange, N. J., were the speakers while groups from Metropolitan New York, Westchester County, and Connecticut were represented. Dr. W. D. Silkworth was also a guest. After the meeting there was cabaret style entertainment, dancing and entertainment by several Broadway favorites, and by a group from the Alanon Club of Newark, N. J. The Rev. Fr. Clement J. Rieger of St. Jerome's praised the organization's work and said it was the "talk of the neighborhood"...Six old-timers were on the platform when the Kearny, N. J. Group celebrated its fourth anniversary recently. The spirit of A.A. embodied in the talks gave an insight into the strength of purpose and the fortitude making A.A.'s earlier members successful, according to those attending...In Jamestown, N. Y. the anniversary celebration was at the Hotel Jamestown where more than 250 heard speakers from New York and Cleveland. Speakers praised the Jamestown General Hospital for its cooperation as well as the local press and radio... On July 25 and 26 the Deep East Texas Group celebrated the second anniversary of its existence with several entertainment features including a barbecue at a lake near Nacogdoches. The public was invited to an open meeting at the high school auditorium...The Pocahontas, Ia., Group held its anniversary dinner with Dubuque and Des Moines men as speakers.

**Patients Make Good Record**—A.A. groups have been started in the Montana State Hospital at Warm Springs and the State Prison at Deer Lodge with gratifying results. Of approximately 15 patients released from the hospital only one so far has been known to slip, while many others are active in groups in their home towns, and at least two groups are being formed in Montana by former patients who joined A.A. while at the hospital. Members of the Butte, Montana, Group have attended all the Saturday meetings since the

group was founded, and members have also attended from the capital city, Helena.

**Holiday Meetings Suggested**—Since holidays were the days when alcoholics formerly looked forward to drinking, the members of the Northwest Groups of Rochester, N. Y., held a Memorial Day meeting at 10 a.m. instead of the evening meeting and had such a good turnout that members decided to have another gathering on July 4. They are passing along the idea to other groups to give a thought to holidays to come!

**A.A. Crusoe Looking for Fridays**—Since an A.A. member expects to be 30 miles "as the fish swims" on Nantucket Island this summer he has asked any visiting A.A.s to contact him through P.O. Box 452, Nantucket, Mass. He says the police and the island paper, *The Inquirer and Mirror*, also know of him and he hopes that with the aid of visitors he can start a permanent group that will remain to function when he and his wife leave. He believes this would be the easternmost group in the United States.

**Fly to Anniversary Dinner**—The Lewes-Rehoboth, Del., Groups were well represented at the 13th anniversary dinner in Cleveland, two members from Rehoboth and two from Berlin, Md., flying there in the plane of one of the members. They reported royal treatment after going through some threatening weather on the cross-country hop. One of the men, a former paratrooper, said he enjoyed it, though, as he didn't have to jump.

**Starting Off Well** — **With** about 75 members, friends and observers in attendance, the newly-formed Westerly, R. I. Group got off to an auspicious start at a recent open meeting at Caledonia Hall. Moderator was a member of the Providence Round Top unit who was accompanied by a good sized delegation from that group. In the audience were District Judge Walter S. Flynn, representatives of the state probation department, and members of the Norwich, Conn. Group...The Durham, N. C. Group was reorganized early this year with five members, one former member of the old group, and it now numbers about 30, all new except the one mentioned. Progress is felt to be on a solid basis. The Durham Group, with the cooperation of the Chapel Hill, Burlington and Raleigh Groups, hopes to hold a public meeting soon. Several Durham members recently visited New York and enjoyed a visit to the Alcoholic Foundation.

**Meet in Bank**—Four members of different  
(Continued on next page)

groups meeting with a new man who had just lost his wife caused the start on March 14 of the Oakman Boulevard Group in Detroit, Mich., Membership is now 38 with an attendance averaging 95 at the open meetings and 40 at the instruction sessions on Friday evenings. The group, affiliated with the Greater Detroit office, has excellent facilities for meetings in the hall of the Hostess Banking Co. at Oakman Boulevard and Twelfth.

**Last Chance Group**—From *the Eye Opener* of Los Angeles, Calif., comes the following account: "One day the writer went to Lincoln Heights Jail with J.L.V. to carry the message of A.A. to the women there. Although they listened intently I seemed to sense an unexpressed reaction from them which said, 'This is all very well, but what about me? I am here now. I have no clothes, no money, no friends.' Driving home the nagging thought persisted. Could anything be done to complement the splendid work J.L.V. is doing? An idea took shape. Could a group of alcoholic women be formed whose main activity would be to make personal calls in Lincoln Heights, the hospitals and institutions to sponsor a girl before her release so that when she regains her freedom her outlook is toward A.A. with its abundant living instead of toward the first bar? The idea materialized into a new group for women alcoholics—the Last Chance Group. It has met with outstanding success so far."

**Advertises for Prospects**—A woman alcoholic who has stuck it out for over two years as the only female member of a group has inserted an ad in a San Bernardino, Calif., newspaper, calling for women interested to attend a session at the Y.W.C.A. or to write PO. Box 1096. Although she regards San Bernardino as a difficult spot for women drinkers she is hoping for a good response.

**Issue Letter in Booklet**—A letter by a Seminole, Tex., doctor to another doctor who requested information on A.A. has been printed in booklet form by the San Angelo, Tex. Group. The San Angelo Group is making it available at low cost to other groups who wish to write to Box 943 in their city. The San Angelo Group also reports that its new address at the permanent club is 19½ East Harris Avenue and the telephone number is 4662. Now numbering 58 members, the group keeps a daily register at the club which shows the visitor average of 16.5 per day in April rising to 24.92 per day in May and about 30 for June. The figures are regarded as significant because many members travel from towns as far as 82 miles away. In addition to furnishing membership information the register gives a permanent record of visitors from other cities, all of whom are welcome.

**Inside Prison Walls From** Wallkill, N.Y. State Prison *The A.A. Grapevine's* correspondent writes: "The average A.A. member may be interested to learn how A.A. can flourish and grow in prison. At Wallkill we have the wholehearted

cooperation of the clergy, the warden and his staff in our work, but it is the task of the inmate members to obtain inmate speakers. At first glance it may seem difficult to the outsider for us to contact men willing to tell their story before the group. The public, perhaps, thinks of men in prison as being cynical and intolerant and it is likely that at one time these men had those characteristics. However, for most, that is a thing of the past, due to the A.A. program. Each speaker, as he unfolds his life story, is listened to attentively by all and there is no scoffing as one might expect from an audience of inmates. As the listeners note the changes that have come over men who have made frank admission of their faults they are encouraged to speak also. These men see that the speakers are not looking for sympathy but are gaining courage through A.A. to face life again when they are released. They have come to the realization that there is nothing they can do about the past but there is much they can do in the future. The program committee, consisting of 10 members and a chairman, acts as a contact in arranging for inmate speakers and our programs have never been lacking for material."

**Grapevine Sprouts**—At a recent meeting of the Kent, Ohio, Group there were four clergymen as guests, both Protestant and Catholic, one of the latter having been located in Kent several years ago when he was helpful in getting the group started. An increasing number of A.A.s are war veterans, it is reported from Minneapolis, Minn., where one member estimates at least 25 percent of the 2,000 in that city are veterans, including several women. Re-establishment of a city farm for working out Corporation Court fines would aid in the rehabilitation of Dallas, Tex., alcoholics, members of the city administration were told recently. Favorable consideration has been given the matter. A carnival staged by Des Moines, Ia., A.A.s to furnish a hospital room for the treatment of alcoholics had a goal of \$580 for the necessary cost. When the receipts were counted it was found that the affair brought in \$750, which minus \$170 expenses, netted just the amount needed! Santa Fe, N.M., A.A.s went to Albuquerque recently for the opening of the clubhouse of the Duke City Group. About 35 went in a motor cavalcade.

**Score Slam in Clubs**—When it comes to achieving new club rooms or quarters, A.A.s still don't seem to let the housing shortage bother them. North Hollywood, Cal., recently held a housewarming at the new clubhouse at 4343 Radford Avenue, the group having outgrown its original building on Chandler Boulevard. The celebration was old time Western style...The Tacoma, Wash., group now is quartered in attractive rooms on Pacific Avenue. Many hours of scrubbing, painting and other work went into the conversion of an old bootleg joint. On opening night main addresses were given by one of the founders

of the Salem, Ore., Group and Chuck Y. This group has continued to grow with an average attendance of 50 to 60 instead of the 15 to 20 of a year ago. Influence in the community is demonstrated by opinions expressed by a member of the police department who was impressed to see a number of his old "regulars" sober. A Methodist minister recently requested one of the group to occupy his pulpit and talk on the principles of A.A. Twelve members of the group have blue chips representing a year of sobriety.

**Texans Have Big Ideas**—Spacious new club rooms in the down town area are now occupied by the San Antonio, Tex., Group, the new address being 503½ West Commerce Street. The club occupies the entire upper floor of a commercial building, having a total floor space of 6300 square feet of which 4500 square feet is given over to an assembly room for meetings and social gatherings sponsored by the club. The room has been completely redecorated and renovated. It is fluorescent lighted, and a water heater, cabinet sink, electrically cooled water fountain and public address system have been installed. There are also candy, cigarette and coke vending machines. The club membership is increasingly rapidly and with the employment of a full time paid secretary the goal is to be the largest club in the largest state. San Antonio members are also holding regular weekly meeting at the State Hospital with a patient attendance of 25 to 35. The doctors are cooperating fully and each week some patients are brought to closed meetings...A dinner dedicated the new club rooms at Marshalltown, Ia., with meat and coffee furnished by the group and members bringing the rest of the food in covered dishes.

**Permian Basin Goes Plural**—The Permian Basin Group started in November, 1946 at Monahans, Tex., in an informal session, had its first regular meeting at Odessa in December with four members and now has several groups located at Odessa, Monahans and Midlands. Big Spring is also one of the Permian Basin Groups although it did not originate from the first small meeting. These groups visit each other virtually every week. Average attendance at Odessa and Monahans is about 20 while Midland had nine at the first session. Addresses are Odessa—Box 2567, Monahans -505 West Lang, and Midland-807 West Texas Street.

**New Nursing Home**—Over 600 visited the recently established Cleveland Alcoholic Clinic at 7809 Euclid Avenue, and consumed uncounted gallons of coffee and ice cream. An innovation in nursing homes is the spacious third floor club rooms providing billiard, cards, ping pong and other diversions as well as the usual A.A. sessions. On the first floor there is a completely equipped dining room open to A.A.s and their guests. A doctor will give a thorough physical ex-



*“The real trouble is my wife, doctor. She thinks I have a drinking problem!”*

amination and trained nurses will be in attendance at all times.

**Iowa Veterans Hear About A.A.**—Over 100 A.A.s gathered at a dinner at the University of Iowa in Iowa City, to get an idea of how A.A. handles the drinking problem. A good representation of G.I.s and about 125 A.A.s attended, the latter being from Dubuque, Iowa City, Cedar Rapids, Waterloo, Oelwein, Marengo, Davenport and Fremont, Nebraska, while guests included the sheriff, county attorney and the press.

An Iowa City man was chairman with the main speakers from Des Moines and Dubuque. Emphasis was placed on working with younger people. The sheriff and county attorney pledged their support. . . . C. G. K. of the New Orleans Group writes in to say that he went to his first meeting on May 10, 1944, when the membership was about 15. Nobody could have told him then, he writes, that three years later the group would number approximately 150, with another 400 or so A.A.s active elsewhere throughout the state.

Anonymous, we have a desire to straighten out our confused lives as much as possible. We also have a desire to help the other fellow find and help himself. Therefore, we make many amends for the wrongs we have done, and when we realize that we are overcoming some of our shortcomings, we are more capable of helping others to avoid making the same mistakes we made.

How? By applying ourselves to the 12 Steps and not in applying the 12 Steps to ourselves. Let us keep that always in mind. And always be careful not to get the cart before the horse. Here is what Robert O. Ballou has to say:

“Do not push forward a wagon — you will only raise dust about yourself. Do not think of all your anxieties — you will only make yourself ill.”

Just how many times we have done what this man has said not to do isn't really important, but the fact is that we did become very ill in the process of developing into alcoholics. As beginners, we may say, “Ah, I don't believe that.” Well, whether we believe it or not doesn't alter the fact that it is very true. All alcoholics are very sick people who have contracted a two-fold sickness from drinking to excess over a long period of time — an obsession of the mind coupled with an allergy of the body. Yes, an incurable disease, but it can be arrested through the proper application of this wonderful prescription—the 12 Step program of Alcoholics Anonymous—just as sugar diabetes can be arrested by proper diet and prescribed injections of insulin — or tuberculosis by proper treatment and rest.—C. T.

## Life Is Fuller

*(Continued from, Page 5)*

happiness. We revel in the fact that each day is new, is beautiful, and given to us to do with as we see fit. To live better, to learn more, and to help others. Life is very small, meaningless and unhappy, if we live it in a shell, never giving of ourselves. Through A.A. we learn the power of unselfish giving, and helpfulness, the outcome of which is fulfillment, satisfaction, and ultimate happiness. We have worked hard for our sobriety, but the fulfillment of success is a never ending reward. Life is fuller, its meaning greater, and its beauties more vivid.

To say I am glad only because I have learned a new way of living, is untrue. I am glad because of the people I have met. They are so honest and sincere. They are people who work hard at making life worthwhile, people you can depend upon when you need help. Going through the agony of alcoholism and overcoming it

seems to soften a person's heart, open his mind, and give to him an infinite understanding.

People who live in a world where nothing drastic happens, and living is comparatively unconfused, miss the complexities in life that we alcoholics experience, and through which we gain a fuller value of life. Perhaps these people think we're unlucky creatures of fate, but to me we're the luckiest of them all, and I'm glad I'm an alcoholic.—*Belly F.*

## A Chance to Help

*(Continued from Page 5)*

pletely whipped. I came to the place of realization we all must reach if we are alcoholics before Alcoholics Anonymous can help us to find and help ourselves.

After we begin to find ourselves and learn how to help ourselves through acceptance and willingness to apply our lives to the very best of our ability to this 12 Step program of Alcoholics

## A. A. Digest—Excerpts from Group Publications

*The Eye Opener*, Los Angeles, Calif.—"The remarkable thing about this A.A. is that it sneaks up on you exactly as your drinking did. All I have to do is to refer back to my first hypercritical attitude. Of course, when I first came in, everybody told me to 'relax and take it easy.' I didn't know it then but I was so tense when I joined A.A. that I didn't need the aid of a hypnotist to stretch myself between two chairs...The hardest job I had then—and still have—is to take it easy. I think I'm on the right track now, however...We've found A.A.—which means that our sobriety is practically a foregone conclusion. And if that be true, why not relax and enjoy it?"

\* \* \*

*The Brighter Side*, Waterloo, Iowa—"Alcoholic diseases: The First Drink, Resentment, Self Pity, Ego, Selfishness, Overconfidence, Intolerance, Jealousy and Discouragement. Cure: Try A.A."

\* \* \*

*The Sahara*, Birmingham, Ala.—"The only thing offered by A.A. which can be counted as originally new is the technique of one alcoholic in his approach to another alcoholic's problem. A transmission of confidence is established between the two which is wholly lacking in any other relationship that the active alcoholic can make. Other sources seem singularly unable to create this bond. No matter how well his case may be understood by his doctor, his minister or his family, and no matter how much respect he may have for each, he is not at ease in discussing his alcoholic problem with them. He feels or senses that such things are outside of the realm of their experience."

\* \* \*

*Rope Yarn*, New York, N. Y.—"It can be said that each of us has conflicts; that is, we all have to make decisions. Hourly, we are torn between two decisions that seem equally satisfactory or equally distressing. Many times we would like to avoid these situations but life, being a process of growth, does not allow us if we are mature. Conflicting emotion is part of the adult age. Our jousts with conflicts are to the mind what physical exercise is to the body. Lack of emotional battles, the feeling that we can ignore the battle of life, leads to spiritual flabbiness and inertia. The deeper we probe into conflicts, the greater we grow in spirit."

\* \* \*

*Squad One*, Washington, D.C.—"Bill P. stressed the importance of a clear understanding that the 1st Step is composed of two elements: (1) We admitted we were powerless over alcohol (2) That our lives had become unmanageable. It is so often true that this Step works backwards, or it does not work at all."

*The Paradox*, published by the Kansas City, Mo., Groups, recently carried an interesting article by the wife of an A.A. husband-wife team there. Among the advantages cited were: "Two-stepping in A.A. means dancing to the same music. ... If it is possible to meet an alcoholic stranger for the first time, and tell him all his mental twists and pet intolerances, it is infinitely more possible to understand and follow the thought patterns of an alcoholic mate. . . The A.A. program is a double delight to live, when there are two of you to do it."

\* \* \*

*Central Bulletin*, Cleveland, Ohio—"The well wishers of Don B. are making it tough for him and his ball club. In their zeal, some have been pestering Bill Veeck with extraordinary requests, even to the extent of asking a transfer of a regularly scheduled game the Tribe plays in Philadelphia to Cleveland, on June 15, the day of our 12th anniversary. Let's not make pests of ourselves. Let's let Don lead a natural ballplayer's life as well as a good A.A. life. He is a grand fellow and shouldn't be subjected to embarrassment."

### Formula That Works

(Continued from page 2)

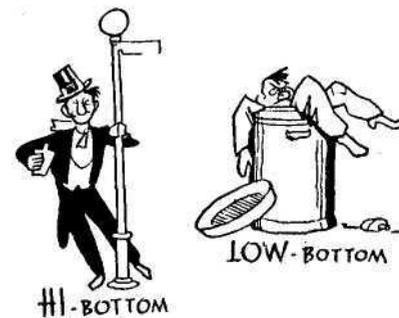
sees more examples of kindness, generosity, patience, humility. He sees people dashing up to Knickerbocker Hospital, to the alcoholic wards of Kings County and Bellevue. He sees and hears A.A. members talking to those who have unfortunately gone "off the beam"; but he does not see those who have "slipped" criticized, condemned. He sees them talked to with patience, kindness, unselfishness—with Love. He sees families given the same courteous, patient, unselfish attention the alcoholic receives.

Little by little this constant manifestation of Love begins to take effect on our newcomer. He has been constantly surrounded by it, he has been constantly receiving it, and now, as he begins to make the grade, he begins to give it.

Slowly but surely Divine Love has registered in all aspects with our newcomer. Instead of fear, he now registers courage. Instead of intolerance, he now displays patience. Instead of condemnation, he now registers sympathetic understanding. Instead of sickness he has health. Instead of weakness, there is strength.

One can hardly recognize in this well-poised, clear-eyed, smartly groomed confident man the once trembling, bleary-eyed, sick, weak, fearful creature who a short time ago crept through the doorway of A.A. A *miracle* stands before you!

—Jack C.



As we go to press, a lady A.A. from California, who has spent many years in Social service work, submits the following conclusion: "I am convinced that there are two things which cannot be concealed — alcoholism and pregnancy."

\* \* \*

Johnny P., one of the early members in Chicago, who also helped found the Kansas City and Oklahoma Groups, and who now lives in Buffalo, can tell of an experience which is not unfamiliar to other A.A.s — an encounter with a prospect's wife who is bent on proving that you can not only push the horse to water but you can also make him drink.

Johnny was doing his best to talk to the 12th Step prospect. But the prospect's wife kept answering for him. The prospect kept mum. Johnny tried to explain several times to the wife that A.A. was a voluntary matter, that the alcoholic himself had to want to get sober for himself, that nobody else could take the program for him.

"You should attend meetings," said Johnny to the prospect. "But it's all up to you. A.A. is voluntary."

"He'll do it voluntarily, all right," chimed in the wife. "I'll see that he does."

\* \* \*

He was one of those who had not made A.A. And then he died. All of his friends were sitting around at the wake. One arose, walked over to the coffin and stood looking down speculatively.

"He sure looks better," said the friend, "since he quit drinking."

\* \* \*

Did you know that owl's eggs are a sure cure for alcoholism? And that another way to destroy an appetite for liquor is to put a live minnow in the poor fellow's whiskey?

That's what Vance Randolph has written in *Ozark Superstitions* (Columbia University Press, 1947), in which he also reports that 'tis said doctors out that way sometimes, in the dim past, tried "to quiet the nerves of alcoholic patients by

(Continued on Page 16)

# Small 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 the 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

## Anonymity Has its Limits!

*From Port Washington, L. I., N. Y.*

When this A.A. first read about Alcoholics Anonymous he was convinced that it was just that—a one-hundred per cent *anonymous* organization. Articles telling about members who had been helped by an interchange of letters strengthened this belief. He wanted A.A. but he didn't want the "stigma" of being an outright member. Then, too, he was afraid of having a couple of hefty boiler makers dashing to his home to sit on his chest every time he wanted a drink.

As a result of all this befuddled thinking he was struck with a brilliant idea, why not start a correspondence course? The Inter-group office in New York to which he wrote under an alias had other ideas about him and promptly sent the names and addresses of two of his A.A. neighbors. With fear and trembling he got in touch with one of them, still under an assumed name, and finally attended several closed meetings. The open meetings were too public and not chummy enough. It can be imagined how successfully that worked. You guessed it — at the end of five weeks of being sober he took the worst flop of his drinking career. It lasted for eight months solid. Finally he crept back to a closed meeting on Long Island, many miles from his first attempt. This time he gave his right name and address — that did it. He was asked why no A.A. came to his rescue when he slipped so badly. His reply will probably live with him forever, "Oh, no one could find me. I gave a fake name and address."

Later in talks I told this on myself, chiefly because I had become imbued with the honesty part of the program, still later because people laughed at it, but now I am telling it because I think it may be useful to A.A.s in dealing with just such timid or should I say dumb people as myself.—Tom C. E.

## Baltimore A.A. On The Air

*From Baltimore, Md.*

Along with all the other attendant publicity, many A.A. groups are now using the radio to get

their message of hope to the despairing alcoholic who thinks his case is hopeless. Perhaps one question of interest to readers would be: "How is it done?" "How does A.A. work over the air?" Different localities are using different methods. This brief article is about what goes on in the Baltimore area.

Although we started later than some groups, Baltimore now has two regular weekly programs — the Towson Group working over Station WFBR Saturday evenings at 7:15 and the Baltimore Group broadcasting over Station WITH Sunday evenings at the same time. Both stations are enthusiastic supporters. The programs themselves, their handling and their development are entirely different; and the contrast in methods is interesting because both are effective. Towson's program has remained somewhat the same, while the Baltimore Group did considerable experimenting before arriving at its present type of program.

Towson's program is an informal, unprepared discussion of A.A. under the moderatorship of a professional, non-alcoholic announcer, ably assisted by an A.A. It has remained nearly the same since its inception, with A.A.s from the whole area lending a hand. It is "homey," comfortable and spontaneous with the announcer or the A.A. asking leading questions to keep the ball rolling, and the participating A.A.s answering readily and with no difficulty, as A.A.s discussing their favorite subject can. It has proven very effective, and especially with regard to mail inquiries. WFBR has good range; and Towson has received letters about drinking problems from beyond the limits of the United States.

Baltimore's program over Station WITH is handled entirely by A.A.s. Two A.A. members write their own five-minute stories of their experiences. These are coordinated with an opening and closing announcement by an A.A. member acting as announcer. The results of this program have been surprisingly good. As in the club rooms, after much experimenting the Baltimore Group found the simple straight-forward stories of the members to be the most impressive means of getting A.A.'s message over the air. When our people are broadcasting on Sunday evenings, and the professionals within hearing grin and signal "Solid," our A.A.s know they are clicking at the station, and hope fervently that they are doing the same with some sick alcoholic who may be tuned in "out there."—Tony F.

## Transition Inevitable

*From Long Beach, Calif.*

There has been much talk about the possibility

of keeping sober by working the 1st and 12th steps only. That is not only possible but is entirely in line with the teachings of "the Book."

I hold that when a person takes the 1st Step, the admission of his powerlessness over alcohol, he has subconsciously taken the 2nd Step, inasmuch as having admitted that a power for—shall we say evil?—is greater than himself, it naturally follows that, as there are two sides to every question, a power for good is also greater than himself.

As good is synonymous with God in many different languages, he has also taken the 3rd Step, as he understands God, by doing good in making calls and otherwise trying to help others.

The 4th Step, the inventory, has been partially worked by the admission of his being a drunkard. I can think of no better place for an alky to start making a list of things wrong with us than right there.

The 5th, the admission of the exact nature of our wrongs, has also been automatically disposed of.

The 6th, the removal of shortcomings, is self-evident by the attendance at meetings and the making of 12th Step calls.

Yes, I think that any one can keep sober by working the 1st and 12th Steps, because he is in truth, working the entire A.A. program, even if he is unaware of that fact. I further hold that if the 1st and 12th Step work is continued, the transition from the idea of working only two Steps, to embracing the entire program will be natural and inevitable. As "the Book" calls it, "this simple program," let's leave it so.

—Gay M. B.

## Our Program

*From Portland, Oregon*

The A.A. Program of Recovery, as outlined in the 12 Steps, is so simply written that almost anyone who can read can understand it easily without the aid of a dictionary. Yet, compressed into this brief program of only two hundred words, is the wisdom of the ages—a proved plan for living a good, useful, and happy life.

Insofar as we of Alcoholics Anonymous are concerned, and especially with reference to the 1st and 12th Steps, it was gotten up in this form especially for alcoholics, but it is a pattern for living, or way of life, that is suited for and available to all mankind everywhere and at all times.

Yet, these precepts, or guide posts to right living, so simply stated, and so easily read, were not easily come by. They were learned and dis-

*(Continued on next page)*

covered the hard way — by bitter experience — by man's foolish efforts to promote his own welfare and happiness at the expense of others. It can't be done! We live in a universe so designed as to make this forever impossible. Its laws, unlike man-made rules and regulations, can never be broken, but can, and do, when we oppose them, break us. That is a purely scientific statement. And absolutely true! But the great religious teachers, or moral instructors of mankind, have never thought it wise, nor feasible, to give strictly scientific explanations for their teachings, but have appealed to man's sense — his conscience.

They have put their own hard won knowledge, and the accumulated wisdom of the race into the simplest and fewest words. The Golden Rule; The Sermon on The Mount; The Ten Commandments, are our own best examples of this. In every age, and amongst every race, these teachings, though they may have been couched in different terms, or presented in a different form, are substantially the same.

The rich residue of them all are embodied in our own 12 Steps. If we have faith in the 12 Steps and accept them absolutely without reservation, they will most assuredly work.

If we try to reason them out and understand them, before we are willing to work them, we shall never get anywhere.

We must DO, before we can KNOW. That is the meaning of experience. And we shall never attain to a "spiritual experience" until AFTER we have put into practice "in all our affairs" the whole of our program — the 12 Steps — and until we seek through continued prayer and meditation, to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understand Him.—*Leo C.*

### Spiritual Awakening

*From Spokane, Washington*

Two years membership in A.A. gives me a clearer viewpoint toward spiritual growth. A neighbor passed our house one morning during one of his periodic binges; he appeared quite shaky so I surmised he was after more alcoholic beverages. On his arrival home he ventured out to hand me a quart of beer over the fence. I refused it with no temptation whatsoever. Having been in the same sorry plight so many times, however, I couldn't help but sympathize and understand another so afflicted. I had a deep desire to be helpful, to find assistance but at that particular time I was handicapped in being any great help. Then it came to my mind how helpless and completely lacking we mortals are at times even in our desires to be helpful and how very much we need the help of God.

After coming inside and working about the house I suddenly remembered the beer incident.

I stopped my work and just stood. It came to me as a miracle—it had been so easy to refuse without even a struggle! It didn't seem that it was I, of myself, for with my will I haven't been able to decline alcohol for 30 years without an awful urge and a struggle so terrific that many times it was beyond my self-control. This time, instead of a strong desire to drink, I felt as if a mighty force possessed me, shutting me out of the old world into the new. It opened my eyes to an untroubled, clear and steadfast world which seemed far above the world from whence I came. I felt the mild faith which I once held had been restored, strengthened and a much greater faith in God assured. I was strengthened spiritually, mentally and physically; directed in this new world with clearer meaning and deeper realization of spiritual power brought into existence. It all made me humble — my heart was touched and I was made glad, and it truly convinces me that we as individuals can rise above our old modes of thinking and do more in accordance with A.A. teachings by reliance and dependence in a Power greater than ourselves.—*Lillian R.*

### Half Measures Not Enough

*From Martinville, Va.*

I have been wondering how many A.A. members who have been in A.A. a few weeks or a few months have slipped by the wayside as I.

On which of the 12 Steps did we fail? Were we only skimming the surface of A.A. until we

had built up our self-confidence enough to try again? Were we honestly and sincerely humble?

Being one who had to learn this bitter lesson over, I've once again soberly turned to my A.A. pamphlet for an answer to my problem.

In the 1st Step—I failed in *sincerely and genuinely* determining to sober up for myself.

I honestly believed in the 2nd and 3rd Steps. Although finding it hard to give these Steps the "right approach" I tried faithfully and it was only when I began to give it up as a "hard job" that I also began to run into trouble.

I half way did the 4th and 5th Steps. The worst inventory and the worst wrongs I tried to forget and made amends only for the ones that would put me in a better light.

The 6th and 7th Steps were fine — except — for the most important item. I was not humble that alone ruined this Step.

Only doing half the 4th and 5th Steps, it was only natural to do half of the 8th and 9th.

I can only group the 10th, 11th and 12th Steps together for it speaks for itself that if I had failed on the first nine, I could not help failing on these last three.

Due to help I've received from friends in A.A., I have found heart to try again — only this time I will bear in mind one of the last sentences in the Guide to the 12 Steps:

"In conclusion, practice these Steps in all your affairs. The 12 Steps are not something to be gone through and then forgotten. They are a set of rides for living that must be practiced at all times, never forgotten."—*J. D. M.*

## VINO VIGNETTES: *Who's a Poor Prospect?*

Like a lot of the others I used to wonder what Red was doing at our A.A. meetings.

He was a perfect type, but not what you'd expect in an A.A. session. Words dropped with a husky accent from one corner of a mouth resembling a mail box slit and the cauliflowering of his ears was a distinct departure from the classical lines of beauty. Kinky red hair topped off a heavy head set on a thick body without much apparent sign of neck.

Someone had spotted Red in the company of the canned heat drinkers under the city bridges where he was making out an existence as dealer in a strictly dishonest poker game. Getting him to a meeting in the first place was one of those examples of human persistence and miracles which flourish in A.A.

When Red continued to arrive punctually at meetings everyone was considerably surprised although they certainly didn't give way to any wild hopes. At first he just sat there and then he began to circulate, talking earnestly to everyone into whose ear he could slide a word or question. We all thought he was curious but didn't expect a lot.

Then one night came the sort of thing that makes members who are inclined to be smug stop short and check up on their own A.A. status. For Red got up and in well-laden accents proceeded to dish out the A.A. dope in about as clear and forceful a manner as I've ever heard.

It's almost anti-climax to say that there were changes made. Red gave up the crooked card game, he took to buying broken down vacuum cleaners and other appliances, rebuilding them and peddling them from door to door.

Pretty soon he had a nice little income of \$15 to \$20 a day for his work. He appeared in a neat suit, still dropping words of accented wisdom from his square cut mouth. The fact is that Red got to be one of the social favorites in A.A.

It sounds like a combination of Horatio Alger and the better known fairy tales, but Red actually did it. He bought a neat house, brought his aged mother to town and continued on his A.A. way.

When I think of a vignette I always think of Red—solid A.A., solid citizen, and a sturdy, living manifestation of those mysterious powers we have come to know.—*Bob H., Greenwich Village, New York City.*

# Reference Library: Fundamentals of Psychiatry

*(Editor's Note: For a broader understanding of alcoholism, The A.A. Grapevine will each month in this department print articles and writings of others than A.A.s themselves. Last month the first of these reprints appeared, an editorial entitled "Alcohol — A Management Problem," which had originally appeared in Printers' Ink. This month's "Reference Library" reading is taken from the book, Fundamentals of Psychiatry by Edward A. Strecker, M.D. Portions of pages 81-88 are reprinted by permission of the publisher, J. D. Lipincott Company, and the author.)*

## ALCOHOLIC PSYCHOSES

Among the psychiatric disabilities due to exogenous poisons, those conditioned by alcohol are by far the most common. Alcohol is quickly effective in screening unpleasant reality; it is readily obtainable and the pathologic drinker is tolerated socially until he has fallen to a very low level. In spite of its reputation among the laity as a stimulant, alcohol is always a narcotic.

It is only within recent years that the light of modern science has been focused upon alcohol and alcoholism with sufficient intensity to penetrate the enveloping fog of traditional error. Nowhere in medicine is the survival of archaic *post hoc ergo propter hoc* thinking more apparent than in theories concerning alcoholism and its treatment. Loose concepts concerning organic pathology, often based on nothing more than a sequence of events, were freely accepted. Now, as is well known, even such pathologic "verities" as cirrhosis of the liver or neuritis can no longer be attributed solely to alcohol.

Concepts concerning the psychopathology of the alcoholic labored under even more ancient and more erroneous fallacies. Consequently, until quite recently, therapy, as might be expected, considering its derivation from such concepts, has consisted of a queer hodge-podge of so-called psychotherapy. Practitioners of medicine participated with families of alcoholic patients in various plans which depended for their hoped-for effect upon persuasion and threat, reward and punishment, usually ending in eventual incarceration. All in all, these plans and methods conspired to wrap the alcoholic even more tightly in the swaddling clothes of emotional immaturity. This was doubly unfortunate in thought and in practice, since the only hope for the alcoholic, psychologically speaking, is to be stripped of the garments of his immaturity so that he may learn to face himself in the nakedness of truth.

Just as in the physical segment of alcoholism certain principles are beginning to emerge so, too, on the psychological side, are we beginning to suspect certain truths. In this brief presentation the author wishes merely to put forward, more or less arbitrarily, certain principles of the psychopathology of alcoholism which in the light of experience have been found to possess therapeutic value.

Contrary to general and public lay opinion, the alcoholic is not very likely to be the "hail fellow well met" type. In his personality traits

he is more apt to be preponderantly an introvert than an extrovert. Of course, there is much drinking among those whose dominant traits are out-going and social, but the real, purposeful consumption of alcohol is more common among those who tend to look inward and who are not socially facile. They have a logical surface reason for their drinking. For them, it lessens the usual friction of the social wheels and makes contact with their fellow men bearable and even pleasant. As for the extrovert, his personality endowments have already granted him the grace of being "easy" with the herd. He does not really need alcohol, though he does use it to heighten the pleasures of reality.

Likewise does it seem true that alcoholism is one of the psychoneuroses of introversion. Careful clinical study of alcoholic patients leaves one with the conviction that alcohol is utilized as psychoneurotic symptoms are utilized — in order to screen effectively unsatisfactory external and inner realities. Painstaking analyses of the clinical life histories of alcoholics and psychoneurotics will reveal, and not infrequently, substitution phases during which, in the first group, the intake of alcohol ceased and neurotic phenomena were in the foreground, while in the second group, the psychoneurotic picture faded to be replaced by alcoholic overindulgence.

Both in one of its chief psychopathologic motifs and in its deeper motivation, the psychoneurotic pathologic drinking of the introvert asserts itself as a neurosis of emotional immaturity.

Once the potential alcoholic has satisfied the surface reasons for his drinking, that is, the attainment of greater social ease and satisfaction, he soon begins to drink pathologically. A much deeper need demands satisfaction and this need is of great significance in the psychopathology of alcoholism. This urge is a demand for regression to lower levels — levels of lessened responsibility, immaturity and finally, fantasy. Here we are dealing with something very ancient, as old as alcohol itself, the ever-present necessity for a technic which may be relied upon to blur the sharp outlines of reality and to soften its hardest blows. That the journey to regressive levels is the *raison d'être* for pathologic drinking is obvious. Even in more or less normal social drinking, alcohol quickly dissolves, for the drinker, the garments of sober responsibility and years and temporarily re-clothes him with the vestments of carefree youth. In pathologic drink-

ing very deep levels of regression are commonly observed, even descent to the level of infantile helplessness with abandonment of control of the ordinary bodily functions.

A careful study of the life histories of many alcoholic patients would seem to indicate that one is fairly close to the fundamental causation in the discovery of the very frequent recurrence of a childhood environment which thwarted, and even completely blocked, the attainment of an adult emotional stature. The common pattern in these histories is one in which the psychological crime of parental loving-dominance was perpetrated against the child. The aftermath is obvious. The time comes all too quickly when the child arrives at the chronological age at which society expects and demands emotional maturity accompanied by adult behavior. The emotionally immature individual makes a sorry attempt to satisfy these demands by a few futile and inadequate gestures. He fails. Society begins to exact the penalty for such failure. Perhaps the remainder of the picture, its alcoholic component, is a matter of chance. But it is a chance in which the dice are loaded, since alcohol is not only the most rapidly acting solvent of unpleasant reality, but is also the most available and least socially reprehensible of the technics for evading reality.

Perhaps the theme has been advanced to the point at which the definition the author has proposed for the chronic alcoholic should be repealed: "The chronic alcoholic is the person who cannot face reality without alcohol, and yet whose adequate adjustment to reality is impossible so long as he uses alcohol."

The highest hurdle that the alcoholic patient must finally succeed in clearing is that of the acceptance of a completely nonalcoholic future. The difficulty of taking this hurdle is not entirely due to the renunciation of the pleasures of alcohol, but it is due, in considerable degree, to the emotional immaturity of the patient. His ego has been somewhat pitifully shamed by the view he has had of his childish behavior. He wants to be a "man" and, somewhat paradoxically, he dallies overlong with the thought that a "man" can "take it or leave it." When he finally does attain the emotional stature of adulthood, he understands all too well that no ego belittlement is involved in the self-made decision that the only possible choice is never to take alcohol again. In any event, unless such a conviction is formed within the patient, and is formed so definitely that it is inculcated into his personality, then, although he may have long periods of sobriety, yet he will never attain complete recovery.

## Wives Can Well Follow A.A.'s Example

From Ogden, Utah

The old saying, "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink", might, it seems to me, be applied to some of the A.A. wives. Some of us come to meetings with our husbands, purely for *their* good. In order to attain sobriety, our husbands have climbed the A.A. Steps until they have contacted a Higher Power and gained for themselves a spiritual experience. For them it was a necessity. They had found their way into such trouble and confusion by following their own wills that they just had to find some way to contact the will of God and by obeying it redeem their mistakes.

For most of the wives, seeking a spiritual experience through the A.A. program may not be a necessity, but it is a privilege. There is no deeper happiness than the feeling that you are following God's will for you and attaining a way of life that will develop all that is best.

Although we all admit the 12 Steps are good for our husbands we sometimes put off actively working to apply them in our daily lives. The most complete set of tools in the world though, can build nothing unless there is a workman to use them; and the world's most modern radio will not play a single tune no matter how you twist the dials unless it is plugged into a source of power. Likewise, we can read the 12 Steps and hear lessons about them for months, but in order to have them really work for us we must definitely try for our own spiritual advancement. It is so easy to claim faith in a thing without following through with the confident action that proves our faith!

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I once read the story of a small mid-western town that was having a serious drought. For many days the sun shone down with withering heat and the crops were wilting in the fields. In desperation the people called a prayer meeting and made their way to the little white church from miles around. They prayed and sang hymns and listened attentively while the minister recounted the beautiful stories of the miracles in the Bible. During the services clouds came up and soon rain was beating down on the little church. The people heard it and joyfully gave thanks. At the conclusion of the meeting though, all the members of the congregation stood huddled in the doorway of the church, unable to leave because of the downpour. All, that is, except one small girl. With perfect faith of childhood she had come prepared for rain, and while the others waited, she calmly put up her umbrella and started off down the steps, the only one to prove her faith with action.

Faith is like a muscle. It atrophies if we don't use it, so we must keep doing small, definite things that show we really believe.

Perhaps some of us have wondered how to really go about contacting this Power greater than ourselves. Well, The A.A. Steps call for humility, prayer and action. Surely if we pray humbly and sincerely, and consistently try to live up to our highest impulses we will finally find actual contact with God's will for us and when that happens we will feel a greater surge for peace and happiness than we have ever known.

We know from our husbands' experiences that God can do nothing about us until we really want him to. God's will is not aggressive. It doesn't seek us out and force itself upon us. But if we earnestly desire it, it will come to us quietly and point the way for us, day by day.

Some people seem born with an inner sense of serenity and a deep understanding. But it only comes to others after they have really been beaten by life and have finally found their way to peace and patience. The path of peace of mind is not too difficult. We must cease to follow our own selfish wills and must learn to be less concerned with ourselves and more concerned with the lives of others. Always we must be truthful to ourselves and others, looking for the real truth behind appearances. For a while each day we must put aside our hurried every day thoughts in favor of high, clear thinking. That is the way to our own serenity.

Too many of us look for our strength in someone or something outside ourselves — persons whose balance cannot be upset. Why can't it be upset? Because they have built a shelter within themselves. They have built it with the power that lies to all our hands. We cannot use their

inner shelters except as a pattern to fashion our own, not only to shelter us in our sorrows, but to lend security and meaning to our joys. For to live according to God's will for us is to find a fuller, more abundant life with protection and gifts and powers far beyond our dreams.—  
Mrs. R.

## Bottoms Up!

(Continued from Page 12)

rubbing the head of the patient with a paste of sunflower seeds" ... "A thick sassafras-bark shampoo" was "sometimes used in similar cases and had the added advantage of killing head lice as well as soothing jangled nerves."

But, we heard the member of one of the New York groups tell how he had the idea for quite a time that if he took his morning drink out of a tin cup it straightened him up better. And then there's another New York A.A. who really believed for a while that although he was an alcoholic in New York, he wasn't one in Florida.

Guess there's no need to go back into history to find alcoholic superstitions!

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One of the reasons A.A. works so well with drunks is because "it takes a drunk to know a drunk." A new twist occurred recently when one of our friends among the priesthood took a hand with a prospect in a New England state. The father made an arrangement to meet his "charge" each Thursday, escort him to the A.A. meeting. Things went along beautifully for about six Thursdays until, on the seventh Thursday, the father found his prospect a wee bit the worse for drink. Speaking to the family about it, the father said: "Well, anyway, he's been sober for the last six weeks." "I think you're mistaken, Father," remarked one of the family, "John has been sober only the last six THURSDAYS!"

## New Groups

(Continued from page 1)

NEW JERSEY—Woodbridge.

NEWYORK—NorthSide Group (Binghamton); Swillburg Group (Rochester).

NORTHCAROLINA—Bladenboro;Boone.

OHIO—Bucyrus; Dennison Avenue Group (Columbus); Downtown Group (Springfield); Van Wert.

OREGON—North Lincoln Group (Ocean Lake).

PENNSYLVANIA—ErieCounty(Corry).

TENNESSEE—Dyersburg; Overton Park Group (Memphis).

TEXAS—Kilgore;Midland;Ward-Winkler Counties Group (Monahans); Port Arthur.

VERMONT—Franklin County Group (St. Albans).

VIRGINIA.—Warrenton.