

The GRAPEVINE

Vol. V, NO. 2, JULY, 1948. P. O. BOX 328, GRAND CENTRAL ANNEX, NEW YORK 17. YEARLY, \$2.50; COPY 25c

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.

Contents of this publication copyrighted, 1948, by A.A. Grapevine Inc. with all rights reserved.

Groups Form World-Wide Chain of A.A. Philosophy



A sea captain recently landed in Lima, Peru. Finding himself in a bar in the company of business acquaintances, he noticed another man in the group was not drinking. He wondered about it for a moment but said nothing.

After awhile the captain's non-drinking companion said, "I notice you're not drinking either. I don't know why you don't drink and I don't care—I know why I don't—I can't."

The man who spoke was an A.A. originally from Palo Alto, Calif., living in Ecuador and visiting in Peru. The sea captain is no longer lonely for A.A. companionship on his visits to South America.

His next port of call was Dublin, Ireland. Upon docking, the boss stevedore came aboard. Following the custom of the sea, the captain took the stevedore to his cabin. He offered him a drink.

"No thank you," said the boss stevedore, "I don't drink."

That night the two of them attended the meeting of the Dublin Group.

Coincidence? Perhaps, but the same thing could happen today to any A.A. traveler in almost any corner of the world.

It all began in 1942 with a letter to The General Service Headquarters. The letter was from a psychiatrist in Sidney, Australia and written to *The American Journal of Psychiatry*. It said:

"I am interested in the formation of a branch of Alcoholics Anonymous in New South Wales. As the names and addresses of the executive officers of A.A. are unknown to me, I am forwarding this letter to you, confident in the knowledge that you will forward it—"

Now, as of June 1, 1948 there are 144 groups in other countries and the United States Possessions registered with the General Service Headquarters.

In studying the files of international group correspondence, it is interesting to note that the problems and birth pains of A.A. groups throughout the world are parallel. For the purpose of example and because it was the first group organized across the sea, excerpts from the Sidney, Australia correspondence are quoted here at some length. These excerpts plus notes from other countries show that a firm, strong chain of A.A. philosophy is beginning to encircle the world.

The second letter from Australia came in April, 1943. It read in part:



April, 1943 — "Our problems with chronic alcoholics are very similar to those you have in America—All that I can show after 20 years of experience in the treatment of alcoholics, and the experience of other psychiatrists in New South Wales has been the same, is a very small percentage of recoveries—a very great proportion of failures. Acute alcoholics recover rapidly in the hospital and relapse just as rapidly upon their discharge.

July, 1944—"We have received every encouragement and offers of assistance from the executive officers of all government departments dealing with inebriates—there should be many converts providing we find the man to start it. So far we have not succeeded—Australians tend to be rather reserved and do not accept a new thing with the enthusiasm of Americans—

March, 1945—"After many trials, difficulties and disappointments, I am now very happy to report that a branch of A.A. has been formed in Sidney. It now consists of four members—

"At present they are using my house for a meeting place—In the near future they will meet in a club room in Sidney or in private residences—Mr. A. is writing to you asking for formal affiliation as a branch of A.A. NOTE: The first Australian A.A. slipped after four months—his first 12th Step case continued on to sobriety—

Oct., 1945—"We meet once a week as a club. Individual members see each other frequently and are always visiting prospects. By newspaper publicity and by lectures we are becoming better known and our mail is increasing—Our inexperience has multiplied our pitfalls. It took us many months to discover that so many who so willingly joined us at first, did so to get what they could from us—

November, 1945—"I pointed out that A.A. technique may have to be modified to suit Australians. The extensive experience gained at the clinic will prove or disprove this theory. At any rate we will analyze the whole position over the next few months—

March, 1947—"Rapid expansion, however encouraging, has had the disadvantage of loss of personal contact and a suspicion of contest for control—Clashes of personalities made us hasten the formation of three branches. Conflicts of opinion, which are inevitable, occur when members think more of the organization and policy than they do of A.A. When this occurs, relapses are frequent.

(Continued on page 2)

Group Has Come-back System

Members Draw Wages from Finance Committee until Confidence Returns

November, 1947—"We continue to make progress. Our foundation is solid—we have overcome the difficulties we had at first."

Nuriootpa, South Australia—situated in the wine country—"We have a scheme whereby our members, when if they slip and get to the down and out stage, are paid their wages by the group, receiving enough to get on their own feet again, then drawing the balance when confidence has returned. For instance, I've had three "alkies" picking grapes in my vineyard this season. They collected their money from the group's financial committee when needed and we find that it works well. The group pays off pressing debts and the member is under obligation to his fellow members to discharge the loan and it never fails. Also as you probably know, "alkies" are by nature too good hearted and would pay all wages, etc., in a lump sum. That would be placing temptation within reach and put a heck of a strain on the average A.A.'s good intentions. Of course this system is entirely voluntary."

Adelaide, South Australia—"We were three months old a couple of days ago. We have gone through quite a deal of trial and error in those three months, and are profiting from it in some degree. Thanks for the advice on the establishment of a Foundation, here. As a matter of fact I agree that there is no place in A.A. for authority and money. A.A. is simply charity and love for your fellow man, obeying the will of God and helping others to see it in that light too. True, indeed we have found that there is no place in A.A. for money. A little is necessary to pay for stamps, phone calls, literature, the *Big Book* and things like that."

Athens, Greece—"There is a great deal of drinking among the Americans here, but we are both on the beam—we will have a real group in operation here soon—"

Niebull, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany—"We the undersigned members of the A.A. group, Nordfriesland, held our first meeting in my home today. Thanks to your generosity we were able to discuss those new messages from across the sea, while drinking coffee and eating cookies. Nine eligible members were present. The issue

of the evening was, of course, the letters and literature that had previously been received from you and the General Service Headquarters in New York. I read all of those to the members and afterwards we had a lively discussion. It is not possible for us to belong to any international organization (they don't understand yet, of course, how we can be organized without actually being an organization. Wonderful, this A.A.) as we would have to have a special permit. But we feel that those things are secondary. We will continue to hold regular meetings at which we will discuss such problems and questions which are of mutual interest to us as members."

Boras, Sweden—"Our membership is now over 80 and I think that about two thirds will go 'the good way.' I have many propositions to start new groups but as you know it is difficult to convince many to come to us. But I can say that we have most of the doctors in this town as our supporters."

Keflavik, Iceland—"We are now two. It is a difficult thing to start a group on these bases, unless two or three members are on hand. However I haven't given up hope. From my experience it seems as though an alcoholic who really wants to stay sober can do so through living A.A. I am coming to the conclusion that it is easier to stay sober than to truly live the A.A. way of life—that your sobriety depends on just that."



Johannesburg, South Africa—"We had a public meeting recently and there was a very good response. There was an attendance of about 120. This also brought in quite a large number of applicants. I feel we are really beginning to be felt now. The doctors are interested as also a percentage of our Social Welfare Sections. Our weekly meeting is being attended by about 40 now. We had a social meeting recently with an attendance of about 65."

Helsinki, Finland—"Perhaps some of your members could come over and see us. We really need some help from alcoholics in this important rebuilding work."

Korea—"We have had many set-backs but they strengthened the ones who remained to learn the Program the hard way."



Mexico City, Mexico—"With families and friends we usually have between 18 and 20 people. Through a close personal friend who owns one of the hotels down here we may get a club room in which to meet. She is now trying to convince her family, who know nothing about A.A. This is a difficult city in which to find a meeting place. The men have tried every available place in town, including the Red Cross—all full up. Wish some good A.A.s would head here for a vacation—our new members need to hear and see them."

Tokyo, Japan—"Help, Help, we are starting a group here. The thing has the blessings of high army officials and army doctors. It has great possibilities but the situation here is somewhat unusual due to many factors—the most important of which is that all civilians and officers are allowed a regular monthly ration of assorted whiskies."

In the jet-propelled aircraft future it may be possible to make personal calls on these far-away groups. Since it is not feasible at present to make these calls, a letter to those A.A.s would be more than welcome. To make this easier for those who care to write, the list of groups in other countries up to June 1, 1948 and the mailing addresses are printed below.

AUSTRALIA

New South Wales

Barellan—Contact through P.O. Box 459 (Grand Central Annex) New York 17, N. Y.

Sydney—Central Office, P.O. Box 101 Broadway—(20 Groups)

Queensland

Brisbane—Contact through P.O. Box 459 (Grand Central Annex) New York 17, N. Y.

South Australia

Adelaide—P.O. Box 1640 M, G.P.O.
Nuriootpa—P.O. Box 63

Victoria

Melbourne—Contact through P.O. Box 459 (Grand Central Annex) New York 17, N. Y.

BELGIUM

Brussels—Contact through P.O. Box 459 (Grand Central Annex) New York 17, N. Y.

BERMUDA

St. Georges—Contact through P.O. Box 459 (Grand Central Annex) New York 17, N. Y.

BRAZIL

Rio de Janeiro D.F.—Alcoholics Anonymous Group P.O. Box, Caixa Postal 254

BRITISH GUIANA

Georgetown—contact through Group P.O. Box 459 (Grand Central Annex) New York 17, N. Y.

CANADA

Alberta

Banff—P.O. Box 98
 Calgary—P.O. Box 371
 Camrose—P.O. Box 718
 Edmonton—P.O. Box 134
 Red Deer—P.O. Box "AAA," Advocate

British Columbia

Alberni—P.O. Box 60
 Duncan—P.O. Box 869
 Kamloops—P.O. Box 353
 Kelowna—P.O. Box 307
 Lake Cowichan—Contact P.O. Box 459 (Grand Central Annex) New York 17, N. Y.
 Nanaimo—P.O. Box 15
 New Westminster—P.O. Box 3
 Penticton—P.O. Box 314
 Princes Rupert—P.O. Box 575
 Powell River—P.O. Box 341
 Vancouver—P.O. Box 464
 Victoria—P.O. Box 1
 Sardis—P.O. Box 1

Manitoba

Winnipeg—P.O. Box 301
 St. Boniface—P.O. Box 103
 Gimil—P.O. Box 1046

New Brunswick

Moncton—P.O. Box 53
 Saint John—Contact through P.O. Box 459 (Grand Central Annex) New York 17, N. Y.

Nova Scotia

Amherst—P. O. Box 125
 Halifax—P.O. Box 447, Armdale P.O.
 New Glasgow—Contact through P.O. Box 459 (Grand Central Annex) New York 17, N. Y.
 Yarmouth—P.O. Box 198

Ontario

Brantford—P.O. Box 67
 Clinton—P.O. Box 188
 Durham—Contact P.O. Box 459 (Grand Central Annex) New York 17, N. Y.
 Guelph—P.O. Box 153
 Hamilton—P.O. Box 13'

Kingston—Contact P.O. Box 459 (Grand Central Annex) New York 17, N. Y.

Kitchener—Room 20, 33 King Street, East.

Leamington—P.O. Box 759

London—P.O. Box 130

Meaford—P.O. Box 39

Ottawa—P.O. Box 38

Sarnia—P.O. Box 94

Sault Sainte Marie—P.O. Box 391

Saint Catharines—P.O. Box 133

St. Thomas—P.O. Box 87

Simcoe—P.O. Box 371

Stratford—P.O. Box 21

Toronto—Contact through P.O. Box 459 (Grand Central Annex) New York 17, N. Y.

Wallaceburg—P.O. Box 494

Sudbury—P.O. Box 203, G.P.O.

Port Arthur—P.O. Box 114

Windsor—P.O. Box 452

Woodstock—P.O. Box 791. Clifford P.O. Box 5. Haileybury P.O. Box 241

Prince Edward Island

Charlottetown—Contact P.O. Box 459 (Grand Central Annex) New York 17, N. Y.

Emerald—Contact P.O. Box 459 (Grand Central Annex) New York 17, N. Y.

North Rustico—Contact P.O. Box 459 (Grand Central Annex) New York 17, N. Y.

Summerside—P.O. Box 607

Quebec

Montreal—P.O. Box 271—Station H

Rowanton—Contact P.O. Box 459 (Grand Central Annex) New York 17, N. Y.

Saskatchewan

Kamsack—P.O. Box 418

Regina—P.O. Box 11

CUBA—Havana—Contact P.O. Box 459 (Grand Central Annex) New York 17, N. Y.

EIRE—Dublin—Contact P.O. Box 459 (Grand Central Annex) New York 17, N. Y.

EL SALVADOR—CENTRAL AMERICA

San Salvador—Contact P.O. Box 459 (Grand Central Annex) New York 17, N. Y.

ENGLAND—London BM/AAL London, WCI

FINLAND—Drumso, Helsinki—Contact P.O. Box 459 (Grand Central Annex) New York 17, N. Y.

FRANCE—Paris—Contact P.O. Box 459 (Grand Central Annex) New York 17, N. Y.

GREECE—Athens—Contact P.O. Box 459 (Grand Central Annex), New York 17, N. Y.

ICELAND—Keflavick—Contact P.O. Box 459 (Grand Central Annex) New York 17, N. Y.

JAPAN—Tokyo—Contact P.O. Box 459 (Grand Central Annex) New York 17, N. Y.

KOREA—Anscom City—Contact P.O. Box 459 (Grand Central Annex) New York 17, N. Y.

MEXICO

Coyoacan, D. F— Apartado Postal 9571, Sucursal Nonalco, Mexico, D. F.

NEW ZEALAND

Wellington—P.O. Box 202

NORWAY

Bergen—P.O. Box 459 (Grand Central Annex) New York 17, N. Y.

Lillibro, Drobak—Contact P.O. Box 459 (Grand Central Annex) New York 17, N. Y.

SCOTLAND

Campbelltown, Argyll—Contact Through P.O. Box 459 (Grand Central Annex) New York 17, N. Y.

SOUTH AFRICA —Johannesburg —P.O. Box 1868

SWEDEN—Boras—Contact P.O. Box 459 (Grand Central Annex) New York 17, N. Y.

SWITZERLAND — Lausanne — Contact P.O. Box 459 (Grand Central Annex) New York 17, N. Y.

VENEZUELA—Caracas—Contact P.O. Box, 459 (Grand Central Annex) New York 17, N. Y.

U. S. POSSESSIONS

ALASKA

Anchorage—P.O. Box 551

Juneau—Totem Club P.O. Box 982

Seward—Contact P.O. Box 459 (Grand Central Annex) New York 17, N. Y.

CANAL ZONE—Balboa, P.O. Box 2031 Ancon
 Margarita, P.O. Box 258 .

MARIANAS ISLANDS—Guam—Station No. 6, P.O. Box 535

OKINAWA—Contact P.O. Box 459 (Grand Central Annex) New York 17, N. Y.

HAWAII—Honolulu, P.O. Box 1238

VIRGIN ISLANDS—St. Thomas, P.O. Box 484

Quiz Program Is Popular For Group Meeting Discussions

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

A NEW A.A. quiz program, designed to spark personal opinions, has met with enthusiastic response from members of the Grand Rapids Group. The questions are thought-provoking, instructive and, we feel, purposeful. So far, we have carried the quiz through six consecutive meetings of our own Group, and loaned it to neighboring groups.

As we all know, there is no authority in A.A. except the "Big Book." So the 50 questions included in our quiz are merely stimulants for individual thinking and group discussion.

The method of procedure is flexible, depending on the chairman's whim. Here we have a master list of the questions, printed on small cards, which are passed out to the members. The chairman can then call for the questions in sequence, or skip around at will.

Our experience has been that members who have never before ventured an opinion, gave forth with amazing interpretations to the questions. When a topic is thoroughly exhausted, the quiz moves on.

Quiz Questions

1. What is alcoholics anonymous?
2. What is an alcoholic?
3. Does it matter when or how you became an alcoholic? . . . Yes or No. . . . Why?
4. How many types of prospects are there for Alcoholics Anonymous?
5. Is A.A. a magic formula for staying sober? . . . A method for learning how to do controlled drinking. . . A new way of life?
6. Is there any difference between being on the water wagon or on the A.A. Program?
7. What are some of the indications of an alcoholic? . . . General and personal.
8. Is alcohol (or drinking) the cause of our troubles, or the result?
9. What incident or series of situations made you decide you had to do something about your drinking problem?
10. During your last drinking days, did

you have a feeling of being cut off from life and worthwhile people? . . . Did you care?¹

11. Did your association with A.A. help you regain your self-respect? . . . or were you secretly ashamed?
12. Does it matter much if you contact another A.A. before or after you take the first drink?
13. What is the 13th Step?
14. Have you read the Big Book—*Alcoholics Anonymous*? . . . What did you get out of it?
15. Why is the loneliness of an alcoholic licked by the comradeship of A.A.?
16. Is anonymity vital to the success of A.A.?
17. How far do your responsibilities go toward helping the individual compulsive drunkard who asks for help?
18. Explain how practicing the 12th Step can help promote an understanding of the 2nd Step?
19. Why is the 10th Step more important to our mental rather than our physical well-being?
20. Did you make direct amends to anyone?
21. Why do you resolve to practice A.A. for only 24 hours a day?
22. Does sobriety bore you?
23. Does an "open mind" refer to understanding of the spiritual phase of the program, personal behavior, or what?
24. Why is the A.A. Program the world's strangest commodity? . . . You can't sell it. . . . You can't buy it. . . . The only way you can keep it, is to give it away. . . . Explain.
25. Is there such a thing as a dry drunk? . . . How do you cure it?
26. Why should we realize that every morning we are potential, or possible, drunkards for that day?
27. Has the A.A. program taught you that you have more trouble with yourself than anyone else you know? . . . If so, is this humility? . . . Spiritual awakening? . . . Honesty?
28. Why do you pray only for knowledge of God's will for you, and for the power to carry that out?
29. In A.A. parlance, what is meant by "H-o-w?"
30. Why is progress preferred to perfection on the A.A. Program?

31. What is meant by the expression—"Watch Your Humility?"
32. Some alcoholics say they simply can't surrender. . . . Did you? If so, explain how you did it.
33. What are your credentials for membership in A.A.?
34. When someone asks you to—"Come on, have a drink!" . . . Do you say "I'm not drinking because I've got a bad heart, flat feet, etc." . . . or, "I've quit because I learned I can't handle alcohol." . . . or, "I'm a member of Alcoholics Anonymous!"
35. Compare *Fear* versus *Desire* as they apply to an A.A. prospect.
36. Does sobriety make the price of one drink too high?
37. Can you give the A.A. Prayer? . . . Explain what it means?
38. In case you could get away with a secret slip, would it be helpful or harmful to your conscience to report it at a meeting?
39. Does the fact that the word "alcohol" is used only twice in the 12 Steps have any especial significance to you?
40. In relation to the A.A. Program, explain the meaning of the statement. . . . "A rear view mirror is useful, but its use too much can be dangerous."
41. Does it embarrass you to be the only one in a business or social gathering who doesn't drink?
42. Just how honest and fearless was your "*Searching and Fearless Moral Inventory*?"
43. When you get an A.A. prospect who needs hospitalization, How do you go about getting him into a hospital? . . . How do you finance him? With your money? . . . His money? . . . Group subscription?
44. Give three reasons why you've been sober today.
45. Does tolerance—or lack of it—affect your relations with others? . . . And in turn affect you?
46. Is it a daily battle for you to stay on the Program?
47. Explain the difference between selfish and self-enlightenment in relation to the A.A. Program.
48. Does a "slip" constitute one drink or a drunk?
49. What is your understanding of the expression. . . . "Working the A.A. Program on faith."
50. Do you believe peace of mind can be a daily accomplishment, or can it only be attained through a lifetime of right living?—*R. M., Grand Rapids, Mich.*

N.A.A. Organized

The wives and husbands of the Rochester A.A. members have organized a non-alcoholic group, which we simply call "N.A.A." at present. We thought you would be interested in knowing about our group and how the meetings are conducted. •

Our meetings are opened with a moment of silent prayer and closed with the A.A. prayer. A member reads our "Six Steps" and "Four Aims," and some pre-arranged topic is informally discussed. We have thirty-five members and the interest in our group is very encouraging. Our "Six Steps" and "Four Aims" were decided upon by us after several weeks of discussion and rearranging. They are:

Six Steps

1. We admitted that we were powerless to help the alcoholic.
2. Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to a life of happiness.
3. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.
4. Continue to take personal inventory, to keep defects of habit from creeping back into our lives.
5. Became willing to make amends for the mistakes of the past and to constantly be on the alert for any destructive habits, such as nagging and criticizing.
6. We try to carry this message to alcoholic mates and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Four Aims

1. Help ourselves.
2. Have a complete understanding, insofar as we are able, of the whole problem of alcoholism.
3. Find out what we can do to help the alcoholic.
4. Help the mates of new members of A.A. to better understand the alcoholic problem.

We feel that we have already been helped greatly by our group and have learned how to better understand the alcoholic problem. We also find that a definite fellowship and friendship exists among our members.

Each week some member volunteers to bring refreshments and coffee, which is paid for out of our treasury, and is served



by the hotel in our meeting room. The A.A. mates usually come by for their N.A.A. mates after the N.A.A. meeting, and remain to have coffee and join in our social period.

Our officers include a chairman, one co-chairman, secretary, and treasurer, and are elected to act for a period of six months. We change officers at the same time our A.A. groups in the city change—February and August.

Our N.A.A. group has been functioning since the early part of February of this year and we hope to continue to grow.—*M.P., Rochester, N. Y.*

Akron, Ohio Marks AA. 13th Anniversary With Large Turnout

From Akron, Ohio

The Akron 13th Anniversary of the founding of A.A. was a history-establishing meeting.

It was attended by 4,000 members living in this area, who showed their appreciation and gave thanks to Dr. Bob and Bill W., the co-founders, and the non A.A.s who were instrumental in making their meeting possible and most helpful during our formative period, also Bill D., the first firm believer in Dr. Bob and Bill W's idea.

The meeting was opened with a prayer by Rev. Walter F. Tunks, Rector of St. Paul's Episcopal Church. The first speaker was Honorable Judge Bernard J. Roetzel, who outlined the rehabilitation that has been done in this community, through the works of A.A.

The second speaker was our Dr. Bob who introduced the non A.A.s who were helpful and instrumental at the beginning of our formative period, gave a description of the early history and the basic teachings of A.A. The third speaker was Bill W. who talked on A.A. Traditions and Yearly Conference plans.

Give A.A. Book

We approach the new members when they are put in quarantine. When the inmate is low in spirits and is thinking a great deal, we pass the large A.A. book to him and let him read it. Later we have a chat with him and then we have a new member in our group.

Of the 12 members that have left us only two have failed to make a go of it.

Last May we had our first birthday. Two hundred people attended the first anniversary meeting of the state Prison Group of Alcoholics Anonymous at the prison auditorium.—*C.P., Vermont State Prison Group.*

Enthusiasm Key Word

Enthusiasm is the key word of Birmingham Service Guild, or Wives' Group, as it's called. Since its first meeting in October, 1947, the membership has grown from 51 to 71. These are wives or relatives of members.

Here are some services rendered by this group recently: A baby shower for two of the women members of A.A. who are now proud mothers; six Sampson card tables, 36 folding chairs, presented to the club.

Donations of cups and saucers, cash and other gifts have made the club rooms in Birmingham more attractive and livable.

At Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years this group gave a series of parties and provided the refreshments. They made it possible for the Birmingham A.A.'s to enjoy a more festive holiday season in 1947 than would have been possible without their help.

Well organized, hard-working, this group has definitely worked-out purposes. Here are some of their objectives:

1. To create better understanding and cooperation between the A.A. member and his or her family.
2. To lend assistance and advice through personal experience to the wife of an A.A. member.
3. To originate A.A. social activities in the club and elsewhere.
4. To aid A.A. families with acute material needs.

The above and many more services have been, and are being, generously given by these loyal friends of A.A.—*Service Guild, Birmingham, Ala.*

An Oldtimer Answers the \$64 "Slipee" Question

First of all I want to congratulate you on *The A.A. Grapevine*. I suppose that as A.A. grows throughout the world more and better material is available for our national paper, but the task still remains of making it interesting and readable—and you are doing a fine job.

The \$64 question posed by A.G. of Rochester, N. Y., in the June issue is about as old as A.A. itself. More than ten years ago a nice young fellow came to our group and told what liquor had done to him—and of course to his family, a wife and three fine children who had been forced to live with her parents. Our new friend's furniture was gone, he had lost his job and had no place to sleep.

Well, we got together and found Joe a room (and in those early days anything over a buck in A.A. was high finance), a job was secured, and with our help he persuaded his wife to give him another chance. She came to the next meeting with him, and instead of hopelessness, hope shone in her eyes. Shortly afterward we had a picnic and the whole family attended, including the children.

It was agreed that "something should be done." A house was rented, their pitiful scraps of furniture were added to—a chair from one A.A., a bed from another, a stove from a third—and with the help of several A.A. mates our new member's wife made her home attractive.

Were Thrilled

We couldn't have been more thrilled! Here was really an instance of "sudden rehabilitation." What, we thought, could be more appropriate than a housewarming? It was arranged for Saturday night—a surprise picnic dinner with each one to bring his share.

Of course we arrived early, before Joe was due home from his job. For an hour we sat around enjoying ourselves in anticipation of this fitting climax to our efforts. But Joe was late, and then later, and finally he came home—drunk.

Yet, as far as we know, Joe had completed his longest period of sobriety—two months—in many years. What we had

overlooked was the simple fact that we can't buy sobriety for anyone, even for ourselves. Nothing had happened to Joe; he'd only been on the wagon; he'd transferred the responsibility for his life and his family not to himself, but to us, his new-found friends.

I have often wondered if we hadn't ruined any chance Joe had to learn A.A., by not giving him the same opportunity we had—that of becoming an A.A. and straightening out our own affairs. In my opinion this is a very important part of the A.A. Program of recovery.

I think we should never give up on anyone. To say a person is hopeless is to limit the power of God. But a buck, ten, or a thousand, isn't ever what makes an A.A. It is, rather, that spark within the person himself, born often of desperation and best described, it seems to me, as a sincere desire not to drink, a recognition that he alone is powerless, and the acceptance of God's help.

Aid of Greater Power

When this has happened, then a new member should enjoy all the privileges of sobriety, for he has the aid of a Greater Power for his personal problems.

All this doesn't mean that we should let a guy go hungry, nor is it suggested that sometimes a buck or two won't be helpful, but this sort of encouragement should be a matter between individuals, not a part of A.A.—and we must always guard against "keeping a man drunk with kindness."

"Pampered Homer" in the June *Vino Vignette* is a good example of how we can kid ourselves that we are being helpful.—*R. S.—New York, N. Y.*



Group Meeting

A New Club Room Comes From Price Of A Cup of Coffee

A year ago there were 15 of us ex-stews in Fargo. Number 16, upon completion of hospitalization for his last drunk—that is—nervous breakdown—asked a 12th Stepper to pay for his coffee. Because, he said, all he had to his name was a silver dollar which had come his way the day he was released. This A.A. neophyte, still thinking alcoholically, saw an opportunity for a free cup of coffee. The old 12th Stepper saw hope. Fargo's ex-Scotch-drinking Scotchman and intellectual par excellence visualized a symbol. Says Mac, "And your carrying the silver as a Symbol of Sobriety?"

So our group became the S.O.S. Group of Fargo. We purchased a new clubhouse . . . SILVER DOLLAR, SYMBOL OF SOBRIETY, SOCIETY OF FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA, and became a non-profit corporation set up in accordance with the laws of North Dakota for giving the philosophy of A.A. and holding property.

Perhaps we were piqued when we were tagged the *Society of Soaks*. Because that Silver Dollar was our own non-abstract symbol of the abstract philosophy freeing US from desperate terrifying distress . . . even as it is the international call of distress. And should we reach for the change for that first drink there is that 1922 mint dollar, with our initials and dry date suitably inscribed, reminding us of our morning pledge. Why even the United States Mint cooperated with the words . . . "In God We Trust"!! !

Humorous Suggestions

Yes, we were even flattered when such humorous suggestions as "Shakes Over Scotch"—"Scarcity of Stimulants"—"Solicitors of Stews"—"Soaks Often Shaky" . . . and such sober truths as "Surrender or Stumble"—"Slippers Often Skeptical"—"Soaks Open Sanitarium"—"Scotch, Opiates, Stumblebums" . . . were proposed.

Now there are 50 of us . . . and that Silver Dollar????

JUST ASK THE MAN WHO OWNS ONE!! !—*E.V.G., Fargo, N. Y.*

A.A. Meetings Seem More Social Than A.A.

From Cincinnati, O.

The question presented in last month's *The ? Box*, "Is A.A. Becoming Too Social?" will undoubtedly draw a variety of answers and I would like to get my two-bits in early, if I may.

I am one who has thought for some time that we were becoming much too social—so social that in some places an A.A. meeting seems more social than A.A.

I am presuming that in this case the word "social" does not mean coffee and cakes, or the little informal gatherings of A.A.s that have become common to the movement. These have my vote, not only because they are congenial and encourage the companionship, that we all need, but because they also are a form of 12th Step work and group therapy.

The kind of "social" affairs that worry me are the big events and the full programs that some groups seem to be carrying on in the form of testimonial banquets, weekly dances, bingo parties, bridge parties, golf tournaments and even popularity contests.

There is nothing harmful in these things in themselves. They are a pleasant part of the affairs of the Elks, the Rotarians, the Country Club, the Downtown club, etc., which have become wholesome institutions

THE ? BOX

for

Group Discussion

Topics believed to furnish good material for group discussion will be presented here each issue in the form of questions, one question per month. No attempt will be made to present any discussion simultaneously with the question, but readers are invited to send in discussion letters on each question for publication in subsequent issues. If your group develops a particularly good discussion topic, you also are invited to send it in to The ? Box. This month's question is:

IS A.A. GETTING TOO MUCH PUBLICITY?

in American life. I belong to some of these clubs myself and enjoy them, and I support their affairs.

But in my opinion A.A. is different, or at least it started out differently. Among

its attractions for me was its simplicity, its singleness of purpose, and its disregard of the social distinctions and social values that inevitably are emphasized in the ordinary clubs.

Social events require organizations. They also require financing and they require planning and supervision.

In the beginning, A.A. was a simple movement. The purpose was to sober up and then help the next guy to sober up. This was done by close, intimate work, usually between two individuals.

As A.A. grew, the size of the meetings naturally grew, too, and a fringe of social activities around and about the groups began to develop. Up to a certain point, these things are helpful.

But the "certain point," beyond which in my opinion social affairs become a hindrance rather than a help and after which they divert and distract from the purposes of A.A. is that point where they begin to take more time and attention than 12th Step work and personal recovery problems. I know members who are spending so much time arranging parties, running clubhouses, attending committee meetings that they don't have any time to go work with some poor, miserable and troublesome drunk. They're too busy with the extra-curricular affairs.

Some organization is necessary, but I believe it should be regarded as a necessary evil and be held to a very minimum. Organization has killed other movements. It could kill A.A. and it may already be hindering its most important functions.

Let's consider our social programs on a basis of their contribution to the recovery program. What kind of activities are essential and which are not? Since they all take organization, and since some of them also tend to put emphasis on the very affectations we are trying to get away from, let's go slow.

Most important of all, let's keep uppermost all of the time the fact that the strength of A.A. has been its simplicity and singleness of purpose. We want to stay sober and to do that we must help others. That's the meat of A.A. and I personally think such things as popularity contests not only don't help, but they becloud and confuse our purpose.—*H.E.*

New Groups Are Organized

The following new groups reported organization to the General Service Headquarters during the month of May:

ALABAMA—Huntsville; Sheffield.
 ARKANSAS—Lonoke.
 CALIFORNIA—Glendale, Women's Group.
 FLORIDA—Jacksonville, A.A. Assembly Group; Palm Beach, Group Two; Tarp Springs.
 ILLINOIS—Carmi.
 INDIANA—Rensselaer.
 IOWA—Clinton.
 KENTUCKY—Somerset.
 LOUISIANA—Natchitoches; Oak Grove, Carroll Group.
 MAINE—Lewiston, Auburn Lewiston Group.
 MASSACHUSETTS—Attleboro, South Attleboro Group; Everett.
 MICHIGAN—Charlevoix.
 MISSOURI—Columbia, Group Two; Kirksville.

NEW JERSEY—Metuchen.
 NEVADA—Reno, Group Two.
 NEW MEXICO—Aztec; Las Vegas.
 NEW YORK—Auburn; Bronx; Mott Haven Group; Brooklyn, Bushwick Group; Greenpoint; Malverne, L. I.; Riverhead, L. I.; Rochester, Group 21.
 OHIO—Niles; Shelby.
 OREGON—Hood River.
 PENNSYLVANIA—Kane; Kingston.
 RHODE ISLAND—Providence, Westminster Group.
 TENNESSEE—Columbia.
 VIRGINIA—Lovingston.
 WASHINGTON—Naches.
 WEST VIRGINIA—Weston.
 WISCONSIN—La Crosse, Group Two.
 CANADA—British Columbia, New Westminster, Sapperton Group; New Westminster, West End Group; Nova Scotia, Yarmouth; Manitoba, Gimil; Ontario, Clifford; Haileybury.

**Have YOU told a NEWCOMER about
The A.A. Grapevine?**

EDITORIAL:

On the 8th Tradition

By Bill

"Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional. We define professionalism as the occupation of counseling alcoholics for fees or hire. But we may employ alcoholics where they are going to perform those services for which we might otherwise have to engage non-alcoholics. Such special services may be well recompensed. But our usual A.A. "12th Step" work is never to be paid for."

Throughout the world A.A.s are "12th stepping" with thousands of new prospects a month. Between one and two thousand of these stick on our first presentation; past experience shows that most of the remainder will come back to us later on. Almost entirely unorganized, and completely non-professional, this mighty spiritual current is now flowing from alcoholics who are well to those who are sick. One alcoholic talking to another; that's all.

Could this vast and vital face-to-face effort ever be professionalized or even organized? Most emphatically, it could not. The few efforts to professionalize straight "12th Step" work have always failed quickly. Today, no A.A. will tolerate the idea of paid "A.A. Therapists" or "organizers". Nor does any A.A. like to be told just how he must handle that new prospect of his. No, this great life-giving stream can never be dammed up by paid do-gooders or professionals. Alcoholics Anonymous is never going to cut its own life lines. To a man, we are sure of that.

But what about those who serve us full time in other capacities—are cooks, caretakers and paid Intergroup secretaries "A.A. professionals"?

Because our thinking about these people is still unclear, we often feel and act as though they were such. The impression of professionalism subtly attaches to them, so we frequently hear they are "making money out of A.A.", or that they are "professionalizing" A.A. Seemingly, if they do take our A.A. dollars they don't quite belong with us A.A.s any more. We sometimes go further; we underpay them on the theory they ought to be glad to "cook" for A.A. cheap.

Now isn't this carrying our fears of professionalism rather far? If these fears ever got too strong, none but a saint or an incompetent could work for Alcoholics Anonymous. Our supply of saints being

quite small, we would certainly wind up with less competent workers than we need.

We are beginning to see that our few paid workers are performing only those service tasks that our volunteers cannot consistently handle. Primarily these folks are not doing 12th Step work. They are just making more and better 12th Step work possible. Secretaries at their desks are valuable points of contact, information and public relations. That is what they are paid for, and nothing else. They help carry the good news of A.A. to the outside world and bring our prospects face to face with us. That's not "A.A. therapy"; it's just a lot of very necessary but often thankless work.

So, where needed, let's revise our attitude toward those who labor at our special services. Let us treat them as A.A. associates, and not as hired help; let's recompense them fairly and, above all, let's absolve them from the label of professionalism.

Let us also distinguish clearly between "organizing the A.A. movement" and setting up, in a reasonably business-like manner, its few essential services of contact and propagation. Once we do that, all will be well. The million or so brother alcoholics who are still sick will then continue to get the break we 60,000 A.A.s have already had.

Let's give our "service desks" the hand they so well deserve.

Aiding Others Gave Dr. Liebman Peace of Mind

The death of Dr. Joshua L. Liebman on June 9 at the age of 41 from a heart attack which physicians said was due to overwork may raise a question concerning his book, *Peace of Mind*.

The book is favorite reading among A.A.'s (see *Good Reading*, page 16) as well as being a national best seller, and undoubtedly it has helped many alcoholics in their search for serenity.

But the question which now arises is: How much peace of mind did Dr. Liebman himself have if he died from overwork?

The question is based on the fallacy that overwork indicates a distraught mind. Or, to put it the other way around, that peace of mind precludes activity, that it requires a state of static and statuesque immobility or pleasant stagnation.

To the contrary, peace of mind for many requires activity, action, work. Many alcoholics are numbered among those to whom inaction would be troublesome and for whom activity is essential to their peace of mind.

No one who is familiar with Dr. Liebman's life could imagine that he ever could have been happy doing nothing. He had to be doing much. Even in doing more than he could stand physically, a reasonable assumption would be that his work contributed to his own peace of mind. Having discovered something he believed to be of value to others, he sought to pass it on, as A.A.s seek to pass on in their 12th Step work the special knowledge they have acquired.

Dr. Liebman overtaxed himself physically. But a man can be at peace in the knowledge that his work is helping so many.

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 General Service Headquarters, P.O. Box 459, Grand Central Annex, New York 17, N. Y.

Musings From the Back Bar— A A. - The Distaff Side

From New York, N. Y.

"If there's anything worse than a drunk, it's a woman drunk!"

That was a bartender talking, several years ago. He meant me, and thousands of my sisters-under-a-skinful. I blushed, and teetered quietly to the next bar.

Came the dawn, came the light, came A.A. Here was a whole new life with a group of people who didn't point the finger at a female lush. Another gal guided me through the complex simplicities of A.A. "initiation" and an A.A. wife became my warm friend. Thus was I launched on a neat pink cloud with the whole "family" cheering. I loved everyone . . . A.A.'s male or female, wives or husbands . . . everyone! I became a part of the first women's A.A. group. They were wonderful, too.

Hands Off Policy

Before A.A. women had never been a real part of my life. Most of the girls I knew were acquaintances only. By mutual agreement, we maintained a "hands-off" policy. My drinking finally took me beyond the pale of local society and into bars which were chiefly populated by men. They seemed more friendly than my own sex . . . maybe they were just less discriminating! Thence to solitary drinking in one of those rooms to which drunks gravitate, thence to A.A. None of these experiences prepared me for life among the anonymi . . . though they did prepare me for A.A.

After a few sober months, several girls from the nearby workhouse' were channeled to the women's group. Some of us respectable A.A.'s were horrified! Must we accept *girls like that*? Of course, their only crime was drinking, and they were unluckier than most in not having friends, family or money to cushion them against the harsh world of alcoholism. But some of us dreamed of the past, filled with fabulous friends and fictional glories. Cliques developed, personalities clashed and the group rocked. Some of us got drunk and returned to the group with a new definition of humility. We needed and received help from those very women we had once scorned.

For me, this marked a turning point. I became grateful to those new and different A.A. gals who had rescued me from my snobbishness. I could no longer say that

I didn't like women; it would have been totally illogical. After all, I was included in that category of women. Given half a chance, these "drunken dames" were not only good A.A.'s, but good friends.

It occurred to me that I needed to do a lot of work on myself. There was the matter of "First Things First." Well, then, I was a woman first and an alcoholic second. Selfishly, I had to learn to live without alcohol or die—it was that serious. I received my help from "women." It therefore seemed reasonable that I could best "carry the message" to another woman. I had to get the chip off my shoulder.

Some A.A.'s whose opinion I respect say that women alcoholics have great difficulty in learning to departmentalize their lives; men apparently grow up with more orderly ideas about the distinction between home and business, work and play. Our feminine logic is often half emotion, half instinct. We may find it difficult to tackle A.A. on an impersonal basis, to work with others on a basis of justice without jealousy. Could it be that women have a special problem, or maybe that special women have a problem in A.A.?

A.A. women, operating in their own groups, or just as individuals, have set a wonderful example for us to follow. I'm grateful for all the help which the Women, God bless 'em, have given to me. As the margin of time between my drinking career and the happy life of today widens, I'm trying to give expression to that gratitude by fitting into the overall A.A. picture in some helpful way.

There are a few heartening indications that I may make the transition from frustrated prima donna to *one of the girls* without bloodshed or halo cramps. My standards are tilting upwards, and the old false front has dropped away. I married an

A.A., which qualifies me twice in the A.A. circle and ought to help me to see both sides of the Wives vs. Women debate. My story doesn't entitle me to throw stones at anybody, and the slingshot arm feels mighty quiet these days.

I no longer worry about being a woman drunk. My only fear is that other A.A.'s will cast a skeptical eye in my direction and announce. "She probably wasn't an alcoholic anyway . . . or at least, that wasn't the whole trouble." That sentence is guaranteed to start a first class A.A. battle, anywhere.

Maybe the A.A. who says "I can't understand women alcoholics" just means "women," period. But it's more important not to *misunderstand* us than to understand us, anyway!—L. T.

Value in Repeating Old Discoveries

From Flint, Mich.

Those of us who have come along in A.A. during the last couple of years probably cannot add much to the knowledge already accumulated by those who have preceded, yet perhaps there is still value in repeating some old "discoveries."

If I may be permitted that assumption, then I would like to say that the idea that anyone has to drink in his business is just plain bunk. I cannot conceive of any job that really requires drinking, except perhaps that of taster in a brewery and I guess that is one line of work that an alcoholic should avoid.

My job is entertaining visiting salesmen and agents. I have no other function. That's it. I have to see to it that the visitors have a good time. Some business goes along with it, but the main business is entertainment.

Yet, I have discovered that I can do my job much better by not drinking than I could before. Salesmen who knew me before say they enjoy my company much better and have a lot better time. New salesmen don't pay much attention to the fact that I don't drink.

As I say, it's not a new discovery, but I am much relieved to have found out that other people aren't half as concerned about whether we drink, or not, as we think they are.—E.A.T.



News Circuit of A. A. Groups From All Parts of The World

New Latin-American Group—The Downtown Latin-American Group has recently been formed in Los Angeles, Calif. At present the group activities are confined to discussions with Anglo-American visitors.

Alcoholic Ward Group—Working in close association with doctors and the chaplain of State Hospital No. 2, St. Joseph, Mo., the Downtown Group of that city has formed an A.A. group in the alcoholic ward. Patients of the ward, after a period of isolation, are paroled to a member of the Downtown Group on Saturday and Sunday nights. At this time they attend regular meetings of the A.A. Group. Weekly meetings are held at the hospital with the assistance of the discharged patients who are permitted to return.

With True A.A. Enthusiasm—The Fresno, Calif. Group heard some of Bill W.'s talks over wire recorders. The members were so enthusiastic about them that they took up a collection and bought the recordings. The enthusiastic group supposed, of course, that it could rent a recording machine to play back the spools and recordings. Such was not the case. So being true A.A.s they took up another collection and bought the reproducing machine. Now that the group owns the recordings and the machine the members feel that it would be a real privilege to take them to surrounding groups for meetings.

New "Baby"—San Diego County, Calif, now has 30 group meetings each week. The newest "baby" is the Pacific Beach Group. This group conducts a purely informal meeting. There is no leader, the 12 Steps are read by a member and a discussion follows. Seating is arranged so that members and guests may talk easily and freely without having to address the chair.

Sunday Brunch—The groups of Flint, Mich., have recently inaugurated a Sunday Brunch. Eggs, toast, juice and coffee all add up to a very successful project the members report.

Another Anniversary—The Westerly, R. I. Group celebrated its first anniversary recently with an open meeting. Civic minded men and women were the guests for the evening speaking program.

Indianapolis A.A.s Open Club—A three story brick building, used during the war as the USO Center, is now the new Alano Club of Indianapolis. The clubhouse is complete with a large room for dancing, lounges and coffee and sandwich bar, equipped with a brass rail so that the members will feel at home. The opening was attended by approximately 500 members and friends. The clubrooms are open at all times and groups from all parts of the city hold meetings there.

Large Turnover—Only two members of the Anchorage, Alaska, Group have lived in the territory for more than five years. The membership of the little group is therefore made up of roving A.A.s, many of them construction workers.

Few Men Confined In U.S.D.B. Will Admit Alcoholism

From New Cumberland, Pa.

Through the efforts of the psychiatrist and the understanding and interest of the Commandant of the U.S. Disciplinary Barracks, New Cumberland, Pa. an A.A. group was formed. With the help of A.A. members from the Harrisburg, Pa., Group bi-weekly meetings are held.

Of the number of men confined here the percentage admitting alcoholism and desiring to do something about it is very small. This reluctance to admit may be due to many reasons. Among those are: skeptics, who cannot understand how the mere meetings of the group will solve their problems; those who refuse to admit to themselves that they are alcoholics and a large number who are afraid that they will be admitting a fault and will thereby lose the chance for clemency and home parole. It is true that the matter of drinking is being brought out by the Parole Board.

Because the percentage admitting to themselves that they cannot handle liquor is so small, they can be believed to be sincere in their effort to stop drinking.

The psychiatric report for 1947 shows 170 alcohol addictions out of 3,000 men who were interviewed and classified here. Of the 170 men only 14 were members of an A.A. group.

The original membership of the New Cumberland D.B. Group was 10 men and continues to fluctuate because of releases. —A.A.F.

New Women's Group—Beginning three years ago with a few members the Bakersville, Calif. Group now has approximately 100 members. The newest project to be undertaken by the organization is a Women's Group. These meetings held each Tuesday are open to both A.A.s and non-alcoholics.

Second Birthday Party—Called by the press, London, Ontario's most exclusive fraternity, the group there recently celebrated its second anniversary. The London Metropolitan Group which numbers about 90 members toasted the anniversary in ice water and black coffee.

Hold First Open Meeting—Because of a limited seating capacity in the new clubrooms of the Winona, Minn. Group, the first open meeting was limited to attendance of the clergy, medical, and legal professions. This type of open meeting will be held every six or eight weeks.

Oldtime Get-Together — Former Towson, Md. Group members met recently for a large rally. The visitors were folks who have moved out of the city or joined groups nearer to their homes. The group has approximately 45 members.

First Joint Meeting—The Monroe and West Monroe, La, Groups recently sponsored a large open meeting. This was the first to be held by the groups with the purpose of stimulating interest in A.A. in this section of the country. There were approximately 175 in attendance.

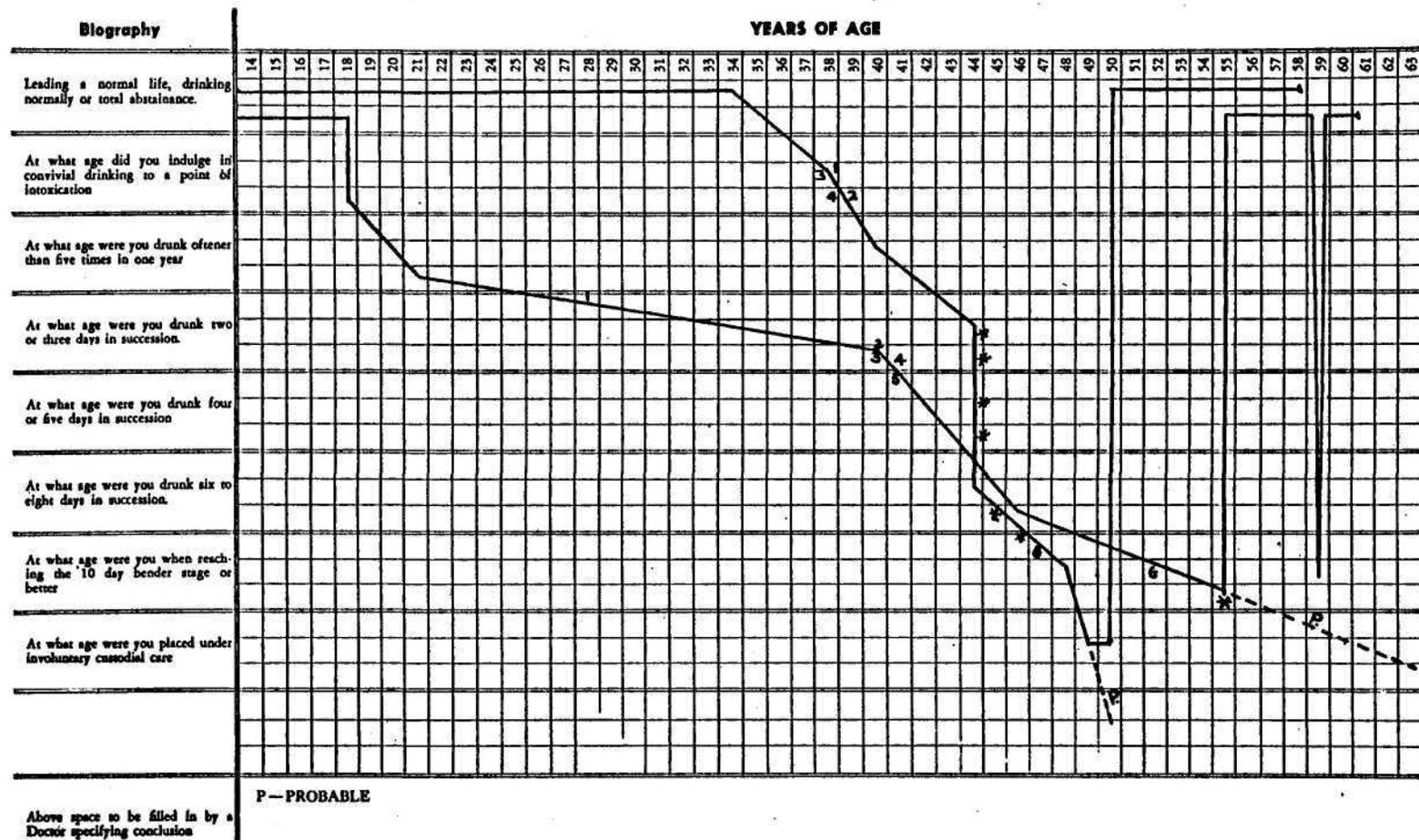
Fellowship Group—A Fellowship Group has been organized in Huntington, W. Va. Anyone having a grudge against another member of A.A. will find special welcome in this group, preferably with the "be-grudged" member. It is said that their differences seem to disappear into thin air.

Calendar Of A.A. Events

July 25—Rochester, Minn. Group second annual banquet.

September 3-4—Southeastern Regional Convention, Jacksonville, Fla.

October 23-24—Iowa Conference, Des Moines, Iowa.



The Spirit Level

(Two members decided to see if they could draw a graph of an alcoholic, before and after A.A. They took themselves as the subjects and came up with the accompanying chart. They claim nothing for it scientifically, but said they found it interesting and enlightening to them and thought perhaps others would find it useful.—Ed.)

These graph lines indicate life drinking career of two typical alcoholics, the lines are fictitious but deviation from two actual cases is very slight, they are given as an aid in plotting lines. Both cases are the Career of Periodic Drunks.

Owing to limited space the biographic stages in the left hand column are divided into the least number of steps of progression for a periodic drunk. A steady drunk differs somewhat and judgment must be used in arriving at equivalents when plotting his line. The three last stages fit both types.

The Spirit Level is not intended to provoke a discussion on normal drinking and Prohibition as the top block of the left hand column will testify. Normal drinking is assumed to be normal living.

Most people will lay down a straight

line in the first block from 14 years on to their age and will have little interest in this unfamiliar form of biography. Others perhaps who have reached a stage of drinking experience extending to three or more days may be inspired to lay down their line of alcoholic progression and recall anecdotes similar to those of admitted alcoholics and wonder why somebody else knows so much about what they have been through. This individual must realize that the two sample graph lines are as real as a hangover after a seven-day bout and once the three-day bender stage has been reached into the lower blocks in the left hand column.

Excessive drinking develops symptoms and habits which are characteristic of the majority of alcoholics. They do not occur in succession as do the stages of drinking therefore to obtain a complete record these symptoms and habits should be shown as indicated on the sample graph lines. The number is to be put on the line at a point indicating the age at which the act, experience, or realization occurred.

- (1)—At what age did you experience remorse after drinking.
- (2)—At what age did you fear retribution for drinking.
- (3)—At what age did you start drink-

ing in the morning for medicinal purposes after a hard night.

- (4)—At what age did you hide liquor for an emergency after you had experienced difficulty in obtaining it by interference of misunderstanding people during a drunk.
- (5)—At what age did you experience hallucinations seeking shadows, dogs, or grotesque forms on walls and picture mouldings. Forms most convincing after long binge.
- (6)—At what age were you really convinced that you could not control liquor and could not drink normally and that something must be done about it.
- (7)—Mark an asterisk or X on your graph line at the approximate time for each time you were hospitalized as a result of alcoholism.

If this interests you get out your pencil and see how well you remember.

For conciseness many results of drinking such as loss of friends, embarrassment, fear, financial difficulties, blackouts, fighting, extravagance, staying home from work, jobs lost, wrecked homes, and others are omitted.

Mail Call For A.A.s At Home and Abroad

We Humbly Ask

From *Chicago, Ill.*

The 7th Step, I believe expresses most completely that attitude which appears to be the final basic requirement for our recovery from alcoholism—humility.

Christ described the door to the Kingdom of Heaven as a narrow door, and He said that few would find it.

Could it be that our 7th Step marks that door?

Would it be easier to discover that door if we stopped looking for an entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven and looked instead for an exit—a door leading out of the dark unventilated cell which is self?

When we ask God humbly as in the 7th Step to remove our short-comings, are we not, in addition, seeking God as we understand Him? Further than that, are we not knocking at a door, trying, not necessarily to get in anywhere, but to get out of these private one celled prisons called self-centeredness? Here every wall is filled, and every corner is stacked to the ceiling with twisted attitudes, the little crimes and ugly debris of our shortcomings.—*D.G.*

I Work the 11th Step

From *Montrose, Calif.*

"When we are conscious of a thing we naturally live in it." When we have made conscious contact with God, it would seem to me we would naturally live in a God-like manner. For me it means to be kindly, courteous, considerate, tolerant, and sober. This is in a small measure demonstrating the qualities of a God-like manner.

We in A.A. are trying to "Improve our conscious contact with God as we understand Him", and in improving our contact it becomes a pleasurable practice.

For me came a feeling of freedom from alcoholism, also a feeling of freedom from insecurity never experienced before. A feeling of a glowing content to be at last in touch with the source of all things. By degrees I came to rest in this contact, to depend upon it, knowing the right direction would be shown me if I kept spiritually fit in my thinking and my every deed to the best of my ability.

When at times I stray from this contact, I get back into it by prayer and meditation, doing this earnestly and honestly, seeking to keep my contact renewed, and someday, I hope, constant.—*M.K.*

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

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

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

—The Editors

As Good as You

From *Columbus, Ga.*

One of my minister friends told me that he only asks people to believe that God is as good and kind as they are.

Who among us hasn't been exasperated by some misdeed of our child? We may correct or punish him, but who doesn't forgive him? Do we hold this misbehavior against him after he shows that he is sorry?

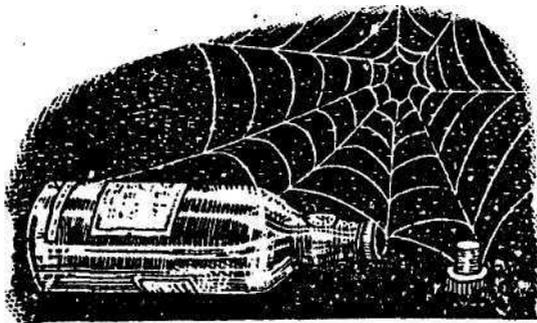
I think this wise minister has something here. If we can find it in our hearts to forgive our children, it seems only reasonable to assume that our Heavenly Father will forgive us our shortcomings if we are truly sorry and try to do better. I don't believe that our compassion is greater than His.—*F.G.*

No Cutting Corners

From *Wausau, Wis.*

Some months ago I experienced a spiritual awakening and have had peace of mind since then. But there is no cutting corners. For 20 years I had bargained with God. This time I had to prove to him that I wanted to stay sober. I did so by confession, admission and apologies—and by living the 12 Steps. All God wanted was a little effort on my part. He did the rest.

I need complete honesty with myself. I have to face every trial of life squarely. I never wanted a drink as badly as I want this happy life I am now living.—*D.D.*



To the Newcomer

From *Bronxville, N.Y.*

The other night at a closed meeting a beginner spoke of the "affliction" of not being able to take the first drink. Being new myself, I felt too timid to speak, but since the thoughts have been recurring, would like to offer them to other newcomers for what they are worth.

Call it "affliction" if you will, as Milton would have been justified to view his blindness, Beethoven his imperfect ears. Yes, every blind man and lame could follow the negative call of complaint.

But how few of them do! Fact is, compensations are sometimes so glorious that the worst obstacles appear as blessings.

To the alcoholic, A.A. offers uncounted compensations, and gradually the vaunted first-drink slips from the picture. Somewhere in the new A.A. subconscious we hear the glass shattering and wonder why it didn't happen before.

Compensations? First, an unfogged vision—was the sunset ever before so beautiful, or people kinder? No, awareness to the miracle of God and his plan for man comes through A.A. thinking.

Second, understanding. Could a real A.A. be narrow and critical? No. He was once down at the dregs himself, nobody could be worse than he was. Therefore, a workable theory of live and let live.

Third, faith in God and human beings, the only victory over neurosis.

Fourth, happy and affirmative living. Challengeful adventure in the every-day experience.

Fifth, freedom from despair and doubt, a gift often denied to the most brilliant thinkers, yet offered—by some incomprehensible justice—to humble, "afflicted" A.A.s.—*E.T.*

The Same Goal

"It seems to me that we are all striving for the same goal, namely, sobriety and the way we reach that same end is by adherence to the A.A. way of life. We may pursue or gain our peace of mind by somewhat different courses, but in the end or final analysis, we find that the means used has produced the desired results. That is the factor that makes A.A. so successful and practicable."—*A.A. Twelve Stepper, Omaha, Neb.*



Group to Give Oscar for Anniversaries

From Larchmont, N. Y.

In some sections of the country, the practice of recognizing "anniversaries" has grown to such an extent that an abuse has developed. The Larchmont Group of A.A. has overcome this practice in an inexpensive, yet practical, way.

Special "Oscars" will keynote the first, fifth and tenth anniversaries, in place of parties, wrist-watches or diamond rings. If movie stars, authors, actors and all the rest are to be honored with an achievement "Oscar," or medal, or other awards, in their respective fields, why not those who have achieved the so-called "impossible," i.e., an alcoholic in good behavior and "on the beam?"

Under the Larchmont plan, three anniversaries will henceforth be recognized by that group. They will be the First, the Fifth and the Tenth.

The recognition will take the form of a Camel. The Camel is wholly emblematic of the purposes of most sincere A.A.s, i.e., to live for 24 hours without a drink.

The Larchmont Group has adopted the Camel as its emblem, and has dubbed the memento the "Oscar of the Larchmont Group for all good acting A.A.'s."

The "Oscar" has been modeled by a well-known artist and sculptor, a Fellow of the National Academy of Art. It will be cast in bronze, then silver-plated and mounted on a mahogany base. A silver plate on the base will be engraved to read:

THE CAMEL MADE IT—SO DID

JOHN SMITH

First Anniversary, June 10th, 1948

Presented by the
Larchmont Group

Please note that no mention of A.A. is made on the engraving, nor does it appear on the 'Oscar' casting itself. The psychology of having individuals within A.A. gain recognition for their control of one of the greatest problems with which they have ever been beset in life, speaks volumes for the merit of the basic idea.—*P.O.D.*

There Is a Place

From Longview, Texas

There is a place acceptable to all of us in A.A. It is a place where we find ever-increasing happiness, confidence, ability, poise and peace.

When I came into A.A. new thoughts, ideas and conceptions began coming to me. I began to see God's good. This Program gives me peace, assurance, strength, courage and a sense of "all is well." I give thanks to A.A. because it has taught me a new comprehension of what is meant by "good." Nearly everyday a new viewpoint challenges my attention. I am taught to alter my point of view, my behavior and to be on guard anew. I am given the wisdom to understand and the strength to abide by every new revelation that comes to me.—*B.C.*

Give Honest Answer

From North Birmingham, Ala.

The North Birmingham group and members from all of Birmingham enjoyed a barbecue recently. "Problems" were forgotten and, until dusk, over a hundred people laughed and talked.

The speaker, F.D. not only gave an enjoyable talk — he cleared up a couple of questions that frequently puzzle new members. F.D. quoted that thin bit of so-called reasoning, i.e., "A.A. doesn't keep you sober — it's your will power; either a man has will power or he hasn't; if he is sober in A.A., it is merely that he is using will power."

He pointed out that there are thousands who tried the will power method and failed, but found sobriety in A.A.

He's done real thinking on another question of new members — "What is an alcoholic?" and he effectively answered that question: "If I am an alcoholic, how is it I managed to never lose a job, never was hospitalized, or suffered any of the degradations so many members suffered?"

"I, too," said F.D., "escaped all that." He had been told by friends outside A.A.: "You are not an alcoholic — just a heavy drinker."

He cited many instances of his "escape" drinking—drinking to run from things; of his three-day drunks that began with "Just one or two."

It is F.D.'s opinion that one of the best criteria whether you are an alcoholic is the answer to the question "Why do you drink?" Answer that question honestly, New Member, he said; then you'll get your answer to "Am I An Alcoholic?"

Mail Call

A Step in Time Saves Nine

From Vallejo, Calif.

Isn't it queer how our A.A. way of living can help when we least expect it? Recently I was calling on a young minister who has been stricken with a very serious disease. There were so many things I wanted to ask him about faith, I guess I was really hungry for knowledge on the subject. I wondered if all his trouble hadn't weakened his belief and faith in the future. His answer was very simple. "If there is happiness within, no outside malady can be too great an obstacle, to overcome." He has real faith and somehow I know he will recover.

Our conversation covered a lot of territory and finally I told him a great deal of my story and how I found the answer. First, to accept those things I couldn't change, second, to be humble enough to admit my weakness, and third, to have faith my life would turn out all right. Among the many things I had to learn was the fact that I don't have unlimited time so I must be careful how I use it, trying to go where I am most needed.

It wasn't until a few days later that I found out our little talk had not only helped me, but had helped him too. He told me that being ill was giving him vast knowledge not found in books and that he too, would have to save himself for the most important things he wanted to do as he couldn't possibly do all he would like to.

The thinking that helped him was not mine, it was our A.A. thinking.—A.R.

Responsibility Continues

From Sioux City, Iowa

I'm pretty much convinced that a sponsor's responsibility does not cease as soon as the new member begins to attend meetings regularly and remains sober.

I am convinced that this responsibility extends over the entire rehabilitation period or at least until the new member begins to live right and changes, if necessary, some erstwhile habits of living and ideas as to how to get along in this world. I think it would do the individuals and the group as a whole a lot of good inside and out if this last were given study and action.—G.W.H.

An Eye to Future

From Sparta, Wis.

It is just possible that four self-appointed carpenters, members of the Sparta, Wis. Group,¹ had an eye to the future.

One of the rural members recently acquired a new farm and with it a setting of chicks due to arrive momentarily. There was no brooder coop on the place.

At 1:30 p.m. one Sunday the four "carpenters" left Sparta. At 6:30 p.m. an 8 x 12 brooder coop was ready and awaiting the expected hatching.

At the present time the four hungry "carpenters" are watching several hundred healthy chicks grow to the proper frying dimensions.

Being a Part of A.A.

From Wilmington, Del.

On a number of occasions I have heard A.A. declared, by members of the clergy, one of the greatest spiritual movements of this century. To a person whose life at least in a spiritual sense has been a total loss, this is indeed a most thrilling reflection.

It has been an inspiration to me to believe that we as individuals can be a part of A.A. just as big a part as almost any other individual. After all, our sobriety can be complete only to the point of total abstinence and our success in A.A. depends simply on trying to the best of our ability to live up to the ideals defined by the twelve steps.

When we set a good example to our associates we have the most powerful agency of spreading our philosophy to others. We should bear in mind our greatest source of happiness as well as insurance against relapses is found in really becoming a part of A.A. by taking an active interest in A.A. functions. In this connection, it would seem that our happiness is in direct proportion to the amount of our own efforts.

It is with a feeling of almost awe that I realize the potential power of good which we have. Just think of the changes in your life and its effect on your family and friends then think all of this may be given to some other unfortunate person and this miraculously adds to our own enrichment.—Bob W.

Live and let Live

A Vacation Help

From Wilmington, Del.

Now that all wives are thinking and planning various ways and means of getting away this summer, the following may prove a very helpful hint:

The woman who has an alcoholic husband who is trying to do something about the problem, had better not leave him alone this year to keep the home fires burning. He might pour on a little bit of alcohol out of sheer loneliness—and a little bit goes a long way.

Don't forget that A.A. members are going through an "about face" and need a guiding influence. If you have stuck with him this far, he's worth helping over the summer holidays too. It is hard for all of us to forget the parties that this season of the year usually brings on, and the weekends away or with guests, but, believe me it can be done with two people doing it. A husband or wife simply cannot be relied on to do it alone and therefore, for complete unity within the home, make it a deal.

After succeeding for two Summers, with the third one coming up, I can truthfully say I am grateful to all the very friendly suggestions and cautions I received our first year, I was all for going away and putting my husband on his own, as he had been a member for six months by then. Another member who had been in A.A. a like term said, when he heard I was entertaining the idea of taking the three children away, "I wouldn't do it if I were you, for I doubt if I could take being left home alone, as yet, and I don't think your husband could."

I look this suggestion for what it was worth, and to me it meant everything. Just the other night my husband said: "I don't believe, had you gone away that first summer, I could have made the grade. I believe I would have slipped."—R.M.

Small Package

"We alcoholics, apparently, are among the most egocentric of them all. To this writer, it seems that the difficulty we experience in making the program is governed by the degree of our self-centeredness. And, without doubt, a person wrapped up in himself does make a very small package, indeed. So let's forget ourselves for a few moments and get down to the fundamentals of A.A." *Camel Club Chronicle, Marshalltown, Iowa.*

Don't Pick It Apart

From Brockton, Mass.

When I first came to A.A., sick and sorry, I was warned that I would do better not to try to analyze the why of the Program. The popular phrase was, "don't pick it apart." I followed this advice with some difficulty because I share with most other humans the natural curiosity that makes me want to know what makes things work. In this case my curiosity was particularly sharp in view of my characteristic experience of complete defeat by alcohol.

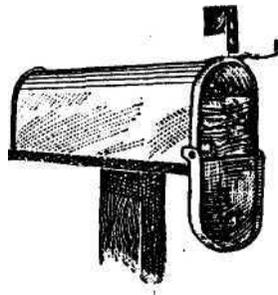
I agree that the advice was valuable. It seems to me that some of those who fail to make A.A. work have suffered from neglect of this wise admonition. Instead of accepting the overwhelming evidence that A.A. works that is before them, they try to see a reason and then, without really knowing anything about it, they decide that A.A. has worked with many but they are "different", it will not work in their case.

This reminds me of a certain advertising man I knew several years ago, who suffered from some strange derangement of the digestive system. Despite all forms of medical treatment by the best doctors, his misery continued. Finally, in desperation he descended to the underworld of quack healers. Approaching one of them who exhibited an imposing array of "miraculous cures" our friend submitted to an examination. Included were a great many seemingly irrelevant questions regarding the patient's history and habits.

After pondering the case for an impressive length of time, the "doctor" elicited from his victim a solemn promise that his treatment would be followed without question. He then revealed his simple formula for curing this man whose case had baffled a number of eminent medical men. It was simply this: "For 30 days, you are to confine your diet to pop-corn and prunes and each morning at sunrise you are to bathe in a running brook."

Since the sufferer lived in New York City, the running brook routine was not easy. It required early rising, consequently early retiring as well as exercise. Miraculously, at the end of the 30 days, the patient was cured.

The moral that I see in this tale was this: If our friend had tried to decide whether or not the treatment would work, he would never have tried it. Instead, he simply followed it blindly. It worked. The reason was perhaps hidden, but the result showed clearly.—E.A.H.



Hints for New Members

From Birmingham, Ala.

If the going is hard at first, here are some hints. *They work.*

Keep Busy

Not slavishly, but when your day's work is done, A.A. offers all kinds of interesting things. From serving coffee to writing articles for your group's paper or *The A.A. Grapevine*. There's telephoning to do. *And how about 12th Step work?*

Be Choosy

Get with just you, yourself. Have a thought-fest; put your finger on those things that are slowing your progress and peace of mind. Maybe it's a crowd you used to run with, perhaps for a while you'd best let them mix their own drinks, if that worries you. Maybe your time is too full of non-essentials. Eliminate those things that get you nowhere.

Clear the decks for *effective living.*

Have Fun!

Too many folks fail to plan daily recreation. Relax! There's lots of social life going on in your A.A. club room.

Get That Yoke Off Your Neck

Suppose two men started to walk a mile. One is bowed by the burden of a heavy yoke round his neck. The other has no hindrance, he walks with an easy stride. He finishes the mile faster, and even is able to enjoy the scenery as he goes along.

Your life is like that — you can walk the world upright and untroubled. Turn it all over to your Guide. You'll find the universe works toward your happiness. You can quit worrying *right now*. God lives. -L.F.

Easy does it

We Are Patients

From Worcester, Mass.

The first requirement of a patient is patience. Quite a hurdle in itself because we alcoholics are an impatient lot. Since most of us spent years getting down to where we were sufficiently licked to accept A.A., isn't it logical to expect that the way back up will also be hard? I feel sure that "Easy Does It" should not be treated as a catch phrase but as a definite rule to go by.

When one is a patient one usually has a doctor; We have one—the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*. If we really want to recover from an illness, we have faith in our doctor and take the medicine he prescribes. If we want to stay sober we must accept and endeavor to follow every word of advice the *Big Book* gives. Our medicine may be hard to take and we may not be able to swallow it the first try, but the more we try the sooner we'll get results.

If the *Big Book* is our doctor, then it follows that the group is our nurse. The moral inventory is our X ray. The 24 hour plan is the chart and the acceptance of God's will is the blood transfusion. We have at hand all the assistance necessary to combat the disease that threatens to ruin our lives. It is up to the individual how well he avails himself of the facilities which our "hospital" offers.—F.S.H.

SUBSCRIPTION BLANK

The A.A. Grapevine,
P.O. Box 328, Grand Central Annex,
New York 17, N. Y.

One Year \$2.50—Two Years \$4.50—
Outside U.S. \$3.00.

For additional subscriptions enclose separate sheet with name and address clearly printed. Make checks payable to *The Grapevine, Inc.*

Total Enclosed

Renewal? (please check).....

PLEASE PRINT

Name

Address

Note: Subscriptions received prior to 25th of the month will begin with the following month's issue.

"Easy Does It" One of A A.'s Most Workable and Useful Sayings

From Nashville, Tenn.

ONE of the most useful of the sayings that have been adopted in A.A. is that which advises, "Easy Does It." So universally workable is this good advice that it qualifies as the expression of one of the fundamental steps in personal rehabilitation.

If this particular saying is applied sincerely and intelligently, it will greatly ease the path of the newcomer in A.A., avert "slips" and further the development of a mature life both inside and outside A.A.

Axioms are only words in themselves, of course, and the phraseology has become trite in many cases. Pseudo-intellectuals are especially scornful of old sayings, and even less snobbish observers may overlook the worth to be found in the meaning behind the words.

It Means Relax!

For example, "Easy Does It," means—relax! Don't fret and worry and stew and struggle! Take it easy! Relax!

Everyone who has an intimate knowledge of the alcoholic will agree that one of the first things he needs to do is to relax, not only in the early stages of A.A. but forever after and a day. "Easy Does It" applies no matter how long one has been in A.A. and, in fact, it is essential to continued progress in A.A. and to a return to more normal living outside.

Physical relaxation has long been identified as a characteristic of great athletes. The DiMaggios and the Williams have an easy swing that belies yet accounts for much of the power of their bats. The fastest of swimmers relax with each stroke. In football, the relaxed player is less prone to fumbles and injuries. The great runners have a relaxed stride even when they are driving the hardest.

Relaxation frees the intellectual, the emotional and even the spiritual functioning of the personality no less than it loosens the muscles of the body.

"Easy Does It" for the newcomer during those first early days of confusion, fear and doubt. If, instead of worrying and "tensing up" because he does not grasp the whole A.A. program in the first sitting—if he will relax, he will find that

the emotional understanding as well as the intellectual understanding of the A.A. philosophy will come along much more readily.

Fortunately, this is a saying which can be tested easily. It does not have to be accepted on faith alone. Anyone can find out for himself whether it works simply by trying it himself.

Suppose a problem has arisen. Suppose it is the old urge to reach for the bottle. Or suppose the problem is one of those by-products of alcoholism which continue to come up long after the urge to drink has gone. The reaction of the alcoholic, and of more than a few non-alcoholics, is to fight the problem, to worry about it, to get into a slew. The tension begins to mount. Emotion runs wild. Self control is slipping rapidly.

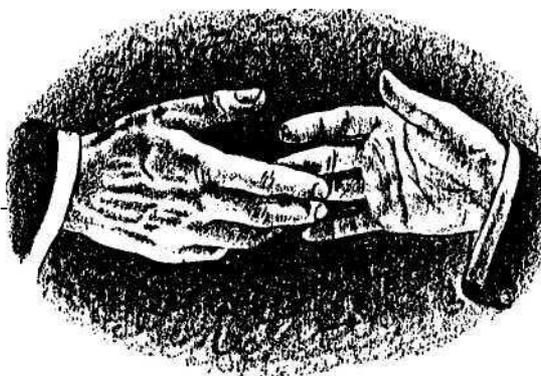
That's the usual sequence. It can be broken if in the midst of it, the victim sits way back, physically and mentally, and relaxes. First he must relax his muscles, because that's the easiest to do. Then he must relax his mind, by directing his thoughts to pleasant subjects, to a reminder that others have succeeded and so can he, to mental pictures of peace and success. If he will but direct his mind away from the problem, he will find a new, source of strength rising up within him.

Has Advanced

At least that is the way it has worked and still works for others. The individual who has learned how to relax has already advanced a long way towards happiness and success.

Relax and enjoy A.A. Relax and enjoy life.

"Easy Does It." If you don't believe it, try it.—J.M.D.



Good Reading

The A.A. Grapevine will publish from time to time a list of books worthy of reading and studying. The following are recommended for your bookshelf:

Alcoholics Anonymous, Works Publishing Co.

Screwtape Letters, C. S. Lewis.

The Art of Seeing, Aldous Huxley.

Alcohol, One Man's Meat, Edward Strecker and Francis Chambers.

Man Against Himself, Karl Menninger.

On Being A Real Person, Harry Emerson Fosdick.

Release from Nervous Tension, David Harold Fink.

Tell It to the Padre, Robert W. Serle.

The Glass Crutch, William Wynne Wister.

Great Time To Be Alive, Harry Emerson Fosdick.

Peace of Mind, Joshua Loth Liebman.

Escape from Freedom, Eric Fromm.

A.A. Is Religion With Feet On Ground

From Akron, Ohio

In a sermon recently delivered in St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Akron, Ohio, Rev. Walter F. Tunks, D.D. said:

"Therein the patient must minister to himself. But ministering to one's self isn't enough! Many of you who have tried it, know **that!** This week I attended a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous. If you want to see a religion with its feet on the ground, still working miracles through the power of God, get in touch with that earnest group that is lifting men and women out of the gutter and restoring them to lives, of usefulness. But as one of them said the other night, 'Take God out of our group, and we have nothing left but human fellowship, and that isn't enough!' Over the place where I stood to speak hung a motto of the group with its terse reminder, 'But for the grace of God—' Maybe alcohol isn't your problem. But whatever your weakness is, you will never overcome it by flexing your own muscles. We can't swing up a rope attached to our own belt straps. All our human efforts fail until they are anchored in the rock that is higher than I."