

September 1949

THE A.A. GRAPEVINE

Not So Much Changed

As — CHANGING

BEHOLD! Your *A.A. Grapevine* looks a little different this month. The new cover itself probably started you wondering what goes on here. And as you turn these pages, you'll find that something new has been added on the inside also. We hope you like what we've done to your magazine!

The A.A. Grapevine is a true child of AA, governed by precisely the same human factors which daily guide and change the lives of us all. It's growing by leaps and bounds in circulation. It must also grow in its concepts of service to all AA members. Otherwise, we stand still, rest "on our laurels," get smug! And that's as risky for your magazine as it is for you.

This issue is probably the "prettiest" we've published thus far. So what? We're not out to win any

beauty contests. And nobody knows any better than your *Grapevine* staff that, in this case, beauty is only paper deep. These changes were not made for looks alone. We're after producing a livelier, more interesting publication. It should improve, issue to issue, as we master some new techniques of production. Don't for a moment think that we have any notion of changing the spirit of the *Grapevine*. But remember also that it's a *moving* spirit!

A A has grown from two desperate, lonely drunks in Akron back there in 1935. Today there are more than 80,000 of us all over the world. The figures do not impress us too much. But we are impressed, mightily impressed, by the fact that in all this hullabaloo

about growth, the same humility, charity, inner honesty, and sincerity of purpose which motivated Bill and Dr. Bob in 1935 are *the same that move all 80,000 of us today!*

A A itself *has* changed, *is* changing, and *will continue* to change. We've grown with our needs. All that Bill and Dr. Bob required that historic Sunday was Annie's kitchen to sit in, successive pots of coffee, and the opportunity to talk it out. "Group therapy" was a mere matter of a single handclasp. Anonymity was no problem. It was automatic. The need for "carrying the message to other alcoholics" was self-evident, and limited, then, to what two men could do one day at a time—and one night at a time!

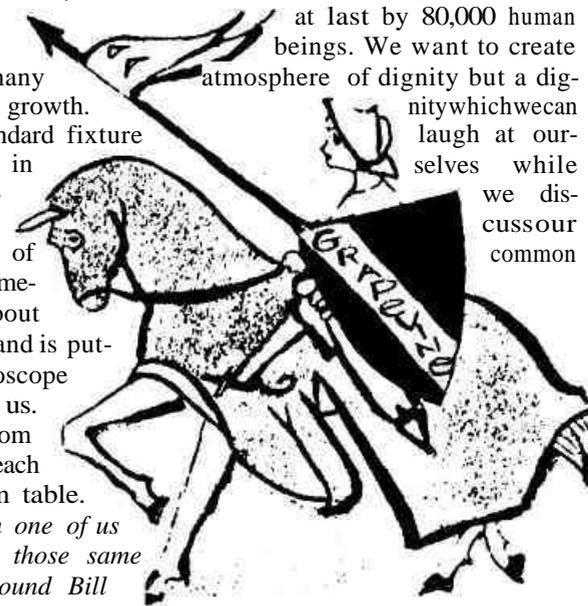
Today there are many manifestations of our growth. The *Big Book* is a standard fixture in nearly every library in this country and others. We have a Foundation. We get reams of publicity. Radio comedians make jokes about us. Medicine has put, and is putting, us under the microscope. The clergy discusses us. All that is a far cry from two drunks facing each other across a kitchen table.

Yet, to this day, each one of us succeeds only through those same humble ties which bound Bill

and Dr. Rob on their first meeting!

These, too, are the ties that bind *The A.A. Grapevine*. The very existence of your magazine is itself a part of AA's need to grow. Its capacity to serve will wither and die if ever we view it as anything but an extension of those same first principles. We *Grapeviners* consider ourselves drunks first—editors afterward! Nevertheless, it is true that a well-dressed ex-drunk with a clean collar and a crease in his trousers is usually a better man to send on a 12th Step call than some slovenly fellow.

It is in that spirit that we have dared to change the *Grapevine*. We want to make a few ounces of paper, type, and printing ink reflect the humble self-respect regained at last by 80,000 human beings. We want to create an atmosphere of dignity but a dignity which we can laugh at ourselves while we discuss our common



shortcomings, our defects, our common confusion, our fears, and our problems in these pages.

There may be some slip-ups, for we've undertaken a whole new process of producing the *Grapevine*. Among other things, we'll compose our own type—an art we've had

to learn during the past hot summer months. So if you come Across a line that goes *like this* or *like this*—please be merciful! We'll get the hang of it very soon. Meanwhile, be assured that your humble servants, the *Grapevine* staff, is doing its level best to do a better job in AA—just as *you* are!