

June 1957

The Grapevine and you - and me.

Dear Folks

THE AA GRAPEVINE HAS SOME PLANS which I would like to discuss with you and these plans include frequent articles by me. I shall try to write something to all of you each month during the next year.

Several considerations have prompted this resolve. The first is that Lois and I can no longer travel about to see you, face to face. We admit we are not quite so young as we used to be. If we go much of anywhere, then in fairness we ought to go everywhere. But "everywhere" in AA is now a lot of territory. It takes in North America, seventy overseas beach-heads and 200,000 AAs. If we journeyed out to see all of you, I guess we'd never get home! So this is a very good reason why I want to chat with you every month in The Grapevine. It can be the next best substitute for widespread travel.

Another reason is this. As AA grows in breadth and depth, so should The Grapevine, for this is the largest mirror we have of up-to-date AA thought, feeling, and activity. Thanks to its devoted workers and contributors of the past, our magazine has always managed to grow.

Periodically The Grapevine makes a special effort in this direction. One of these spurts is on right now. We want to catch up with worldwide AA in all of its new and fascinating facets and ramifications. We want to catch up with the old-timer who sometimes thinks, perhaps rightly, that our magazine is too much slanted to the problems of the newcomer.

So then, what can you and I do about it? First we have to clear away a serious handicap. If a bigger and better journal is to be produced, its staff, paid and volunteer, will have to be enlarged—the paid people a little, the volunteers a lot. Both in subscription and editorial departments the magazine has long been understaffed.

The fact is that the Grapeviners have been waging a losing battle against inflation—a battle which has been going on a long time. At twenty-five cents, the price has stood unchanged for the last dozen or so

years. It's about the only remaining article in the world that hasn't gone up, except perhaps "Life Savers" candies. Meantime the costs of putting out the periodical have soared, just like everything else. Even after the recent big push for subscriptions, The Grapevine still can't get by. This state of affairs is totally unsafe for the long run and it is a bar to any large improvement in size or quality, now or ever, under these conditions.

This spells it out that the price surely has to go up to thirty-five cents a copy or \$3.50 a year. Of course, we know that everybody will be glad to give that extra dime for his Grapevine. A preliminary survey abundantly confirms that fact. This will take away the hurdle that our Grapeviners, for all of their dedication, can no longer surmount.

With this accomplished, you and I can still help a lot. The Grapevine wants to add sixteen more pages. It wants to add several departments: a news section, Al-Anon activities, and others. It wants more interest for our five-and-ten-year members. It is looking hard for every promising new idea the staff can lay hands on.

Surely you and I could supply some of these much needed ideas.

So why don't you folks out there sit down and write me some "idea" letters? I don't mean pieces or full articles quite yet. What The Grapevine wants is your notion of what you would like to see printed in the magazine. This could include a vision of new departments, a topical list of new subject matter, or actual titles for new articles on which the staff could follow through ...

... and what—most especially—you would like me to write about in the coming twelve months.

On your part this will have to be very much a labor of love, quite in the spirit of anonymity. I'm sure your mail will be far too large for me to answer. But you certainly can, and I know you will, give the Grapeviners and me a wonderful lot of excellent and usable ammunition.

So please write me soon at The Grapevine Editorial Office, Room 108, 141 East 44th Street, New York 17, N. Y. Your letters and your thoughts will be carefully read and immensely appreciated.

*Gratefully Yours
Bill*

Ed. note—Thanks, Bill, for your help. We are looking forward to the new series—the first of which will appear in next month's Milestone Grapevine under the title "Let's Be Friendly with Our Friends." We have high hopes that Bill's example may set some other old-timers communicating.