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A Monthly Journal devoted to those seeking further knowledge on the problem of alcoholism, in the hope that it may prove a unifying bond to all alcoholics everywhere. Individual opinions expressed here are not, necessarily, those of A.A. as a whole.

BILL CUNNINGHAM, TOP-FLIGHT COLUMNIST, LIKES BEING AN A.A. "SIDE-LINE ROOTER"

My acquaintanceship with A.A. is, thank God, that of an outsider, and I don't come into your presence completely desiccated. You might mark me down as an admiring neutral, who chanced across A.A. in line of duty. I'm a newspaper reporter—at that time I was a sports writer—and I was trying to find out what sort of an unlisted, jumped-up miracle had suddenly made a paragon of politeness and a brilliant backstopper out of a baseball player who was boozing his way out of the majors, and who obviously didn't have much further to go.

There's no point in calling names, and this is an association of anonyms, anyhow, but this was a straight case of a great athlete who had become, for reasons of his own, a periodic Admiral of the Red. This particular ball club had an amazing kid pitcher who was young, clean, strapping and as fast as light. He seemed to be the absolute antithesis of the fading catcher, but for some strange reason, the older man was the only one on the staff who could bring out of the kid his best possible performance. This happened about once a week, usually on Sunday, and then the catcher usually celebrated in the traditional fashion of the maladjusted. Obviously this couldn't go on.

It didn't go on. All at once the catcher was a new sort of man. He had a new sort of confidence, what seemed to be a new sort of faith. The years seemed to drop from him. He not only caught the kid in his regular turn but he was going down under those bats on other days, too. Soon, thanks greatly to him, the team was high in the pennant race.

But that's getting ahead of this story. Back when it happened, and unable to comprehend the miracle, I went after the secret of what had wrought the sudden change and ran, for

the first time, into the great epic of Alcoholics Anonymous. The sports column telling the story of the ball player's salvation brought a flood of mail from alcoholics and the distressed relatives of alcoholics asking where and how they could find the same help. It was a little hard to tell them at the time because the only address I had was a New York post office box number. I was a little leery about giving it too, because the story was so strange and there are so many weird and devious sorts of rackets that I wasn't sure this wasn't just another.

But eventually an old newspaper friend, who had had his troubles with the Demon, walked in one day looking chipper and bright to tell me that there was a local chapter of such alumni in this stronghold of culture and to invite me to attend a meeting. Frankly, I went with very little enthusiasm. And, frankly again, I never met a finer bunch of people, nor had a better time.

In fact, I came out of the place conscious of having got a very real lift. These were people who'd accomplished something, who'd whipped something, who'd proved something—to themselves, and to the world. In a world plunged at the moment into the depths of defeatism, here was one place where the accent ran the other way.

I wrote a piece about it. I couldn't help it. The mail came in again. Now I had something close in the way of an address to give and something I'd personally seen and could personally endorse to hand on to those who were asking, in God's name, is there any real help.

Recently, I spoke before a woman's club in a town not far from Boston. The talk was on politics. It was just before the presidential election. After the affair a man came up out

of the audience and asked me if I'd care to stop by his house for a drink. I had some time and said "Yes."

When we got in his car, he said he'd be eternally grateful for what I'd written in my column years ago about Alcoholics Anonymous. He said the information had really saved a dear friend of his. Finally we reached his home, a nice place, and he introduced me to his wife, a handsome gal. The next door neighbors came over. But, in the getting of the whiskey, the soda and the ice cubes from the refrigerator, the hats and coats upstairs and all the rest, there was a brief interval when the wife and I were alone.

"It's a great privilege to have you here," she said, "I want to thank you for the, greatest gift I ever received, or ever could have received. That was a column of yours about Alcoholics Anonymous. I've been a member ever since. I never miss a meeting..."

The man's "dear friend" was his wife. And she served the highballs that night as impersonally as if the stuff had been water, leading the conversation, joining in all the laughter and definitely as much of the party as any one else. She didn't partake of the refreshments, but she didn't make any point of it. Obviously the stuff was of no further appeal to her. I felt very humble, considerably self-conscious about taking a drink in front of her, and I went my way at last thinking in terms of Samuel B. Morse, "What wonders God (and A.A.) hath wrought."

And that still goes. Some of my "patients"—I've never seen but two of them in the flesh—write later, some months later, to tell of their progress. Some I never hear from again. But I know they've all found hope, and many have found salvation of the body and probably soul. It's an honor just to be a side-line rooter.

Bill Cunningham
Columnist, The Boston Herald
Boston, Massachusetts

EDITORIAL:

On the 3rd Step

I was co-chairman of the Loop group a few months ago and the subject of religious experience was brought up. I answered this in my stumbling way by saying that each of us could have such an experience only when we 'got on center with ourselves'; if that were not clear we could express it thus: when we fully realized for the first time in our lives the essential dignity of ourselves as human beings. I also said that this realization could be achieved through return to the formal religion we once practiced but never knew, or by honest thought along our rough-hewn way.

I have lately come to think that the 3rd step on our guide post to the good life is the meat and drink of the twenty-four hour program. Without a complete, whole-hearted 'surrender' at the start of each day, much of the good that we think, or do, is lost to us. I must confess that in my own daily application of the program I had begun to slip on this point—if indeed I had ever really practiced it. But the tide of events swelled over me recently to wash this bad thinking away. Unsatisfactory events, however, do not seem to be without compensation. Out of this turmoil and confusion *in* my business affairs has come a deeper understanding, a peace and serenity, a clarity of outlook I never knew before.

I sometimes wonder how many of us, after early, diligent application to A.A., coast along without getting wet solely because of a thoroughly house-broken habit as far as alcohol is concerned. I have always thought that the man who is thoroughly sickened of the stuff, when he learns of A.A., has the best chance to pick up and go; but it seems to me that there is danger ahead for such a man sometime later, just because he won his 'strength' too easily at the start.

Walter L., Chicago, Illinois

Points of View: Arkansas Style

Arkansas "Moon" brings on a peculiar kind of mean insanity, fearsome in its throes even to our horny-toed hillsmen. Four of our first seven A.A.s had to be lassoed and hauled out of caves where they had been living with panthers and bears. Two of the other three were easily taken: our local founder dug them up out of the sod—incorrectly diagnosed. The founder himself was a screwball trumpet player from one of the state's oldest, most revered families—fundamentally incapable.

A perfect foundation for an A.A. group.

It all began in March, 1940, in the mind and heart of a Little Rock (trumpet playing)

insurance executive, an alcoholic who had been dry for five years after reading Peabody and practicing an unlabeled brand of A.A. He had had very little success with fellow alcoholics and when he read the first notice of A.A. he sent for the book.

He roped in a furniture salesman (without wares) and a broken down (young) newspaperman who had buried himself (for keeps he thought) deep in the oblivion of the State Hospital for Nervous Diseases.

These pioneers in what Bill calls the "mail order section" went to local newspapers and obtained a modest notice in each; rented a

Post Office box; began contacting ministers, police and court officials, and exploring flophouses, poolrooms, courts.

Business was brisk.

Within a few weeks the membership included 25 men and two women.

The troubles began early. Some of the men got the idea that they had joined a wet nursing organization and proceeded to turn it into one; the women tuned out to be less alcoholic than unattached. One by one the members sloughed off.

Result: three months after founding, four charter members remained, two shaky.

At this time, prospects were given only the book, the weekly meeting, the offer of association. and were more or less on their own. One of the charter members drafted a program which, after several overhauls dictated by tryouts, became known as The Little Rock Plan, or the Approach Program. The sole motive behind it was to improve effectiveness of the group's service to alcoholics.

It is a big dose, a rough assignment, highly controversial among groups familiar with it. It has served the Little Rock group well. We like it. (Detailed information will be furnished on request.)

Out of the application of the Approach Program came the sponsorship system: one veteran and usually a young neophyte conduct a prospect through the program, which requires a minimum two weeks of the prospect's full time.

We now have a membership in Little Rock of approximately one hundred; a women's group under our wing and meeting with us weekly; a swell club room establishment; and several branches in smaller Arkansas cities including Camden, where an even dozen from Little Rock now work for the Navy.

Four paramount lessons learned:

You can treat the spiritual phase any way you choose in the group as a whole, but sooner or later it becomes dominant in all the group's activities. In the beginning the group gave this phase very little house. It's the big motivation now, accepted, recognized, revered, held in awe.

For his own good you mustn't coddle a prospect.

Slips? We're now on our 'steenth policy and system for coping with slips. All have worked in some cases, failed in others.

But, then, we think: something is wrong if the group doesn't periodically have its troubles and problems.

Bud G., Little Rock, Arkansas

CHARLES JACKSON SPEAKS AT HARTFORD A. A.

When Charles Jackson, author of the A.A.'s favorite best-seller, *The Lost Weekend*, consented to speak at the Hartford group's November open meeting, he said that his topic would be "Why I Wrote *The Lost Week-End*."

He began by saying that he was not professionally a public speaker and he was not and never had been a member of Alcoholics Anonymous. This occasion was, in fact, his first contact with the group at all.

Jackson wrote *The Lost Week-End*, he said, "because I think the alcoholic problem is one of the most serious problems in American life, because gifted people are often its victims, and because the alcoholic has been too frequently looked upon as a comic figure." There was a sore need, he pointed out, for such a character study as that of Don Birnam. Whereas alcoholics have often appeared as characters in books, never before, to Jackson's knowledge, had one been the principal figure. The public needed to be shown the true tragic nature of the alcoholic.

The first publisher to whom the book was offered thought it would not sell because of the public's present interest in the war. "Nobody cares about the individual," said the rejection letter. The book was accepted by the second publisher, Farrar and Rinehart; and it has gone into six printings in less than a year. It is also currently being published in Swedish, Spanish, Portuguese; and in England and South Africa. Apparently the public is almost as much interested in alcoholism as in the problems of the war-torn world.

The Lost Week-End has been criticized because Don Birnam was left no better off in the end than he was at the beginning. Many readers thought the author should have solved the problem, or at least hinted at some change for the better in Don. Jackson answered this charge by saying that no "reform" worthy of the name would be possible in five days, which is the length of time covered in the book, and that, moreover, it is not up to a novelist to solve psychiatric problems, but merely to present such problems—to "state the case," so to speak. He said that he would be a "reformer" if he had extended the book to cover a year's time and pointed out the solution. The book would then have been a "tract" and not the pure novel or character study it was intended to be. Moreover, Jackson added, the hopeless note on which the book was concluded tends to make the reader concerned about the problem of alcoholism.

A nationally-known psychiatrist has declared on the radio that Don Birnam was a "true character," and that he would be known in real life as a "still drinker," or hopeless addict, as the solitary drinker is often considered, whose next step would have to be death. The author, however, does not agree that death is the sole solution. He thinks Birnam can recover. Not by the help of any doctor, because medical men do not understand how the alcoholic feels inside; but with the help of an exceptionally intuitive man, or another alcoholic, who can understand him because of a similar background or experience.

Though he is at present just completing a new novel called *The Fall of Valor* which is not a sequel and has nothing to do with the earlier book, Jackson said that there would be another story about Don Birnam about a year and a half from now, in which Don finds his way out of his predicament—perhaps through A.A., perhaps by other means. He added that it would do no good for Don Birnam to give up drink for anyone but himself alone. If he gave it up for a relative or a friend, the "reform" would not stick.

Alcoholics Anonymous would be good for Don Birnam, Jackson thought, as A.A. gives the solitary drinker a social outlet. It would give Don friends who did not consider addiction a stigma. Don hid from the people he knew because he was remorseful over his behavior and he knew others thought ill of him. He would not have to feel this way among A.A. members, who would be eager to give him true fellowship, help him face the fact that he could not drink, and make him understand that there was no shame connected with his past addiction.

Alcoholism, Jackson went on to say, should not be whispered about as tuberculosis once was. The problem can be dealt with better when it is considered by the public not as something "unmentionable," but as an unfortunate illness such as tuberculosis has come to be considered.

Jackson said he was indebted to A.A. for one of the novel's most telling points. He referred to the phrase he used in the book which says that, for the alcoholic, "one drink is too many and a hundred not enough."

Most A.A.s wonder, after reading the book, whether Jackson is an alcoholic. The author's answer to that question was diplomatic. He said he used to drink "like most everybody

else" but gave it up when it interfered with his work. Though the actual events of the story are invented, he explained his remarkably understanding portrayal of Don Birnam by saying simply, "I have a good memory." Listeners drew their own conclusions.

Jackson had a few words of advice for A.A.s, some of it based upon his own experience. "How can you endure a cocktail party and meet so many people without putting yourself at ease with a few drinks?" is a question often asked of him. He said that he handles such situations by rationalizing with himself. He believes that everybody, without exception, is scared of new people, no matter how little they may show their self-consciousness; and he recalls the fact that heavy drinking only makes one suffer more in the end. He prefers to go through a social evening with a clear head, because now he wants to get the most out of life by being fully aware.

Jackson named ridicule as another problem faced by the ex-addict, and admitted that he himself had smiled at the notion of Alcoholics Anonymous when he first heard of it. The non-drinking alcoholic will be offered drinks and kidded for not accepting them, and practical jokers will try to give him soft drinks with liquor in them, he warned. He went on to say that the victim of this sort of treatment must learn to "take it."

It is Jackson's opinion that while all normal people can in time become alcoholics merely by overdoing their drinking, most alcoholics, like Don Birnam, suffer some underlying neurosis that is primarily responsible for their addiction. He believes that only after the addiction itself is arrested can the basic difficulty be found and possibly corrected.

Jackson wanted it definitely understood that he is not against drinking except when the indulgence of an individual harms someone else or the drinker himself. If remorse is present, however, the drinker obviously is ashamed of his behaviour and should be helped, but only if he wants help.

Just a word now about Charlie Jackson, the man. I expected to meet someone a little on the aloof side—someone above the usual level, where of course Jackson has a right to be. But Charlie won't let you look up to him. When he's talking to you or listening to you he makes you feel that you *matter* to him. Friendly, modest, sincere, unspoiled. That's Charlie Jackson.

Marion May R., Hartford, Connecticut

Granite Vermont opens its Heart to A. A.

Curious things happen here. For instance, Bill and Doc were born here and perhaps they felt there was no need for A.A. in this quiet, kindly, historic state. But they have not been here for some time and things have changed since then.

The beginning of A.A. in Vermont is credited wholly to Joe. About a minute after he deposited his bags on arrival, he began to look over the "larger" cities such as Burlington (23,000) and Montpelier (7,500). He found plenty to do. Joe had an A.A. group going in each of these cities in no time.

In Burlington the group consists of a printer, an electrician, an insurance broker, and a sound engineer; and a doctor is a good prospect for their next meeting. Montpelier has a few more members; there is Jim B., who owns an excellent dry-cleaning business; yours truly with varied interests—office machines, a taxi business, and an ice cream and dairy store in town; George B., owner of a wholesale candy business (won a grand betting on F.D.R.); Ted K., writer, farmer and breeder of Aberdeen Angus cattle; Wayne D., right now selling Christmas trees and farming—treasurer; Merrill P., farmer; Ralph H., chef in the hospitable and attractive Montpelier Tavern. We also have Elbert C., wholesale and retail pork products (ten years dry this month), our real standby in a pinch,

and Wayne B., owner of large lumbering interests in Stowe, Vermont, twenty miles away. Wayne has not missed a meeting since the group was started in October. Two other out-of-town members are Dick L., merchant of Waterbury, which is twelve miles away, and Dick C., a merchant of Newbury, thirty-eight miles away. Our one honorary member, Bill F. (three years dry), is an associate of Joe's and is now in New York City.

The plan, for now, is to keep the group small and to meet at the home of yours truly. In the spring we hope to come out with open meetings and take on all comers. With this in view we just will not *allow* any slips. Each member knows and understands the plan, having actually voted on it at a regular meeting. This means, of course, they just can't slip, which would be a catastrophe for Vermont. After all, it's Bill's and Bob's state and it is the most recent to come into A.A.

We do not stop here, however, as the real back-field, Jim B., Wayne D., George B., Ted K., and the secretary, are at it daily. We have spoiled lots of drinks in Montpelier, we know, and even some non-admitting alcoholics are seen in drug stores and coffee shops more than in the past.

As you all know, Joe is a tireless worker for A.A., and on a recent trip to Montpelier we made many contacts. One of the most

pleasant was lunch with our Governor-Elect, a non-A.A. He had little knowledge of our program and Joe covered it fully. He has promised to come to one of our meetings some Monday night. He was informed that no funds are now available; for the care and treatment of alcoholics in any Vermont institution. In fact, not even one bed is available. By way of contrast, Joe told what New Jersey is now doing in this respect.

We of the Montpelier group feel fortunate in having such an outstanding sponsor and such fine friends from New Jersey. We feel that we have the jump on most new groups.

By combining A.A. with his regular business trips about the state, our Secretary hopes to start many A.A. groups in Vermont. We boast that we will have at least six groups going before April.

Much credit must be given to the wives in our group. Each week two volunteer on the eats and we are yet to be disappointed with any of the sandwiches, pumpkin pie, ice cream, cake, maple syrup and raised doughnuts, cheese and coffee, coffee, coffee.

We are also pleased with the fact that two Ration Boards have granted gas for our work, so Vermont is in high spirits as this is written.

"Monty" and Ted K., Montpelier, Vermont

WAR GAVE FLORIDA GROUP FLYING START

A.A. would inevitably have come to Jacksonville some day, but we are grateful to an Executive Officer of the Naval Air Training Station for bringing A.A. to us as far back as the beginning of the present world conflict.

By April 18, 1941, he had formed a nucleus of a group with four alcoholics, and we are very proud that these four men are sober, dependable representatives of this city today. They found the going rough, just as our co-founders did in the beginning. But today, we have risen from the original four men to sixty-eight men and women. Meetings were first held in homes; later a leading hotel offered the group accommodations one night each week. When we got squarely on our feet with about fifteen members, we moved into our own Club Rooms, and one year ago we found it necessary to again move to much larger quarters. We now have the use of a

fraternal organization's hall to accommodate our open meetings, numbering one hundred and more members and guests.

We are now in the experimental stage with Squad Meetings, dividing the city into four zones, and this will produce a more closely knit system of calls and follow-ups on prospects, as well as proper size classes for the study of the 12 Steps and other fundamentals necessary for a successful group.

The Jacksonville group has also found much stimulation in inter-city meetings. Recently a joint meeting between the Daytona Beach-Orlando-Jacksonville and Crescent City groups was held at Daytona Beach.

Jacksonville is at last coming into its own with the medical profession, although war conditions have made it impossible for A.A. or any organization to get any hospital interested in an alcoholic ward. We are also

looked upon with much favor by certain members of the ministry, civic organizations and law enforcement authorities, due to a great extent to their attendance at our last annual banquet, where the principal address was given by the one and only Bill W. This banquet helped to swing one of the newspapers over to us, which is a tremendous help.

Yes, the ill-winds of war brought consternation and suffering to many in Jacksonville, but by the Grace of God it brought a Naval Officer to us with A.A.

Many A.A.s come to, and pass through Jacksonville as the Gateway to Florida. We extend a most cordial invitation for all to contact us at our Club Rooms, 204 East Bay Street, telephone 5-7646, open every night with closed meetings Thursday nights. Open meetings are held Monday night at 127 East Bay Street. *J. L. A., Jacksonville., Florida*

Mail Call for All A. A.s in the Armed Forces

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The first A.A. Seamen's group ever organized was formed in Manhattan, June, 1944. Six months later, in December, the Seamen took over the first A.A. clubhouse ever opened anywhere (over 4½ years ago), at 334½ W. 24th St., New York, the clubhouse having been vacated by the New York A.A.s for larger quarters.

That sounds like quick, easy going. Actually, the establishment of the A.A. Seamen's Club was preceded by many months of consistent work by A.A. and doctors along the Eastern seaboard. As hospitals became overcrowded, the War Shipping Administration and the United Seamen's Service opened 7 Rest Centers throughout the country, near the largest seaports, where for 3 weeks men of the Merchant Marine could recuperate from their nerve-racking trips at sea. In some of the Rest Centers, the doctors have taken particular interest in steering alcoholic seamen into the A.A. way of thinking. The A.A. Seamen's Club does not confine itself to the Merchant Marine but hopes to include the Navy and Coast Guard as well—all types of seamen.

Already the A.A. Seamen are looking toward the day when they'll have groups in San Pedro, San Francisco, Baltimore — in all the ports of the United States and, eventually, in all the ports of the world. One of the dried-up seamen among those making calls on the alcoholics in the seamen's hospitals at Staten Island and Ellis Island is a man who, until a few weeks ago, hadn't bought himself a suit of clothes in 20 years. John W., always penniless after the binge that invariably followed his reaching shore, got his clothes from charitable institutions. The other day John, who was accustomed to getting "a Hop at the doghouse at 60c a week," for the first time in 20 years bought himself a new suit, new shoes, new overcoat—and put up at a big New York hotel at 6.50 a day. And he had one swell time. Sober. While formerly Drink was the only international language known to seamen when they got off their ships, an ever increasing number are learning the constructive language of the A.A. Seamen.

Treasurer of the Club is the non-alcoholic Vice-President of the Bank of New York, James Carey. Seaman Joe F. is Secretary, and among those on the Policy Committee are Horace C., an A.A. of 6 years dry-standing, and his non-alcoholic lawyer brother, Alfred.

(The *Grapevine* extends best wishes for 1945 to the new Seamen's Club.)

MORE ABOUT SEABORNE A.A.s

We have noticed from the correspondence of A.A.s in Service that, without group contacts over long periods of time, these men and women frequently appear to be following the A.A. program, especially the spiritual side, more closely than many of the rest of us who live in almost daily association with our fellow members. In this connection, we quote, by courtesy of the Toledo group, several paragraphs of a letter from one of its Service men with an F.P.O. address:

"You may think that I am making a very broad statement when I say I feel I know; ill of the benefits of A.A. I feel I am qualified to say I do, after a year and one-half without contact of the group. I have been able to do the same as you that have had constant contact. This is due to a supreme effort to live up to the teachings of A.A. and the guidance of "The Supreme Power." I was taught how to do this while with the group. Many of you were my teachers, and convincing ones at that. It, at times, has not been an easy job but, like yourselves, I am on the twenty-four hour basin. and continue to place my problems in "His" hands. A personal inventory has always shown me a way for improvement. Honesty is a prime factor, and key to our future progress, and if we are honest with ourselves we will be with others."...

"To those of you that I know I hope you will continue on your present path to happiness and to those of you that I do not, I hope you will find as much happiness as I have found through A.A." *W.M.L.*

(The Toledo group, numbering approximately 150, has 15 members who have served in this War and one who died in Service.)

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We have always had a profound curiosity to know more about those gallant lads known as Seabees. Now, most unexpectedly, we learn that A.A. is represented, and well, in that branch of Service also. The letter quoted above was from a Seabee and we are advised from Cleveland that another Ohio A.A. is not only with them but right in the midst of things in the Pacific:

"N.R. is with The Seabees now in the Philippines and has done a bang up job staying completely well for over four years, one and one-half of which have been spent in the Pacific. An outstanding job by a real guy."

HOW 14 CALIFORNIA GROUPS GREW TO 22

Just over one year ago, Bill made a two-month visit to the West Coast, one month of which was spent in Los Angeles and immediate environs. It, therefore, is natural that the twenty-two A.A. groups in the Los Angeles area should, at this time, reflect on some of the benefits reaped from his visit.

Ostensibly Bill did little or nothing here but tell us informally what he thought about A.A., 'how it happened to him,' and how it worked elsewhere. He gave us no orders and left us no mandates. He proved a past master at dodging when a definite difficulty of a group was thrown into his lap for solution. His answer always ignored that problem but recounted how a group far away met a similar issue. That set the inquirer thinking and in most cases he solved the problem himself. The result was that Bill left us with a realization that he had tossed the ball right back to our pitcher, with a kindly hint that we play ball according to the A.A. rule book. And that seemed to work.

For it made us realize that, in our group problems, as in our alcoholic problems, our "stories are all the same." And so we all set to work to play the game better.

One result is that twenty-two A.A. groups exist now in the area which had fourteen when Bill was here. The membership then was about seven hundred. Now it nears two

thousand.

We learned from Bill that A.A. is an answer to a universal need of mankind; that it cannot belong even to him, its founder, nor to any leader, or group of leaders; that it cannot be controlled by those who precede others in membership.

He taught us that only those have a right to A.A. who use it with the singleness of purpose for which it was founded and handed to us. He taught us that those whose ideas veer from A.A. ideals get off the beam and, sooner or later, fail in sobriety when they begin using substitutes instead of "practicing A.A. principles in all our affairs."

Bill remarked while here that sometimes he is startled when he regards the growth of A.A. and realizes that, while he started it all, he does not control it, and has no desire to. He sees that what he gave the world is the world's to use. And if the man who needs it misuses it he does so to his own loss alone. No one can hurt A.A. fatally. No one can stop its growth.

Bill's visit here made us A.A.s realize that we were free to form our own A.A. groups in direct affiliation with the New York Foundation and that no senior individual or group had district or territorial jurisdiction so long as the new group conformed to the Foundation's requirements. We learned that, just as

each member may interpret the program for himself (with honesty, of course), so each group may do the same, with the same requirement of honesty.

The result of this was courage for free development and lessening of friction by enabling any members, dissatisfied with the way their group was conducted, to join another group or launch a new group with persons they considered more congenial.

Bill convinced us of the universality of A.A.—that it is as unrestricted as is its need. He made us realize that we alcoholics out here are not California alcoholics, but just alcoholics, branded by a global, not a sectional, disease.

And this understanding has led to more intelligent methods of operating—to methods that are more tolerant of the opinions of others.

In other words, Bill gave, us the principle that no one need have too great concern about Alcoholics Anonymous getting into "inexperienced hands."

We learned, as Bill expressed it, that any good idea will work and any bad idea, when tried, will fail of its own weakness. One thing alone is a *sine qua non* in A.A.—honesty with ourselves. With it A.A. and its members are safe.

Frank S., Los Angeles, California

In Texas, Women Too, Are Wonderful

In May, 1943, Esther K. arrived in Dallas! For the problem drinkers of this city that is an historical news item, and the history of the Dallas group of Alcoholics Anonymous must necessarily be a eulogy to that lady.

Esther is a comely gal, with personality plus, who had assiduously carved out one whale of an alcoholic career for herself until she became innoculated with A.A.; result—she has found not only sobriety but a happy life; she's comelier than ever and that personality fairly reflects the beneficent influence of the A.A. way of life.

For two years Esther had been one of the most active members of the Houston group, but upon her arrival in Dallas she found herself High and Dry (contradictory in our language but true) without the life-giving activities of an A.A. group. So she really went to work. The material was here, of course,

for Dallas like every other city has a plentiful supply of alcoholics—good, bad and indifferent; but Esther's first efforts among some of her former drinking buddies were pretty discouraging. Then one of her Houston "babies" (another lady souse) put in an appearance, and finally Esther found a male alky—an A.A. from Oklahoma City—just what she had been praying for, she said.

That was the origin of the Dallas group of Alcoholics Anonymous. In the beginning we had only one meeting a week in Esther's home. Then we used the office of one of our members for what we called our business meeting, having our social gatherings in the various homes. For quite a while we were only about seven in number, but that period meant a great deal to those seven. Then we began to overflow the office at our disposal, so we hired a hall once a week at the Y.M.C.A.

The first year of growing pains witnessed the customary fluctuating membership, but we believe that the past seven months have brought us a certain coordination and that our future growth and expansion will be surer and steadier. Now we, have forty active members and we definitely feel that at least we have emerged from our swaddling clothes.

The request for this article comes, it seems to us, at an opportune time, for we are a happy bunch. On December 2nd we held our business meeting in our first home—if you can call a space in an office building that. But it's ours—the coveted Club Room, and we're proud of it. Meetings are held on Mondays and Thursdays of each week but the Club Room is open on every other night as well as on week ends, so some of you traveling A.A.s remember to look us up.

Merle S., Dallas, Texas

A. A. s COUNTRY-WIDE NEWS CIRCUIT

The husky Braves pitcher, Nate Andrews, while at training camp last spring, went on a terrific tear that involved hidden bottles, nerve pills, and frantic long-distance telephone calls. The whole of it ended in columns of bad publicity. He was rescued by the BOSTON A.A.s, and though there was little confidence that the good-natured, popular Nate would ever fully recover from his ordeal, he did. With a sixth-place team, Nate won 16, lost 15 games. He was the best pitcher on the club. An enthusiastic member of the Boston A.A. group, he spoke often at meetings. The publicity given his dive overboard and subsequent rescue brought into the group one hundred and fifty new men during the summer. Retaining his delightful sense of humor, Nate said just before returning to his home in North Carolina, "But Ah told 'em they needn't expect me to make an example out of myself every spring."

NOHTH HOLLYWOOD A.A.s are going to build a clubhouse of their own. They already have the blueprints, and are underwriting their venture through the sale of "Sobriety Bonds."... Peter J. Hampton, Associate Professor of Psychology at Western College, in his study on alcoholism during the past year, has conducted hundreds of personality tests on alcoholics. In a big public meeting in CINCINNATI, Prof. Hampton recently discussed "the wonderful organization that is Alcoholics Anonymous," and told something of the series of tests he is at present making in conjunction with members of the Cincinnati A.A. group.... A PHILADELPHIA newspaper, commenting on the forthcoming film, "The Lost Week-End," makes this statement: "Strangely enough, the W.C.T.U. has damned the picture, while A.A. believes it will have a good effect on behavior of cinema addicts in general."

Veterans' hospitals all over the country are writing into the New York Central Office for A.A. literature, and in quite a few hospitals groups have already been formed. WASHINGTON, in fact, is looking more and more to A.A. as a way to aiding alcoholic men and women of our Armed Forces, both at home and abroad. Letters of inquiry are pouring in from all over the world—from France, Ireland, Scotland, Cuba, the Aleutians, etc. Some of these are from the Red Cross and other organizations, some from the G. I. s themselves. No wonder that in one month

alone the Central Office sent out 3,385 letters.

A feature of the program celebrating the second anniversary of the SCHENECTADY (N.Y.) A.A.s in late November was the playing of a transcription of the State Health Department's "Health Hunters" radio program, previously heard over a number of stations, dealing with the work of A.A.

Columnist William P. Frank of the Wilmington, DELAWARE, *Journal* is typical of the favorable reaction of most newspapermen to A.A. He writes: "If the drink problem worries you—and you want to know something about kicking Old Man Alcoholism in the face, why not attend the public meeting of A.A. tonight in the Delaware Academy of Medicine. And if you have friends who are all tangled up with alcohol and can't get rid of the old devil, you ought to go there, too—and learn for yourself what this organization is doing." Frank comments on the members' sense of humor as one of the interesting features of A.A.

Examining the jurors for a trial coming up in MIAMI, Fla., the D.A. asked if any of them ever belonged to a temperance organization or had been members of A.A. None had. What, we wonder, would have happened if they had?... Los ANGELES now has a Central Office, functioning as a clearing house for all the A.A. groups in that area, with a paid secretary.... Speaking of paid secretaries, Bill made mention the other day of what is erroneously referred to as "professional A.A.s." He emphasized the fact that these people are not being paid to be A.A.s but to work in various secretarial and executive capacities.

High Watch Farm at Kent, Conn., has undergone a transformation in organization and is now being run by an Operating Board which has representatives from the CONNECTICUT A.A. groups and Yale. An increasing number of alcoholics are availing themselves of the good food and comfortable home surroundings at the farm, also the beautiful Connecticut countryside.

From MICHIGAN comes word that the conclusion of a survey assembled for the American Hospital Association by the Committee on Hospital Treatment of Alcoholism was that hospital facilities for the care and treatment of alcoholics in the United States are scanty and inadequate. In Russia, the survey states, all alcoholics are registered and their

personal and social histories filed in accordance with a comprehensive scheme of control which has been developed by the State. Acutely intoxicated persons are taken to the regional sobering-up stations. Persons suffering from alcoholic psychoses, etc., are committed to psychiatric hospitals where treatment is carried out under the supervision of skilled specialists.

An audience comprised chiefly of East Bay physicians listened intently at the SAN FRANCISCO Century Club as members of A.A. spoke before them at a recent meeting. Among subjects discussed were the psychological phases of alcoholism, and its spiritual and family repercussions.... The Moline, ILLINOIS, *Dispatch* says that a number of persons have called Magistrate Ralph Stephenson and Geneva Dunderberg, Moline policewoman, to express interest in their suggestions, published previously in the *Dispatch*, that a chapter of A.A. be organized in Moline. Stephenson said some who called him were alcoholics and some were persons having close friends or relatives victimized by alcohol. "I believe we may get somewhere with this," Magistrate Stephenson remarked, "and I should like to reiterate the belief that such an organization is needed in Moline."... Not only doctors and magistrates but clergymen of all denominations are coming nationally to recognize the benefits of A.A. A short time ago, in Richmond, VIRGINIA, the Catholic Father T. E. O'Connell was guest speaker at the monthly public meeting of the Richmond group. He had been designated by Bishop Peter L. Ireton, who has approved the principles of A.A.

"Not to bore you good people who have, never been tempted by the cup that cheers, yet there is something intriguing in the Alcoholics Anonymous and you can count among that membership some of your friends of whom you are just as fond as you are of many you rub elbows with at your favorite tavern." This was written in the Saint Joseph, MISSOURI, *News-Press*. Yes indeed, say we, and when you find yourself no longer rubbing these same elbows, come to A.A.—and *don't* be surprised if you find them there.

Out in Salt Lake City, UTAH, the newspapers go to town in stressing the need for A.A. and strongly urge people to go to the public meetings "where, have no fear, no one will try to convert you."

LOCATED IN NEW YORK, COSMOPOLITAN CLUB TO SERVE ALL A. A. S

A living room in a Brooklyn brownstone, 1934-1939. A swank tailor shop on Fifth Avenue, full of bolts and bolts of handsome tweeds—and assorted A.A.s—spring of 1939. A vacant apartment on West 72nd Street, summer of 1939. The same tailor shop's West Side loft, with the cutting tables for seats, the rest of the hot summer that same year. A real meeting-room in Aeolian Hall, fall and winter, 1939-40. Then, at last, the New York area A.A.s had grown enough to dare taking their own clubhouse, and in the spring of 1940 "24th Street" was ours—A.A.'s first clubhouse anywhere.

Now, as the year 1944 ends, the A.A. Cosmopolitan Club has been born. This is, at last, a club for all A.A.s from wherever they may come, passing through New York, visiting here, or living within reach of it. Here, the New York area will hold its Inter-Group meetings every Tuesday night. Here the secretary will take the calls and interview the newcomers from all the New York area, putting them in contact with the group in whose locality they live. And here A.A.s will find each other, to talk with, to play with, to grasp a helping hand or to extend one.

405 West 41st Street is the address of the A.A. Cosmopolitan Club. It has been known as the Knox Memorial Chapel, for it was once used as a church—more recently it has served as a men's club. Let's begin in the basement, which is really the recreation hall: bowling alley, billiard and ping pong tables, plenty of room for cards. The main floor is a panelled hall, two stories in height, with a deep

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balcony all around it. The seating capacity of the floor alone is seven hundred—the balcony will hold many more. Also on the main floor is the secretary's office, and on the second floor (the balcony entrance) are other rooms, one where newcomers can talk quietly and comfortably to older members. The third floor is a huge meeting room—it seats five hundred—with a dining room and kitchen off it. The top floor is a fully equipped gymnasium with showers.

Taking this club and supporting it is a project of interested A.A. members, individually, not of groups as groups. In other words, it's yours, Mr. A.A., Mrs. A.A., and Miss A.A. Yours to use and yours to support.

NEW JERSEY BLAZES PATH FOR ALCOHOLICS

New Jersey's State Alcoholic Beverage Control Commissioner, Alfred E. Driscoll, has asked for a legislative appropriation of 500,000. in 1945 for the rehabilitation of alcoholics through development of institutional facilities.

Administration of the proposed fund by the Department of Institutions and Agencies, Department of Health, Department of Education and the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control was suggested by the Commissioner.

"I earnestly recommend that the State begin at once to assume a greater portion of its obligation to society," continued Driscoll. "The sum asked is but a modest start on a task of tremendous importance and State-wide significance. Today citizens suffering from alcoholic addiction are, in too many cases, consigned to the police, thrown into jail for a sobering-up period, and then left to their own devices without constructive aid from the medical profession, hospitals or society. Some unfortunate inebriates are permitted to serve repeated sentences, punctuated by brief periods of freedom, with no medical treatment of any kind provided. While there is a growing public awareness that the alcoholic is a sick person, he is more often than not treated as a voluntary subject of vice.

"Private and public institutions are presently overcrowded and because of the magnitude of the problem, are loath to assume new responsibilities. Further, it is generally recognized that alcohol addiction is more than a medical problem and requires a special type of care and treatment. Mention should be made of the splendid work of Alcoholics Anonymous in this field. "

OREGON CONFERENCE STUDIES ALCOHOLISM

The first Pacific Coast Conference on Alcohol Studies, presented by Yale University, opened here in the Masonic Auditorium the morning of November 27th and continued for five days through the evening of December 1st. Sponsored by Governor Karl Snell of Oregon, and the Educational Advisory Committee of the Oregon Liquor Control Commission, it was the first project of its kind on the West Coast. Probably, outside of Yale itself, there has never been a conference on this problem in which the subject was treated so comprehensively.

Apart from the Yale "team," which consisted of Drs. Haggard, Jellinek, Bacon and Baird, and Mrs. Marty Mann of the Yale-sponsored National Committee for Education on Alcoholism, there were Drs. Finley and Montague from the University of Oregon Medical School, Dr. Victor Morris, Dean of the University of Oregon, Dr. Willard Spalding, Superintendent of Portland Public Schools, and the Rev. Thompson L. Shannon. Their lectures covered every aspect of the problem: physiological, psychological, sociological and legal, with one full day reserved for discussion on the treatment of alcoholism, and another on education.

It is an outstanding fact that no conference was ever held in this locality that interested so many and such varied organizations. The enrollment for the week numbered over twelve hundred names. There were delegates from State and City Police Departments, Bureaus of Parole, Social Welfare organizations, Y.M.C.A., Councils of Churches, Parent-Teacher Associations, Health Departments, Brewer's Associations, Wine and Distillers' groups, etc., etc. There were also doctors, judges, school teachers and principals, inspectors of police, and last but not least, many members of Alcoholics Anonymous from different Pacific Coast groups.

One entire evening was assigned to Marty Mann for a lecture on "The Approach of Alcoholics Anonymous," and at the close of this session a closed A.A. meeting was held in another room. Throughout the entire conference, the lecturers were high in their praise of A.A., and this favorable atmosphere was markedly enhanced by Marty's talk, and her heart-to-heart chat with the A.A.s. As a result of all this, a real impetus has been given the A.A. groups out here.

"Doc" H., Portland, Oregon