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*The national monthly journal of Alcoholics Anonymous, devoted to those seeking further knowledge on the problem of alcoholism, with the hope that it will help all alcoholics everywhere. Individual opinions expressed here are not, necessarily, those of A.A. as a whole.*

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## What Are the Enemies of Peace of Mind?

To us alcoholics, I believe that "peace of mind" is the paramount prerequisite to continued sobriety. During our drinking years, we did not, and could not enjoy "peace of mind." In the battle for sobriety, we have four definite enemies of "peace of mind" which require constant daily combat.

*LYING* is the enemy No. 1 of "peace of mind" and in connection with all alcoholics.

### CHICAGO ASSURES YEARLINGS A PART ON THE PLATFORM

One of the initial acts of the newly formed Policy Committee of the Chicago Group was to recommend a new pattern for the large, joint meeting which is held there each Tuesday night for all of the Groups in the Chicago area.

The new policy, adopted by the Set-Up Committee which remains the final authority in Chicago Group affairs, provides that each Tuesday night program will have four first year members as speakers with a fourth, fifth or sixth year member as chairman. The policy was evolved out of the thought that if the speakers' lists were reserved for the older members who continued to appear on subsequent anniversaries, they would displace the one-year people and, at the rate of the Chicago Group's growth, the multiple anniversaries would exceed the first appearances.

Under the new policy, the Program Committee has divided the Chicago area into subdivisions with one committee member having responsibility for a number of adjoining groups. Each area will provide speakers for a night, set well enough in advance to assure proper preparation.

Lying represents one of the chief germs of the disease, because we lied about everything when in most cases the truth would have been better; we lied to get out of the house, on the pretext of going to the store for groceries, but what we really wanted was another drink. We lied about where we had been, a last minute meeting had been called after business hours, which was the cause of our being late for dinner, but the meeting was actually with the bartender. We lied about money matters to our wives in order to hold out a few extra dollars for what we believed our much needed stimulant. Therefore under such prevarication it is understandable that we had no "peace of mind."

*RESENTMENT* is enemy No. 2 of "peace of mind" because with a heart full of bitterness, jealousy and resentment, there is certainly no "peace of mind." We hated our neighbor because he was a pious, church-going, prohibitioner, who had on numerous occasions seen us come home in a condition much the worse for liquor, and maybe he had even offered words of condolence to our wives, which heaped more searing coals upon our fire of hate. We resented with fervor, and a sickening jealousy, the successes of our superiors, even the promotion of our associates, and sometimes said to ourselves, "Why didn't I get that promotion instead of him?" and immediately set out to drown what we felt to be our troubles. And so, living in the cloak of resentment, it is again quite understandable that we had no "peace of mind."

*INTOLERANCE* is enemy No. 3 of "peace of mind." It is the inability of an individual to cope with the smallest irritation. If we should make an error we excuse ourselves with the

thought that it is human nature to err, but just let some one else make a comparable error and what happens? You know, we blow up—and did we make any effort to help the erring person? No! We were intolerant and couldn't understand how any one could be so dumb, and if we happened to be in a position of authority, we were more than likely to let off our super dynamic, egocentric, self-esteemed, arrogant, alcoholic steam, by firing the poor erring individual, not giving two hoots what happened to  
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### MINNEAPOLIS RECORD INDICATES THAT 75% ARE SUCCESSFUL IN A.A.

The Minneapolis Group, in March, 1943, inaugurated a system for keeping a record of the sobriety of members from three months on up. As a result, the following exact percentages have been arrived at:

For the Year 1945				
	members	100% successful	0% slipped	
5-yr.	"	100%	"	0%
4-yr.	"	100%	"	0%
3-yr.	"	100%	"	0%
2-yr.	"	89%	"	11%
18-mo.	"	90%	"	10%
1-yr.	"	80%	"	20%
9-mo.	"	82%	"	18%
6-mo.	"	70%	"	30%
3-mo.	"	48%	"	52%

(Of those who slipped in 1945, only 16½% have worked back to any degree of sobriety.)

Over-all Percentages		
1943	78% successful	22% slipped
1944	83%	17%
1945	77%	23%

# EDITORIAL:

## On the 10th Step...

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

This step is really an extension of the 4th Step. It is the "follow through" on that long list of things that we put down on paper after reading the 4th Step. The new twist is the part about *"when we were wrong promptly admitted it."* The going may get a little tough when we try to put this Step into practice.

It's easy to write down our good qualities and our bad qualities honestly if it's done privately and we are sure nobody else sees it. If we are honest, the list of bad qualities will be very much longer than the list of good qualities. If we are trying honestly to live the A.A. program, we try to do something about that longer list. We make resolutions. We plan to "turn over a new leaf." Then, unfortunately for most of us, we tear the list into tiny pieces, burn it and carefully bury the ashes.

Admission of an unkind remark to someone or of a persistent feeling of resentment is an overt act which means a growing maturity. And it is a matter of a person's emotional maturity. Perhaps a better word would be childishness. How often have we acted like a child when we should have acted like a man?

A man admits his mistakes and tries to make amends; a child pouts. As problem drinkers, we were problem children. As problem drinkers, we sought to escape the consequences of voluntarily childish acts through alcohol. As arrested alcoholic cases, we must learn to face reality and responsibility for our acts if we are to "stay on the beam."

The 10th Step is simply a device we use in attaining maturity. None knows better than we how hard it is to admit to our wife, or our boss, or our friends that we have been wrong about so many things. And yet, if we follow this device and make our admissions *promptly* we go a long way towards attaining the maturity necessary to a happy sobriety.

In a way, this Step is tied to those old standbys in A.A., tolerance and humility. To admit that we were wrong is truly to show humility; to revalue our own importance is truly to be humble. If we are trying to be tolerant, we are trying to understand the other fellow's point of view. And if we understand his point of view, we are much less likely to treat him unkindly.

To *"continue to take personal inventory"* means to know ourselves. It's so easy—and so human, too—to feel a little proud of our sobriety at times. How often have we said to ourselves: Poor old Willie! He was so drunk at the office party. What an ass he made of himself! What makes him so stupid? Why doesn't he get smart and come into A.A.? We, of course, didn't do anything wrong at the party. We were sober. We are quite a wonderful fellow! Oh, brother, are we the big A.A.!

This type of thinking is very dangerous. As a matter of fact, lots of persons at the office party probably thought that we were becoming a very stuffy individual. If we were smart, we would thank God that we were able to live through the office party without drinking. If we were honest, we would get down on our knees and thank God that we found A.A. And, as for criticizing Willie! We should try to secure our own sobriety by helping Willie instead of kicking him around.

The 10th Step is really a reminder. It reminds us to be alert about ourselves. It reminds us that we are only an arm's length from a drink and a slip. It is a very important step. We would do well to learn its implications.—*J.T., Greenwich Village, New York City.*

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### WHAT "EARN" MEANS WHEN APPLIED IN A.A.

Webster's definition of the word, "earn" is: "To merit or deserve, as by labor or service."

Webster's definition of the word "distinction" is: "State or quality of being distinguishable or distinct."

We have earned the distinction of being A.A.s.

Our uprising against society, our concen-

trated efforts to ruin our health, our painstaking efforts to insult our friends and our wanton waste of precious business hours together with our home wrecking abilities, must not be confused with my statement that we have earned the distinction of being A.A.s.

We "merit and deserve" because we have left

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## TO ACT NORMALLY FIRST LIVE NORMALLY

It is my contention that in order for a man to act normally it is necessary for him to live normally, that is, to adjust his life so that each phase of it will balance with the other. The occupational part must be on the same level as the emotional part and the spiritual part and so on.

Fundamentally we are virtually the same. Conditions, environment, age and health, however, are factors that often overwhelm our judgment to the point that we begin to believe we are different from other persons. Usually when we begin to believe we are different we assume a sense of inferiority. Sometimes we try to sugar-coat it with an air of superiority. But you may wash it and scrub it as much as you will, it is still an inferiority complex, and you encounter many heartaches and much sorrow when you travel the road in such a frame of mind.

### Alcohol Impairs Judgment

Our impaired judgment is a result of indiscreet use of alcohol. There is no doubt but that we could overcome the obstacles that made us think along these lines that are wrong had we not voluntarily befogged that part of our anatomy that controls our thinking. We have gotten out of the realm of happiness, peace, security and contentment and we do not know how to get back. We have forgotten how to live normally.

We need help and advice but are reluctant to accept it when it is offered. There are a thousand excuses and a thousand reasons we give. We use them to gratify our ego or satisfy some ever patient listener. Actually they don't make sense. They are something like what could be said of iced tea. First you put it on the stove to make it hot, then put ice in it to make it cold, sugar in it to make it sweet and lemon to make it sour. It is not quite understandable. Our well being has been jeopardized in its entirety and we are no longer capable of managing that intangible part of us that may be good and holds a spark of hope for the future. We are not pleased with the scheme of things, neither are we pleased with the outlook. We definitely belong to a group that doesn't fit in any line of endeavor or in any plan whether it be large or small.

### Must Want Help

Before we can honestly accept the help that we need we have got to want it. We have got to admit to ourselves that this problem is bigger than we are, that we want to overcome it entirely and be sincere enough to admit we want to do so, not for John, Joe or Jim but for our own

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# Who Is A Member of Alcoholics Anonymous ?

By Bill

The first edition of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* makes this brief statement about membership: "The only requirement for membership is an honest desire to stop drinking. We are not allied with any particular faith, sect or denomination nor do we oppose anyone. We simply wish to be helpful to those who are afflicted." This expressed our feeling as of 1939, the year our book was published.

Since that day all kinds of experiments with membership have been tried. The number of membership rules which have been made (and mostly broken!) are legion. Two or three years ago the Central Office asked the groups to list their membership rules and send them in. After they arrived we set them all down. They took a great many sheets of paper. A little reflection upon these many rules brought us to an astonishing conclusion. If all of these edicts had been in force everywhere at once it would have been practically impossible for any alcoholic to have ever joined Alcoholics Anonymous. About nine-tenths of our oldest and best members could never have got by!

## Who'd Have Lasted?

In some cases we would have been too discouraged by the demands made upon us. Most of the early members of A.A. would have been thrown out because they slipped too much, because their morals were too bad, because they had mental as well as alcoholic difficulties. Or, believe it or not, because they did not come from the so-called better classes of society. We oldsters could have been excluded for our failure to read the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* or the refusal of our sponsor to vouch for us as a candidate. And so on ad infinitum. The way our "worthy" alcoholics have sometime tried to judge the "less worthy" is, as we look back on it, rather comical. Imagine, if you can, one alcoholic judging another!

At one time or another most A.A. Groups go on rule-making benders. Naturally enough, too, as a Group commences to grow rapidly it is confronted with many alarming problems. Pan-handlers begin to pan-handle. Members get drunk and sometimes get others drunk with them. Those with mental difficulties throw depressions or break out into paranoid denunciations of fellow members. Gossips gossip, and righteously denounce the local Wolves and Red Riding Hoods. Newcomers argue that they aren't alcoholics at all, but keep coming around anyway. "Slipees" trade on the fair name of A.A., in order to get themselves jobs. Others refuse to accept all The 12 Steps of the Recovery Program. Some go still further, saying that

the "God business" is bunk and quite unnecessary. Under these conditions our conservative program-abiding members get scared. These appalling conditions must be controlled, they think. Else A.A. will surely go to rack and ruin. They view with alarm for the good of the Movement!

At this point the Group enters the rule and regulation phase. Charters, by-laws and membership rules are excitedly passed and authority is granted committees to fill out undesirables and discipline the evil doers. Then the Group Elders, now clothed with authority, commence to get busy. Recalcitrants are cast into the outer darkness, respectable busybodies throw stones at the sinners. As for the so-called sinners, they either insist on staying around, or else they form a new Group of their own. Or maybe they join a more congenial and less in-

## LEST WE FORGET . . .

Question: Is there any objection to a member using the name, "Alcoholics Anonymous" or, simply, "A.A." when addressing a letter, postal card or telegram to another A.A.?

Yes, there are very sound objections to such a practice.

Suppose such a letter, postal card or telegram was delivered to the wrong address? Or mislaid by a stranger who accepted it for the addressee?

It could happen easily. It might cause both you and the other A.A. embarrassment. It could cause real harm. In any event, it wouldn't be quite fair to your A.A. friend if you failed to respect his anonymity.

But, there are more important objections. If we do not practice anonymity, many suffering alcoholics or their families may be driven away from A.A. Remember how self-conscious you were when you first realized your drinking problem? Would you have come into A.A. if you thought other members would banter your name about? Of course you wouldn't.

On page 1, of the March issue of *The A.A. Grapevine*, this subject was discussed under the title "Our Anonymity Is Both Inspiration and Safety." Included is this important statement: "Great modesty and humility are needed by every A.A. for his own permanent recovery. If these virtues are such vital needs to the individual, so must they be to A.A. as a whole. This principle of anonymity before the general public can, if we take it seriously enough, guarantee the Alcoholics Anonymous movement these sterling attributes forever. Our public relations policy should rest mainly upon the principle of attraction and seldom, if ever, upon promotion."

tolerant crowd in their neighborhood. The Elders soon discover that the rules and regulations aren't working very well. Most attempts at enforcement generate such waves of dissension and intolerance in the Group that this condition is presently recognised to be worse for the Group life than the very worst that the worst ever did.

After a time fear and intolerance subside. The Group survives unscathed. Everybody has learned a great deal. So it is, that few of us are any longer afraid of what any newcomer can do to our A.A. reputation or effectiveness. Those who slip, those who pan-handle, those who scandalize, those with mental twists, those who rebel at the program, those who trade on the A.A. reputation—all such persons seldom harm an A.A. Group for long. Some of these have become our most respected and best loved. Some have remained to try our patience, sober nevertheless. Others have drifted away. We have begun to regard these ones not as menaces, but rather as our teachers. They oblige us to cultivate patience, tolerance and humility. We finally see that they are only people sicker than the rest of us, that we who condemn them are the Pharisees whose false righteousness does our Group the deeper spiritual damage.

## Ours Not to Judge

Every older A.A. shudders when he remembers the names of persons he once condemned; people he confidently predicted would never sober up; persons he was sure ought to be thrown out of A.A. for the good of the movement. Now that some of these very persons have been sober for years, and may be numbered among his best friends, the oldtimer thinks to himself "What if everybody had judged these people as I once did? What if A.A. had slammed its door in their faces? Where would they be now?"

That is why we all judge the newcomer less and less. If alcohol is an uncontrollable problem *to him* and *he* wishes to do something about it, that is enough for us. We care not whether his case is severe or light, whether his morals are good or bad, whether he has other complications or not. Our A.A. door stands wide open, and if he passes through it and commences to do anything at all about his problem, he is considered a member of Alcoholics Anonymous. He signs nothing, agrees to nothing, promises nothing. We demand nothing. He joins us on his own say so. Nowadays, in most Groups, he doesn't even have to admit he is an alcoholic. He can join A.A. on the mere suspicion that he may be one, that he may already show the fatal symptoms of our malady.

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# GOD MADE OUR RELATIVES, TOO

If there are more than twenty thousand A.A.s scattered throughout the land, there must be guessing conservatively, at least sixty thousand of their relatives. That means 60,000 additional problems—ours! Our attitudes toward them affect our sobriety, both in quality and duration. Should we not consider carefully what those attitudes are, since family is often the most important influence in our lives?

Over here on the right, ladies and gentlemen, you find a school of A.A.s who mentally tack up a large sign: No Relatives Or Dogs Allowed! And over here on the left, is another group who complain that their relatives take only a long-suffering, skeptical interest in the program. Again, here and there, dotted around the country, are A.A. groups that are actually relative-ridden. Some groups don't even dare to have closed meetings because relatives object. Some gatherings are attended by more relatives than alcoholics; the wives and husbands come, even if their A.A. is sick or out of town—kin, hell-bent on getting well for them!

An old-timer recently hazarded a guess that 95 per cent of the relatives had never read the chapter written just for them in our book *Alcoholics Anonymous*. Most of them, however, did not know there was such a chapter; of course a lot of them didn't know there was a book!

## Urge Reading of Book

Point One might well be, then, to introduce the book and chapter to our own families, and to relatives of those on whom we are doing Twelfth Step work, and *urge them to read it!*

But that is only a starter. If we expect to be happy in our own A.A. life, and want newcomers to make the grade, we must be more understanding of our near-and-dear ones. We are so sick and weak ourselves by the time we reach A.A.; we are so full of physical aches, mental pains, moral sores and spiritual bruises, that it is hard for us to realize that those who have lived through our binges with us are generally neurotic cases, too. At this point, relatives are not their real selves at all, they have lived too long in hourly fear, dashed hopes, privations, humiliations and disgust; they have been the objects too often of drunken revenge, vituperation and betrayal. Justly or not, they have been blamed extravagantly for everything. Is it not natural that they, too, will have to go through a faltering period of recovery and readjustment and recapture of faith?

Certainly, they need sympathetic understanding, too—and need it badly. And they can come to see, and let us hope, experience, how eleven of the Steps can be adapted to their own benefit.

Human nature being what it is, it is not likely they are going to achieve all this alone; they need help as we do.

Sponsors and older members can do a generous service by pointing out these values repeatedly during a newcomer's early months.

The more that our relatives appreciate the program, take an interest in the group, are welcomed among A.A.s, and given a sense of belonging, sharing and helping to further the good work, the less friction, frustration and hindrance each of us will suffer in progress.

Take, for example, the extreme disapproval of so many relatives in regard to our closed meetings. Or consider the resentment many of them feel about the long, intimate twosome A.A. powwows that are a major aid to clarifying our outlook. Naturally, such occasions must seem suspect to relatives left out in the cold. If the situations were reversed, might we not conclude that we and our intimate affairs were being discussed—with no chance given for us to tell our side of the story? Or, according to our imaginations, might not we surmise that these were bull sessions, and sex discussions, and might we not be jolly well articulate about it all? Or, supposing we were long-suffering enough to forbear, wouldn't we feel estranged and self-conscious?

Only by thoroughly understanding that an alcoholic will talk to another alcoholic as to no other human, can our relatives possibly come to tolerate, approve and even encourage meetings and confidential sessions.

And as their complete understanding is necessary on this point, so the solution to a great many of the conflicts that often put relatives on one side of a barbed-wire fence, and members on another, lies in the enlightenment of relatives in the whole A.A. program and all that it implies and entails. We should stress the word en-

lightenment too—and avoid the word instruction—for the very righteous, ego-puffing attitude that the word "instruction" causes us often to adopt, is salt in a suffering relative's wounds and detrimental to our own pursuit of humility.

It is said—and rightly—that A.A. is the greatest example of democracy in the world. But don't we risk that ideal if we make and feel a class distinction against normal drinkers or non-drinkers, and find ourselves associating happily with alcoholics only? The luxury of being understood, and of being able to talk freely can wreck us if overdone. As soon as we are able to look out as well as in, we might do well to set ourselves a definite goal, to meet and like *all* our fellows, rich and poor, educated and uneducated, men and women, young and old, bores and charmers, *alcoholic* and *non-alcoholic!* With our slogan of "live and let live," we soon learn to sympathize, to listen patiently, to shrug at the prejudices, the foibles, the eccentricities, of perfectly stranger fellow-drinkers, giving them time to iron out their character snags, helping them to do so when we can. and even examining ourselves exhaustively on a challenged point, to reaffirm or readjust our own views. It stands to reason that it would pay off in spiritual and social growth to give the same tolerance and kind patience to non-A.A.s. All non-A.A.s. but most especially non-A.A. relatives.

## Relatives Can Be Helpful

There are any number of relatives who would be happy to feel useful and a part of things. Why waste such a source of good works? Why not tap such a powerhouse of constructive effort? We find ourselves with a great work to do—helping other alcoholics—and because we seem ordained by our own suffering to do that work as no one else can, and since it helps us "make amends" to the world we live in to do so, we know the strength and healing help that being useful gives us. No relative who properly understands will want to interfere with or intrude on 12th Step work—it's not his forte. But why can't our folk help with the relatives of our newcomer? And aren't there often a dozen things to be attended to for a new and perhaps rambunctious prospect—anything from broken ear-phones to be fixed, irate landladies to be calmed, broken appointments to be explained, trains to be met in place of the drunk—and wouldn't a surprising lot of relatives be happy and proud to work as co-partner on some of our cases? Certainly there is more work to be done than there are A.A.s to do it fully and competently. What A.A. hasn't wished, at some point, that he had 48 hours in his day? We

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## OHIO WELFARE HEAD URGES WORK WITH A.A.

Frazier Reams, director of the Department of Public Welfare, State of Ohio, another public official who has come forth recently in urging more adequate treatment for alcoholics, stated in a letter to a member of A.A. the following:

"In my opinion, the profits that come to the state from the sale of alcoholic beverages, should in a measure, be devoted to an institution which would work with the organization known as "Alcoholics Anonymous." and with a staff of doctors ... It can be done. It has been done in many cases in this state and over the country. I am hoping that within the next year we will make a definite start on such a program . . ."

have all heard many relatives say, with real humility, that they would gladly be "hewers of wood and drawers of water"—errand-boys and envelope addressers, if it would help. And as soon as they learn loyalty to observe the sacredness of our anonymity, so that they can be trusted, not gossip or spread information, what mistaken altruists we make of ourselves to refuse their help!

### Why Deprive Them of Joy?

If, however, the feeling persists with an A.A. that relatives must not be involved in any way directly with our activities, should this exposure to the joy and strength to be obtained through direct personal giving of oneself to help another go completely to waste? A husband or wife, mother, son or daughter might be encouraged to find another avenue of good samaritan practice. There is too much suffering in the world besides alcoholism for them not to find an absorbing source of spiritual growth in unselfish aid, with our enthusiastic support.

In some towns, relatives have asked for Relatives' Meetings, and some of these are successfully under way with one or two A.A.s speaking briefly, two relatives speaking and a long question-discussion period.

Many of the old-timers around the country are beginning to wonder whether further development might not be a great contribution to happiness and co-operation all around. Why not groups of relatives, run as sort of auxiliary? They might welcome a list of things to be done from which they could choose their activities; chief of which might well be to welcome relatives of newcomers and work with them as we work with the alcoholics. There are so many kind things to be done for newcomers AND their families, to bridge them into peace with themselves and ease with the the world, all quite aside from the program help which only an alcoholic can give to an alcoholic. There *are* some groups that put across outings, bowling teams, baseball or softball games successfully. Frequent and smaller get-togethers might be stimulating, helping relatives to know each other.

### Express Your Appreciation

On the little matter of parties—it might go big if more A.A.s expressed appreciation and praise oftener to those wives of members who are forever giving forth with sandwiches, cookies, cakes and coffee after meetings. We are apt to take so much for granted, and neglect the graciousness that could give a kindly heart joy.

With women A.A. members, the opinion and attitude, of relatives are, often, the keynote of recovery and success. Women are generally more answerable to their relatives, less apt to have freedom of movement and time without disrupting a household. If The woman A.A. is a

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# Pleasures of Reading

GEOFFREY CHAUCER OF ENGLAND by Marchette Chute (Dutton, \$3.75)

Born six hundred years ago, Geoffrey Chaucer, the son of a London brewer and vintner, eschewed his ancestral vats and urns to find continual excitement in his own life, and bring a native exuberance to his own work. Chaucer's animated spirit, his lusty appreciation, his keen observations of life, and his Falstaffian gusto set him apart in the most glittering of centuries. He expressed his time—yet escaped it, for he is as vibrantly alive today as he was in the fourteenth century.

Miss Chute does not attempt to modernize her subject, making him at home in our times, but, rather, to familiarize her readers with the Chaucerian era. She weaves together biography and literary criticism very skillfully, picturing the life of Chaucer, who was both governmental official and poet, setting him amid tumultuous times, and placing him and his work against the backdrop of the English and European scene, and against a long literary and cultural tradition, English, French, Italian, and classical.

Talent for manifesting character is seen in her sketches of the historical personages who crossed the poet's path, and also in her comments upon the characters in Chaucer's poetry. For those unfamiliar with Chaucer—and the book appears to be directed to such readers primarily—Miss Chute will serve admirably as literary mentor. This is all to the good, since, as she puts it, "there are few writers who are so well worth knowing" as Chaucer.

She undertakes to give the beginner summaries of all Chaucerian works, with running commentaries upon their literary merit. At the same time, she tells the story of the poet's life, with careful regard for documentary sources, yet with imaginative insight into the relationship between his official career, and the development of his powers as poet until he became, in the fullest sense of the phrase, "Geoffrey Chaucer of England."

The thing to remember is that Chaucer was a pioneer—the first great literary artist to write in English. In Chaucer's day it was customary for men of letters to write either in Latin or French, but Godfrey preferred to use the people's tongue—the words and phrases he heard every day as he went about his duties in London. He also revolted against tradition by writing about real people, real characters and events, and about real love. Before his time poems were not written in the vernacular, nor did poets poke fun at the shortcomings of religion, and the scrambled ethics of chivalry.

Miss Chute gives detailed explanations of the poet's works: *The House of Fame*, *The Book of the Duchesse*, *The Parliament of Birds*, *Troilus and Criseyde*—and an unusually fine interpretation of his greatest work, *The Canterbury Tales*. His *Tales* were written by fits and starts between 1373 and 1400, and consist of twenty stories supposed to have been told by pilgrims to the shrine of St. Thomas at Canterbury.

A happy *Prologue* sets the background and establishes the mood. The very opening lines reflect the poet's liveliness of vision—the new strength of the flowers, the west wind's sweet breath, the small birds sleeping all night with open eyes. Thus is an eternal April created. The person and characters of the pilgrims are sketched with marvelous spirit in the *Prologue*, and here and in the *Tales* there is a dramatic power of the comic sort scarcely inferior to that of Shakespeare. What Chaucer wrote indeed places him among the first rank of English epic poets. Had he lived in Shakespeare's day, his dramatic gifts would have made him a dangerous rival to the Swan of Avon himself as a writer of comedies of every kind. Equally skilled in pruning and enriching, Chaucer was a master of verbal music, color, and conversational ease. In his *Prologue*, and stories he has left a gallery of portraits unrivaled except by Shakespeare and Scott, and he established beyond cavil the capacity of English as a great literary language.

Miss Chute has a sly humor and style which would have delighted Geoffrey Chaucer himself, for he was a wagster whose fun-loving has come down to us through the roaring centuries. This delightfully informal and thoroughly distinguished biography is marked by entertaining writing with gifted scholarship. It is so obviously a labor of love, contrived with care and glad patience, informed with the sun of English springs, the joy and color of medieval life, that no one can fail to take delight in reading it.

The whole vivid world of the fourteenth century is spread sharply before the reader's eyes. It is one of this book's virtues that it explains the intellectual differences between our world and Chaucer's; its dress, customs, manners, thought, and literature. You can return time after time to this book and enter an enchanted, lovely world—*R.E.B.*, *Greenwich Village, New York City, N. Y.*

# A.A. Digest—Excerpts from Group Publications

*New Life*, Youngstown, Ohio: "No question pertaining to drinking is silly or irrelevant. The matter is TOO SERIOUS. Any questions We ask may help someone else."

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*Hi and Dri*, Minneapolis, Minn.: "Let's give the new man or woman his or her best chance to make this program by pointing out the time and effort and openmindedness which is essential. If he or she runs away from this at first, don't be alarmed. Better to wait until that person is receptive and *can give A.A. a chance*, than to put, when he is not ready, another defeat in his or her life."

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*The Rope Yarn* (A.A. Seamen's Club). New York City: "It's nice to have money and the things that money can buy—but it's nice too to check up once in awhile and make sure that

you haven't lost those things that money can't buy, *and Sobriety is one of those things.*"

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*Central Bulletin*, Cleveland, Ohio: "In seven cases out of eleven of persons who had difficulty with the A.A. program, . . . what bothered them most was their inability to pay up all their debts. They owed so much to Joe, so much to Frank and so much to Jim and others that they would offend two if they paid up one, et cetera.

"We know of one man who solved this problem who once a week regularly paid as low as 50 cents in installments until \$300.00 was paid off to seven persons. He explained to each what he was doing and each at first was inclined to humor him. Before he was paid up, his reputation for absolute honesty soared throughout the city.

"We all would like to make the grand gesture and 50 cents on a ten dollar debt seems so little. We fear we're losing face by admitting we cannot pay more. Determine what you can afford to spare from your income, figure up all your debts, and commit yourself to regular weekly payments and though you think you are humbling yourself unnecessarily you'll be surprised how you gain in stature.

"You *must* pay up your debts. You can if you really *want* to."

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*Weekly Bulletin* (Top o' Texas Group), Amarillo, Texas: "Those who made the trip to McLean recently were very much impressed with the brief talk Brother Langino gave on that occasion. (He is pastor of the McLean Methodist Church.) . . . The committee on zoning the city for calling on prospective new members decided on four districts, marked east and west by 6th street, and north and south by Polk. . . . Remember always that you are under no obligation to the member or members who helped you, but that you are obliged to go to the aid of the unknown man out yonder who is calling for help."

\* \* \*

*Camel Club Chronicle*, Marshalltown, Iowa: "**When** you hear 'em talking about friction in A.A., don't let it throw you and don't let it get you down. If you do, John will step in and help throw you DOWNER and that's the truth. . . .

"Making a moral inventory of the other guy was one of the most popular indoor and outdoor sports of most of us before we came into A.A. and perhaps all of us should be a little tolerant of those of us who do such things. However there is a sure cure for this cause of friction in A.A. Work on the guy 'I' instead of on the other guy. In other words, do some 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th and 10th Step Work."

\* \* \*

*The Eye-Opener*, Los Angeles, Calif.: "Yesterday is history made; today is history in the making. Yesterday can't be changed by one jot or tittle; today is yours to do with as you will. Today you are deciding issues; yesterday's issues are decided—settled—over and done with!

"Today is a streamliner on which you're traveling at full speed. Yesterday is the stretch of country you traversed and left behind.

"Yesterday is gone; today is here.

"You are what you are today; live it to the fullest!

"And remember—today is the tomorrow you worried about yesterday!"

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## YOU'D DO IT IF YOU WERE DRUNK

The title phrase struck me when first I felt uneasy and wanted help. Feeling unsure, I took refuge in the alibi: The party would be too busy; I was making too much fuss, etc. Then it hit me, "You'd do it if you were drunk"; and that I would.

From that beginning I developed the idea that my sobriety must give me a sense of freedom, not one of restriction. Else I surely would be prone to turn back to alcohol and its sense of release. True, self-discipline was necessary, but not those restrictions imposed by fear. Little indulgences which sobriety sometimes questioned must be weighed as to intent and, if harmless, why not? Be good to yourself occasionally; you'd do it if you were drunk!

Alcohol as a medium of freedom had only meant license, and I hoped the right use of the Steps would prove to be a medium of liberty and that by their application I could somehow find the inner courage to rid myself of the everyday terrors. Since my life and sanity were at stake, I must "go to any lengths". To whatever extremes I had gone to get drunk, so must I also be willing to go to get A.A. If this new "way of life" was to bring me the realization of those dreams for which I drank, "half-measures would avail me nothing."

One drink didn't make me drunk. I had to drink and drink to get drunk; and I kept at it time after time, year in and out. By that same token, one taste of A.A. didn't make me sober. I had to keep at it to get what I am staying sober

for. Keep at it day after day, "alone or with somebody." I never got a glow on that didn't need steady stoking, and I'll never keep the glow of sobriety without much constant doing.

A lot of hard, difficult things were necessary to get drunk. Likewise, a lot of difficult things are necessary to get my sobriety and maintain its quality. It's a new way and I'm unfamiliar with the procedure. If I make a weak attempt and say it's good enough or that I'll only do so much, it's out of character. I didn't drink just so much and let it go at that. Without too much questioning I tried everything which was conducive to drinking, and so must I apply myself to sobriety.

With the first and successive drinks I changed. Nothing else changed; not the world nor conditions—just me. I still can't change the world, the outside. I can, though, take A.A. and change, just as before, from the inside out. When I was drunk enough the other fellow's actions or "brand" didn't bother me, so if I'm A.A. enough they won't annoy me now.

Whatever I did to get the dubious benefits of being drunk, I do now for the definite satisfaction derived from sobriety. If, to still my hunger and my longing I served one master—alcohol, I now serve another master, God, for the same purpose. If I liked the pseudo glow and sense of self-confidence "spirits" gave me, I like much more the true stimulation and sense of God-confidence, the spiritual "in" A.A. gives me.—*S.J., North Hollywood, Cal.*

## A.A.s TO BE ASKED FOR INFORMATION

A.A.s will be invited shortly to assist, insofar as the filling out of the questionnaire and collecting data, on a nationwide basis, in a new educational project aimed at accumulating new information which may help potential alcoholics to avoid going across the line into alcoholism.

The origins of the new project go back more than a year to a meeting of the Greenwich Village Group in New York City at which the question was raised as to whether the life of an alcoholic could be charted in graph form. The group debated whether a graph could be prepared which would give any indication of averages relating to the progress of alcoholism, of averages relating to age, home environment and other circumstances, and of averages pertaining to the behaviorism of an alcoholic.

The members of the "Village" group decided that the first step in acquiring the data needed for a graph would be a questionnaire, and that even if the undertaking did not yield any information of use outside the Group it would form the basis of stimulating discussions and self-analysis while being prepared.

A questionnaire was drawn up and circulated among different A.A.s throughout the New York metropolitan area. When the questionnaires were finally collected, filled in, the information they contained seemed to have some degree of pertinence. Members of the sponsoring Group, however, did not feel qualified to evaluate the data themselves. Consequently, they sent the questionnaires to Dr. E. M. Jellinek, director of the Summer School of Alcohol Studies at Yale University, for an appraisal because of his wide experience in research and the gathering of information by the questionnaire method.

Dr. Jellinek's response to the potential value of the questionnaire and the data it might yield was enthusiastic. If the questionnaires were revised and expanded to include certain areas of information overlooked in the original questionnaire, Dr. Jellinek said he thought it might well be the source of some of the most valuable data collected to date on alcoholism.

One of the chief values, Dr. Jellinek said, in circulating the questionnaire through A.A. membership would be the complete reliability of the information obtained. He pointed out that no group of people could be found more thoroughly qualified to discuss alcoholism and that as A.A.s "they can be depended upon to be completely frank and honest in their efforts."

The new, revised questionnaire is now ready for distribution to A.A.s throughout the country. Quotas will be sent to the secretaries of the various groups with the request that all individual members be invited to participate in the



"My wife don't understand me, Ossifer."

### EDITOR DIES

Carl K., editor of *The Empty Jug*, died of a cerebral hemorrhage, Saturday night, July 13, in Memphis, Tenn. Carl was a member of the Chattanooga Group and was well known throughout the South.

project by filling out the questionnaires, which of course will be unsigned and thereby preserve the A.A. principle of anonymity.

Most appealing to members of A.A. will be the fact that one of the chief hopes and expectations is that the data obtained from the questionnaires will provide a new and still more complete set of warning signals by which potential alcoholics will be able to determine how far along the road they have come and by which even "social drinkers" will be able to gauge whether they have any tendencies which need to be watched or restrained. Evidence which can be used as a preventive of alcoholism is an objective which, it is felt, will enlist the interest of all A.A.s in the project.

A preliminary report on the nature of the data indicated in the original questionnaire is to be published soon as an explanatory preface to distribution of the new questionnaire.

### Who Is A Member?

(Continued from Page 3)

Of course this is not the universal state of affairs throughout A.A. Membership rules still exist. If a member persists in coming to meetings drunk he may be led outside; we may ask someone to take him away. But in most Groups he can come back next day, if sober. Though he may be thrown out of a club, nobody thinks of throwing him out of A.A. He is a member as long as he says he is. While this broad concept of A.A. membership is not yet unanimous, it does represent the main current of A.A. thought today. We do not wish to deny anyone his chance to recover from alcoholism. We wish to be just as inclusive as we can, never exclusive.

Perhaps this trend signifies something much deeper than a mere change of attitude on the question of membership. Perhaps it means that we are losing all fear of those violent emotional storms which sometimes cross our alcoholic world; perhaps it bespeaks our confidence that every storm will be followed by a calm; a calm which is more understanding, more compassionate, more tolerant than any we ever knew before.

# MEDITATIONS OF A DRUNK ON CRITICISM OF OTHERS

## The Clip Sheet

"I am an alcoholic and my life has become unmanageable."

This, the first of 12 Steps recommended as a program of recovery for the chronic alcoholic by *Alcoholic Anonymous*, is to me the base upon which success or failure is predicated. With an honest and sincere admission of these facts the individual, if he so chooses, is ready to do something about his problem. He is face to face with a situation that he has continuously evaded; he must make one of two choices: To do something about it, or to do nothing. In most cases the sheer instinct to survive will influence the choice of "doing something about it." Where the admission has been an honest one and the choice of survival taken, the problem is what to do.

Having been a complete failure in the past in relation to his drinking he is fearful of the future. He mistrusts his judgment and his ability; he hangs on to individuals or groups. As a result he is open to suggestions. The sensible application of these suggestions is indeed a state of "open-mindedness." The gradual dehydration leads to a mounting return of confidence in one's own abilities and a partial understanding of why he went as far as he did. With it comes an appreciation of others and a willingness to "live and let live." As long as he continues along these lines he is on safe ground.

Many of us come in with conscious or unconscious reservations and encounter difficulty. This is often caused by mental comparison of our case with those of others in which we always give ourselves the benefit of any doubt. If others went so much farther than we, then there must be degrees of "alcoholism." Pursuing this trend of thought often leads to the conclusion that perhaps we are not as alcoholic as we supposed. That with an "intelligent" application of the self-knowledge we have gained there is no reason why we cannot now lead "normal" lives. Eventual experimentation and the resultant disaster usually follow. While not to be encouraged or taken too lightly, such a "slip" is by no means hopeless. Appreciated in the light of education much can be learned from it. We have at least proven that there is something wrong with our method; that once again we

have failed to run the "show" on our own terms.

The tendency of many of us to criticize the other fellow: to offer opinions as to his sobriety and its "quality" is most dangerous as well as extremely unjust. To set one's self up as an all high judge of humanity is quite in keeping with our original mode of behavior which in the first place led us to the position where we were forced

to admit "I am an alcoholic and my life has become unmanageable."

Medicine has not as yet determined any one factor that invariably produces alcoholism. Until it does, and is in a position to do something about it, the drunk who is interested in bettering his condition as related to society must look to his own kind. An impartial observation will soon disclose to him an amazing parallel between his own actions, motivations, etc., and those of other individuals who run counter to the trend of organized society, regardless of their "problem." These thoughts lead one to suspect that there is a possibility that most of these "problems," including alcoholism, may have a common base or origin lying somewhere deep within the personality. That the method chosen for expression is different and made by chance.

It is my honest opinion that there is not one among us who can look at another, regardless of his moral standards, physical or mental state, or social position, and not in all honesty admit that he is looking at himself, but for a set of fortunate circumstances over which he had no control and for which he is due no credit. He might well say "I am a drunk, by the Grace of God."—*Pal C., Manhattan, N. Y.*

### Live Normally

(Continued from Page 2)

selfish selves. Our way of living has been cockeyed. It was the wrong way in that we were inconsiderate, selfish, and disorganized and our personalities became so complicated that people did not understand us nor would we let them.

Some of us found A.A. through desperation, some through curiosity and others because we wished to please a member of the family or to satisfy the request of a friend. There is no doubt that we were all in a sense skeptical. Instead of a "catch" and a lot of "Thou shall nots" we found a design for living clearly defined and simple to put into execution. More than likely some of this plan had been in our minds during sober intervals but we lacked the necessary push to put it over in that we could not do it alone. In A.A. we found a group of men and women who had suffered the same trials—some perhaps who had hit the bumps even a little harder.

These people have gained new perspective. They have been able to work out many of their problems by just overcoming the basic and all-important one through group therapy and by earnestly following the simple but effective program offered in A.A.—*Benny W., Clearwater, Fla.*

### Aid for Veterans

Brockton, Mass.. *Enterprise and Times*: "Aid for returned war veterans who have taken to drink is being provided by Alcoholics Anonymous, it was pointed out at the meeting of the Brockton group. . . .

"It was brought out that veterans of the first war who became enslaved to liquor had few to help them with their problems, but veterans of the last war are finding sympathetic persons to work with them on the problem.

"Members were informed that one group in Greater Boston which has a total membership of 21, has 12 veterans of the past war as members, and the group has been turned over to those men, and they have been given the offices in the organization."

### Sickness Explained

Manitowoc, Wis., *Herald-Times*: "An alcoholic, as distinguished from a normal drinker, is a person who drinks even when he doesn't want to, a representative of Alcoholics Anonymous told members of the Wisconsin Public Welfare association at their annual convention (in Milwaukee). . . .

"The speaker, who remained anonymous, said one of the major jobs of A.A. was to convince the alcoholic's family and the public that the true alcoholic was a 'desperately sick man' to be helped rather than to be scorned and abandoned."

### First Reaction

Impressions of a first meeting in A.A. were published in the *New York Herald-Tribune* July 1 in the form of a letter to the editor from a new member of the St. Petersburg, Fla., group. The opening and closing paragraphs of the letter as published in the *Herald-Tribune* follow:

"Attended a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous at 8 p.m. this date. Took no alcoholic drink during the day, nor the day previous.

"The meeting was entirely different from any I had ever been to. . . . There was no ranting and old-fashioned roaring against the liquor interests. In fact, alcoholic drinks were not advertised at all. Nothing was drastically highlighted or dogmatically propounded. Just a rather comfortable assurance that a very real human problem had been squarely faced and *is* being squarely solved on a day by day, time payment basis for solid investment toward health, wealth and happiness. Just a mutual agreement felt rather than spoken. A right about face from the road of self ruin to the far happier path of fraternal self-healing."

# Mail Call for All A.A.s at Home or Abroad

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

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

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

## Des Moines Anniversary

*From Des Moines, Iowa*

Members of the Des Moines group of Alcoholics Anonymous are at present devoting much time and thought to preparations for the third anniversary celebration of the group. Dates for the observance have been set as Saturday and Sunday, October 26 and 27.

The second anniversary, in October 1945, attracted nearly 500 members and friends of A.A., and the 1946 event is expected to exceed that attendance.

Present plans include the attendance of one of the men primarily responsible for the establishment of the Des Moines group in 1943. This man, at present a west coast newspaperman, will fly to Des Moines in order to be present.

Starting in 1942 with four or five men, the Des Moines group now has an active membership of approximately 160 and has been directly or indirectly involved in the launching of nearly all the more than 20 groups now active within the state.

The Des Moines group has also actively supported and encouraged the establishment in Des Moines of an Alcoholic Information Center which is statewide in its scope of activities.

Never content with past performances the group is collectively and individually pledged to a future program of spreading the work of A.A. in every way possible throughout Iowa.

A recent visitor to the Des Moines club was the chairman of the Board of Supervisors in another county. This man knew vaguely what the A.A. program contemplated and was interested in actual accomplishments of the group.

He spent two hours around the club asking pointed questions and, at the close of his visit, remarked:

"I am going home with this thought in mind. Anything that the A.A. group in my county asks for from the supervisors it can have. Any outfit that can take 10 or 20 or 100 economic liabilities in any given area and turn them into definite economic assets to the county certainly deserves the wholehearted support of every resident of the county. What can we do to help?"

The supervisor was further astounded when he was thankfully informed that A.A. neither solicits nor accepts financial or material aid from outside its own ranks.

"All we ask," he was told, "is that you and your fellow officials give us your moral support and, perhaps, refer to our membership such persons as you believe might be helped to straighten out their lives by adherence to our program."

This is offered as one small illustration of why A.A. is growing in Iowa and we Iowa A.A.'s believe that just as long as we keep A.A. in Iowa on such a basis we will continue to grow and the manifold benefits of A.A. will spread over Iowa in constantly increasing quantity and quality.—P.S.C.

## A Thank You

*From Binghamton, N. Y.*

May I please take a very small space in Mail Call to say a word for the Binghamton Group of A.A.?

This group just rescued me from self-destruction (alcoholic), and I want to say, thank you to each of them.

They may be a small group but they are not small in works. I have seen in a little over a month plenty of action out of this group and I think they will carry the God work of A.A. far.—E.J.W.

## Gratitude in A.A.

*From Walla Walla, Wash.*

In our striving for a new way of life in the A.A. program we reap rewards both material and spiritual; and if we fail to express our gratitude for these "things that have been added unto us" we will be falling short of our A.A. purpose: life is giving as well as receiving.

When we are the recipients of good we should be grateful enough for these new bounties to acknowledge to others, and to the source of good itself, our humble thanks. Good will not continue to shower itself upon an ingrate any more than it will shun one who sincerely and humbly acknowledges it. We take most things too much for granted. We don't appreciate our good health until we get sick, nor our shelter until we are out in the storm, nor our freedom until we are locked up in jail. We consider all good things our "rights."

We cannot expect to receive a continued flow of good into our lives unless we keep the channel open. Those who share and give will receive more to share and pass along. The most gratifying joys are the ones not measured in dollars and cents; it costs us nothing to give of ourselves and we are rewarded by lasting bonds of fellowship. These things we can share but at the

same time retain in our lives. The more we give the more we will have. We cannot both give away and retain material wealth.

Vash Young said in his book, *A Fortune to Share*, "Let's not be go-getters, let's be go-givers." Love is reflected in love. The same is true of hate. Let's be grateful for health, sunshine, friendship, tolerance and for an opportunity to do good. If we ask for more and more good, and are not grateful for the good we already have, does that make sense? We can be grateful for a bus token to get us downtown even though we are otherwise broke, out of work and near the end of material resources. Suppose we had to walk after a job in addition to other misfortune?

Grateful persons are better liked than their opposites; even an ingrate would rather have a grateful person around than another groner. More grateful persons remain sober than an other kind. Because they are grateful is one big reason they remain sober, perhaps.—I.K.B.

## Moral Inventory Chart

*From Manhattan*

That moral inventory chart in the June issue was a honey. Mark W's accompanying remarks were as fine and effective as the chart itself. he or you reprinted the chart, the remarks could go well on the back. I think the two together make a swell exposition of A.A. fundamentals. To my own copy I added after the Asset, "Love—willingness to sacrifice. That's how I checked myself on whether, when I so profess, I really do love some one or some cause. Also, at the end, to the list of Assets I added, "Altruism—get outside and above yourself. For me that is the secret and the content of all 12 Steps, even the moral inventory. I find myself sitting across the room examining that always-suspect—myself.—Bill Mc.

## The 4th and 10th Steps

*From Linda Vista, Calif.*

I have received so much benefit out of the 12 Steps as Specification for my New Home that I would like to pass on to others the way I 4th and 10th Steps work in them.

I used the 4th Step to detect the flaws and faults that were in the existing structure I find when I came into A.A., or rather I should say when A.A. came and got me, because that is what happened that night when a couple strangers walked into a dark, rotten and decaying structure and brought with them a ray of light that has been my salvation since.

*(Continued on Page, 12)*

## What Are the Enemies of Peace of Mind?

(Continued from Page 1)

him or his family. So here again, we had no "peace of mind."

**SELFISHNESS** is enemy No. 4 of "peace of mind." Looking back, how many times have the children gone to bed without milk, simply because the alcoholic needed the last 50 cents in the house for a half pint of "rot gut?" How many times have the lights been cut off, the gas cut off, credit at the grocery discontinued, and many other necessities of life been denied our families, because of that unquenchable thirst of selfishness? In short, every alcoholic, at some time during his drinking career has gone through this nightmare, and could any one mean to say that we could have "peace of mind" under these conditions?

There are many more enemies of "peace of mind", but these four seem to be the outstanding. Some readers might want to change their arrangement, but regardless of arrangement, we must agree, they are all important enemies of "peace of mind": 1. **LYING**: 2. **RESENTMENT**: 3. **INTOLERANCE**: 4. **SELFISHNESS**.

Perhaps as a new-member of A.A. you may ask, "What do the enemies of 'peace of mind' have to do with my sobriety? After all, the only thing I am interested in right now is sobriety,"

This is a very natural, and very good question, and helps firmly to establish the fact, even more solidly, that you are definitely an alcoholic! . . . Without "peace of mind" we will not now, and never experience continued sobriety. We will not now, and never experience "peace of mind" until we start getting rid of the enemies of "peace of mind."

How are we to eradicate these enemies?

**TRUTH.** Let us substitute truth for lying. This is a lethal weapon against our enemy No. 1, and truth is the first step in obtaining, and retaining "peace of mind." Now we are able to face our fellow-man, our neighbor, our friend, our loved ones, with an open heart and mind. We have nothing to cover up, or hide, behind the enemy of "peace of mind" any longer. We are free once more, and have also gained in self-respect and self-confidence, because now we are on the first step to genuine "peace of mind."

**LOVE, RESPECT, PRIDE** (in the success of others). These we must substitute for resentment. America is the land of the free and remember, our neighbor is privileged to be a church-goer, a prohibitioner, or anything else he desires, because he is to be respected. An expression of pride at the successes of our superiors, or associates, will always reflect most favorably upon the expressor. How many times have we held resentment for the ones we

love the most? But that was because they didn't understand our illness and were constantly attempting to make us quit drinking.

Do you want to see the wife brighten up, and bend over backward to do things for you? Then substitute love for that resentment. The very small expression of appreciation toward a loved one will change a clouded picture to one of sunshine and brightness. Just a word of praise makes the little wife feel a whole lot more like doing the very things she always has, and always will do for us. This game of substituting love for resentment works both ways, girls, so let's not have it a one sided affair. Remember, the old man likes to hear words of praise and encouragement, too. And now we have taken our second step toward "peace of mind".

**TOLERANCE.** We shall substitute this for intolerance. Courtesy, kindness, and helpfulness toward others. The small irritations which once caused us to be intolerant are merely problems of the other fellow. We may be able to help him by exercising patience and tolerance. In so doing we are building better and stronger foundations for our own character thus making the ease with which we maintain our sobriety, a pillar of strength in our very lives. At this point, being tolerant does not mean that we turn into spineless, wishy-washy jelly fish. We must season tolerance with a fixed determination of firmness. Here is a very fine line which must be guarded against crossing because a fixed determination of firmness unseasoned with tolerance can surely back-fire into critical narrow-mindedness. The success of your tolerance in obtaining, and maintaining "peace of mind" is a big factor in the maintaining of sobriety.

**UNSELFISHNESS.** Here substituted for selfishness, which involves first the practice of giving, and doing for others: your fellow man, your friends, neighbors and family. It is even possible to experience a spiritual awakening, mentioned in our A.A. 12 steps, in the practice of unselfishness, because you will recall that, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." And now that we are living in a new world of truth, love, tolerance, and unselfishness, we find it quite pleasant to be able to meet each new day, and the problems it presents, because we have a new and better understanding of normal life and a sane and sober capability to cope with any and all conditions that arise.

There is only one road to joy, happiness, success, prosperity, and "peace of mind" (for the alcoholic) and that is sobriety. If you

really want sobriety more than anything else in this world, you can have it and it doesn't cost you one cent. Alcoholics Anonymous stands ready and willing to teach you, and guide you along this road to joy, happiness, success, prosperity, and "peace of mind".—*Don G., Jacksonville, Fla.*

## What 'Earn' Means

(Continued from Page 2)

off with our obnoxious escapades. We "merit and deserve" because we have approached humility. We have asked for spiritual guidance and help in arresting the desire to destroy ourselves as a whole or in part. We "merit and deserve" because as "by labor and service" we have undertaken to help others. We have suffered them to come to us in pain and have tried to take this pain and replace it with sobriety, joy of living, compassion and tolerance for others both within and outside our group. And in this connection let me say that to any one who each day can find a kind word for a fellow man and if the opportunity affords, a kindly deed or helping hand, I think should go the badge of fellowship. He has permitted the teachings of A.A. to penetrate his entire day by day life. May God bless him for his complete reception of those splendid principles originally set down, by those gifted persons, for themselves and for the rest of us who wanted to run away from all that is good.

To "merit and deserve as by labor or service," "that state or quality of being distinguishable or distinct," and in the category of A.A., is something to consider as an achievement. It behooves us to continue to merit and deserve so that we may daily earn this distinction.

Gone and buried are the dead snakes of yesterday. At hand is a normal and happy way of living. We shall remember the burial ceremonies only as a protection against recurrence and to continue being useful to family, friends, community and country.

Let us rejoice in our present status as normal, thinking, unselfish people. Let us rejoice in our desire and our ability to serve. Let us be determined to continue in this status, come what may. Let us dedicate the time remaining to us to service. Let us do whatever we are doing in such a way that no one with no more skill can do a better job.

This altitude towards the philosophy of living has taken me over ten months to acquire. No one could inject it—it had to be acquired from within. I am still ashamed that I had to kill the snakes that are now dead, but I am proud and happy that I did kill them.

From whence did this conviction, this altitude, this philosophy come? Your guess is as good as mine, but it probably came from whence most good things come.—*G.W.H., Sioux City, Iowa.*

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

Five years ago, two Oklahoma City alcoholics, unknown to each other, wrote to the Central Office in New York City asking for information. The office put them in touch with each other. Today, the Oklahoma City Group has approximately 250 members. It also has a new home, seating capacity 400. Two adjoining lots have been bought with the idea of later on building a big auditorium.

\* \* \*

Every Sunday five Montpelier, Vt., A.A.s visit alcoholic patients in the state hospital at Waterbury. The visiting group is composed of a chairman and four members. For each succeeding visit one member drops out and another takes his place, until every member of the Montpelier Group has made four visits. . . . The Glen Ridge, N. J., Group was founded April 1, 1946. It has grown to a membership of 24. They meet once a week in each others' homes. . . . The Canton, Ohio, Ladies' Group, which held its first meeting two months ago, is steadily acquiring new members. . . . Since its inception in January of this year, the Fresno, Calif., Group has grown to 15 members.

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The one-man "group," in McLean, Tex., reports that a number of A.A.s from Amarillo came to McLean to assist him in holding the first open meeting in that town. . . . San Francisco A.A.s are now so numerous that they have to rent Druids' Hall for central meetings. A picnic in July, a fish fry this month, and a "Days of '49" party in September are highlights of their social activities during the summer. . . . A.A.s of the Washington State Penitentiary Group (Walla Walla) are setting up a small library of their own. . . . Three California judges spoke at a meeting of the Los Angeles Group which was attended by about 400 people. They are Justice Thomas P. White, California Court of Appeals; Superior Court Judge John Gee Clark, and Municipal Judge Robert Clifton.

\* \* \*

Three A.A.s from Chicago and one from South Bend attended a meeting of the A.A.s in the Indiana State Prison in Michigan City. . . . The Nashville, Tenn., Group has recently opened club rooms at 308½ Fifth Ave. North, in the heart of the business section. They are open daily until midnight.

\* \* \*

After driving to A.A. meetings in January, 1944, in Oklahoma City, a resident of Tulsa decided to see if there were not enough Tulsans who would like to give the program a whirl. In May, 1944, he and two other alcoholics met. That

was the first session of the Tulsa A.A. Group, which celebrated its *second anniversary* in its own club rooms at 114½ North Denver Ave. this year. During the first year, the membership stood at 33, compared to the 97 men and women on the rolls today. . . . the noted Philadelphia neuro-psychiatrist, Dr. C. Nelson Davis, was guest speaker at a meeting of the Lehigh Valley, Pa., Group, which maintains club rooms in Allentown. . . . the newly organized Bronxville, N. Y. A.A.s held their first open meeting in the Bronxville Public Library.

\* \* \*

The group at Hays, Kansas, now numbers 28 active members, which is encouraging growth for a comparatively short time, especially in a small community. . . . The Sioux City, Iowa, Group now has more than 100 members.

\* \* \*

Down in Monterrey, Mexico, a Group of 25 has resulted from correspondence (in Spanish) with a Spanish-speaking A.A. in Cleveland. The

## NEW GROUPS

CALIFORNIA—Altadena, Balboa Island, Long Beach (Signal Hill Family Group) and San Jose.

CONNECTICUT—Westport.

FLORIDA—Ft. Myers.

IOWA—Boone.

KENTUCKY—Frankfort.

LOUISIANA—Baton Rouge (Capital Area Group).

MAINE—Newport and Saco Biddeford.

MICHIGAN—Grand Rapids (Mid-Week Group).

MINNESOTA—Faribault.

MISSOURI—Mexico and Poplar Bluff.

NEVADA—Reno.

NEW JERSEY—Atlantic City, Livingston, Princeton, Rutherford and Union City.

NEW YORK—Bath, Penn Yan, South Bronx and South Suffolk.

NORTH DAKOTA—Cando, Fargo, Grand Forks and Kenmare.

OHIO—Cleveland (West Side Morning) and Urbana.

OKLAHOMA—Alva and Atleue.

OREGON—Salem.

PENNSYLVANIA—Pottstown.

TEXAS—Taylor.

VIRGINIA—Madison Heights.

WEST VIRGINIA—Union.

WASHINGTON—Vancouver.

CANADA—London, Ontario, and Woodstock, Ontario.

Group began a little over a year ago when a woman in Monterrey wrote the Cleveland downtown office asking for help for her husband. . . . Outdoor eating is high on the popularity list in the Cleveland area. Groups holding annual picnics or breakfasts include Canton, Massillon, Borton, and Euclid-Wade. The last one celebrated its *fourth anniversary* in late July. . . . the Tulare, Calif., Group is now three months old, having started in May with the help of members from the Los Angeles Central Sunday Night Group. Tulare A.A.s occasionally hold meetings with the members working in Giant Forest, Sequoia National Park.

\* \* \*

On station WFIL a member of the Philadelphia Group recently outlined A.A. on a regular variety show called "This Week in Philadelphia." . . . the Group in Ann Arbor, Mich., is one of many cooperating with theaters and newspapers during the showing of the March of Time feature, "Problem Drinkers," the first public film record of A.A. work. Stories in Ann Arbor newspapers about the movie refer interested readers to the local Group for further information and help. . . . Incidentally, Westbrook Van Voorhis, the "voice" in MOT films, recently spoke about "Problem Drinkers" to the Cleveland Advertising Club.

\* \* \*

A three-member team of Palo Alto, Calif., A.A.s recently explained the 12 Steps at their First Methodist Church. Other Groups that have furnished speakers for non-alcoholic meetings lately include those in Westport and Bridgeport, Conn.; Scotch Plains, N. J.; Hanover, Pa.; Columbia, S. C.; and Eau Claire, Wis.

\* \* \*

The Monroe County (Rochester, N. Y.) Group held a forum on the part played by the wife in the rehabilitation of an alcoholic husband. These A.A.s report a 50% increase in membership over a period of a few weeks. . . . Six founders of the New Rochelle Group spoke at their *second anniversary* meeting, which was attended by A.A.s from White Plains, Mt. Vernon, Peekskill, Yonkers, Mt. Kisco, and Bronxville. . . . Over 125 members from Kingston, Central Valley, New Paltz, Newburgh and New York City attended a dinner party in Croton-on-Hudson sponsored by Peekskill A.A.s.

\* \* \*

Doctors, clergymen, city officials and social workers were present at an "educational" open meeting conducted by the Mt. Vernon, N. Y., Group. . . . When the Twin City Group (Ben-ton Harbor-St. Joseph, Mich.) celebrated its *first*

(Continued on Page 12)

## Mail Call *(Continued from Page 9)*

The 10th Step I use to detect the cracks and weak spots as they show up in my daily life, so that this home I have started will not fall and destroy me with it.

A set of specifications is drawn up so that we can detect the flaws and faults in the structure we are trying to build. So we examine it to find not the good but the bad, knowing that if we remove the bad parts the good needs no attention and with the flaws out we have left only good.

When I'm called on to examine a structure, I'm an inspector, I look for the flaws. I don't set up a balance against the bad and decide that as long as some are over strength that they will take care of the weak members, but I have the weak parts of the structure removed so that an excessive strain thrown on the building will not come on a few weak spots and thus warp and destroy the building.

I am not trying to strike a balance or set up an inventory sheet to prove to someone that I have enough assets to justify a loan, but to clean out this house I live in and make a home of it. That is the danger in looking for assets instead of liabilities. We are apt to get so engrossed with the good, if any. Personally, when I took my inventory about all I had left to build on was a job and a fair amount of health. We cover up with point and putty the faults and flaws in our characters. But when we make a list of our liabilities they stand out in such bold relief that we have to start to remove them if we wish to attain complete physical and mental sobriety and we must have mental sobriety above all else.

Remember that A.A. deals only with mental sobriety. We can find physical sobriety any place

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or anywhere that we can go to have ourselves dehydrated or dealcoholized. Mental sobriety can be attained only by a complete purge of our flaws. This we can do if we are completely honest and look always to our God for guidance and help.

God who is the Master architect designed and specified a perfect structure and to have that it behooves us to remove and keep out the faults and flaws that develop if we dwell too much on the material side of life.

I have found out since becoming a member of A.A. that I live within myself. And that I can only be happy and make others happy if I become honest, patient, tolerant and humble.

Remember that a house is only a shelter from heat, cold and storms, but a home is a place where there is happiness, peace and contentment. That is the kind of a home I want and hope some day to have, but can have only if I remember that we are not and never can be perfect but must always strive for perfection.—*J.F.H.*

## News Circuit

*(Continued from Page 11)*

*anniversary* with a dinner in St. Joseph, 160 delegates attended from Kalamazoo, Elkhart, South Bend, Chicago, Mishawaka and LaPorte. This Group holds its weekly meetings over a Sunday breakfast and has planned a vigorous program for its second year. . . . Wilmington, Del., members heard an address by the Rev. Dr. J. Francis Tucker, pastor of St. Anthony's Church there, on a program which also included talks by two Philadelphia A.A.s.

\* \* \*

At the Staunton Veterans Home in Virginia, six A.A.s and two Staunton ministers spoke at a recent open meeting, attended by members from Waynesboro, West Augusta, Washington and Richmond. . . . An industrial personnel manager, Frank B. Taylor of St. Paul, Minn., addressed the St. Paul Group, he reported that alcoholism costs industry thousands of dollars annually in lost manpower. . . . Paterson, N. J., A.A.s conducted a meeting for the Newburgh Group recently, and heard the host group's report of continued growth in membership.

\* \* \*

Launching an expansion of their activity program, Norfolk, Va. A.A.s have started a series of open social meetings to be held weekly, in addition to the regular closed meeting each Tuesday night. . . . A family-style dinner served by wives of members is the weekly feature of meetings in Shawnee, Okla., where the Group now numbers over 35 regular members.

## THERAPY FOR DRUNKS WITH A FOLLOW-UP

The manager of a certain midwestern home for alcoholics, himself a "practicing A.A." asked a newspaperman friend to dream up an advertisement of his institution to be used in a medical journal and a circular letter describing the facilities, therapy, etc., to be sent to doctors throughout the state.

The newspaperman suggested the following caption for the ad, which seemed, under the circumstances, the most logical in the world:

"AT LAST—A THERAPY FOR ALCOHOLICS —WITH A FOLLOW-UP."

"You see, Mac," said the newspaperman, "that is what your Home has, which distinguishes it from the many "cure" and drying out places around the country—the "follow-up." The physically rehabilitated alcoholic is not pushed out your front door defenseless, to fend for himself in a still drinking world. He has developed connections terribly important to him, if, during the period of his physical purge, he has chosen to accept the help of the most successful movement of its kind. Yes sir, the thing you have to offer here is that condition—the place is infested with A.A.!"—*R.P.C., Indianapolis.*

## God Made Relatives, Too

*(Continued from Page 5)*

wife and/or mother, or even a daughter, her comings and goings affect other people. And she, even more than a man, needs the warmth of approval, interest, enthusiasm of those closest to her. Unshared interests do not contribute to a happy relationship or a harmonious household. The understanding of her folks can do much to cement a woman A.A. to her new activities and can certainly add to the quality of her sobriety. Surely, there is little serenity when a woman is trying to readjust her whole mode of living amidst surroundings that are cold, unresponsive and filled with misgiving, or even downright disapproval or tinged with ridicule. It would seem wise, therefore, to make a far more concerted effort with the relatives of women A.A.s than any other. A husband greeted, welcomed and treated as an important element in the picture may be an oblique kind of 12th Step work that can well forestall a future slip.

Isn't all of this collateral 12th Step work in its way—certainly, "practicing these principles in all our affairs?" In winning and helping a relative to our way of living, we make a fellow-member's road easier in the program—and we add another happy and enthusiastic propagand-spreader, which is aiding in educating the public in alcoholism, if nothing else.—*Grace O., Manhattan.*