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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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## 'Tis the Night Before Christmas - - -

"THIS is Christmas, fella! Just one won't hurt you."

Where have we heard that one before?

We've heard it in many places, many times—every Christmas, every New Year's, every holiday season. At the office party where all is hilarity. In the warmth of our good friend's home. From the doorway of the bar where the gang is gathering for a bit of libation on the way home.

Any holiday can be trying, and the Yuletide with its extended period of fun and frolic, starting before Christmas and carrying on through New Year's, can be the hardest.

Perhaps the most dangerous moment comes at the instant when our good friend is gently trying to persuade us, "Just one won't hurt you." He's proud we joined A.A. and stopped drinking. He thinks it's wonderful. But he doesn't quite understand. He can't see why "just one" during this gay and relaxed season will hurt us.

The Yuletide poses a choice—we can take the short view or the long view, the dim view or the bright view. We can be worried and miserable, or relaxed and happy. Or, to put it bluntly, we can get drunk or we can stay sober.

From the short view, the setup looks unfair—unfair to us. Look at everybody! They're all having a good time. They're gay and giddy, romping from one exciting party to another. Everybody but us. We've been discriminated against. The fates have been unjust. Life is cruel.

And so, for one week or 10 days, or however long the party season seems to go on, we can mope around with our chins bumping the floor, bemoaning our raw deal and oozing self-pity from all our pores. We can even wind up taking "just one."

'But let's consider the long view, just to see what it has to offer.

At the most, the Yuletide period runs two

weeks. How does that compare to the length of time that you have been in A.A. and sober—and you, and you, and me? How does it compare to the years ahead that all of us can go on in A.A., sober?

Two weeks isn't so long, especially when it's broken up into periods of 24 hours each. What's 24 hours compared to all we've gained so far and all that we can gain in the future? Just 24 hours is all that anyone needs to get through the whole Yuletide safely.

Eight of those 24 hours can be disposed of easily by taking the doctor's advice about sleeping. So that really leaves only 16 hours to worry about, at a time, and no one who knows anything about horse trading would trade 16 hours for a lifetime. Furthermore, a good share of those 16 hours can be filled with A.A. friends and A.A. talk and A.A. thought.

But time is not the only comparison that the long view brings into focus. Santa Claus, it has often been said, comes only once a year for most people.

Must we not admit that Santa Claus comes every day for us? Hasn't he been coming every day for however many days we have been sober, after all those years of being drunk, mentally or physically?

Old Kris Kringle, if we want to use that name for the moment, has been a regular caller. Furthermore, the choice of gifts we have been re-

ceiving shows pretty discriminating taste. What better gift, what more practical and at the same time more valuable gift, could one give an alcoholic than sobriety?

Not everyone subscribes to the theory sometimes expressed in the words, "I'm glad I'm an alcoholic." Some think that is straining it a bit, perhaps almost as much as if a bed-ridden patient proclaimed he was glad he had tuberculosis. But it's reasonable to assume that, having developed into an alcoholic, we are glad now that we found A.A. and sobriety, and glad for the knowledge and the viewpoint that we have gained in A.A.

This knowledge and the A.A. viewpoint combine to give us the opportunity to make a great deal more of Christmas than we ever could before. We already have learned through rough experience that it really is better to give than receive and that, in fact, only by giving do we receive. We have been forced to learn the real meaning of Christmas. To help ourselves, we have had to undertake to help others; to stay sober ourselves we have had to help others get sober.

Through no virtue or nobility of our own, but through a choice imposed on us by circumstance, we have learned the real meaning of Christmas, and its true spirit of giving, and of good will, and peace.

We have learned this day by day. The experience of A.A. has piled up the proof until what was once only fatuous sentiment for which we had little time, especially at Christmas, has become a vibrant, living truth. We know so by personal experience.

Christmas, then, brings us a warming reminder of all the good we have received and can now pass on to others, and that where we once had little to give, we now have much.—T.D.Y.

*Live and let live*

# EDITORIAL

## On the 1st Tradition

By Bill

*"Each member of Alcoholics Anonymous is but a small part of a great whole. A.A. must continue to live or most of us will surely die. Hence our common welfare comes first. But individual welfare follows close afterward"*

Our whole A.A. program is securely founded on the principle of humility—that is to say, perspective. Which implies, among other things, that we relate ourselves rightly to God and to our fellows; that we each see ourselves as we really are—"a small part of a great whole." Seeing our fellows thus, we shall enjoy group harmony. That is why A.A. Tradition can confidently state, "Our common welfare comes first."

"Does this mean," some will ask, "that in A.A. the individual doesn't count too much? Is he to be swallowed up, dominated by the group?"

No, it doesn't seem to work out that way. Perhaps there is no society on earth more solicitous of personal welfare, more careful to grant the individual the greatest possible liberty of belief and action. Alcoholics Anonymous has no "musts." Few A.A. groups impose penalties on anyone for non-conformity. We do suggest, but we don't discipline. Instead, compliance or non-compliance with any principle of A.A. is a matter for the conscience of the individual; he is the judge of his own conduct. Those words of old time, "Judge not," we observe most literally.

"But," some will argue, "if A.A. has no authority to govern its individual members or groups, how shall it ever be sure that the common welfare does come first? How is it possible to be governed without a government? If everyone can do as he pleases, how can you have aught but anarchy?"

The answer seems to be that we A.A.s cannot really do as we please, though there is no constituted human authority to restrain us. Actually, our common welfare is protected by powerful safeguards. The moment any action seriously threatens the common welfare, group opinion mobilizes to remind us; our conscience begins to complain. If one persists, he may become so disturbed as to get drunk; alcohol gives him a beating. Group opinion shows him that he is off the beam, his own conscience tells him that he is dead wrong, and, if he goes too far, Barleycorn brings him real conviction.

So it is we learn that in matters deeply affecting the group as a whole, "our common welfare comes first." Rebellion ceases and cooperation begins because it must; we have disciplined ourselves.

Eventually, of course, we cooperate because we really wish to; we see that without substantial unity there can be no A.A., and that without A.A. there can be little lasting recovery for anyone. We gladly set aside personal ambitions whenever these might harm A.A. We humbly confess that we are but "a small part of a great whole."

*(All of the editorials by Bill covering the 12 Points of Tradition appear in the new 48-page Tradition pamphlet, along with the 12 Points themselves. Copies of the new pamphlet were distributed free during November by the Alcoholic Foundation through the group secretaries. Extra copies may be had at 10 cents each by addressing requests to: Alcoholic Foundation, P.O. Box 459, Grand Central Annex, New York 17, N. Y.)*

## Alcoholics Anonymous

*Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism.*

*The only requirement for membership is an honest desire to stop drinking. A.A. has no dues or fees. It is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy, and neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to stay sober and to help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.*

*The A.A. Program of Recovery is incorporated in The 12 Steps. The A.A. book of experience, Alcoholics Anonymous, and other literature, including The 12 Points of Tradition, are available through any group or the Central Office, P.O. Box 459, Grand Central Annex, New York 17, N. Y.*

## Not a Little Prayer

From Dublin, Ireland

In this group we base our sobriety and our happiness in sobriety—in the words of an American priest—on an actual day-to-day observance of two ancient commandments: "Honor God;" "Love thy neighbor as thyself."

"Honor God."—perhaps we should really change the emphasis on these words and say "Honor God." We hear some people say "Ho! I find religion a great help in keeping dry. I say a little prayer in the morning to keep me safe, and another little one at night when I've got through the day."

"I say a little prayer in the morning . . ." Suppose a good job was going in your line, suppose your livelihood depended on it—would you be content just to write in "Please give me that job; I want it very badly"? Wouldn't you try to show that you were qualified, loyal, trustworthy? That you were worth the job? Would you really think that the equivalent of "a little prayer in the morning" would get you the job?

"And I say another little one at night . . ." Just as you're falling off to sleep? Or like the little girl's "God Bless Mummy and Daddy and make me a good girl and please Mummy may I have a chocolate"?

We don't expect you to spend your lives in prayers and meditation. But at the end of each day, each week, each month, you ought to, you surely must realize that something rather wonderful's been done for you. You've been got through without a drink . . . and you failed in that yourself so long. You can give back something else than lip service. You can show your gratitude in many ways—speaking at meetings, finding out other alcoholics who need help. And you can at least by your continued abstinence and the example that you set give living daily proof to all you know that there is something real and vital in A.A. for every man and woman alcoholic in the world.—S.M.

# Reference Library—ON THE INDUSTRIAL ASPECT

*(Following is a letter from G. H. Gehrmann, M. D., the medical director of the duPont Company, written in answer to an inquiry regarding the progress of A.A. work in the company and, with his permission, turned over to The A.A. Grapevine by an A.A. member who has been spearheading the work dealing with alcoholism among duPont employees.)*

I could write a good sized book on our experiences with the alcoholic and the A.A. in the duPont Company but unfortunately I have not the time to do it. Therefore, I will briefly try to give you some of the high spots of our experiences.

I would like to preface anything that I might have to say with the statement that the success of A.A. in the duPont Company has been phenomenal and has even exceeded my own expectations and I was the one who introduced it into our organization.

I have been with the duPont Company over 30 years in a medical capacity and although we have no more alcoholics in the duPont Company than any other company, alcoholism had been, up to the time of introduction of A.A., a problem with us. We have had experience in 28 states. Naturally experience in 28 states would involve a large number of doctors, sanitoriums, methods of cure and individual problems. Much money was spent and I can definitely assure you that the results were highly unsatisfactory to say the least and putting it on a mathematical basis, I would say that zero would represent the end result.

Somewhat over four years ago I became interested, in A.A., not because alcoholism was a problem to me as far as I myself was concerned but because of the problem to the company. I soon realized that here was an organization that really understood the problem and could handle it 98 per cent and probably 100 per cent better than I could and also could handle it better and more successfully on the same percentage basis than any other professional group in the country. I am not a psychiatrist but I have a good fundamental basis of psychiatry and I came to the realization that the only person who could handle one alcoholic was another who had been through the same experience and furthermore the alcoholic was not interested in anything I had to say because he did not recognize me as an individual who understood his problem.

Three and a half years ago I took David M. on my staff here in the Wilmington office. At that time we had no branch of A.A. in Wilmington. Through his efforts there was started a Wilmington Branch which now numbers about 150. About 30 per cent of this 150 are duPont employees and with few exceptions they are valuable employees who have been rehabilitated and are now doing at least a 75 per cent



better job than they were during the period while they were alcoholics. They all have a new outlook on life. They are all happier in their business life, their home life and their social life and insofar as I am concerned, I believe they represent as fine a group of citizens as one could hope to find anywhere and furthermore they are better Christians than a large percentage of people that I know who are regular church members.

You ask for specific information on the subject of absenteeism, loss of personnel, and accidents, due to excessive drinking. I cannot give you factual information on these subjects nor do I think any organization can. There is undoubtedly a great deal of absenteeism due to alcohol but on the company records it does not appear as alcoholism. I am sure that it is quite obvious to you that employees who do not report for work because of alcoholism do not notify their employer that they are out because of drunkenness. They notify their employer that they are out because of illness and in most instances the family physician substantiates the illness without going in to detail as to what the illness is or if he does send in a report it is a disguised diagnosis. I might also point out to you, and you may question the truth of this, but I can substantiate it, that the average practitioner fails to recognize al-

coholism until it has reached the advanced stages.

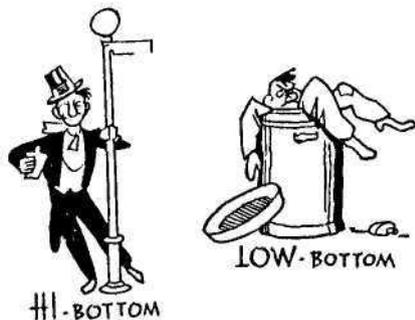
Accidents occur in industry but in any well organized industry with a good safety program, there are not too many. Just how many do occur which are due to alcoholism, it is impossible, I believe, for anyone to say. An employee reports for duty and if he is staggering drunk, he is held up at the gate and sent back home. There are, however, many partially under the influence of alcohol who come to work and nobody knows it. Accidents occur in this group and naturally all attention is focused on the accident and unless the employee is obviously drunk, no attention is centered on his alcoholism at the time. I make this statement based upon actual experience of over 30 years in industry and I do not believe it is ever going to be practical to answer the accident or absentee question.

The loss of personnel is also subject to disguise in the records. Many an employee is let out because of alcoholism and so far as his record is concerned, the reason for discontinuance is usually put down as "unsatisfactory services." Employers in general refuse to put down the truth. In all probability the reasoning behind this sort of record is that John Doe is really a capable man. We had all we can take because of his alcoholism and maybe if we fire him and he has to go somewhere else, he will straighten out and we would not like it to show on the record why we fired him because it might interfere with his future progress.

These are the few brief thoughts which I am transmitting to you. In summing up I would say that in my opinion, based upon almost four years of experience with A.A. and many years of experience without it, that any industry or organization that does not avail itself of the services of A.A. is missing the only means of rehabilitating the alcoholic.

P. S.

David M.'s duties with the duPont Company are purely A.A. He started a branch in Wilmington. He has started branches in other plant locations. He still has a big field ahead of him and years of work as we look forward to the time when we will have "active" branches at every location. I have several members of my staff who are members of A.A. and they were members before I hired them. I am not at all concerned nor do I waste any time worrying about their future with alcoholism as I am reasonably certain that I will have no trouble with them. If I were to concern myself and worry about any of my staff, I would worry about those who have not yet suffered alcoholism and found relief in A.A.



Gather around, kiddies, and let your Bottoms Up editor tell you about the progress of the "Best Hiding Place" contest. Either this issue or the next will wind it up. You have been swell to send us so many interesting and ingenious stories and we want to take this opportunity of thanking you. How about sending us other funny experiences before or after you joined A.A.? We would dearly love to publish them here.

A Long Island, N. Y., member—an architect—sent us a drawing of an elaborate open fire place which he designed for his borne during his drinking days. Included is a secret hiding place for the bottle! He constructed a special niche over the damper which was *never* discovered.

Saddest story of the month comes from a Midland, Mich., member who wrote: "I was staying temporarily with relatives. In an attempt to keep them from knowing that I drank much at home, I kept my bottle hidden in the basement in a stored rolled-up rug. It made a good hiding place as it was convenient to the work shop, furnace, lavatory, etc.

"I returned home one evening really needing a drink and looking forward to 'fixing the furnace.' It was more than dismay and disappointment—rather, it was like a pin pricking a balloon—when I discovered that the rug (bottle and all) had been sold and moved that day."

R.A.T.W. of Mt. Pleasant, Mich., sent us a sketch of a "vicious Dalmatian dog" and dog house. Brother R.A.T.W. hid his bottle in the dog house straw! The dog acted as guardian. Virginia H., of the Fairmont, W. Va., Group, hid her whiskey in the family vinegar bottle. In plain sight of everyone, it was never discovered.

Peter H. R., of the Minneapolis Group, tells of a fellow patient at a rest home who "brought a quart of whiskey in the ward with him; poured it into the chandelier. Whenever he needed a

drink he would loosen a screw on the bottom of the chandelier."

One of the general office secretaries sent us the following letter, received last month at the Alcoholic Foundation. Here it is: "I have read that you can do something to prevent Alcoholics Anonymous. If you can do something about this, please let me hear from you at once."

Charles E. G., of the Detroit Group, tells of a telephone call that came into the A.A. clubhouse. A woman, obviously on the drinky side, demanded that someone come to her rescue immediately. She explained: "I'm all right. But I have two little dogs here that need to go out for a walk. I'm scared to go out. Send someone over to walk my dogs *now*." Charlie tried to find a "dog walking specialist" in the clubhouse but reports that none was available.

Most unusual A.A. Group to come to our attention is a five-member affair in a southern state. All five members are brothers! One is the secretary. The group is duly listed with the Foundation.

## SAVINGS (!) OFFERED TO SUBSCRIBERS

Just, in case you haven't heard:

*The A.A. Grapevine* has two new subscription rates, one of which saves the individual subscriber a little, while the other offers a way for the groups to net a little from bulk orders.

The regular subscription, as you know, is \$2.50 per year. If you subscribe two years running, as of course we hope you will, you can now get a two-year subscription for \$4.50. Maybe that's only a small saving in these inflated days but it is a saving.

Groups can net five cents per copy from the sale of *The A.A. Grapevine* if they order 10 or more copies at a time. By ordering 10 or more, they can get this monthly for 20 cents per copy. Groups must sell it to individuals for the regular price of 25 cents per copy. Naturally, *The A.A. Grapevine* should never be sold to individuals for less than the printed price. And that nets each group five cents per copy for the coffee till.



# A WIFE LEARNS HOW BEST TO REALLY HELP

From San Francisco

It was after one—the last one—of our numerous separations. I was waiting, with a combination of the usual fervent hope and skepticism, for my husband's usual repentant promises.

And then, "You've been no help to me!" he said.

The words were a dash of cold water on me. I had been no help? Why, I had not only helped, I had practically carried the whole burden—paid the bills, the rent, the debts, told lies, covered up—every wife of an alcoholic knows the story. And that was the thanks I got!

But my husband was absolutely right. I had been no help to him. The shock brought me up short and I began to take stock, and that point marks the beginning of my regeneration as a person—to which all else is incidental.

Some of the mistakes I had been making may be of interest to others. (All thinking wives will recognize them.) I had rather fancied myself as a good wife. I was even pointed out as an example of a good wife. I was familiar with the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*, had attended meetings and thought I understood the 12 Steps. But I understood them in this way, that I placed all the emphasis on my husband's alcoholism, thinking that he was the problem in my life. My holier-than-thou altitude must indeed have been trying.

Soon, I began to understand that I was my own problem, that I fairly swarmed with faults and deficiencies, prejudices, notions, neuroses, crooked thinking, cockeyed emotions, rampaging interior conflicts, feelings of fear and insecurity and doubt and suspicion. And I learned that application of the 12 Steps would begin to change my personality so that I would be a better person, a happier person, a more mature person. No fault can stand up against persistent

application of the 12 Steps. As our thoughts change, our actions change. Remember, it's no good trying to change our actions without first changing our thoughts. With the change in thoughts and actions there comes a change in personality, and finally in consciousness, so that what was deliberate effort at first becomes a continuous and unchanging attitude of being.

Another mistake:—I had felt responsible for my husband, for his drinking and his sobriety, for his whole life. I practically tried to keep him in diapers. This is a very common form of wifely possessiveness, under which any man will chafe at the bit. I had to learn to understand that I am responsible only for my own thoughts and actions. To arrogate to myself more is sheer conceit. In order to grow out of that mistaken thinking I had to learn to be detached, to be non-attached. I had supposed that detachment meant indifference—a prevalent mistake. It means that I keep my foolish little emotions out of the cog wheels of relationship and circumstance. It means that I gain, step by step, more and more perspective, so that instead of seeing in a distorted fashion a tiny section of the picture I see more of the whole picture with the clear vision of serene and balanced emotions.

Another mistake:—I had felt very noble about being the family mainstay. My attitude of "Look at poor me and look at that heel!" was certainly not conducive to a happy marriage. I learned that the gift without the giver is indeed bare. I learned that the gift *with* the giver is riches and joy to overflowing.

Another mistake:—I thought that happiness meant financial security and total lack of troubles. In other words, I wanted my life to drift along effortlessly on a rosy cloud, with God in fairly constant attendance, and I was raising

particular hell because it didn't. I learned, instead, that happiness comes with the peace of mind that follows acceptance of growing and maturing as the greatest adventure of life; I learned that happiness comes with serenity that can rise above any situation or circumstance. I learned that happiness lies entirely within myself, in my own integrity and peace of mind, and in my own expansion of awareness. And I learned that only with detachment from selfish and possessive emotions can love, so-called, become real love. To be able to love, unselfishly, understandingly, undemanding and expecting no return, increasing in depth and scope as our horizons widen, no matter what the circumstance, is a mark of maturity.

Love holds infinitely more for me than it did before, when it was bounded by my limited concepts and confined within the narrow horizons of my selfish little being. Love carries on, joyously. Love understands. Love is peace of mind. Love is compassion. Love loves! Love transcends the merely human husband-wife relationship and becomes an expression of divine love, divine strength.

As wives, some of us have a continuing alcoholic problem. Some alcoholics are unable yet to accept or practice the 12 Steps, unable to let the miracle of regeneration come forth under the guidance and care of God. But the wife who grows as she no longer tries to "help" by her old blundering methods, learns to stand by during this time and help in the only way possible, by understanding and loving. She learns that the only help one human being can give another is of divine origin, flowing through her increasingly as she grows in love and peace of mind.

I have caught a glimpse of this vision, like a frog squinting up at a star from the bottom of a well. And I shall spend the rest of my life climbing up toward that vision.—*Ruth G.*



# THE 'BORDER BOYS' WANT IN!

from Bristol, Tennessee

So much emphasis is placed on extreme alcoholism, that the ordinary drunk is almost overlooked. There are thousands who have never had D. T.s, never been in jail, or hospitalized, never lost their wives or their jobs, but who, like myself, are very definitely allergic to alcohol, and are therefore alcoholics. We are very generally told that we may be border cases, and can come in if we like, but nobody seems to think it matters much. Let us have a look at these "border boys."

My complaint is that most A.A. literature overlooks this group. My own case is a very clear example. I only drank when my work permitted it. I never liked to drink alone, but did so on rare occasions of necessity. As I drank, my wife and children suffered the pains of death through mental anguish, but never through physical violence. I believe they found me more generous while drinking than otherwise. But I was an imbecile at least once out of every three times I touched the stuff; and very soon I would become sick unto death—violently sick. I had to drink from the faucet because I couldn't hold a glass; plain drinking water wouldn't stay on my stomach, and of course food was out of the question. For a day or two the second, third, or fourth drink would stay down and straighten this out, but then a little later on no drink would stay down in any form. I couldn't write my name, and on occasions I actually couldn't get out of bed. But I had picked a time when I could stay in bed—hence no loss of job. Now, no living mortal can tell me that I am not an alcoholic, in the light of the pain, suffering, remorse, and humiliation I have suffered. Yet much of the literature I read indicates that inasmuch as I was able to abstain for long and continued periods of time; and because on some occasions I didn't get hurt (I could pick the time), and since I did not become violent, have D. T.s, get in jail, lose my wife, or abuse my children, and especially since I was able to continue to support my family, I may only have some alcoholic tendency. This is utter and complete folly.

Now that A.A. has taught me to be honest with myself, I have to admit that under no circumstances can I use alcohol in any form without risk of the sort of sickness I have described. I have a number of friends whom I have been unable to interest in A.A. because the pamphlets, literature, etc., I am able to furnish them, convince them that they are doing at least reasonably well, when the plain truth is they are suffering as I suffered, and brother, that's plenty. I know that without God's help through A.A.

there would have been no way whereby I could have enjoyed life without an occasional binge. The occasions would have grown closer as time wore on, and I too would have lost my job, my family, and everything worthwhile, simply because I was not to learn that I was an alcoholic until I reached that bitter end. Why then make the rules of entry so rigid? I know they are not literally rigid, but why not say that an alcoholic is any person adversely affected by the use of alcohol? If the use of alcohol makes you sick and continues to makes you sick, surely that, in and of itself, ought to be plenty of proof. You don't have to wallow in poison ivy to be allergic to the vine, and you don't have to get in the gutter to be an alcoholic.

Just one more word to alcoholics in the gutter: Please move over. The Border Boys are comin', for they've got to prove a point!—H.H.H.

## A.A. Digest—Excerpts

*The Brighter Side*, Waterloo, Iowa—"This is what we tell beginners; A.A. is served cafeteria style—you may and should help yourself liberally to everything on the menu. You will make some very close new friends. Numerous opportunities for recreation, social activities and sincere advice from those who have been through the mill and won, are offered you. but—you must reach for all parts of this program and be anxious to learn and have an open mind on all suggestions, steps and phases. You must look for good things rather than unfavorable factors. You must make your own decision and complete surrender. You must carry out this program primarily for yourself and your own future. If your decision is made to please someone else alone, usually, the program will not succeed."

*The A.A. Beacon*, Victoria, B.C., Canada—"We may take it for granted that one who habitually flies to the narcosis of alcohol when faced by problems he feels are unbearable will also be reluctant to face those problems when the escape is no longer available and that he will struggle with all his might and main to avoid the pain of frankly facing his difficulties."

*Central Bulletin*, Cleveland, Ohio—"Every member of this fellowship has his or her own idea of the Greater Power. Whatever their conception, however, it is simple and workable. This is because the members of Alcoholics Anonymous live with that Power every hour of the

## New A.A. Booklet Mailed

An important new pamphlet, *A.A. Tradition*, by Bill W., already has been mailed to the group secretaries. Enough copies have been sent to enable every member to obtain one free of charge. Be sure to ask your secretary for a copy.

The pamphlet, a 48-page booklet, contains a foreword by Bill; the 12 Points of Tradition to assure A.A.'s future; discussions on anonymity, money, hospitalization, clubs, incorporation, the A.A. General Service Center and other reprints from *The A.A. Grapevine*.

Although there is no charge for the first distribution of the booklet, additional copies may be obtained for 10 cents each by writing Works Publishing, Inc., P.O. Box 459, Grand Central Annex, New York 17, N. Y.

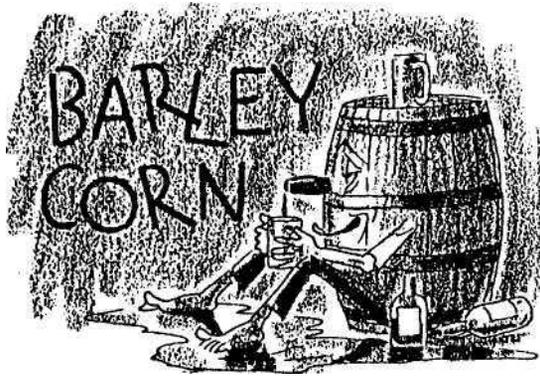
## from Group Publications

day. He is called upon at any time to keep them sober, to change their thinking and their character and to give them the power to help others."

*Twelve Stepper*, Omaha, Nebraska—"Isn't it easy for us, who think we have the program well in hand, to forget that only a short time ago we walked in a fog? Don't we, perhaps in word or action, tend to brand as hopeless ones who have difficulty? It may take up our time, rob us of sleep, cost a few dollars perhaps—but the knowledge that we are doing something that only an A.A. member has the power to do far overshadows the efforts expended."

*The Screwball*, Nacogdoches, Texas—"Add life to your years instead of years to your life."

*Alanews*, Dubuque, Iowa—"This brings up the point of just what is the responsibility of the A.A. group to the citizens in its community and to the alcoholics numbered in that citizenry. We do not believe that the group should operate as a missionary unit, either collectively or as individuals. We hardly have the time or the ability to ferret out all the alcoholics in a community; nor can we presume they would be willing to listen to us if we did. Nor yet can we sit back idly in the hope that anyone who needs our help will hear about us and come to us of his own accord. We can arrange to make our presence and our purposes known to the community. The public is interested and willing to learn."



All alcoholic is a person who takes a drink for a reason.

\* \* \*

From the patron medico of A.A., Dr. William D. Silkworth:

"Nothing is ever so bad that a drink won't make worse."

\* \* \*

As an example of the terrible effect liquor has on some people, there was the case of the Scotchman who thought he was getting one drink free everytime he bought one when all the time he was only seeing double.

\* \* \*

Kate S. at Midland, Mich., tells of a drinking friend and neighbor coming by late one evening after doing a considerable amount of imbibing to tell her: "Kate, I hear you've joined up with those A.A.s and I want you to know that I think you're too good a woman to be associating with a bunch of drunks. Hic."

\* \* \*

The Secretary of the San Francisco Group reports the following call:

Lady on phone: "Will you please help me with my husband? He's tearing up the house and throwing everything he can lay his hands on."

Secretary: "There's nothing we can do unless your husband wants help."

Lady: "Just a minute and I'll see what he says."

Husband on phone: "Sure, I want help. Send somebody out right away. She's hidden my wooden leg and I can't get out to get a drink."

### Stronger With Age

More than 320 Youngstown, Ohio, district A.A. members gathered at the Y.M.C.A., recently to wish themselves a happy seventh birthday and gird for another year of fighting alcoholism. Helping them celebrate were two visiting members, Mrs. M.D., a Cleveland business woman, and Dr. J. L. of Dover. The former, who once attempted suicide, said that whenever tempted at first she said a short prayer, got help "right now" and it worked 90 times the first month. The doctor stressed the 12 Steps with emphasis on the 10th.

# The Pleasures of Reading

*The Meeting of East and West* by F. S. C. Northrup (Macmillan, \$6)

At first blush this closely written 500-page book seems not to be one for the general reader but a work which requires for its understanding and critical appreciation a degree of learning and scholarship above the average. Such a limitation would be unfortunate if the central idea of the author's thesis is to receive the broad dissemination he probably intends. However, notwithstanding a terminology that is sometimes formidable and the introduction of concepts often abstruse, any interested reader of this volume will undoubtedly find much informative material presented with sufficient clarity and simplicity so that his store of knowledge of the subject matter will be enlarged. As to the conclusions and recommendations of the writer, many will receive ready acceptance, some will be rejected, upon others judgment will have to be reserved.

In this *Inquiry Concerning World Understanding*, attention is drawn to the fact that the world is full of conflicting ideologies. There is, of course, the opposition between the traditional democracies and communistic Russia. There are also the differences between the Jews and the Arabs in Palestine and the Mohammedans and the Hindus in India. The author stresses the conflict between the medieval Roman Catholic conception of moral and social values "grounded in naturalistic Aristotelian divine law" and "the modern Protestant democratic and pragmatic concept of an ecclesiastical and civil law which derives its authority solely from the humanistic convention of a majority of men." In the East, it is pointed out that the political institutions and religious observances inspired by Shintoism combat those which are the fruition of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism. And in Pan-America the traditional Latin-American ideals and values conflict with those of traditional Anglo-America.

Dr. Northrup (Professor of Philosophy in Yale University) has analyzed the problem and suggested a solution which "defines a more inclusive truly international cultural ideal which provides scientifically grounded intellectual and emotional foundations for a partial world sovereignty." This ideal "defines the criteria also for relating democracy and communism, Roman Catholic medieval and Protestant modern values and Occidental and Oriental institutions so that they support and sustain rather than combat and destroy each other." The solution offered involves a philosophy of culture and a philosophy of science. "Thus," the author claims, "the humanities as exhibited in the ideal culture and the natural sciences grounded in nature are essentially and intimately connected and reconciled."

The substantive part of the work consists of an exposition of ancient and modern science (especially physics and mathematics which seem to be the mother of philosophies) and the cultures, philosophies, religions, politics and economics of the major racial and nationalist groups with side excursions into their folklore and idiosyncracies. The analysis of the cultures of Europe and its American manifestations is pushed back behind Marx and Hegel, Hume and Locke, Descartes and Las Casas, St. Thomas and St. Augustine and even behind Aristotle to Plato (and Democritus) where in the vision of the "New Atlantis" in the *Dialogues of Plato* its roots are found. The meaning of Western civilization and the explanation of the revolutionary character of its evolution, in the opinion of the author, lies in its identification with a system of knowledge based upon inferences and scientifically formulated factors subject to change without notice, like a timetable, upon the discovery of new factual information.

Examination of the Eastern civilizations, ancient, modern and contemporary, takes the reader through Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Shintoism and the Western influences in India, China and Japan. The characteristic of Oriental civilization which differentiates it from Western civilization is the Orientals' concentration upon the nature of all things "in their emotional and esthetic, purely empirical immediacy" in contrast with the Occidentals' predilection for the rational, scientific and theoretical. "Thus, the basic philosophical problem of the East and West is the same. It is the problem of determining the relation between the esthetic and the theoretic components in things." If this problem can be solved the author believes that it will be the guiding principle in the achievement of the following, constituting the task of the contemporary world: (1) the relation of the East and West; (2) the similar merging of Latin and Anglo-Saxon cultures; (3) the mutual reinforcement of democratic and communistic values; and (4) the reconciliation of the true and valuable portions of the Western medieval and modern worlds. Through all of these special tasks is the more general one of harmonizing the sciences and the humanities.

As has been indicated, Dr. Northrup stakes everything upon the assumption of the existence of an "esthetic component" and "a theoretic component" in man, in nature and in the universe.

(Continued on Page 16)

## You Don't Know What Lonesome Is!

*From Portland, Oregon*

You don't know what lonesome is until you have taken your first slip after being exposed to the Alcoholics Anonymous program. You thought you were lonely before you ever attended an A.A. meeting. Sure, the alcoholic is the loneliest person in the world—isolated, ignored, scorned. You can admit no one to your little twilight world.

Then you are exposed to A.A. Dozens of friendly hands are extended to you, dozens of warm voices say, "Hello, pal. Have a cup of coffee." You start to tell them your story and they say, "Sure, we know. We've been there, too. We know what you're talking about."

So you bask in the cheerful warmth of their friendship, you listen to their talk, you study the program and try to clear the fog out of your brain. Pretty soon things begin to look rosy. Why, say, this is peaches and cream, this is the life you've been looking for. Somebody gave you a dollar and a clean shirt, maybe they even got you a job. The program is easy.

All you have to do is follow it, and that's a simple matter when you're traveling with people who are struggling toward the same goal you

are. Life is a bed of roses, and someone has kindly removed all the thorns. That's what YOU think.

Then comes the first bump. The boss says something that hurts your feelings. Or you see a girl you want, but she doesn't want you. Or maybe it rains, or the sun shines too much. Whatever the reason, the old despair comes into your heart, the old glaze dulls your eyes, and you head for the nearest tavern.

So you start pouring it down. You could quit after the first one, then you remember that it doesn't matter now. You've already taken the first one. There's a meeting tonight, but you can't go. You may be a heel, but you're not that much of a heel. You've shut yourself away from those people, and you sit there crying in your beer, remembering how good they were to you, how they tried to help you.

So the sun goes down and twilight comes on and the tavern fills up and you're beginning to understand what lonesome is. That bleary blonde over there is watching you and the look in her eye makes your stomach churn a little. The tavern is full of loud, hoarse voices, and there is no sense in what they are saying. And the juke box is playing "When You Were Sweet Sixteen" and you try to think back to a girl you knew who was sweet 16, but you can't remember her name, and she's probably dead anyway, and life is a pretty sad mess, so you cry a little more and call for another beer.

The meeting will be starting just about now, but you can't go. Everybody is standing, someone is reading the 12 Steps. "We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable." The words of those Steps are written on your heart and the first thing you know you are repeating them out loud and the guy next to you gives you a fishy look and goes over and whispers to the bartender.

Remember how you looked when you were drunk—like an old sick cat that has been left out in the rain too long? Remember how you felt—like the frazzle end of a misspent life? Remember what went through your mind—the bells and birds and bees and the little slithering things which nobody could see but you? But you didn't remember soon enough. You struck a blow at your last hope, you tried to tramp it to death in a senseless frenzy for one more drink. And those friends you had made—you struck a blow at their defense as well as your own.

And the great beacon light turns on, trying to light your way through the fog. And you know that it will always be there, burning bright when your eyes become clear enough to see it. But you're sitting there, and at last you really know what lonesome is.—*I.S.*

## CHRISTMAS LIGHTS ARE SIGNALS ALONG A.A. ROAD

*From Chicago, Ill.*

The Red Lights of Christmas are glowing at us from friendly windows and outdoor Christmas trees. They're symbols of cheer—but they're signal lights of warning to us.

This is a season of "Peace on Earth and Good Will to Men." But, along with the Christmas rejoicing, this is also a season of emotional upset for many of us. For some years, Christmas thrilled me, yet upset me. Some of my most unexpected difficulties seem to have come on me at the Christmas season. Perhaps it was because I was off my guard. Perhaps I drifted along with the color and pageantry, and confused the Christian rejoicing with "just another opportunity for celebration"—alcoholic celebration.

So, as I reflect on the cheery Red Lights of Christmas, I find myself taking heed of their clear warning. And I say to myself: "My Christmas present to *me* this year can be sobriety for the day."

The Christ Child came into a world of poverty and struggle, but came into it to bring relief, salvation. His birth brought re-birth to the transgressors of the ages. It brought promise of life, of death, and of resurrection.

I feel that A.A. is truly in the spirit of Christmas—and follows the Christ Child. It comes to us as a cause for rejoicing that a means for salvation from our special chaos, our special poverty and struggle is at hand. It comes to many of us in our own "stables"—with the wise men of A.A. guided to us by a mysterious bright star. It brings to us a new life. One with firmness of purpose needed, but one with a program to make that firmness possible.

We have a great gift, direct from the hand of our maker, I fervently believe. The gift of *ourselves*—restored. The gift of life . . . under control and worth something to ourselves and others. The gift of being able to help ourselves through helping others. The gift of self-knowledge, through frank appraisal. The gift of tolerance for others.

Yes, as I see them, the Red Lights of Christmas are signal lights, warning me to be on guard against complacency, reminding me that each day needs attention, that the gifts which have been so freely given can be as freely thrown away through complacency or thoughtlessness.

And, as I read their warning, I also read their message of good cheer, of blessing, of rejoicing. And I give thanks that this day has been a true gift, and pray that tomorrow, and all tomorrows, I may again receive the gift, and receive it well.—*M.F.*

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## NEW GROUPS

The following new groups reported organization to the General Office during the month of October:

ARIZONA—Douglas.

ARKANSAS—Bentonville, Hot Springs (Spa Group).

CALIFORNIA—Avalon (Catalina Island), Chico, Linwood, Napa, Ocean Park, San Francisco (West Portal Group).

CONNECTICUT—Plainfield.

ILLINOIS—Alton, Champaign (Urbana Group).

MASSACHUSETTS — Palmer (Happy Valley Group).

MICHIGAN—Otsego.

MISSOURI—Anderson.

NEW JERSEY—Bayonne, Caldwell, Jersey City (Hudson County Negro Group).

NEW YORK—New York City (Inwood Group), (West 48th St. Group), Pelham, Whitestone, L.I.

OHIO—Newton Falls, Oberlin.

SOUTH DAKOTA—Brookings.

TEXAS—Borger, Fort Stocton, Perryton, Snyder.

WASHINGTON—Seattle (Empire Way Group).

WISCONSIN—Richland Center.

CANADA—St. Thomas, Ontario.

MEXICO—Coyoacan, D. F.

# The GROUP

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

## How Soon The 12th Step?

Topics previously discussed on this page are: "Admitting . . . you are an alcoholic;" "Anonymity;" and, "A.A. Devices." Another topic which sometimes bothers the new member and on which views differ among older members is this:

The question: How soon after coming into A.A. should a member undertake to do 12th Step work?

One A.A.'s Thoughts: Three months, say some; six months, say others. But how can any given time be chosen arbitrarily? At three months, or even three weeks, some members are ready to do highly effective 12th Step work. Others who get the "feel" of A.A. more slowly may not be ready at six months.

Two factors are always present in 12th Step work. One is the effect on the prospect and the other is the effect on the 12th Stepper himself. Perhaps it is true that regardless of whether the prospect gets any good out of a 12th Step visit by a member of A.A., the member himself almost always benefits. He's making the effort to pass along his knowledge and he is bound to derive some good from the desire to give good.

But, the effect on the prospect can scarcely be ignored. If a visit leaves him more confused than ever, or antagonistic to A.A., or fearful for one reason or another of joining, then he has suffered a setback. To this possibility the answer is sometimes heard, "If he really wants A.A. he'll come around." Perhaps that is true, too, but how much better it is when he can be persuaded to come around sooner than later—that is, persuaded by an exchange of experiences and by example, not by high pressure selling.

So, the effect on the prospect would seem to have some bearing on the question of how soon 12th Step work should be tried. Since the time required for absorbing enough A.A. to be able to pass it on varies with each individual, there should be a more logical approach to the question than by an arbitrary selection of three months, or six months, or some other period.

A compromise suggestion is this: Why wouldn't it be a good idea for the new member to get started on 12th Step work by accompanying an older member? Let him go along and listen; let him see how it's done before he strikes out on his own. This way he will learn from the older member and at the same time he will be sharing in the benefit that unquestionably



Group Meeting

attends 12th Step work. Furthermore, the recent dry can sometimes help the recent wet. He's nearer the viewpoint of the brand new prospect than the oldtimer is.

Doesn't the idea of 12th Step work being done by teams—each team composed of a new member and an older member—offer the best way for all concerned to get the most out of it?

\* \* \*

## Open or Closed Meetings

The question: Can a group operate to greatest benefit of all by having no closed meetings?

One A.A.'s Thoughts: We think not. At least the practice of having all open meetings followed by a few groups here and there seems to be trying it the hard way.

No doubt a number of members may be surprised to learn that any group has only open meetings. A few do, however, at least to the extent that non-alcoholic wives and husbands attend all meetings. These groups have no meetings which are attended only by A.A.s.

Perhaps if all groups had gone to the other extreme and followed the practice of having only closed meetings and never holding any open meetings A.A. would not be as widely known as it is today. The open meeting certainly has a valuable function. It is a medium for spreading the word through the mass technique. It is a way of demonstrating A.A. to large numbers. The large open meeting is impressive to outsiders and even many A.A.s themselves derive comfort and strength from the large meeting.

On the other hand, the closed meeting also seems essential, and more essential to many members than the large, open meeting. The closed meeting is where the exchange of experience that is so vital in A.A. works best, where the trading of helpful suggestions can be carried on most effectively. In a closed meeting, a freedom of expression prevails that never seems quite attainable in any meeting at which non-alcoholics are present.

# MEETING Page

It's not that A.A.s have any deep, dark secrets left. The truth is that by the time one reaches A.A. his spouse already knows the worst, or may even "know" much worse than ever really was.

Nor is it that A.A.s want to get together to throw "wild" orgies (on coffee and "cokes?") or conspire in some foul plot. They're conspiring to stay sober and it helps a great deal to be able to talk freely with each other, not so much about the events as about the why's and the wherefore's.

No matter how understanding, forgiving and sympathetic a wife or husband may be, or how wholeheartedly they are in favor of A.A., their presence at a meeting can be a restraint. One might feel no restraint at all in discussing anything with his own wife, but he might feel quite self-conscious if other wives were present to discuss personal matters. He might also feel quite self-conscious in front of non-alcoholic men, the husbands of women A.A.s in the group.

One reason why the alcoholic never seemed to get far through the ministrations of the psychiatrist, the medical doctor, the social worker or even the clergy was the line between them. The alcoholic, rightly or wrongly, felt that these people had not shared his experiences and therefore couldn't help him. His characteristic behavior was to withhold from them. He was, again, self-conscious. And it must be admitted that the reluctance to discuss one's own large and many faults in front of someone who appears to have many virtues is a thoroughly human, even if irrational, reaction.

A.A. is generally admitted to be the thing that has worked best for the alcoholic and one reason it works is that it provides private, intimate and non-critical meeting places for alcoholics.

Those are just a few of the reasons why this member believes that the group that does not provide any closed meetings at all is handicapping its members.

\* \* \*

## Color Scheme

Earl T, of the St. Joseph, Mo., Group, says that alcohol has a definite color scheme. "It gives you a *red* nose; a *black* eye; a *while*, liver; a *yellow* streak; and a *blue* outlook." He also says that alcohol is a wonderful remover. "It removes stains from clothes, clothes from the man who drinks it, clothes from the man's wife and children, food from the table, rugs from the floor, furniture from the home, lining from the stomach, liver from the side, hair from the head and sight from the eyes."

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

**Open Meeting Draws 1,000** — A turnout of about 1,000 in a city of 27,000 population is a source of pride to the Winona, Minn. Group which held its first annual open meeting in the high school recently. Representatives of the clergy, judicial and medical professions as well as A.A.s spoke to an audience which represented a good cross section of the city, all of them supporting the A.A. movement. Comments from those attending the meeting indicated that an impression was made which will do an immeasurable amount of good in educating the public in the problems of chronic alcoholism and the efforts of A.A. to reach the alcoholic. More than 150 A.A.s from Dubuque, Waterloo and Cedar Rapids, Ia.; Eau Claire, LaCrosse and Sparta, Wis.; Rochester, Faribault and Owatonna, Minn., helped swell the crowd. The Winona A.A.s used considerable newspaper advertising space and received much favorable comment in the columns of the *Republic Herald*, local paper.

**A.A. Lands on Okinawa** — "Happy to inform you that we now have an A.A. group started and going on this island, with the help of my A.A. friend E. W. of the Miami, Fla. Group," our correspondent writes from that spot in the Pacific. "We've had five meetings; at the first one, we were only three and at last week's meeting we were 20. Both E. W. and I have been on the beam here in Okinawa, thanks to A.A. and the A.A. way to stay sober. Will you please send *The A.A. Grapevine* air mail, as it takes about six to eight weeks to get here by boat."

**Bowl Over Pins, Not Bottles** — Cleveland, Ohio, A.A. bowling leagues are again in full swing playing host to some exceptionally fine kegglers as well as those satisfied to settle for enjoyment rather than high scores. Growth of the leagues has been phenomenal with about 300 men taking part and finding not only pleasure but a good way to let off steam. Many new members find new and mutually helpful friendships on the lanes. Cash prizes are awarded each learn in the order of its average at the season's end; matches are strongly contested with many A.A. spectators as well as bowlers. Cleveland A.A.s are looking forward to the holiday party season with many plans made.

**Badge Shows Squad Pride** — A blue triangle with the figure "5" and letter "P" in a yellow monogram identifies the wearer as member of Squad Five or the Perseverance Squad

of Washington, D.C. Adopted some months ago, the emblem is worn at group meetings and other A.A. gatherings. The figure is defined as the first five Steps of the A.A. program with members of the squad attempting to aid each other up and through the first five Steps. The color of the figure and letter is symbolic of the light that is necessary for members to seek to accomplish the task. The blue field of the triangle denotes the caliber of personality necessary to aspire to such an undertaking. The letter stands for the name of the squad and the important human quality which manifests itself at meetings.

**Mississippians Meet** — One of the largest and most enthusiastic A.A. meetings ever held in the state of Mississippi was staged at Philadelphia, Miss., recently when members of the Columbus, Jackson, Louisville and Meridian groups convened for a big barbecue and open meeting. The feature speaker of the four-city joint session was Maryan H. of Memphis, chairman of the southeastern regional meeting held in the Tennessee city in September.

**Cincinnati's Active** — Under the auspices of the Salvation Army's Men's social center a banquet at the Cincinnati, Ohio, Club recently attracted more than 250 men and women. Major Paul Harvey of the Salvation Army served as chairman and introduced Major Peter Hofman of Cleveland, the man who first infiltrated A.A. into the work of reclaiming men. The Akron, Ohio, member who styles himself "the first guinea pig in the A.A. operation" gave a much enjoyed talk. Cities represented from outside Cincinnati with its seven units, were Hamilton, Springfield, Dayton, Columbus, Middletown, Cleveland, Indianapolis, Covington, Lexington and Frankfort. Plans are under way to make the dinner an annual affair. In Cincinnati at present the A.A. Group of Greater Cincinnati operates out of the Palace Hotel. The Cincinnati Fellowship Group occupies its handsome home at 405 Oak Street with a full nightly schedule of meetings and a secretary in daily attendance. The Freeman Group (Salvation Army) meets weekly at 1508 Freeman Avenue and the Covington, Ky., Group meets weekly in the Cathedral Lyceum in that city. Four suburban home-meeting groups are now operating and all things point toward a record year for A.A. in this locality. A Halloween party staged at the clubhouse was heavily attended by members, their wives and children.

**Tacoma Attendance Gains** — Attendance is picking up in Tacoma, Wash., our reporter writing that there were 14 new faces, eight of them women, at a recent meeting. A.A. in the Northwest is receiving considerable help from a series of much appreciated articles written by Byron Fish of *The Seattle Times* which give a good picture of how A.A. works. The reporter also writes that during a recent vacation he visited groups in Portland, Ore., and 10 in the Los Angeles area.

**Omaha Women Organize** — A group composed entirely of women has been organized in Omaha, Nebr., and a series of meetings scheduled. While this group retains membership and attendance in their respective groups, members meet each week in a session for women only and discuss their special problems and development of practicable and effective 12th Step activity.

**Discussion by Letter** — The Polk County Group, composed of A.A.s from Lakeland, Mulberry, Barlow, Winter Haven and Lake Wales, Fla., feel they have something novel in the way of meetings. John G. wrote to the Rome, Ga., Group and asked that they put on the program, which they did by letter. Different members of the Rome Group explained different Steps, and after the letter was read there was a general group discussion which lasted three meeting nights. Our reporter, who lives in Lake Wales, reports only four members there. They have group meetings Thursdays and then go to Barlow for the Polk County meeting. By next spring each town hopes to have its own group but it will have the county group as the "parent."

**Nominations Made Easy** — "We have found a good way to appoint committees," the secretary of the South Charleston, W. Va., Group writes. "Just let some bird holler for something—he is right away made a committee of one to do it. Sometime ago someone suggested a Thanksgiving party. He was IT. Someone else suggested that it was getting so hot that we should have a fan. Guess who was at once nominated to get it. I am hoping that someone suggests getting another secretary. Boy, do I know who is going to get that job!"

**Seamen's Group in Montreal** — A new group for seamen has been inaugurated formally at the Montreal Sailors' Institute, Place Royal, Montreal, Canada. The four charter members

have the cooperation of the Rev. William MacLean, manager and chaplain of the institute, who sat in on the first meeting, offering all the facilities of the Institute. The group was well received by the press, *The Montreal Herald* in particular.

**Sponsor Prison Group**—The Springfield, Mo., Group has been sponsoring an A.A. meeting at the federal prison in that city for more than three months. The prison, known as the U. S. Medical Center, has inmates here for treatment from all over the U. S. and many have had previous experience with A.A. Notice of the first meeting carried in *The Prison News* brought dozens of applications to attend. However, Warden Pescor and Educational Director Bowman carefully screened the applicants and allowed only eight, of whom five had had previous A.A. experience, to come. Meetings are held at 6 o'clock on the first and third Tuesdays of each month with at least two members from the Springfield Group attending and with at least one new man going each time.

**Hold Vermont All-State Dinner**—More than 350 Vermont A.A.s, guests and friends attended the first annual statewide A.A. dinner at Montpelier, Vt., on October 18. The dinner was also the occasion of the third anniversary of the Montpelier, Vt. Group. Principal A.A. speaker was Bill W., co-founder of A.A., who emphasized the need for attention to the principles of A.A. and declared that these principles would go far to assure its perpetual unity. Principal non-A.A. speaker was Father James Timmons, editor of *The Sign*. The large crowd caught the Vermont A.A. Intergroup Committee, sponsor of the meeting, unaware and hastily erected seats had to be prepared to handle it. The committee reports, however, that everyone was comfortably seated and that the dinner was a huge success.

**For A.A. Grapevine 100%**—Subscriptions received from the Fairport-East Rochester, N. Y. Group make all nine members subscribers. Formed early this year the group has started a policy of giving a year's subscription to *The A.A. Grapevine* to each member reaching a three months' period of sobriety and hopes to keep up its 100 per cent subscription record in this manner.

**Mankato Proud of Club**—A barren warehouse room has been transformed into a modern and attractive clubroom by Mankato, Minn., A.A.s to serve as the official meeting place and

recreation center for that city and much of Southern Minnesota. Located at 502 North Front Street, the new club is described in the *Mankato Free Press* as comprising a foyer, office, squad room, a large attractive lounge, a completely equipped kitchen and serving counter and large assembly and game rooms, with bright, attractive furniture. The newspaper article describes the growth of the group from its start three years ago, to 60 members and in the editorial columns the paper supports the A.A. program.

**Houston Judge Helps**—Through the influence of a prominent Houston, Texas city court judge, a new building has been erected at the penal farm where old offenders are placed and held in a clean, sanitary abode until they are released and returned to the city, where A.A. and other organizations can aid them. The judge, who spoke at a recent meeting of the Suburban Group, deplored conditions and treatment and said many could be restored to useful citizenship. The executive secretary for the Houston Committee for Education on Alcoholism followed the judge to cite the work being done for the establishment of an alcoholic clinic and the contacts now being made with all Houston hospitals to accept alcoholics as such and render the necessary treatment. It is hoped the civic authorities, the committee and the four local A.A. Groups will cooperate to remedy conditions. The Houston Suburban Group has opened its new club house at 1959 West Alabama Street and extends a cordial welcome to A.A. visitors.

**Take 11 steps**—The Twin City Group, composed of members from Benton Harbor and St. Joseph, Mich., have formed the A.A.A. or Alcoholics Anonymous Auxiliary. The members are trying to live by 11 Steps, all but the first of the 12. They advocate attending all open meetings and lectures, as well as social gatherings in order to learn all they can about alcoholics, their own associates in particular.

**Busy in Beloit**—The Beloit, Wis., Group, an offspring of the Chicago Group, has grown from one member less than two years ago to 25 at present with one or more newcomers at each meeting. Originally the group included Janesville, but seven months ago the latter group became so large that it was necessary to split, although the two groups get together for the weekly Saturday night social gathering when husbands and wives attend. Beloit membership

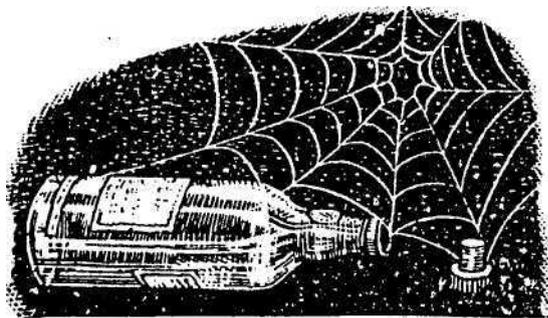
includes A.A.s from the surrounding towns of Delevan and Elkhorn as well as Rockton, Ill., while recently several summering at Lake Geneva drove down for the mid-week discussion. Chicago A.A.s are frequent visitors and their talks have been inspiring. One of the Chicago members will discuss A.A. before the local Kiwanis club soon. Recently families of the Janesville and Beloit Groups joined in an all-day picnic at Big Hill park with a baseball game between the two groups as a highlight. Much cooperation from representative citizens including the police chief, ministers, doctors and hospital staff and the editor of the *Daily News* has been received, the letter's publicity bringing in several new members as well as educating the public. One of the moving picture houses ran the movie short, "I Am an Alcoholic."

**Family Hour Enjoyed**—Wonderful success in enjoyment of "the Family Hour" is reported from Sacramento, Cal., where it was first urged by a member coming in from Portland, Ore. Fortunately another member helped and managed to get Sunday night set aside for the meeting, which was greeted with eagerness and understanding. One member has effected a reconciliation with his wife and son after 17 years of separation. Every Sunday morning five or six men from this group go up to the Folsom Prison Group. Many other activities center around the Billois Club, named for Bill and his wife, while recently 37 chartered a bus and went to Stockton to bear M. M., as they also did to start a new group in Marysville. Many went to Roseville for the second birthday of that group.

**Non-Alcoholics Speak**—A Cleveland, Ohio Group recently heard two non-alcoholic wives of alcoholic husbands and a non-alcoholic husband of an alcoholic wife in a program which proved helpful and illuminating. Major purpose of the discussion period was an attempt to arrive at the best and most helpful kind of cooperation with the alcoholic on the part of non-alcoholic members of the family. It was felt the expressed reaction was of great value to the group-

**Open Meeting at San Quentin**—the third quarterly open meeting of the group at California State Prison, San Quentin, recently was attended by 109 members from the Bay Area Groups in addition to 150 members of the group in the prison. A.A.s from San Francisco, Oakland, Alameda, Richmond, Vallejo, Santa Rosa, San Rafael, Burlingame, San Mateo, Palo Alto, Pittsburgh and Redwood City were among invited guests. The general session was devoted to discussions by both men and women A.A.s and non-alcoholic visitors. Dr. D. G. Schmidt,

(Continued on Page 15)



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

## Recognition

*From Chappaqua, N. Y.*

This year, during the National Convention of the American Legion in New York City, I went to an A.A. meeting of the Lenox Hill Group. As I entered, I was greeted by several A.A.s at the door. At once I became a part of the group and no longer felt a stranger. One introduced me to another and the evening stands out as a gem in my memory. This idea of a welcoming committee is a great thing and worth adoption by all groups because so many strangers, or newcomers, are reticent about talking to people and their shyness seems to create in them a sort of isolation, which, although self-imposed, is there, nevertheless. A friendly greeting goes a great way in combatting this attitude.

Several members have told me of going to group meetings where everyone was strange to them and, although they enjoyed the speakers, they felt left out in the cold.

Another point on this same theme is that many of us who have done 12th Step work are apt to take our older babies for granted once we have gotten them well launched. We neglect them for our new problem children and, by so doing, cause them anguish unintentionally. We forget that it takes the novice quite a long period of time before he can build up enough assurance and self-confidence to enter into the group spirit by himself.

This timidity, which so many have, is dangerous—it might easily lead to wrong thinking or an eventual relapse. To me it is a frightening thought that I might undo the good that has been done, by a simple sin of omission, forgetting to say, "Hi ya, fella," to someone whose very sobriety might hang on so little!

Isn't it something to think about—that happiness or tragedy might just depend upon a slight sign of recognition, a nod of the head or, perhaps, just a friendly wink?—*F.V.G.*

## Beware That Overdose!

*From Philadelphia, Pa.*

On the subject of drugs—and, specifically, on the possible violence of the reaction to an over-

dose of benzedrine—it may be enlightening to again consider the case of the live worm angler who was in the habit of administering benzedrine to his worms in order that the superactivity of their wriggling might more effectively lure his quarry. One dawning, one of these worms, under the heavy influence of this drug, fought and battled under water, freed himself from the hook and sped ashore, where he lurked in ambush awaiting the arrival of his traditional enemy. When they appeared upon the scene in considerable numbers, he attacked, overpowered and strangled to death 35—just one short of three dozen, mind you, by actual count—35 EARLY BIRDS!—*J.M.*

## Going It Alone

*From Island Falls, Maine*

As usual, *The A.A. Grapevine* is proving most helpful, and especially so way up here in northern Maine, with the nearest established club over one hundred miles away. Many times in the past two months, since moving here from Baldwin, Long Island, I have had reason to be thankful for the many good friends in the Baldwin Group and also at the old 41st Street clubhouse where I found A.A. myself. It is the experiences and visits with those grand people that I have now as a background in trying to get a group started up here.

My dear fellow State o' Mainers seem to be able to take a great many poundings and rise again for more, but as many of them in this section are old drinking pals of mine, I am sure they will begin to ask questions before long. Three good prospects have been in camp with me for a week, bringing the usual supply of wet goods. After the first shock to them of my turning the drinks down the only result I could see was their satisfaction that there would be much more for them! Not very encouraging, but I know these folks are by nature slow to change any habit and would be more so in this one, so "easy does it," I suppose, and I must not get too anxious to add the next number to The Big Woods Group which at the present time consists of one and even though he, the writer, still tips the scales at 270 pounds, it is a darned small group.

If anyone could give me their experiences in starting a group in their old home town (only 1,000 people) it would be much appreciated. Before my recent retirement I had been away about 25 years so most of my heavy drinking was done "outside" as they say. My guess is that patience is one necessary item.—*P.L.C.*

## Is It Fair?

*From Wooster, Ohio*

To non-drinking A.A.s who do no 12th Step work and do not attend meetings—IS IT FAIR?

This question is asked simply and humbly and addressed to A.A.s everywhere, who are leading sober, happy, and worthwhile lives due to the influence for good they first received from the A.A. movement.

Is it fair to your God—to yourself—to other members of the organization—and, most of all, to suffering alcoholics everywhere who wish to have lifted from their shoulders the burden they are carrying just as you received this blessing?

Is it fair for you not to attend meetings? Is it fair for you to do no 12th Step work?

This question is being asked in the most humble spirit simply to find out if there are dry A.A.s who feel this non-activity is fair.—*C.F.*

## God Heals Us

*From Richmond, California*

The longer I am a member of the fellowship of A.A., more of the good things in a life of sobriety become apparent to me. The greatest thing we do is share the good with others, so I hope some others will be aided by my thoughts.

To many members of A.A. the spiritual phase is the hardest to straighten out.

I used to think of a physician as a man who healed the sick. Then one day I read that over the door of a college of physicians was this motto—"I dressed his wounds; God healed him." That is A.A. pure and simple. Following the comparison farther—the physician attempts to aid his patient according to his skill; our method is understanding, sympathy, example and leaching the 12 Steps.

Sometimes the physician has a patient who is not seriously sick, but he has lost the will to survive and he dies. We meet the same kind. Sometimes the patient is seemingly incurable, but he has the will to live and the seemingly impossible happens—he survives. A.A. has parallel cases.

We waste too much time trying to find out why we drink. Almost all of us drink for three diverse reasons—Prosperity—we must celebrate; Adversity—we can't take it; Monotony—we are poor company for ourselves. What screwballs we are! No wonder no one understands an alcoholic.

Some of us feel we are giving up one of our privileges when we stop drinking. Not so; we traded drunkenness for sobriety and I for one

got the best of the bargain and don't want to trade back. We lost our places in decent society by our drunkenness. We have an opportunity to gain it back and climb higher by vigorously using the 12th Step. We are ex-drunks, but God forbid that we get confused and think we are ex-alcoholics.

I was sober today all day. This is very important but not unusual. I have more than 1,000 days of sobriety behind me today. That is gratifying but not so important. Sobriety today is important because I will awaken tomorrow with a clear mind and thankfulness and humility in my heart. The sun will shine brighter, my family will be happier, my work will be better done, the world will be a little better off because I was sober today.—C.S.

### Making Amends

*From Los Angeles, Calif.*

This letter is not going to be easy, but because this day is an important anniversary for me, I awakened this morning with a sure conviction that this was my job for today.

I must go back more than 11 years to the time when I left Chicago. There was so much wrong with me then. I couldn't put it into words, because I didn't understand it myself. I only know that I was baffled, unhappy and frustrated. Inside, I was filled with resentment against everybody and everything. Fear and a terrible heart-breaking loneliness possessed me. I had a feeling that no one understood me. Of course, now I know that that was not strange, because I didn't understand myself.

I found release from inner tensions. I discovered it in alcohol. I found that when I took a few drinks, I could (at least in my mind), become something of the woman I wanted to be. The tragedy of it was, as you well know, I never stopped with a few drinks.

I can't tell you how hard I fought whiskey; I can't tell you how terrible the shame and remorse. I can't tell you how bitter the resentment against society, and finally against God.

When I returned here in 1936, it was with a high resolve that my life was going to be different. I felt that by cutting myself off from the past, I could build a future according to my own plans.

The next few years of my life are what I choose to call my reign of terror. In spite of my frantic efforts, my life was completely out of control. I tried everything: Hard work, hobbies, falling in love, various forms of religion, a serious talk with my doctor. I always ended up drunk and in jail. Sick, broke, and miserably unhappy I'd try to pick up the pieces and start over again. I finally came to the soul-scaring (and very private), conclusion that I was losing my mind.

My mother and dad had to make me leave their home. The shame and humiliation I brought to them and to myself, was more than any of us could take. I landed on Skid Row; somewhere along the line I became a waitress. From here on, the entire pattern of my life was to take the line of least resistance. I was becoming very tired, and very, very ill. I had no self respect, no feeling of kinship with my fellow creatures, and I had become agnostic.

At this time, a man came into my life. He loved me, and wanted to marry me. I had no capacity left for any kind of emotion, but I hung on, because I guess it was all I had to hang onto.

In May 1944, after a terrible drunk, this man finally persuaded me to see a doctor again, this time a psychiatrist. You know very well I didn't go willingly. I was afraid of what he would tell me.

I can't explain what happened that morning. That wonderful, kind man! He told me that I am an alcoholic! That alcoholism is an illness; that there are thousands of us; that I could get well if I wanted to.

If I could only describe to you how all of the emotional turmoil rushed out to meet the hope that was held toward me. For three and a half months there was sobriety under intensive treatment; at the end of that time the pressure was too great. Even though I fought like a mad woman, I took that first drink that led on to a drunk, and almost cost me my life.

For thirty-three days I went through a private hell that I simply could not take again. Only God knows why I lived.

On September 29, 1944, I was literally carried to a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous. The next day I stopped drinking. Today I am celebrating three years of total abstinence.

It's been a long hard job, and one that will go on all the rest of my life; it's been re-education in every sense of the word and I have loved it! Alcoholics are maladjusted personalities. If

I wanted to live without taking that first drink, I had to find out what was wrong with *me*, and do something about it. That was some job! This is a disease of the body, the mind, the spirit and the emotions.

If I wrote from now until Christmas I couldn't get it all down. The A.A. Program of Recovery embodies sincerity of purpose, honesty and tolerance. Through practicing its principles in my daily life, I am becoming, slowly, the woman God wanted me to be. I have my self respect, more friends than I could ever accept before, and a workable relationship with God.

My marriage to another A.A. is as wonderful an adventure as the rest of my life has now become. We are both too happy to talk about it without losing control a little!

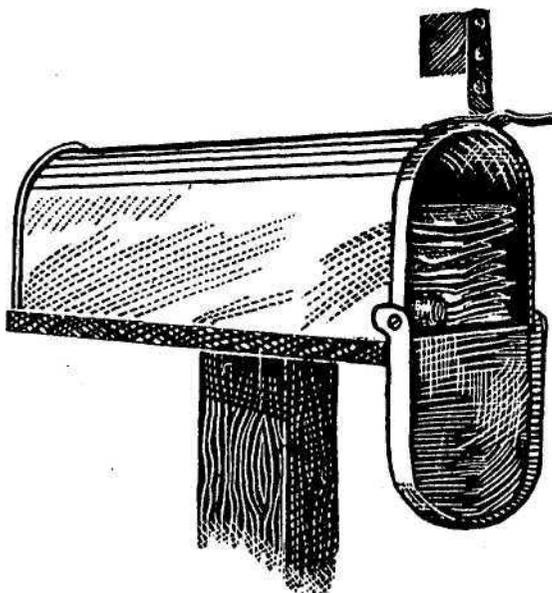
Please forgive this long, rambling letter. I've wanted to write it for three years to partially make amends for some of the grief I caused. I cannot only say that I am sorry, but I can point to the last three years as proof of my sincerity.—A.A.

### Grateful for Serenity

*From Vincennes, Indiana*

It will be a year in November since I read the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, and attended my first A.A. meeting. Although I am only 39, drinking has been a problem to me for over 20 years. Because of several unhappy incidents in my childhood, by the time I was in high school I had a full fledged inferiority complex. I discovered this vanished into thin air after a few drinks. As the years went on, my drinking progressed until I was using alcohol as the proverbial crutch—as an escape from any and everything of an unpleasant nature that I had to face. Like all alcoholics, I had caused much unhappiness to myself, my husband and little girl. Last year I had reached the point where I would walk the floor at night unable to sleep, frightened at the kind of person I had become and at what our future held. I knew I could not stop drinking. Then a neighbor who was an A.A. gave me the book to read and I attended my first meeting. Here was the answer.

Tonight I was thinking of the many things for which I am grateful to the A.A. way of life. To mention a few—for being able to awaken in the morning knowing where I am and where I was the night before—for being able to hear the phone ring and not being afraid to answer it because of what I might hear about my actions while I was drinking—for being able to meet my neighbors and look them in the eye without a feeling of shame—for the wisdom to see my shortcomings and the desire to do something about them—for my good and understanding friends in A.A.—for being able to go to bed at night and sleep—and not dream! Big things, these, for an alcoholic. I hope I may be an A.A. for the rest of my life.—Connie M.



## DR. PEALE ADDRESSES 13th ANNUAL BANQUET

"Alcoholics Anonymous is not an organization. It is a movement. Moreover, it is one of the greatest movements for good of our generation," said Dr. Norman Vincent Peale, pastor of the Marble Collegiate Reformed Church of New York, and guest speaker at the 13th anniversary banquet of A.A., held in the Hotel Commodore, New York, on November 6.

The banquet was sponsored by the New York Intergroup Association of A.A. and executed by the association's banquet committee acting under the supervision of Hank G., of the Mt. Kisco, N. Y. Group.

In addition to Dr. Peale, three members of A.A. spoke. They were: Norman B. of the Forest Hills, N. Y. Group, who acted as toastmaster; Joe C., of the Brooklyn, N. Y. and Forest Hills, N. Y. Groups; and Lucy P., of the Bronxville, N. Y. Group.

The first speaker, Norman B., told the story of his recovery from alcoholism through the A.A. Program. He pointed out that "once an alcoholic, always an alcoholic." To prove his point, he told a personal experience.

The second speaker, Joe C., described the progress of his alcoholism to a point where he was drinking when he didn't want to. He said that although he promised after every binge that he would stop he knew in his heart that he couldn't keep his promises. After seeking help through A.A., he continued, he realized that there was a way out.

The third speaker, Lucy P., urged women alcoholics to come into A.A. She said that women undoubtedly have a harder time "admitting that they have an alcoholic problem" but assured the audience that A.A. welcomed members of her sex at all times.

Bill W., who introduced the guest speaker, spoke briefly on the need for unity in A.A. He cautioned that "success is a heady wine" and that the time had come for all members to stick together "to preserve our unity." To emphasize his point, he read and commented on the 12 Traditions of the fellowship.

Throughout the evening, messages from other sections of the country and abroad arrived at the speakers' table. One cablegram from the Dublin, Ireland, Group, read: "Best wishes for a happy birthday from your Irish brothers."

Large delegations from almost all states in the nation began to arrive in New York early in the week for the annual event. On November 5, one delegation arrived by chartered airplane.

One hundred and eighty-two out-of-town members of A.A. were entertained at the traditional A.A. luncheon on the day of the banquet.



*"Heavens, I just remembered the pint I hid behind the Bible!"*

### Prison Group a Year Old

*From Salt take City, Utah*

The first anniversary meeting of the Golden Key Chapter of Alcoholics Anonymous proved strange, surprising and interesting.

Strange because the 50 members of the Golden Key Group are inmates of the Utah State Prison, and it was there in the prison's old, second-story chapel the members assembled. It was surprising because of all places where sincerity would be so seldom expected, there it prevailed. Interesting because it produced true stories of men who ignored pride and pretense in realizing and confessing their shortcomings. They discovered that in being unlike the man who measures

success in worldly attainments, they asserted an even greater strength in being humble.

Of 13 guests invited, ten were fellow-members of the A.A. brotherhood from Salt take City and Ogden and three were state officials, Warden John E. Harris, Deputy Warden VanFleet and Dr. Leslie D. Burbidge, a member of the Utah State Board of Corrections.

The officials, before attending the meeting, had gone over figures which showed that out of the 15 A.A. members paroled from the institution since the Chapter had been formed, none had violated the conditions of their parole agreements. In leaving the meeting, they probably had evidences less tangible but more convincing than that which can be printed.—W.W.

## Williamsport Reports Country-Wide News Circuit *(Continued from Page 11)*

### On Year's Activities

This is Richard. Richard is knocking on *The A.A. Grapevine* door for the first time. Richard wants you to open that door to the A.A. Group from Williamsport, Pa. Thank you.

Since this is our first attempt at trying to crush the portals, we believe you would be interested in a brief sketch of our A.A. group and growth. We are an offspring of the Harrisburg, Pa., No. I Group. Our founders, Horace H. and Earl B., both members of the Harrisburg mob, knowing they came from virgin territory as far as A.A. was concerned, conceived the idea of forming a group in Williamsport. So, on September 26, 1916, Horace and Earl met at the former's home with three other alcoholics.

We celebrated our first anniversary with 16 members. The wives of the members of our group presented us with a large birthday cake, having a lone candle on the top. During our year's growth, we have had as high as 23 in our group. Some have moved away, others did not hit bottom hard enough, but our 16 present members have been on the ball.

Our group has furnished speakers for the various service clubs, manufacturing groups and the county medical society. All these have endorsed the work of A.A. and our group, and the medical society has been making extensive use of our services.

Our group expects to run a number of articles in a local newspaper, featuring the 12 Steps, and giving our postoffice number, Box 11.

We procured our own club rooms in Williamsport in May of this year. Here we meet each Tuesday evening at 8 o'clock and anyone is welcome. We tried closed meetings, but they proved a failure as attendance fell off so we reverted back to our open meetings.

If you come our way be sure to look us up at 2900½ West Fourth Street, Newberry Square, Williamsport, Pa.—R.K.

### RYE BIRTHDAY

The Rye, N. Y. Group is now moving along on its second year, still glowing with the success of its first anniversary meeting. Approximately 400 people turned out, as reported by *The Daily Item* (Portchester, N. Y.), including members from the New Rochelle, Mt. Vernon, Yonkers, Bonxville, Scarsdale, While Plains, Port Chester, Greenwich, Stamford and Bridgeport Groups. Among the speakers, the only one who, as *The Daily Item* put it, "could be identified . . . was a non-alcoholic Rye man, Leonard V. Harrison, chairman of the Alcoholic Foundation, Inc., . . . and former Commissioner of Welfare, New York City."

acting chief medical officer at San Quentin, spoke from the point of view of a psychiatrist while Warden Clinton T. Duffy, long a supporter of A.A., and Associate Wardens D. C. Rig and H. O. Tees were also invited to speak. *The San Quentin News*, prison newspaper, carried an advance news story and an editorial praising and explaining A.A.

**Judge Advises Joining A.A.** — Two men before North Adams, Mass., district court on drunkenness charges were advised to join A.A. by Special Justice William A. O'Hearn recently in an action which is believed by members of the Pittsfield Group to set a precedent for Massachusetts and perhaps for the country. Stating that the commonwealth classifies drunkenness as a crime and does little or nothing to bring about rehabilitation, Judge O'Hearn said he feels it is a disease and "we should begin to do something about it." The judge continued one case for a year and placed the other on a year's probation, concluding by saying, "I had little faith in A.A. when it was first organized but I have watched the growth of this organization and know some of its splendid accomplishments. I feel that today it perhaps offers the greatest opportunity in overcoming this terrible curse." The Pittsfield Group, which includes members from North Adams is following through on this by planning a big open meeting at the Hotel Richmond in North Adams soon. With the splendid cooperation of the local radio and press it is hoped that this will be successful and result in the formation of a North Adams Group.

**Steps to Sobriety** — Ten steps to sobriety have been worked out by S. R., secretary of the Springfield, Mo., Group and printed on small cards for distribution. The final steps express the thought that through the A.A. program he can achieve "a peace of mind; a tranquility that will enable me to live in serenity of spirit with my family and friends; and to be in harmony with whatever Higher powers there are that guide the universe and that I accept as living proof the thousands of men and women who have been helped." It concludes with the statement, "I strongly desire a life of sobriety and will try with honesty and sincerity to practice charity and tolerance with all people."

**Prison Group Planned** — A.A.s of Santa Fe, N. M., recently proposed to officials of the state penitentiary that a group be formed there in the near future. A.A. officers met with inmates recently and distributed literature in Spanish and English and asked those interested to consider forming a group.

**Forum at Danville** — Four Indianapolis A.A.s conducted an open forum at Danville, Ill., recently which was attended by about 200 and drew good comment and favorable newspaper publicity. A small printed pamphlet was widely distributed by members to friends, churches and other civic groups while at the door of the forum meeting one of the member's wives handed out another pamphlet to each one entering as well as slips of paper for questions, the latter resulting in good discussion. One Danville member was on the platform with the visitors. The audience included members of the clergy, social workers and those with alcohol problems in their families. Several calls have resulted from the session.

**Winnipeg Has Open Session**—A large theatre was rented for the first public meeting at Winnipeg, Canada, on December 4, with Mr. R. of Wisconsin as the speaker. It is reported that the public there is becoming more conscious of the alcoholic problem and that the Winnipeg Group now numbers 100 with the majority doing well.

**Happy Sobriety** — A dramatic contrast between five and one-half years of sobriety marked by restlessness, dissatisfaction, resentments and a relapse into drinking was made by Bill H. of the West Palm Beach, Fla., Group on the anniversary of his four years of A.A. coming into A.A. in South Orange, N. J., The speaker said that in some mystic manner he had changed from an agnostic. After the meeting there was a party with anniversary cake, and for a joke Bill was first presented with a neatly iced cake of card board before the real one was brought out.

**Growth in Northwest**—Recently about 30 Seattle, Wash., A.A.s made a trip to Olympia to get a group with eight members started and later another Seattle contingent of the same size took a trip to Cle Elum and Roslyn to start new groups there. Good growth is expected for these. There have also been several trips to Bremerton and other smaller groups by Seattle members. As an innovation at one of the regular open meetings held each Friday in the Chamber of Commerce auditorium the meeting was put on by the Toastmasters group, numbering 30 A.A.s. Twelve men spoke for five minutes each, giving their interpretations of Steps of the A.A. program. It was felt that the idea was tremendously effective, and has been hailed as putting the program out where the people needing help can get it.



## GROUPS MARK ANNIVERSARIES

Wichita, Kans., A.A.s had their third annual jamboree and dinner November 15-16 at the club house, 536 North Broadway, beginning with registration and getting acquainted on Saturday afternoon, open house, entertainment and fellowship meeting Saturday night, scenic trips Sunday morning, a dinner and meeting in the afternoon.

Second annual banquet of the Head of the Lakes Groups was held at the Spalding Hotel in Duluth, Minn., with more than 200 from Duluth and Superior attending, including 25 from Hibbing, Minneapolis, St. Paul, Eau Claire, Wis., and several other cities. Instead of two or three speakers about a dozen extemporaneous speakers look part. Duluth also reports that nine months ago when the group seemed to be buying more than its share of slips it was decided to start a beginners' class and to organize into squads or discussion groups of about a dozen members, a system which has worked well.

A gala dinner-dance celebrated the third anniversary of the group in Montreal, Canada, with more than 100 gathered in the first joint celebration of all the groups in the city to honor the man who started the ball rolling. There are now more than 150 in nine groups. Representatives of the groups and a special speaker from the U. S. were heard.

Recently the El Paso, Texas, Group celebrated its second anniversary with an all-day open house for visiting A.A.s from all over West Texas and New Mexico. There were visitors from Shreveport, La., Denver, Colo., and Washington, D. C. A large open meeting for the public was held in the evening with the Ft. Worth Group, who arrived 30 strong in chartered plane and Pullman, in charge. The El Paso *Herald Post* and El Paso *Times* gave much favorable publicity to the group. Special praise went to Ft. Worth A.A.s who spent \$2,000 of their own money to get A.A. started in El Paso.

Fairmont, W. Va., observed the first anniversary of its group "with a banquet in the American Legion home with an attendance of about 80. N. Y. of Canton, Ohio, a blind member,

## The Pleasures of Reading

(Continued from page 7)

To the explanation of what these terms mean and to the demonstration of their validity the major part of the book is devoted. To this job the author brings all the resources of learning, scholarship and reasoning at his command, which are considerable. Roughly speaking, the esthetic is that which is immediately sensed and the theoretic is that which is assumed or inferred and upon which a course of action may be based subject to modification if the theory does not stand up to test. The thesis is that some philosophies, some religions, some cultures have too much of the one to the exclusion of the other, and that the ideal situation is reflected in an appropriate balance between the two components. The author feels that his formula will unite the unique achievements of both the East and the West and also reconcile and reconstruct the traditionally incompatible and conflicting partial values of the West, "so that *each* is seen to have something unique to contribute and *all* are reformed so as to supplement and reinforce instead of combat and destroy each other."

There's the rub—"that all are reformed." Certainly, those individuals who have definite notions of the nature of man, the soul, God and the universe, notions which are unaffected by changes in the laws of thermodynamics or mathematics but are verifiable, to *their* satisfaction, by reason and by the experience of the spirit—such persons are not going to give up or "reconstruct" concepts of philosophy and religion which are of the essence of their being. Nor will they think it necessary to do so as part of the process of world conciliation. A similar response may be expected from those who have different or no convictions on these matters, but who properly feel they can, nevertheless, be good members of the good society and participate in the work of world reconciliation.

This is, notwithstanding, a stimulating book, a valuable contribution, a notable piece of special pleading. But The author is in no position to object if the reader, applying the author's own test to his conclusions—namely, that they be "realistically grounded, scientifically verifiable"—comes up with some different answers.

It seems appropriate to footnote the foregoing by calling attention to a recently issued reprint of *Saint Thomas Aquinas* by Gerald Vann, O.P. (Benziger, \$3). In this book Thomism is presented as an ideal synthesis between the East and the West. Believing with Professor Northrup that the East and West have each something to contribute to the other, Father Vann feels that an understanding between the two can be brought about by the balanced philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, with its synthesis of rational and intuitive reality. The two books have this in common: they purport to deal with a "perennial philosophy," one which will hold at all times in all places. See also, *The Perennial Philosophy* by Aldous Huxley, reviewed in this column in the issue of February, 1946.—R.F.S., Montclair, N. J.

was guest speaker. The group started with one lone woman member, V. H., now secretary.

The Dallas, Texas, Committee for Education on Alcoholism has passed its first year with a record of having given information to approximately 12,000 persons in the past year. During the year 412 calls for help were received, speakers were sent to address 107 clubs and other groups, 885 pamphlets were distributed, three radio addresses were sponsored and 9,317 letters were received and answered. During the next year emphasis will be on setting up and operating a diagnostic clinic patterned on the Yale Clinic. The committee will have an exhibit in the Dallas Health Museum at Fair Park during the State Fair of Texas, this exhibit to remain as a permanent feature of the museum.

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### On Other Pages

*The Catholic World* for September carries an article by Joseph B. McAllister called "Apologetics Unnecessary" dealing with the philosophies of A.A.

### IT MIGHT WORK

Memphis, Tenn., *Press-Scimitar*: "the secret of A.A.'s success is that they bring religion out of the clouds and put it to work on earth. They never fool themselves or let others fool them. They look facts in the face. But they never give up hope. If they fail, they pick themselves up and help the other fellow up. They plug in on a higher power. Is this just for alcoholics? Why not apply the A.A. technique to other needs? Why shouldn't men who aren't alcoholics form similar groups cutting across denominations in order to achieve the goals which all religions, Protestant, Catholic and Jew, have in common; to help each other to be good and do good; to bring harmony in labor-management relations, decency and honor in politics—even prevent

*Easy does it*