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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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Calls For Restatement of A A. Purposes

From San Diego, Calif.

A. A. helps the individual alcoholic create within himself a spiritual and physiological change. A.A. is not trying to start a mass movement for the betterment of the whole human race.

A.A.s are banded together not for the purpose of educating the general public on the problems of alcoholism but for the prime purpose of helping the individual alcoholic with his individual alcoholic problem.

A.A. as a society is not primarily interested in hospitalization, psychiatry or theology. Those are all a part of the education of the individual alcoholic and he learns to use as much or as little of them as he needs as an individual in the solution of his personal alcoholic problem.

"A.A. is not a cure for alcoholism!" There, is no known cure for the disease of alcoholism. A.A. is a society of alcoholics who have found a successful method of staying sober and who are trying to pass that information on to other alcoholics who are honestly looking for a way to rid themselves of the obsession to drink.

A.A. did not come into being to make a public show of the alcoholic—he can and does that job expertly himself—but rather to give the individual alcoholic a sanctuary where he could find the help he needed from other individuals.

A.A. exists today, not because of the vast amount of publicity it did and does receive, but rather in spite of it. The reason it does exist today is because it does continue to help the individual alcoholic and shows him how he cannot only help himself but can help others who have the same disease, and shows him how he can in this way make amends for some of the havoc he has created in the world—and shows him how he can do this and still remain anonymous himself if that is his wish.

A.A. does not exist today because of the mis-

guided efforts of some individuals in A.A. who wish to hang the alcoholic up on a clothes line.

A.A. needs today to take an inventory of itself and find out whether or not we have or are being crowded off the main course by these misguided individuals who, seeking self-aggrandizement, are using A.A. for their own selfish interests and riot caring who knows about them, are forgetting that maybe the newcomer and some of the others do not care to wash their dirty linen in public.

Don't misunderstand me; I am not as an individual ashamed of the fact that I'm an alcoholic. As an individual I'm proud of the fact that I had courage enough to admit it and then did something about that admission, by joining A.A. I'm very much of the belief that A.A. has done its part in arousing the interest of the general public, the medical profession, the ministry, and the judiciary.

TODAY'S THOUGHT

/ am but one, but I am ONE;

I can't do everything,

But I can do SOMETHING;

What I can do, I ought to do,

What I ought to do, God helping me,

—I WILL DO.

Having accomplished that, we should turn the scientific part of the alcoholic problem over to the agencies that have been created for this express purpose, and go back to the original and prime purpose for which A.A. came into being.

A.A. must leave to others the answers to: What is the disease of alcoholism? How can it be prevented? How can it be cured? What causes some individuals to become alcoholic?

A.A. has only one reason for its existence, that is to help the individual alcoholic with his individual alcoholic problem. If we lose sight of that or allow A.A. to be crowded off that main course we will be guilty of killing the goose that laid the golden egg for us. And when we kill that goose we will kill ourselves.

A.A. cannot do its job and allow itself to become involved in the mass alcoholic problem because that job involves organization, finance, and leadership, all of which are dynamite to the program of life set forth in the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*.

A.A. teaches us the broad principles of true democracy plus the spirit of true Christianity, and those go out the door when we build an organization out of A.A.

Every member of A.A. today should ask himself this question: Am I doing what I'm doing in the name of A.A. because of a true desire on my part to help the individual alcoholic or am I, deep inside me, looking forward to the time when I will be known as the man who helped put A.A. on the map as a big time organization, with hopes that I will receive the homage due me as a great benefactor of mankind?

A.A.'s continued existence depends on our coming up with the right answer and that answer must be an honest, fearless and lasting one.—*J.F.H.*

EDITORIAL:

On the 3rd Tradition

By Bill

"Our membership ought to include all who suffer alcoholism. Hence we may refuse none who wish to recover. Nor ought A.A. membership ever depend upon money or conformity. Any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an A.A. group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation"

This is a sweeping statement indeed; it takes in a lot of territory. Some people might think it too idealistic to be practical. It tells every alcoholic in the world that he may become, and remain, a member of Alcoholics Anonymous *so long as he says so*. In short, Alcoholics Anonymous has no membership rule.

Why is this so? Our answer is simple and practical. Even in self protection, we do not wish to erect the slightest barrier between ourselves and the brother alcoholic who still suffers. We know that society has been demanding that he conform to its laws and conventions. But the essence of his alcoholic malady is the fact that he has been unable or unwilling to conform, either to the laws of man or God. If he is anything, the sick alcoholic is a rebellious nonconformist. How well we understand that; every member of Alcoholics Anonymous was once a rebel himself. Hence we cannot offer to meet him at any half-way mark. We must enter the dark cave where he is and show him that we understand. We realize that he is altogether too weak and confused to jump hurdles. If we raise obstacles, he might stay away and perish. He might be denied his priceless opportunity.

So when he asks, "Are there any conditions?" we joyfully reply, "No, not a one." When skeptically he comes back saying, "But certainly there must be things that I have to do and believe," we quickly answer, "In Alcoholics Anonymous there are no *musts*." Cynically, perhaps, he then inquires, "What is this all going to cost me?" We are able to laugh and say, "Noth-

Alcoholics Anonymous

Alcoholic 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.

ing at all, there are no fees and dues." Thus, in a brief hour, is our friend disarmed of his suspicion and rebellion. His eyes begin to open on a new world of friendship and understanding. Bankrupt idealist that he has been, his idea is no longer a dream. After years of lonely search it now stands revealed. The reality of Alcoholics Anonymous bursts upon him. For Alcoholics Anonymous is saying, "We have something priceless to give, if only you will receive." That is all. But to our new friend, it is everything. Without more ado, he becomes one of us.

Our membership tradition does contain, however, one vitally important qualification. That qualification relates to the use of our name, Alcoholics Anonymous. We believe that any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an A.A. group provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation. Here our purpose is clear and unequivocal. For obvious reasons we wish the name Alcoholics Anonymous to be used only in connection with straight A.A. activities. One can think of no A.A. member who would like, for example, to see the formation of "dry" A.A. groups, "wet" A.A. groups, Republican A.A. groups, Communist A.A. groups. Few, if any, would wish our groups to be designated by religious denominations. We cannot lend the A.A. name, even indirectly to other activities, however worthy. If we do so we shall become hopelessly compromised and divided. We think that A.A. should offer its experience to the whole world for whatever use can be made of it. But not its name. Nothing could be more certain.

Let us of A.A. therefore resolve that we shall always be inclusive, and never exclusive, offering all we have to all men save our title. May all barriers be thus leveled, may our unity thus be preserved. And may God grant us a long life—and a useful one!

THERE'S ONE IN EVERY GROUP

The ham psychiatrist — this type just discovered psychiatry six months ago and he thinks that it has done him so much good that he can't wait to pass the word around. He has wrecked many a 12th Step enterprise with his constant misquotes of Strecker, Jellinek, Freud, A.A., etc. Newcomers shy away from him. Everyone is wondering how long he will last.



DOES A PILL JAG COUNT AS A SLIP?

From Greenwich Village, New York City

I know a person who is planning to celebrate three years of "sobriety." He hasn't had a drink in three years. He has been a sturdy member of A.A., often a speaker. For the past eight months, however, he has been using pills secretly. On a number of occasions, he has appeared at meetings and elsewhere under the influence of these drugs. Has he had a "slip?" Can he honestly celebrate three years of "sobriety?"

The answers to these questions seem obvious, but it is surprising how many persons celebrate A.A. anniversaries, although they continue to use pills. In New York and other large cities it is by no means unusual to hear of persons who claim long periods of sobriety while they stagger around under the strange influence of goofballs.

Personally, I think a pill jag is worse than a slip. Surely it is more dishonest. Psychologically, the pill baby has a worse time than the garden variety drunk who says to hell with it and grabs a bottle. Physically, he has a much worse time. Drugs are not eliminated from the body as quickly as alcohol and he suffers more. He has no one but another pill baby to discuss his problem with, even if he feels so inclined. He soon takes to the benzedrine habit to combat the sedative-induced depressions. Inevitably, he winds up in the old squirrel cage: goofballs, hangover; hangover, benzedrine; benzedrine, hangover; hangover, goofballs, and so on until he hits bottom.

Let's look at goofballs. Like many other medicines, they come in tablet, capsule or liquid form. They come in all colors, even in stripes.

The drunks have tagged them with many nicknames. Narcotic users quickly discovered that most of them would "cook up" in a spoon for injection to bring almost instantaneous relief to jangled nerves. Drunks discovered almost as quickly that they would bring at least temporary escape from the shakes, insomnia or "that depressed feeling."

Until recently, such pills as barbitol and benzedrine could be purchased over the counter at the corner drugstore. Now most states require a prescription. In some states only the first prescription is required. The purchaser simply takes the box back to the store for refills. In others states barbiturates must be obtained by prescription but benzedrine and, curiously, paregoric may be bought over the counter.

In New York, where habit-forming drug laws are strict, all of these drugs may be purchased from bootleg druggists and doctors. Prices, depending on the supply, vary from 10 cents to 50 cents a piece.

And so it is quite easy to get goofballs. In

fact, many A.A.s, sympathizing with fellow drunks, carry a supply of pills with them on 12th Step calls. It doesn't occur to these persons that they are not only practicing medicine without a license but may be endangering the lives of their prospects!

The reason doctors warn against indiscriminate use of these drugs is the fact that the average layman doesn't know anything of the history of his "patient." All too often, the patient may have taken a handful of pills *before* his rescuers appeared on the scene. When he receives more of the same, he may die from an overdose.

The A.A. who gets sober on the Program has no need for pills. He will have days when he feels the need for a lift in spirits; when he thinks that he needs "something to sleep." He avoids alcohol in any form because he knows that he can't take the first drink. And yet the dry jitters persist. If he knows nothing of pills, he solves his problem by "toughing it out" or by

ADDICTS ANONYMOUS ENDS FIRST YEAR

From Lexington, Ky.

A year ago, several members of the Alcoholics Anonymous Group in this vicinity approached the Medical Officer in Charge of the United States Public Health Service Hospital here in Lexington, Ky., for the purpose of introducing an A.A. group into this institution. It was out of this beginning that the charter group of "Addicts Anonymous" was formed.

The success of our organization is measured only by the success of its members in abstaining from the use of drugs, even though they may be in an environment where they are readily obtainable.

The underlying purpose of Addicts Anonymous is outlined in our preamble:

"Our precepts are patterned after those of Alcoholics Anonymous to which all credit is hereby given and all precedence is acknowledged. We claim no originality but since we believe that the causes of addiction and alcoholism are basically the same, we wish to apply to our lives the truths which have benefited so many otherwise helpless alcoholics. We believe that by so doing, we may regain and maintain our health and sanity."

Those interested in obtaining more information may contact us at the address below, and every confidence will be given inquiries, unless otherwise stated.—Secretary, Addicts Anonymous, Box 2000, Lexington, Ky.

getting together with other A.A.s to "talk it out."

If he knows about goofballs, he may end up by using them. He rationalizes that pills are not alcohol and that he, an alcoholic, can take pills without any of the bad effects. If he resorts to these drugs and finds temporary relief, he may very well be on his way to becoming an addict.

Some doctors distinguish between "addiction" to and a "dependency" on drugs. But it is absolutely true that goofballs, like alcohol, develop a tolerance in the body of the user. The more you use, the more you need. The period of relief from the drug shortens and the user compensates by using larger doses. Just like whiskey, only the name and the effect are different.

Now let's look at the effect of pills on the user. Some persons become elated after a pill or two. Their reactions sometimes are similar to reactions from alcohol. Others appear only to be quieted for a period by pills. Symptoms of overdoses are drowsiness, lack of coordination, disorientation and a general appearance of "goofiness." The hangover eventually becomes just as severe as an alcoholic hangover, but it lasts longer. If the drug is withdrawn immediately, patients may go sleepless for a week.

It has been said by observers that pills bring out all of the "worst qualities" of the individual. Be that as it may, the reaction is progressive and soon the user suffers violent withdrawal symptoms. Because there is no odor on the breath of the pill baby, he is often at a loss to explain his eccentric behavior. For this reason, he becomes all the more secretive, guilt-ridden and frustrated.

In my opinion, an A.A. who deliberately gets goofed up on pills has slipped. He cannot, with honesty, claim to have been on the A.A. Program during the period in which he used pills.

That the pill habit is dangerous—indeed, far more dangerous than the alcohol habit—is an accepted medical fact. There are many cases of users who suffered permanent brain deterioration. One case on record describes a doctor who built up a second habit to 60 grains a day. He was hospitalized for eight months before he began to show signs of slow improvement.

Another curious effect of pills on the body of the user is the fact that pill addicts lose all interest in the sex urge. The drug not only incapacitates the addict but destroys the desire. This effect often is the factor that brings about the discovery of the habit in a husband or wife.

The A.A. who takes to pills is trading the devil for the witch. If you are using pills, openly or secretly, don't try to convince anyone that you're still sober or living the A.A. way of life. It just ain't so.—J.T.

GROUP MEETING DISCUSSION PAGES

(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.)

All groups are invited to contribute to this page not only discussion topics which they have found particularly stimulating, but also other suggestions and ideas pertaining to the conduct of group affairs. Their experience may help other groups.

Last month, for example, a statement of local policies issued by the Spencer, Iowa, Group was published here. Following is a statement of policy on which the Austin, Texas, Group operates:

"Statement of policy of the original Steering Committee of the Austin Group of Alcoholics Anonymous."

Foreword

"The method of selecting members of the Steering Committee was adopted at a meeting in January, 1947, after the group had been in existence for a little over a year. All members of the group were urged to attend and a preponderant majority did attend. At this meeting it was decided that a Steering Committee composed of the seven members who had the longest record for continuous sobriety should constitute the original Steering Committee and should serve without change for the next seven months. At the end of that seven months the member with the longest record of continuous sobriety was to drop out and the member of the group (not on the original committee) with the longest record of continuous sobriety would become a member of the Steering Committee. The next month the second oldest on the committee would drop out and be replaced in the same manner of selection. This was to be a continuous and automatic process. In the same manner the chairman of the meetings for a week's period was to be chosen, that is by having the member with the longest record of continuous sobriety lead the meetings for the first week and so on. The Steering Committee members were to select from among them the chairman, vice chairman, secretary, treasurer, etc., of the Steering Committee. The duties of the Steering Committee are to administer the affairs of the group in a manner deemed beneficial to the best interests of the group as a whole.

Preamble

"The following statements are statements of policy only and are in no way to be construed as being rules. In support of this, it is the belief of the Committee that a rule as such must have a penalty attached and since there is no penalty attending violations of these statements, they can be classed as policies only.

"1. The group has but one purpose: To help the sick alcoholic recover if he wishes.

"2. The group has no opinion on any controversial subject nor does it oppose anyone.

"3. The group has only one requirement for

membership, that being an honest and sincere desire to quit drinking. We assume that anyone who fulfills this requirement will use every means known to A.A. in overcoming the obsession to take the first drink. Failure to do so, in our opinion, is evident admission of the lack of the requirement for membership, and hence an alcoholic automatically forfeits his claim to membership on taking the first drink. Automatic reinstatement is effective the moment the alcoholic expresses a sincere desire to stop drinking again, provided the expression is made at a time when the former member is completely free from the influence of alcohol or drugs of any form.

"4. The clubhouse of the group is a sanctuary in which a member may enjoy and share his sobriety. It is our belief that anyone who has forfeited his membership has also forfeited his right to admission to the clubhouse, and that since he can't help but may hinder the recovery of others present, it is the duty of each and every member present to refuse admission to any former member should he seek it while drinking.

"Since a person seeking assistance for the first time is not a former member, he or she is an exception to this policy.

"5. All financial needs should come from within the group and donations from outsiders should be graciously and politely refused. We take this attitude for obvious reasons, one being that we do not desire that the group feel obligated to anyone; secondly, that no criticism may be made of the organization on the grounds that it charged for its services.

"6. We believe that the good of the group should come first in all matters. The welfare of each individual is important but is secondary to the welfare of the group as a whole.'

"7. We believe that all members should at all times place the emphasis on principles rather than personalities; therefore, the principle of anonymity should be conscientiously upheld.

"8. 'Wet nursing,' as such, is not a function of Alcoholics Anonymous and furthermore, in our opinion, is harmful to the individual in the final outcome. Our definition of 'wet nursing,' as used here, means the attention to and care of any ex-member of A.A. whose attitude is one of 'Give me what I want when I want it' rather than one of 'Do for me what, in your sober judgment, is what I need in order to gain permanent sobriety.'

"9. We believe that while the clubhouse and fellowship are important adjuncts to the program, the real basis for success of the A.A. program is that part which deals with the spiritual—that without the spiritual basis we have merely sworn off drinking in a new manner. In other words, the program is he one thing in A.A. that is of primary importance, anything else is secondary.

"10. We endorse the present method of selecting members of the Steering Committee and leaders of meetings by automatic rotation according to seniority in continuous sobriety.

"11. We recommend, for the group and for individuals, strict adherence to the tradition of A.A. as set forth in the pamphlet entitled *Alcoholics Anonymous Tradition—Twelve Points to Assure Our Future* and the pamphlets detailing these traditions. We also believe in close and active cooperation with the Central Committee of A.A.

"12. We believe that the group and the club should be set up as separate organizations, each having its own governing body but closely cooperating."

Greece Joins List Of Foreign Groups

Heading the list of new groups registered with the General Office of A.A. during the months of November and December is one in Athens, Greece. The complete listing of new groups follows:

GREECE—Athens
 AUSTRALIA—Adelaide, South Australia
 MARIANAS ISLANDS—Guam (BMP Camp No. I Group)
 ALASKA—Anchorage
 CALIFORNIA—Bell Garden, Colton (Hub City Group), San Francisco (Park-Presidio Group, St. Francis Women's Group)
 COLORADO—Grand Lake
 CONNECTICUT—Norwich (City Group)
 FLORIDA—Lake Wales, Sebring, Winter Park
 GEORGIA—Dublin
 INDIANA—Anderson, Wabash
 IOWA—Grundy Center (Grundy County Group), Mason City, Sioux Rapids
 KANSAS—Argonia, Lawrence, Parsons (Lone)
 KENTUCKY—Covington, Mayfield
 LOUISIANA—Houma
 MAINE—Newport
 MARYLAND—Colmar Manor
 MASSACHUSETTS—Westfield
 MISSOURI—Sedalia
 MONTANA—Anaconda
 NEBRASKA—Columbus
 NEW JERSEY—Newark (Forest Hill Group), Passaic (Central Group), Westfield (Union County Negro Group)
 NEW YORK—Larchmont, New York City (Murray Hill Group), Pleasantville
 NORTH CAROLINA—Henderson
 OHIO—Cleveland (Baxter Avenue Group), Strongsville
 OREGON—Roseburg
 PENNSYLVANIA—North East, Philipsburg, Washington, Wellsboro
 SOUTH CAROLINA—Charleston (Tidewater Group), Edisto Island
 TEXAS—Colorado City, Henderson
 UTAH—Nephi (Nebo Group), Salt Lake City (Altrun Group)
 VIRGINIA—Warsaw (Northern Neck Group)
 WISCONSIN—Edgerton

Real Oldtimers Meet with New 'Babies' To Exchange Views on Program

From Manhattan, N. Y.

A panorama of A.A. firsts was unfolded the other night in New York City when several of its first members, including one of the co-founders, gathered in the world's first A.A. clubhouse in the first meeting of its kind and inevitably took up the first question that so many ask: *What makes A.A. work?*

An experiment in bringing together some of the oldest "greybeards" and some of the dewiest newcomers, the meeting was held for members with either five years or more, and six months or less, in A.A. Six who attended could count more than ten years of A.A. each, and several could go up to six and seven. The meeting place was the old 24th Street Clubhouse, now the A.A. Seamen's Club, and even as in the past whenever more than 100 people crowded into the downstairs room, the chairs were straight, hard and uncomfortable, the smoke became so thick that from three rows away the chairman was all but blotted out of sight, but it was "home" for many and altogether wonderful.

The audience covered quite a spread of years, both in and out of A.A. Some of the oldtimers in A.A. have been around for a half century plus, though the glow in their eyes and the smile on their lips belied it. Some of the newcomers were pretty young, younger than the original members were when they first came in. It was a mixed gathering of men and women of many walks of life. Doctors and lawyers, business men, stenographers, ex-GI's, a number of seamen, an actress and actor or two, a lovely young gal with a page-boy bob and a lovely elderly lady with white hair. It was, in short, a typical A.A. meeting as to audience, but a new kind because of its historic "firsts."

The purpose of the meeting was not to set a pattern for all meetings, but to determine whether there would be any interest and extra discussion value in bringing the oldest and youngest together occasionally.

The six who have been members a decade or more and who came out from behind their whiskers to talk a little about those earliest days when A.A. was newborn and almost still-born, and their combined assets could be measured in nickels and dimes—on some days—were: Bill W., who with Dr. Bob of Akron, started it all; Horace C., Bert T., Dick S., Jack S. and Sim R.

But the greybeards indulged in surprisingly little reminiscing, although the return to 24th Street naturally revived many memories of the past. What interludes of remembering—when that the oldsters did permit themselves, were merely, as Bill expressed it, "for purposes of identification." The greybeards reflected the rejuvenat-

ing vitality of A.A. and showed that instead of retiring to some musty corner to yearn for the good old days, they have continued to grow, too, and are looking forward with confidence and optimism.

Horace C. opened the meeting with a brief reference to his own story and how when on his way to see Bill for the first time more than a decade ago he was saying to himself, "If this fellow hasn't got the answer, the river has."

Horace introduced Bill who also gave a brief case history of himself, recalling again "the man across the kitchen table" who gave him his first inkling of the practical results of a Spiritual Power. Getting into a discussion about the Steps, Bill said that in his opinion, an alcoholic "is perhaps half way well" as soon as he takes the 1st Step and admits, honestly and completely, to himself that he is powerless over alcohol.

When the meeting was thrown open to questions from the floor, the eager interest of the newcomers prompted a steady flow of queries that kept the greybeards on the edges of their chairs for more than an hour. Typical of the democratic flavor of most A.A. meetings, the newcomers showed no hesitancy about probing the oldtimers with searching questions and were even ready to debate, six months against 10 years, if the answer given did not seem to completely satisfy them. Yet, there was plenty of evidence of the deep appreciation of each other that runs through A.A. and it was spoken not only by the newcomers but also by one of the oldtimers himself, Dick S., who in discussing how his relationships with people had undergone a basic improvement since joining A.A. said, "I am deeply grateful to the people who have come into A.A. after me."

With Horace in the chair as a relaying point, the newcomers asked the questions and the oldtimers tried to give the answers. Practically every subject that comes up in A.A. discussions was tossed out onto the floor and kicked around a bit, and then came the big one: *What makes A.A. work?*

Bill's answer: "That question may never be fully answered. Why A.A. works is fundamentally a mystery. When we consider that for thousands of years few alcoholics escaped from their misery and that we are now witnessing a wholesale escape, that adds up to a miracle. And a miracle is a mystery. Of course, we know that A.A. has certain elements which have proved effective. We now can understand, be understood and be understanding through our identification with fellow alcoholics. We have a program for living through which we can readjust our lives. We even use the element of fear, applying the



old lesson of the child who finally learns that he'll burn his hands whenever he touches the hot stove. We also have a new, compelling interest, and because drunks are usually bankrupt idealists, a compelling interest is vital. Yet, we know that all of the devices we use have been tried before, at least separately. We have lumped them all together and added one more element. Doctors call the latter, 'X.' We really can't explain it."

Horace voiced a similar answer. "I call it 'The Great Intangible.' I have spent many hours trying to analyze the various elements of A.A.—the 12 Steps, the group therapy, the fellowship and brotherhood, honesty, and so on. I can see how all of these things help, of course. But no matter how I add it up or analyze it there is something that I can't quite define. I don't know what it is, or at least I can't describe or classify it exactly, but I know it works. That's what I call 'The Great Intangible.'"

Bert T. cited the three H's: "I believe the three most important elements in the A.A. program are honesty with self, humility and helpfulness." He also stressed the importance and the value of active prayer. ..

Similar answers, varying—according to individual interpretations and viewpoints, yet following along A.A. fundamentals came from Jack S., Sim R., and other oldtimers. Answers came also from some of the newcomers who had begun to feel that "this is going to work for me."

After nearly two hours, the chairman decided that it was time to "close the meeting in the usual way," after which the coffee began to appear from the kitchen, and the audience broke up into clusters of people, still talking, and laughing, too.

Perhaps it was a symbol of A.A., when looking across the room at that moment, one could see in each of the little groups one or two of the greybeards surrounded by several of the "youngsters," and the murmur of voices telling that the word of A.A. was being passed along from oldtimer to newcomer, and being passed right back again.

AND YOU TAKES YOUR 'CHERCE!

From Pittsburgh, Pa.

All up and down the ranks of some 50,000 A.A.s in the United States and the rest of the world you frequently hear of "spiritual trouble"—that is, difficulty on the part of A.A.s, chiefly new A.A.s, in accepting a Higher Power.

When I had been dry two years I said in my anniversary speech that any guy or gal who got drunk and blamed the spiritual phase of the A.A. Program was a damned liar looking for trouble. Now I have mellowed somewhat and look on this difficulty with a more sympathetic eye.

It is true the 12 Steps mince no words about the necessity of accepting a Higher Power as a corollary to the admission that "*our lives have become unmanageable*" because we are "*powerless over alcohol*." It is also true that the 12 Steps formulize several times on "God" or "Him" or "His" as synonymous with the Higher Power, but with assurance that this spiritual entity may be accepted "*as we understand Him*."

This language does not brand A.A. as a religious cult, a sect, or even a church-loving fellowship. These are the only readily available terms with which *anyone* may name a Power higher than we poor humans and human ex-drunks.

"God" is employed because a good, large majority of the world's population accepts this term and understands it in one way or another. According to the latest edition of the Yearbook of American Churches, there are some 667,700,000 Christians of all faiths in the world today. There are about a billion and a half people who belong to other faiths of one kind or another—meaning that about two billion men and women know what the word "God" means—to them, individually or collectively—when it is used.

I am not one to say that more than two billion of the world's population is out of step with me because I have no physical proof that God exists and am, consequently, in the category that "doesn't know," hence agnostic. I have merely quit arguing theology, which doesn't get many people many places, and have accepted a spiritual concept that I do know does exist far higher than my poor powers in this world.

Let us get down to cases. Is there anywhere a really sincere person who truly dissents, even intellectually, from the belief in a Higher Power, who believes that individual man is self-created and a law unto himself, that there is no more unity and coherence to the Universe than that created by man-made laws, ethics, morals, rules of conduct, folkways? I truly doubt it. After a good long time on this earth, talking

with a good many hundreds of people of all kinds, faiths, races and intellectual endowments, including a few professed atheists, there is a recognition of spiritual life in all.

All do not create the God concept in their own image, visualize the Higher Power as a gigantic being of human shape with a long white beard and benign countenance, however. Nor do all—perhaps not any, really—agree on standard definition of the spiritual factor, since all thinking men and women have their own individual concepts. They merely sense, innately, that there is Something that created, designed or controls.

Even the groping agnostic mind, which is only dissident in that it refuses to accept a broad, general definition of Deity, senses characteristics in this "Something" which may be readily personified—or do we tend to personify in order to understand in our own terms? For example, the giraffe had to get its neck out of joint to reach and eat leaves high up on jungle trees, and it has kept its evolutionary neck out. There are little forms of insect life which when danger approaches roll themselves into tight, hard balls that roll away to inconspicuous safety.

Anyone who has ever suffered a terrific accident to body or limb knows the haven of unconsciousness, which serves as an anesthetic when pain becomes too great for endurance—the quality of mercy. Alcoholics who have finally made up with the world after years of rebellion, slippery dealings, cheating and double crossing learn something of the quality of forgiveness by others that is too general to be really personal.

Human minds have dreamed and worked for centuries to bring forth a moving mechanism, the automobile, the airplane, the submarine.

Anchorage, Alaska Now Boasts a Group

From Anchorage, Alaska

I wish to inform *The A.A. Grapevine* that a new group was formed in Anchorage, Alaska, one month ago (November), composed of former members from different groups in the States.

We have had several newcomers already and have plans for club rooms in the near future. Our address is P. O. Box 551, Anchorage, Alaska.

This country certainly needs A.A. in the worst way. Anchorage has a population of about 15,000 and over 80 drink-dispensing establishments—14 in one block on the main street!—*J.R.B.*

Compare any of these finite, temporary gadgets with the self-reproducing body and the noble and ignoble soul of man—the soaring bird, or the cold-blooded fish!

These few examples are reached at random to indicate, rather than to prove, the existence of "Something." The light shed cannot compare with the bright sun seen by those who proclaim revelation from the feed box. It is not even bright enough to lead anyone, myself included, to a clear perception of all the intricate relationships in a confusing world.

Perhaps it is better so because a bright light would turn my eyes on others and how they walk rather than on my own inner self. What light I have found is but the small lamp of my own fumbling thought, dimly burning, shedding only enough light to keep me sober and at peace 24 hours at a time through more than eight years.

This necessary and vital recognition of a Higher Power—which is really a recognition that the sum total of all other men and women, electricity, atomic power, gravity and a lot of other things that I can see or prove are greater than I—does not in any way mean that I must join any or all of the some 75 Christian faiths that maintain churches in this country, unless I personally want to join up because joining may help me get and keep dry. I still hold to the concept of a Power "*as I understand*" that concept and as that concept in terms of me impresses me with my own finiteness.

If the newcomer in A.A. will stop struggling, breathing hard and making ripples on the spiritual waters, he will soon see what I mean. He can begin with any "Power" higher than he—the greatest good for the greatest number, the corner policeman, the sun and the stars, or anything else he can grasp. he doesn't have to take A.A. on faith alone, because all around him he actually can see men and women who punished The Creature for years now moving calmly, their noses clean and their lives comparatively serene, all because of A.A. He can begin to get dry on the Power that regenerated these characters before he came in.

A new A.A. need not worry about forcing himself into a religious mold to get at the spiritual teaching of the A.A. program. If he will relax and let easy do it, he will find a spiritual mold filling in around him to hold him secure. If that spiritual mold later comes to resemble one of the faiths of Christendom—or even of magic!—and he has an open mind about religion, he will have time enough to consider affiliation with men of like mind in an existing faith.—*Bill L.*

THE CLIP SHEET

Excerpts from the Public Press.

Boston, Mass., *Post*: "Guernsey Island in the English Channel has an effective way of handling toppers. It still retains its ancient custom of blacklisting alcoholics, in the hope of reforming them. A member of the tippler's family applies to the court, which issues an official order that no one is to sell him liquor thereafter, and to put teeth into the ruling the court orders a police photo of the offender to be posted in every bar. "In England in the days of Oliver Cromwell drunkards were punished by being forced to walk around in a barrel with their heads protruding from the top and their arms dangling on the sides through holes. It has been suggested that this custom may be the origin of the term 'pickled.'

"The ancient Romans used an 'aversion therapy' that is not unlike certain modern methods in use. Chronic alcoholics had to drink wine in which live eels were swimming, on the theory that this would create excessive disgust.

"The word teetotaler, by the way, stems from the French 'te-a-toute a l'heure,' which means literally 'tea in a little while.'

"Alexander the Great would have lived longer if he had squeezed less grapes. He was a prodigious drinker, one of the mightiest, in fact, of his era. But he carried the crock to the spigot once too often. After two nights of guzzling he drained the so-called Hercules cup, which was the equivalent of six bottles of wine. He never awoke."

The Cliche Expert Testifies on Alcoholism

(With apologies to Frank Sullivan)

Q. Mr. Heister, you are an expert in the use of the cliché as applied to alcoholism, are you not?

A. Indubitably.

Q. In that case, would you give us your definition of an alcoholic?

A. An alcoholic is a very sick person.

Q. How sick?

A. Sick as a dog.

Q. Any particular kind of dog?

A. No, just any old dog.

Q. Mr. Heister, what happened to you the last time you had a drink?

A. I had a slip.

Q. What is a slip?

A. A coy word used by members of Alcoholics Anonymous to convey the idea that they almost murdered themselves.

Q. How did this slip make you feel, Mr. Heister?

A. First, I felt high as a kite, then tight as a tick. After that I was loaded but the police said I was soused.

Q. And how did you feel the next day when it was all over?

A. It wasn't the next day; it was the next month.

Q. Very well, but how did you feel?

A. I had a brutal hangover, violent nausea, hot and cold sweats, no appetite and a completely shot nervous system. I was full of guilt and remorse.

Q. What caused you to do all this to yourself—to start drinking again—to slip?

A. I had an argument with my wife while an old Navy chum and my college roommate were in town for a visit. Besides, I had just lost my job and I was thirsty.

Q. Hmmm! Tell me, Mr. Heister, what does Alcoholics Anonymous think of such goings-on?

A. I think they call it "wet thinking."

Q. Would you say, Mr. Heister, that this slip had anything to do with a personal feeling of frustration, resentment, elation or self-pity?

A. Yes.

Q. What was your next course of action?

A. I put a nickel in the slot and had a long talk with a fellow who's got the Program.

Q. What did he recommend?

A. Sobriety.

Q. Anything else?

A. The 12 Steps.

Q. Just what are the 12 Steps, Mr. Heister?

A. Oh, they are various Steps which most slip-pees skip.

Q. Which one did you skip, Mr. Heister?

A. The first one.

Q. Mr. Heister, what are your plans for the future?

A. I don't worry about the future. I'm on the 24 hour plan—day-to-day living.

Q. Does that help?

A. Yes, I'm on top of the heap.

Q. What heap, Mr. Heister?

A. On top of the world, feeling fine. I've had a tremendous release.

Q. Release?

A. Yes, my divorce decree became final yesterday.

Q. Let's stick to alcoholism, Mr. Heister! What are you doing about it?

A. I'm tapering off and reading the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*.

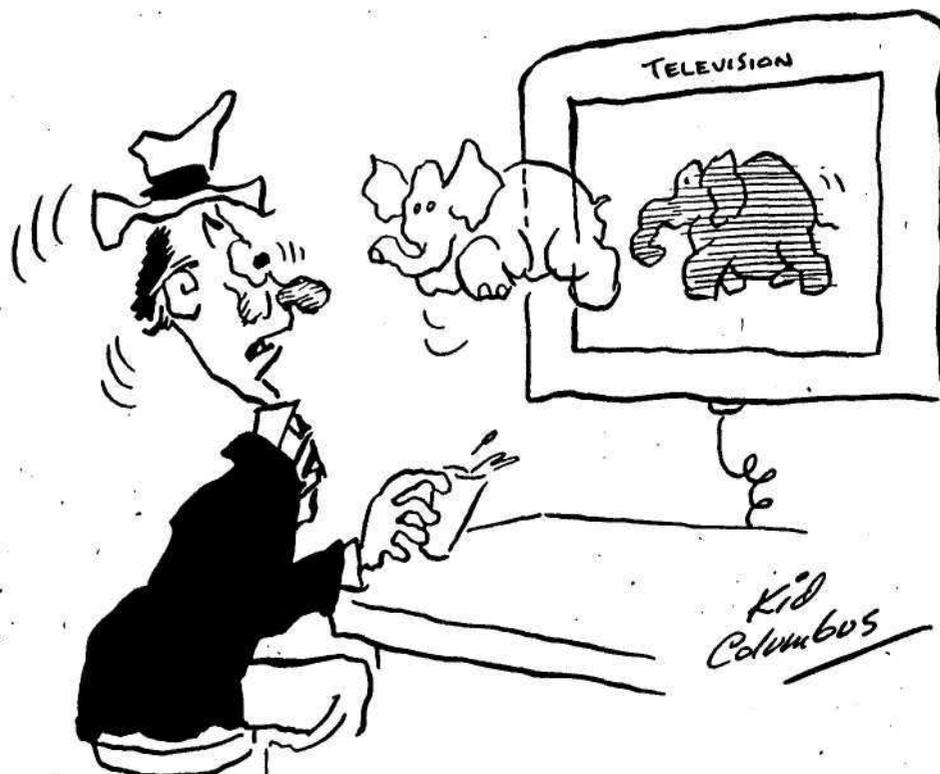
Q. How do you like the book?

A. It doesn't make sense to me. Just a lot of case histories proving that alcoholics have to stop drinking.

Q. Are you an alcoholic, Mr. Heister?

A. I don't know but I am an expert on clichés.

Q. That will be all, Mr. Heister!—A.P.



"We're glad we joined A.A. before television!"

A.A.'s Country-Wide News Circuit

English Coffee Improved—"We report progress both in spiritual strength and in materially improving the potability of English coffee," reports our correspondent from London, England. "One stalwart who met A.A. through the Bermuda Group makes weary and frequent journeys from Portsmouth to help and to keep in touch. The members have gladly welcomed nine trans-Atlantic visitors since Bert T. and Grace O. did so much to get the movement started some months ago, but they still regard American and Canadian A.A.s as too much a stay-at-home crowd. We feel that with rationing and travel difficulties, numerous small groups adaptable to 'home visiting' will show the greatest rewards." The London members would like to hear from any other readers to help maintain and further a good relations policy. The contact is BM/AA1, London, WC 1.

A.A. Properly Tax Exempt—The state board of tax appeals gave the Cincinnati, Ohio, Fellowship of A.A. a friendly pat on the back recently in an order exempting its property from taxation. Exemption of the Group's residential property at 405 Oak Street was granted on the ground that it is used exclusively for charitable purposes. The order applied only to the Cincinnati Fellowship. Other units of A.A. operating in Ohio are understood to rent the property used for meeting places. Along with the order came a commendation from the board which said in part: "As this is the first exemption asked by an institution of this character the board feels that it should receive such consideration and comment as it richly deserves. Many applications come to this board for exemption on charitable grounds wherein it is extremely difficult to ascertain that charity is actually dispensed. The present requests are indeed refreshing in that herein is found affirmative answer to Cain's question, 'Am I my brother's keeper?'" The news story in the *Cincinnati Enquirer* then goes on to praise A.A. and tell of its work.

New Members in Earnest—The Dumont, N. J., Group, founded in December, 1946, as an offshoot of the large Hackensack Group, continues to help alcoholics in North Bergen County. In the past six months the attendance has grown from about 15 to 30 active members at closed meetings, every other Friday, and more than 50 for open meetings, these latter not including the public. New

members are reported as following the program in an especially serious way. Most of these are in their late thirties, one in the late twenties. Recently a meeting was held for members of the clergy, medical profession and police of North Bergen County, about 300 being invited. One of the speakers was Dr. E. Blaisdell, senior director, Rockland State Hospital, Orangeburg, N. Y.



Attend Tri-State Banquet—Thirteen members of the Pioneer Group of Winona, Minn., recently went to Madison, Wis., where they attended the Tri-State anniversary banquet and open meeting sponsored by the Madison Group. One carload got lost on the return trip, not from nipping, and traveled back by way of Black River, a considerable distance out of line. The Pioneer Group has been advertising in the personal column of the *Republican Herald* as follows, "Problem or Compulsive Drinkers. We help ourselves by helping you. Write Alcoholics Anonymous, Pioneer Group, P.O. Box 122, Winona."

Non-A.A.s Aid Growth—Non-alcoholic wives and husbands of the members of the Houston, Texas, Suburban Group have banded together to understand better the program and in an attempt to adjust themselves to any possible change which occurs in a member of the family upon accepting the program and working closely with the 12 Steps. This auxiliary has been successful in many ways in promoting the growth of the Suburban Group, which now meets in its new clubhouse at 1949 Richmond Road. "Like a 'voice crying in the wilderness' we are endeavoring to offer a way of life to the more than 36,000 known alcoholics in this city," the report to *The Grapevine* says. "We are accomplishing this growth, not by shouting our

wares from the roof tops but as a result of a quiet, dignified presentation of the drinking problem as we understand it, to both the medical profession and clergy. In this manner many alcoholic cases are presented to us and more than a few have accepted the program and are well on the way to complete rehabilitation. Like other groups, we have social functions as a part of our therapeutics, but the

primary purpose of the group is never lost. We intend to safeguard the sobriety of our members and acquire the necessary knowledge and experience of the group to pass on to others having a similar problem."

Army Co-operates—

Things are looking up for the Pioneer, Group on Okinawa with a regular attendance of between 10 and 15 at the two weekly meetings on Monday and Thursday. Quite a few have been coming in from the States who have been members there. An effort is being made to obtain clubrooms for use of the men in their spare time. Recently an Army chaplain and a chief psychiatrist, Captain Horneck from the Army base hospital were present. This hospital cares for men from the camp, which now includes about 2,000 men.

Brady Tries Open Meeting—Although started only in August, 1947, the Brady, Texas, Group recently held its first open meeting for the public. The group numbers less than 10 members and there was some doubt as to public response. However, more than 300 representatives of business, professions, civic clubs and churches turned out, although the city's population is only about 7,000. Speakers from the San Angelo, Coleman and Seminole Groups helped to give the session a lift.

What Newspapers Say—Discussing the flourishing branch of A.A. in the State Prison at Waupun, Wis., of which John H. Woodhouse of the prison record office has been adviser, the *Milwaukee Tribune* concludes in an editorial, "A.A. at the Prison," that A.A. is an excellent form of group therapy and that "perhaps there is a clue to the direction we should take in the success of A.A. at the prison. It is at least worth thinking about."

A feature story in the Pittsburgh, (Pa.) *Press* recently ran to more than a column with a description of how a hospitalized alcoholic became a member. *The Press* praises the more than 500 Pittsburgh members who celebrated the seventh anniversary of their group in Carnegie Music Hall recently.

Recently a newspaper editor from Prince Albert, Sask., Can., who has been "lone wolfing" it, in his efforts to start a group there, made a 2,800-mile trip to attend a third anniversary celebration in Winnipeg. Since that time in a column in *The Herald*, "Speaking for Myself," he has written a series of articles discussing various phases of A.A.

Pat Paterson, writing in the Paterson, N. J., *Morning Call* heads a recent column "Tipplers' Tip," or "Better the Slip Before Cup Reaches Lip" and points out that of 29,000 chronic alcoholics in New Jersey less than 800 each year are given treatment in private and public hospitals. "Less than 50 per cent of the general hospitals refer alcoholics to other institutions or organizations," he writes, "but of those who do 21 per cent of their patients are referred to A.A. Nine out of 12 mental hospitals report that they refer their patients to A.A. and at one institution investigating professors learned there is a chapter there."

Want Clubroom in '48—Members of the Aberdeen, S. D., Group have adopted the slogan "A clubroom in 1948" and three energetic members have been assigned to combat the housing shortage in the community and find suitable quarters. Members of the group, founded in March, 1946, were entertained at a special Christmas party by the Gerhard Kiddie Troop, ages 4 to 12, who put on various dances. Several members of the Britten Group, started by three former Aberdeen members, attended. The group meets every Wednesday and Sunday night in the Milwaukee Women's clubrooms.

Six Complete Year—Six men observed their first 12 months of sobriety at a recent meeting of the Pioneer Group of Winona, Wis., with members, their wives and guests gathering at the Steak Shop. Four visitors from Eau Claire were present.

Business Men Endorse A.A.—A resolution adopted by a unanimous vote of the directors of the Front Royal, Va., Chamber of Commerce recently

read: "Whereas it has come to the attention of the board of directors of this chamber that a chapter of Alcoholics Anonymous has been organized in Front Royal . . . and whereas the members of this board are in thorough sympathy and accord with the purposes, aims and objects of the said organization: Therefore be it resolved . . . that this board . . . endorse the purposes, aims and objects of the said organization which has thus far resulted in accomplishments not heretofore believed possible of consummation."

Open Meeting Draws 900—An estimated 900 people thronged to the First Christian Church of Palestine, Texas, recently to attend the first open meeting of the group there. Although some guests were from surrounding counties, the attendance was believed outstanding for a city of 15,000. Among the speakers was Bishop Clinton S. Quin of Houston.

Get Clubrooms—Clubrooms have been secured by members of the Staunton, Va., Group, which reports it hopes to be installed in the quarters by the time this issue appears.

Attendance Wins Subscriptions—At a recent meeting of the Endicott, N. Y., Group, it was voted to give all of those who have attended three meetings a yearly subscription to *The Grapevine*. Fourteen names were included with the notice to this magazine.

Many Holiday Parties—Although the holidays are weeks past, reports of a considerable number of observances have been sent to *The Grapevine*.

Goshen, Ind., A.A.s joined with members at Elkhart, 10 miles distant, in celebration of New Year's, which was marked by an informal program, a short talk and a buffet supper, enjoyed by about 100 persons. The same two groups plan to join early in February for the third anniversary party of the Elkhart organization which held its first meeting February 6, 1945. The Goshen Group will be a year old next July 21 and now numbers about 20 members who meet twice weekly.

An afternoon party at Kent, Ohio, was given over to the children with toys of all kinds to fit their ages. Ice cream, cake and balloons were handed out around a large tree. Presents were exchanged at the regular evening meeting and there was a songfest and dancing. Over 150 enjoyed the celebration.

About 50 children from the Polk County Juvenile Home in Des Moines, Iowa, were guests at the club there for a dinner, entertainment and gifts.

The Chattanooga, Tenn., Group gave food, clothes and toys to a family in which both parents are alcoholics. The

kitty one meeting night before Christmas supplied the funds and the family was designated by the Salvation Army.

Los Angeles, Cal., A.A.s went to the Camarillo State Hospital for a party with alcoholic patients for an annual party and Christmas meeting. Many former patients, now members of outside groups, returned for the gathering. Two subscriptions to *The Grapevine* were given as presents.

Music, coffee, a floor show, buffet turkey dinner and dancing made up the New Year's party program for Kansas City, Mo., Group members at Garrett Hall. A party for the youngsters was also arranged.

New Year's Eve was celebrated by Niagara Frontier A.A.s with a party at the Food Craft Hall in Buffalo.

The Guild hall of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church was the scene of the New Year's Eve party in Spencer, Iowa, with many visitors from other groups in that section.

Wichita, Kans., A.A.s had two parties, a Christmas dinner at the club, and a New Year's Eve party.

With a guarantee in advance of "no headaches" the Rutland, Vt., Group celebrated New Year's at the club rooms with food, favors, punch, dancing and cards.

The first annual Christmas party of the Brighter Side Group, Waterloo, Iowa, was held before Christmas in the Sacred Heart Church basement parlors with an attendance of nearly 100 members and families. Visitors were present from Grundy Center, Reinbeck, Tripoli and Independence.

Like Open Meetings—With regard to open meetings, our correspondent in San Luis Obispo, Cal., writes, "We began a group effort here on the 'open' basis largely because our members drove in from fairly great distances and the couples just naturally attended together.

"The same tendency was noted in general family relationships such as sister bringing brother. This was an open territory on the California Coast, and we have watched with interest the founding of other groups nearby. They have all seemed to grow in the open tradition, without any decisions taken by the founders.

"We have felt that the wives and close relatives of the alcoholics have helped in all phases of group work.

"Advantage has been taken of meetings in which we found ourselves 'closed' by accidents in attendance to sound out the members on the matter of holding closed meetings. There has been no desire for a change in that direction thus far.

"These comments are from small town experience. We shall be interested in reactions from areas of heavier population."

Indiana Anniversaries Observed—That there were only two A.A.s in Ft. Wayne, Ind., five years ago, while now there are three groups in the city as well as others in Warsaw, Kendallville, Wabash, Monroeville and North Manchester was recalled at the recent anniversary banquets in Ft. Wayne and South Bend. Group I of Ft. Wayne observed its fifth anniversary with a banquet at the Chamber of Commerce with representatives of the groups mentioned as well as from Marion, Indianapolis, Lima and St. Mary's, Ohio, together with representatives of the clergy, medicine, business, professional leaders and city officials. A magazine writer of national renown was chief speaker. The South Bend banquet was held at the Oliver Hotel with 225 present.

Some New Groups—Although a regular meeting hall had not been obtained at the time *The Grapevine* was informed, Olean, N. Y., now has a group formed of members who formerly attended meetings in Salamanca and Bradford. Starting in October, these cities inaugurated a regular monthly joint meeting the second Sunday of each month with each group taking its turn as host.

Another new group in this area is the Amherst Group in North Buffalo, whose members are meeting in the Main-Fillmore rooms at 2629 Main Street on Friday and Sunday evenings at 8 o'clock with the former a closed session.

Building on the foundation laid some months ago by J. M., Sioux Falls, S. D., attorney, a group has been formed in the South Dakota State Penitentiary at Sioux Falls. J. M. was aided by F. O., an inmate of the prison. Address is the South Dakota Penitentiary Chapter of A.A., Box 911, Sioux Falls, S. D.

First meeting of the Hutchinson, Kans., Group was held late last fall at the Leon Hotel and now numbers five men and one woman. Four of the present members were associated with the Wichita Group. Meetings are held twice weekly in members' homes, Thursdays and Sundays. Address is P. O. Box No. 845, Hutchinson.

The Johnson City, Tenn., Group recently sponsored a group at the National Soldiers' Home just outside the city and another at Elizabethton, both of which are growing well. The Elizabethton Group meets Tuesday night at private homes and ministers are honorary members. The Mountain Home Group has changed its meeting night to Friday at the Veterans' Administration Hospital staff room. Members of the two groups attended the John-

son City meetings in the basement of the public library.

A.A.s of the new Parkchester Group, Bronx, N. Y., have been meeting in St. Helena's School since the founding in October and report things going well. A leaflet put out by the church says that the meetings represent "a practical, well-working society which has done wonderful work. We are proud to have them with us." Meetings are held Tuesday nights.

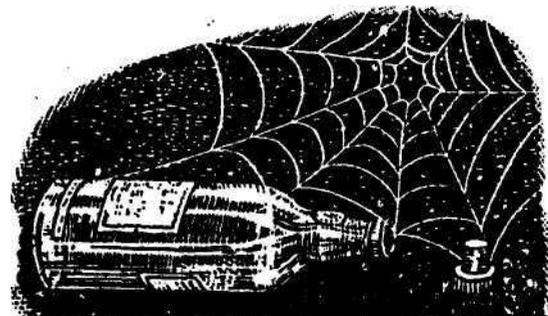
Wichita, Kans., A.A.s are proud of the groups they have sponsored in nearby towns with three established and two others in process of formation.

According to *The Derelict Schooner* of Jacksonville, Fla., the St. Augustine Group had its first meeting just before the holidays at the home of G. W. with four members present. Three members of the Murray Hill Group also attended.

Seven new members at Manchester, Ia., started their own group recently with the aid of 130 other members from Dubuque, Cedar Rapids, Maringo, Oelwein and Waterloo. Principal speakers were from Dubuque and Wisconsin. Meetings will be held Monday nights at the home of T. C.

Frontier Has Paper—*The Niagara Frontier A.A. Bulletin* is the latest of the new exchanges to reach *The Grapevine* office. The fourth issue is an attractive mimeographed sheet carrying a good selection of news as well as a table showing how 62 years of sobriety were reached by various members in the last two months, the times ranging from one to seven years.

Forms Own Group—F.A.R., writing to *The Paradox* of Kansas City, Mo., says that he has formed a group of his own. After association with groups in Galveston, Houston, Dallas and Kansas City he took a job on a paper in King City, Cal., where he has been trying unsuccessfully to found a group. His previous experiences had convinced him that without God's help he was hopeless, but now he writes: "I found myself in Phoenix, stiff as a plank. So I went back to Galveston where I came to realize that only with the help of God could I quit drinking. That's when I took the 3rd Step and God and I formed our group. You won't find it listed in the A.A. directory, but there's a group in King City, Cal. Its members are God and F.A.R."





Just in case you didn't see it in the column last month, may we remind you that you can win two subscriptions to *The A.A. Grapevine* in the next few months? The first goes to the gal or guy who submits the best idea for a new contest. The second goes to the winner. Because everybody liked the Best Hiding Place Contest we want to get another one going as soon as possible. Send your ideas to the Bottoms Up Editor, *The A.A. Grapevine*, Box 328, Grand Central Annex, New York.

* * *

As we go to press, Paul B., of the Bennington, Vt., Group, sends us the first idea for the new contest. He suggests that readers compete for prizes for the best A.A. beverage. Paul believes that anything would be better than the non-alcoholic drinks available now. He offers the following recipe for "The Switchell"—two tablespoons molasses, one teaspoon vinegar, one-half teaspoon dried ginger, small pinch salt (optional). Ice water to fill large glass. Try it. Paul says it's tops.

* * *

Before we announce the winner of the handsome two-quart cork in the Best Hiding Place Contest, we would like to include a roundup of last-minute entries. The following reports of hiding places arrived at the office late. We think that all of them are good, some of them excellent. Here they are:

L.T.G., of the Mobile, Ala., Group, reports: "Of all my numerous hiding places, I believe my favorite was pouring gin in the alcohol bottle.

Weeks went by before my husband, confused by my many trips to the bathroom discovered that the innocent and obvious container of rubbing alcohol didn't contain rubbing alcohol at all!"

W.W.H., of a Chicago Group, reports: "I remember a couple of hiding places I used with great success. 'I was in the undertaking business for many years before my drinking caught up with me. In the prep-

aration room, where the embalming is done, there was a cabinet full of shelves for embalming fluid, etc. I kept one shelf for my booze and, as a rule, there were a dozen or more used fluid bottles there which had been refilled with gin. My wife, who by all odds is a great little bottle finder, was completely baffled until a certain day when she hid in the room pretending to be a corpse. When I slipped in the cabinet for a refresher, she popped out from under the sheet and caught me!"

Marjo C., of the San Angelo, Tex., Group, reports that she had her husband, family and friends slowly going nuts trying to find her hiding place. They knew it was somewhere in the house, but where? Marjo would drink two bottles of beer under supervision and then go about her housework. But she kept getting drunker by the minute. Everywhere was searched but Marjo continued to catch one every now and then.



After she got into A.A. she explained that the old vacuum cleaner had been her friend. Seems she fitted a cork into a coke bottle, slipped the whole thing into the cleaner. Apparently, the bottle didn't impair the function of the cleaner and was a handy portable bar.

H.S.J., of the Longview, Wash., Group, reports: "A few years ago I spent several weeks in the orthopedic ward of a large hospital. In the bed next to me was a fellow with a spinal injury. He was in a cast which extended from his arm pits to his ankles and had lost a lot of weight. There was a good sized cavity above his chest. Boy! What a place to hide the bottle! Suspicious doctors and nurses never found the supply."

G.S., of the Pittsfield, Mass., Group, reports that a local woman alcoholic got away with a hiding place to the bitter end. When she died recently of acute alcoholism it was discovered that she had cleaned out all her cold cream jars, perfume bottles, etc., to make room for her "quickies."

H.V.W., of the Portsmouth, Hampshire, England, Group, reports: "There was one hiding place that my wife never found. I always kept a bottle of rum under a pile of manure at the end of our garden. She found the other bottles but never that one."

Carl, of the Cincinnati, Ohio, Group, reports: "My wife generally could find my bottle. One day, however, I decided to tidy up the house when she had gone to market. Coming to the kitchen cabinet, I noticed the sugar canister. I had always wondered why it was never used. I

opened it and what do you suppose I found? You're wrong, I found almost 200 doses of 'Keely Kure.' "

H.H., of the Charleston, S. C., Group, reports: "I bought a half dozen coconuts and, with my knife, bored holes in three of them. After pouring out the milk I refilled with whiskey and carefully plugged the holes with small cork stoppers, clipping them off even with the shell. As the corks were about the same color as the nuts, they were not noticed when mixed in with the others. When I felt the urge, it was a simple matter to remove the corks. This trick fooled the law during prohibition as I drove through the countryside as well as my nosy relatives at home."

* * *

And now for the news you have been waiting for. The winner of the Best Hiding Place Contest is Peter H.R., of the Minneapolis, Minn., Group, who poured a quart of whiskey in the chandelier. Peter would loosen a screw on the bottom of the fixture and pour himself a drink whenever he wanted one. Remember him? Runner up is the member from a Savannah, Ga., Group who successfully hid a bottle in his mother-in-law's shoes!

* * *

A character from the Richmond, Va., Group just walked into the office to say hello. By twisting his arm we made him tell us about this large and flourishing Virginia group. He says that things are going wonderfully well and that one of the members bought 30 subscriptions to *The A.A. Grapevine* as a Christmas present for the group. He reports that the club had a very interesting speaker from Philadelphia recently; that the fellow was not only effective but amusing. This speaker, telling of his drinking experiences, said: "Well, folks, don't think I haven't been through the mill. I was arrested so many times for being drunk and disorderly that they changed the charge to 'reckless walking.' I don't have to worry anymore, anyway. The government takes care of my money; my neighbors take care of my business; and A.A. takes care of my sobriety."

* * *

The next time you hear a good story or a funny drinking experience send it to the Bottoms Up Editor for the column. Drop us a line every now and then with suggestions.

If you do we can make this **LOW-BOTTOM** column the best read part of your magazine!



A.A. Digest —Excerpts from Group Publications

The Visitor, F.C.I., Sandstone, Minn.—"I've tried many different reforms, churches and institutions in my pursuit for truth, but as yet, I have found none which gives the satisfactory answers to the questions I naturally put to them. Actual faith in anything which does not come under the feeling of my own two hands is extremely difficult for me because I can't believe in things which to me are magical promises. The greater power which guides me is an A.A. member who has maintained sobriety for a decade. He is the living proof that I will have peace of mind and contentment for as long as I want it. He is stronger than I. He is a power greater than I. I look up to him, not in adoration as one would to a God, but in humble respect. I can only respect A.A. members and earnestly strive to imitate them."

The Brighter Side, Waterloo, Iowa—"Remember, someone needs us for a friend. Let us be that friend. Remember always those who were good to us in those dark days at the start while we were still picking up pieces of our personality and trying to fit them into new and lasting forms. Once we do that, we have cast off the old shell of self-pity and self-interest and we begin to care deeply about what happens to others. When we learn to be happy in their happiness, hurt with their hurt, we are delivered from all indifference to others. Thus A.A. lights the lamps and charts the sea so unhappy, distressed folk can find the way to a higher, joyful life of sobriety.";

Aridity Review, Spencer, Iowa—"As a thought for the week let your editor repeat the statement on membership printed in 1939 in the first edition of the Big Book: *'The only requirement for membership is an honest desire to stop drinking.'* And there is no provision setting us up as judges of the sick man's honesty of desire. We can, and must, assume that his openly expressed desire is honest and go on from there to help him as we can to accomplish the same

Bill Starts A. A. Tour

Bill W., accompanied by his wife, Lois, left New York this month for an extended tour of large A.A. centers in the United States and Canada. His itinerary includes parts of Canada, the West Coast, Texas, St. Louis, Mo., and Chicago.

Because all stops already have been scheduled it is impossible to change the itinerary, Bill said. He added that both he and Lois regret being unable to drop off in many more cities and towns to visit with A.A. groups.

end for himself which has been such a miracle for those of us who are more fortunate in that we have been the recipients of the A.A. miracle. In one word—tolerance, not just when a man comes to us at first, but every minute of our lives."

Alky Argot, Wisconsin State Prison—"A good business man advertises his wares, either sending a salesman out or going out to solicit business himself. In either case, he benefits. After an A.A. member has reached the point where he is thoroughly familiar with the working principle of his organization he can advance himself by securing new customers, thereby guaranteeing his success for the future. So you see, A.A. is a sound business, a good one, and it's ours for the taking. We need no capital or investment, yet we can establish ourselves in the prosperous business of right living if only we heed the voice of opportunity."

The Weekly, Jefferson City, Mo.—"Did you ever raise a child from a handful of scrawny, squalling humanity to a full grown individual, to fit himself into his little niche in this universe and live the life of a normal citizen in his community? Did it give you a thrill? Well, we have the same feeling of thankfulness, only intensified, nearly every time we attend an A.A. meeting—just to know that we have some little part in helping a fellow man onto the broad, bright road of the A.A. way of living. Would I miss it? I'm going to make a good hard try to help another one today. I don't mean just stand around and talk about it. I mean I'm going to contact someone who wants what we have and try to help him get it."

The Screwball, Nacogdoches, Texas—"Time heals the scars of sorrow and erases or glosses over the memory of pain and suffering of the dying, but for the alcoholic there seems to be no surcease from living suffering and no solace in dying. He is the epitome of misery. But, my fellow sufferer, the alcoholic does have a friend—we can find comfort for our miseries; the balm of Gilead for our soul is available. Why do we say there is hope of such a friend? Because we know, for we have found Him!"

Rope Yarns, Seaman's Club, New York—"A.A. is the personification of democracy, for in A.A. all are equal, all are given the same chance to help themselves. Each one can speak his mind, do his part, is given a chance to learn and think for himself. Here respect is earned; it can't be bought. In A.A. rich and poor are one; only responsibility gives privileges."

CHICAGO SECRETARY DIES SUDDENLY

From Chicago

She knew all about us and loved us anyway. Grace Cultice, 57, was a blessed paradox—a non-alcoholic who spoke the language of the alxies, an "outside" believer in Alcoholics Anonymous who backed her faith with good works. When two alcoholics got together eight years ago to form the first A.A. group in Chicago, Grace was on hand to help. She's been helping ever since.

She gave those eight years willingly, eagerly, unselfishly. Indeed, she literally gave her life. Grace died in her Chicago apartment January 8 of a heart attack. She had endured a long illness, but was thought to be recovering. Against medical advice she had persisted in many of her duties as secretary and office manager of the Greater Chicago group. She'd tried to slow down, but it was next to impossible to keep her under wraps.

For two days her flower-banked casket lay in a Chicago mortuary. Thousands came to mourn. Then the body was taken to her native Xenia, Ohio, for burial by relatives.

Miss Cultice was a familiar figure in Chicago advertising circles when she became interested in A.A. through friendship with the local group founders. Often she acted as hostess at early meetings of three, four or a half dozen members. She grew up with the Chicago group. Along the route to its present 5,000-plus membership, the need became pressing for a full-time secretary. Grace took the job, ignoring the financial sacrifice.

Because she knew how alxies talk and think and act, she shepherded hundreds into the ways of recovery. She was a genial "greeter" for A.A.s visiting Chicago. On her last Christmas, cards came from A.A.s the world over.

Alcoholics have an inherent distaste for mawkishness. But none feels shame for his tears for Grace, nor for his devastating sense of personal loss.—E.B.

* * *

New Quarters

The last letter from Grace to *The Grapevine* was written the day before she died and said that as of February 2, the Central Office of the Chicago Group is located in new quarters at 123 West Madison Street, Chicago 2, Illinois. The new phone numbers are: Financial 1475, 1476 and 1477.

Reporting the change, Grace wrote: "The move is due to the fact that we need more space, and we will have almost twice as much as now. Of course, we won't have a view of the Lake, but we have been too busy to look out the window anyway."



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

Let's Stay Simple

From Detroit, Mich.

Is A.A. going the way of all flesh?

I begin to think so when I read in *The Grapevine* of A.A. buttons, pins, banners and all of the other doodads that distinguish the great-orders-of-this-or-that, the ladies' aid sewing circles, the dinner clubs, and the push-the-home-town boosters. I'm not taking a crack at those groups. They have their place and some of them do a grand job in civic and social enterprises.

But I thought A.A. was different. And then I read about and see the formation of committees for this and committees for that, and boards and councils, and heavens knows what. Just like the board of directors. Squabbles, of course, follow. Cliques appear and the old, ugly head of politics rises up.

Can't we stay simple? No matter how large A.A. becomes in its totals, we can still stick to small groups—except for the occasional large, open meeting held mainly to show the public what A.A. has to offer. It was in the small, intimate, personal relationship that A.A. began. That is still the way A.A. works best, in my opinion. And that's the way to avoid all of the organization with all of its attendant evils. Let's please stay simple, basic, fundamental—let's stay A.A.—OR.

It Wouldn't Hurt

From Manhattan, N. Y.

The last article on Page 16 of your December issue, entitled "It Might Work," asks three questions.

(*Editor's Note:* The reference is to a reprint of an article from the Memphis, Tenn., *Press-Scimitar*, which asked, in effect, these three questions: Is the brotherhood and spiritual philosophy of A.A. 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 . . . have in common?)

The answer to the first question is: No.

The answer to the second is: Why not?

The answer to the third: They certainly should, for if everyone was to follow the three suggestions, it certainly *would* work! In fact, it is just what this benighted world of today needs.—R.R.

Why All the Congratulations?

From Manhattan, N. Y.

It seems to me that in the New York metropolitan area, at least, we are going badly overboard in the matter of celebrating personal anniversaries at open meetings. Of the last eight open meetings I have attended, no less than six have been "anniversaries" with, in most cases, birthday cakes with candles brought in during the meeting, singing "Happy Birthday to You" and other antics. I am somewhat loath to bring up the subject because I realize that the anniversary date—whether six months, one year, two years or longer—is a "red letter" day in the life of the member. But with everyone, particularly the speakers on the program (sometimes at inordinate length) telling Joe Doaks what a grand fellow he is and what a record he has achieved, it would be too much to expect that at least some of it will not be absorbed into Joe's system—with a consequent displacement of some of his essential humility and of his hardly-won knowledge that it is not Joe himself but the Higher Power that is responsible for his success. As we all know, too much "laudatory exegesis" is bad medicine for the temperamental alcoholic and, in the let-down after the celebration, too often disaster follows. As usual, Bill F. puts it succinctly: "When we start taking bows (even on anniversaries) we bow ourselves right into the cuspidor."

Criticism, unless it is constructive, is not helpful. I suggest, therefore, as a partial remedy, that the birthday cake and the trimmings be relegated to the "coffee and cake" period after the meeting proper is over and that speakers on an anniversary program be requested to very strictly limit and tone down their laudatory remarks; all to the end that newcomers, as well as oldtimers, will realize that the meeting is a real A.A. meeting and not the annual banquet of a Mutual Admiration Society.—J.A.D.

A Better Lift at Last

From St. Petersburg, Florida

Let's talk a little about our former use of alcohol. From the time we felt that first "lift," that first mysterious sense of "release," not un-

mixed with a sort of mischievous and exhilarating pleasure—from the time of that highly tragic discovery, we alcoholics were initiated into the Kingdom of Bacchus and the servitude of John Barleycorn.

Years passed, till, coming one day to realize our abject enslavement, we determined to free ourselves from the desire, use, and effects of alcohol, only to discover ourselves powerless to do so.

Essential vitamins were at a low ebb in our bodies—not only the famous B1, but, as since proven, a serious shortage of all other vitamins necessary to good performance of mind and body. This shortage gave place to a craving which we attributed entirely to lack of alcohol whenever we were either forced to abstain, or tried to quit on our own.

Also, we grievously missed the "lift," the pleasurable "release," the exhilarating and "conscience-numbing" joyousness, with an attendant adolescent sense of sportive mischief. This, of course, was the base for our craving—the denial of which brought on a sense of monotony, ennui, and boredom, which made our sobriety worthless. We were abstaining, yes, but our hearts were not in it.

Today, all that is changed! Our essential variety of vital vitamins is up to par. Our vision and our enthusiasm of, and for, the Spiritual Power of A.A. is a priceless substitute for the evil pleasures we once enjoyed in our use of alcohol! And, truth to tell, we all *did* really enjoy it. Many a time we actually escaped penalty—many a carefree hour or day, when we, "loaded lightly," seemed to prove at the time that alcohol was a real blessing. Some of us honestly thanked God for it!

Today let us thank The Higher Power that we are far happier, without that illegitimate enslavement to alcohol, and the ultimate penalties of its abuse.—Walt K.

Congenial Family

From Vacaville, Calif.

We are the most congenial family on earth and that is our greatest asset. No matter where or when two of us meet, there is a feeling of joy to have seen or talked with the other. We are gregarious as English sparrows. No danger of one of us ever passing another up or dodging him. Every time we meet, we are strengthened. Perhaps that leans a little to the spiritual side; love of a fellow being in trouble. We see the best in each other. One even dislikes the parting at the conclusion of our meetings. Our feeling

for each other is free from the jealousies and cruelties of life which we have to face so often apart.

We will never be paragons; but it's a cast iron cinch we will be better men and women since becoming Alcoholics Anonymous and "dry." "Easy does it."—M.S.

Selfishness Loses Out

From Montgomery, Alabama

A.A. is broad in scope and simple in practice—a vehicle which carries us from a frustrated and unhappy state to one of clear thinking and useful living. In its flexibility it teaches us to believe in and rely upon a higher power just as we understand him. We, who have been filled with resentments, doubts, prejudices and suspicions and filled with an inborn fear of our inadequacy, learn to live our lives in such a manner that for the first time we can meet and face men and situations openly and fearlessly, with a willingness to show our real selves and hide nothing.

We attain a firm desire to see and understand the other fellow's viewpoint. We want to lend a helping hand to those who need us. We want to give pleasure rather than be pleasant.

In our daily living we put aside selfishness and practice generosity. We give ourselves and in so doing we become a part of the scheme of things. Our friends learn that they can count on us and we will not be found lacking, whereas in our drinking days we spent a great deal of our time running away from reality. We can now meet the issues and problems of the day giving our best, and in giving our best we have the genuine satisfaction of knowing that no one could do more.

We have put aside our defensive, our defiant, our headstrong and arrogant attitude. We regain a faith in ourselves and our beliefs which for so many years was lost to us.

For the first time in years we see the true and finer things of life. We find a great relief and peace which comes with our honesty, sincerity, tolerance, patience and good will toward our fellow man.

Gone are our delusions, our torturous self-pity, our fears and doubts, and we live a life of service, serenity and happiness, regaining our self-respect and the respect of those with whom we live.—E.C.L.

A.A. Saga

From Bronxville, N. Y.

For 30 years writer in various branches of show business.

In the bag most the time.

Made a small fortune. Blew it. (And how I got rolled!)

Joined A.A. Memorial Day 1946.

Took year off for recovery.

Started to rebuild career, the A.A. way.

Honest, it worked. Am back, on solid rock.

On solid rock until I forget, 24 hours a day, A.A.

Which I haven't yet, thank God!—P.B.

How Thin Is the Ice?

From Tuscaloosa, Ala.

After returning from a business trip to a large southern seaport city recently, H. M., a Tuscaloosa A.A. who had been sober for 16 months, told an interesting story. The point of his story illustrates clearly the crux of the sobriety problem for all recovered alcoholics.

H.M. visited the A.A. club in this seaport city and there he met a man we shall call Mr. X. Mr. X was an insurance adjuster and had come from a northern city only a short time before. He had been sober for 18 months and had several thousand dollars in the bank.

Something happened to Mr. X in the seaport city. He began drinking, and with a woman companion, visited all the best bars and had a gay time. Finally X's money was gone, all the several thousand dollars, and he had a nice load of remorse and a severe case of jitters. His father, also an A.A., had written him, "No more money from me."

H.M. told this story to the Tuscaloosa Group. When he finished he said, "I realized just how thin the ice is."

DUBLIN GROUP WANTS LETTERS

From Dublin, Ireland

This letter is an appeal to all other groups. We are handicapped here by not being able to call on speakers from other groups to come and relieve the weekly routine.

Will others please send us letters, instead, telling us how they make out and about themselves?

We will gladly reply to any letters we get, and give our own news.

I have written to over 50 myself in the past two months—but I hear so much criticism of my handwriting that I thought a printed request might be fairer.

All best wishes to you and your staff—and our thanks for the great work you are carrying on so successfully.—S.

(Address: The Country Shop, 23 St. Stephen's Green, Dublin, Ireland.)

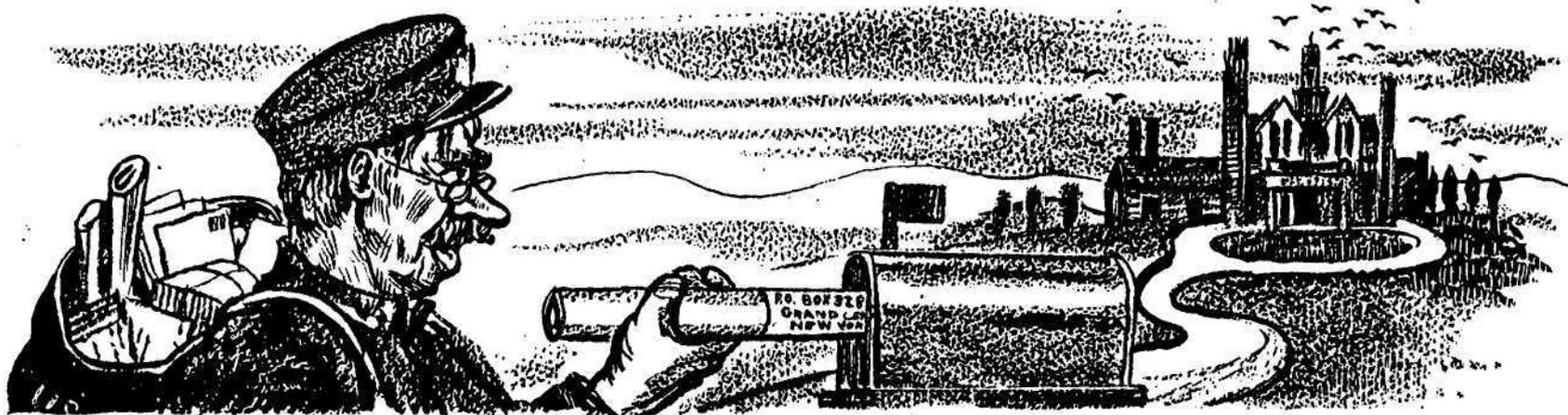
There's the core of the problem, there's the answer to why I slipped three times during the past year, my first in A.A. The answer comes straight from the "Big Book":

"The alcoholic at certain times has no effective mental defense against the first drink. Except in a few rare cases, neither he nor any other human being can provide such a defense. His defense must come from a Higher Power."

Memory of the last spree's torture is very short. And when we travel to unfamiliar surroundings, perhaps among drinkers who are not alcoholic, the danger is great, the ice is very thin. No human can help us in this spot. Only God can do this. H.M. on his business trip look out insurance against that first drink by listening to Mr. X's story, and he found Mr. X at the A.A. club.

Many in A.A. are like I have been during the past year—they have given lip service to the idea of turning over their lives to their higher power. Traces of the old cynicism, of rugged

(Continued on Page 16)



Reference Library—A.A. GOES ON THE AIR—

(Editor's Note: On New Year's morning, a member of the Manhattan A.A. Group appeared as the guest star on "Hi, Jinx," morning program of Jinx Falkenburg and Tex McCrary, over WNBC, New York City, Because the script was admirably handled in deference to A.A. principles of anonymity, and with great care to bring out the ideals of A.A., it is reproduced with the permission of the principals.)

TEX: "Well, we could run through a bunch of New Year's Resolutions."

JINX: "We could do that . . . except that I still have a strange feeling nobody's listening ... 8:45 on New Year's morning is a time for sleeping ... not good resolutions."

TEX: "And the people who aren't sleeping are probably nursing hangovers . . . which means they can think of their own good resolutions without any help from us. . . . They've got plenty of help from their hangovers."

JINX: "I read the other day that there are 50 million drinkers in America and I suppose this is the day most of them will pick for a hangover."

TEX: "If we could only dream up a cure for hangovers ... one that would really work . . . we'd have lots of listeners even this morning. You know . . . something like the whites of two eggs in a glass of Florida orange juice mixed with a dash of tabasco."

JINX: "That would *give me* a hangover . . . not cure one! But I wonder what does help ... I wonder . . . what is a hangover?"

TEX: "What is a hangover? That question will hold me until I can do some outside reading. . . . But this I do know . . . it's got something to do with singed nerve fibers."

JINX: "You sound very professional."

TEX: "Well . . . after seeing 'Lost Weekend' and reading a lot of articles about an organization called Alcoholics Anonymous and hearing a lot of jokes about the same outfit on the radio, I'm beginning to feel like an expert . . . second-hand expert."

VOICE: "Those jokes about Alcoholics Anonymous are about the most stupid things I ever heard. It shows that the guys who wrote the jokes . . . and the people who laugh at them . . . don't have the slightest idea of what A.A. is all about."

JINX: "Hey! Who are you? What's your name? How do you know so much about Alcoholics Anonymous?"

VOICE: "Well, Jinx, I know what I'm talking about . . . because I *am* an alcoholic . . . anonymous!"

JINX: "Oh, you're a member of Alcoholics Anonymous."

VOICE: "Well, Jinx, I'm not a member because we don't exactly have 'memberships.' . . . But I go to the meetings. I've been going for a long time."

JINX: "Oh, then you mean you don't drink anymore."

VOICE: "Not at all."

TEX: "And you used to drink a lot?"

VOICE: "Too much, Tex. Much too much."

TEX: "And now . . . how long have you been dry?"

VOICE: "Five years, come next September."

TEX: "But hasn't it been sort of tough really swearing off . . . and making it stick? I mean, hasn't it cost you a lot of fun because you can never take a drink . . . no matter how much you feel like it?"

VOICE: "Well, at first, I did feel a little strange. I think it was fear that I might start again. Then, as things became a little plainer, they also became simpler. I realized that I was a free man, for the first time in years. Completely free!"

JINX: "But why didn't you stop before . . . a long time before ... if it meant so much when you finally did stop?"

VOICE: "You see, Jinx, in the beginning, we just won't believe that we are alcoholics. . . . Even if we do feel it in our hearts, we won't admit it, even to ourselves."

JINX: "Then what makes men like you finally wake up and know you can't drink . . . that you are an alcoholic?"

VOICE: "Jinx, there's an old saying among drinkers: 'If you fall down three times . . . and only get up twice . . . you're drunk.' An alcoholic is definitely faced with absolute failure and unhappiness. . . . It's just a matter of time. If we can catch a fellow before he's all the way down, so much the better. But most of us in Alcoholics Anonymous did hit the bottom . . . and I mean the *bottom*. We fell the third time and came up with no job, no friends, no help. Then we know we're alcoholics."

TEX: "There's been a lot written and there has been a movie made about this problem . . . one movie in particular. Do you think the story . . . the problems . . . were well depicted, well portrayed, in the movie 'Lost Weekend?'"

VOICE: "Just about as well as could be expected ... I mean when you think that the audiences of pictures like that are non-alcoholics."

TEX: "Why can't non-alcoholics . . . social drinkers ... or just plain non-drinkers, understand the problem?"

VOICE: "Because drinking, as such, is accepted socially . . . and, to be a social drinker is all right. . . . But the fellow who carries it too far is sort of an outcast. They say he is lacking in principle, or in ordinary common sense or will power."

JINX: "Well, isn't he?"

VOICE: "Not always. It seems to be a difference in the chemical makeup of the man. While the first few drinks may act on him the same as on the next fellow at the bar, the overall effect is more like a drug. The only thing that will keep him together and able to carry on after a certain stage is another drink. Where the normal drinker this morning, after his over-indulgence to celebrate last night, will shudder at the thought of a drink, the alcoholic will probably take more as a medicine in an effort to bring himself back to normalcy. Then the cycle starts all over again, for no alcoholic ever stops in time. The results are always the same . . . uncertainty, more drinking, drunkenness, lost jobs, family quarrels, sickness, separations, and worse. The alcoholic doesn't drink—he goes on binges—each morning he tries to undo what happened to him yesterday. This leads to another even worse day and so on until his whole system rebels. An alcoholic seldom eats after the first two or three days of drinking and sooner or later it's blackout—sorrow, remorse) and a very sick body."

JINX: "How does he get well?"

VOICE: "Vitamin B or tonics to reduce acid and create appetite. Slowly he comes back. Three days of hell can be expected and only the alcoholic knows the mental pain and agony of those days and nights wondering what he has done to friends and loved ones . . . feeling that he is a complete loss. Suicide is often contemplated."

TEX: "When he does get straightened out, doesn't he make a resolution?"

VOICE: "Every time. ... If God will only let me get well this once, I'll never touch a drop again."

TEX: "What happens?"

VOICE: "As a rule, just as he knows the depths of remorse and sorrow, so an alcoholic knows great joy and happiness when he finally gets well. A new lease on life comes with his new resolutions. Great ambitions fill him. There is a renewed spring in his step and it's this

very ability to rebound that is often his undoing. Whether it is trying to get away from reality, to drown a sorrow, or to celebrate a great happiness. It's the first drink that starts the alcoholic on another binge. They like to call themselves periodic drinkers, but there is no such thing. Or better still, there is no other kind of alcoholic. The drinking periods get longer and the in-between sober, normal periods get shorter until they meet. Look for them then in Bellevue, Keeley Cure, Green Hill, or other sanitariums or hospitals—or just alone and despised in their lonely rooms."

JINX: "How does Alcoholics Anonymous stop all this?"

VOICE: "Well, I have said in effect that only an alcoholic understands an alcoholic. There's your secret. In days gone by, a man afflicted in this way would go to his doctor or spiritual advisor and not even get sympathy. They would be apt to say, 'Why don't you think of your loved ones—why don't you use a little will power?' Believe me, they do think of their loved ones, and as for the will power, you might as well tell a man dying of tuberculosis to use will power to stop his coughing. We know now that the alcoholic is suffering from a disease as surely as is the man with high blood pressure or Bright's disease. But it's a combination of mental and physical differences, that up to a point are accepted as normal and after that point, looked down upon and avoided. The doctor or the spiritual advisor today will probably submit to the man the advisability of going to A.A. or some other similar organization. Why? Because then he will find men who understand, who talk the same* language. There he will mingle



with men who do not look upon him as an outcast but as a guy or gal who has the same problem that they overcame . . . and those who have found their freedom from this enslaving disease are anxious to help, for in constantly keeping in touch with others who are fighting their way out, they are themselves kept constantly in the knowledge that once an alcoholic, always an alcoholic."

TEX: "You mean you are never really cured?"

VOICE: "Tex, the man who gets a rash when he eats strawberries will stop eating them, right?"

TEX: "Right!"

VOICE: "So he stops eating strawberries, right?"

TEX: "Right!"

VOICE: "Then time passes and he eats strawberries again—and gets a rash again, right?"

TEX: "Right!"

VOICE: "No, you're never really cured. You're still an alcoholic. But there isn't any great sorrow there, Tex . . . not for the alcoholic who has changed his whole life from depressed sorrow, failure, and unhappiness . . . changed all that to a free and full life . . . accepted by his friends and in his profession . . . in his job. He will not only thank God for his newfound joy, but he'll be forever grateful to his friends in A.A. or anywhere else . . . the friends who helped him out of the slavery that is the lot of every alcoholic. From then on, he'll be glad to live by the 12 rules that guarantee his freedom."

JINX: "Twelve rules? What are they?"

VOICE: "Well, Jinx, here are a few of them. They might be of interest to some of your listeners this morning. . . . A few of the Steps a member of Alcoholics Anonymous takes before he finds security and freedom from fear.

1. We admit that we are powerless in the hands of alcohol; we recognize that our lives become unmanageable as a result of using alcohol.
2. We learn to believe that a power greater than ourselves must and can restore us.
3. We make a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
4. We make a list of all persons we have harmed and we set out, willingly, to make amends to all of them.
5. And finally, strengthened by/the spiritual experience of taking these Steps, we try to carry the same idea, the same message of hope to other alcoholics while we continue to practice the sound principles in all our own affairs."

JINX: "And these are the principles that cured you of alcoholism?"

VOICE: "Cured me, Jinx? Cured me? We never put that in the past tense. You know,

once a long time ago, I wrote an article called 'I Was An Alcoholic'..."

TEX: "You put it in the past tense."

VOICE: "Yes, and I know now the mistake I made, Tex, because years after, maybe two, maybe three, I felt so strong and so bold that I took another drink . . . and had what we call a slip. I got drunk. It was a year later When I sobered up. And so that's when I joined A.A. and I know that once an alcoholic, always an alcoholic. We just can't drink."

TEX: "The job is never done."

JINX: "You know, there's one thing I have always wondered. Are there women members of A.A. as well as men?"

VOICE: "Yes, indeed. Your sex is well represented, Jinx. Today I think it's about 50-50."

JINX: "You mean there are more women now than there were . . . say ten years ago?"

VOICE: "Yes, they came to us a little slower!"

TEX: "How about other countries? Does A.A. operate outside of America?"

VOICE: "Yes, we have been forced to spread. Of course, you know the growth of A.A. has been tremendous in these past 13 years. Thirteen years ago, it was one man and his buddy. They got together with their problems. Today there are thousands and it is international."

TEX: "What are some of the other countries . . . England, Mexico, Canada, or do you know that list offhand?"

VOICE: "England was first, and France is in, and South America, yes. There are others I can't list right now."

JINX: "How do you get to meet somebody in A.A. . . . I mean, suppose somebody wanted help. What would they do?"

VOICE: "I think the easiest way would be to open the telephone book, look up under Alcoholics Anonymous, and call one of our clubs."

TEX: "You just look for Alcoholics Anonymous in the Manhattan telephone book?"

VOICE: "It's listed like that in New York and wherever there is a club."

JINX: "And are there people . . . specific people whom you are helping now?"

VOICE: "You mean our pigeons?"

JINX: "What?"

VOICE: "Pigeons."

JINX: "Pigeons! What are they?"

VOICE: "Well, if we are fortunate enough to be able to help another alcoholic, we call him or her our pigeon while they are in the process of being cured."

JINX: "How many pigeons do you have at the moment?"

VOICE: "I have three now. Two male and one female pigeon."

JINX: "Are they good pupils or do you call them pupils?"

(Continued on next page)

TEX: "Are they homing pigeons, in other words?"

VOICE: "Homing pigeons is very well said. To date, these three have been very good. One I've stood beside for about four months and is doing very well. I don't think we have any more worries concerning him. The other fellow is doing very nicely. He wrote me only yesterday that he had a slip but he is out of it and he is going to try again with both feet on the ground. My female pigeon isn't doing so well. She's in the hospital now but I'm going to get her out soon."

TEX: "Have you told your pigeons that the old master is on the air this morning?"

VOICE: "No, I haven't."

JINX: "That's sort of a secret we kept from everyone but isn't it much easier since you were an alcoholic for you to teach your pigeons the right way, the way that you profited by all the things that you did wrong?"

VOICE: "You mean that I'm a pretty good example?"

JINX: "Yes, I do."

TEX: "And that you speak their language?"

VOICE: "Yes. All the way through, I've told you that that's the strength of Alcoholics Anonymous, the fact that the habits of all alcoholics are so similar. We know before they say a thing what they're going to say. We know before they slip that they are going to slip almost. We can tell by the feel exactly what's going through their mind because it went through ours so often."

JINX: "Didn't you say that A.A.s live almost day by day?"

VOICE: "Yes, I think that's one of the safest ways that we do it. We don't say 'next year' or 'year after' or 'how long'—we say 'If I can live these 24 hours happily, free from alcohol, I'm satisfied. Just today!'"

TEX: "Is there more fear of the night than there is of the day time, or do the 24 hours just melt together as one problem?"

VOICE: "That's a very pertinent question, Tex, because in actual practice, those first few days and weeks, the night time is the tough time . . . and we stay with them very closely, but when we're on our own, I don't think there is much difference. One day blends into another and very happily for me and for the rest."

JINX: "Do you get specific help from doctors? Are there doctors that are sort of associate members in case anybody doesn't trust you amateurs?"

VOICE: "Very often we'll have a doctor at our meetings and he will say very nice, kind things. More and more, the doctors are beginning to join us. In fact, the hospitals are giving over some of their space. In two of the New York hospitals, we have alcoholic

wards now. They are cooperating to the very best of their ability. And it's a wonderful help because an alcoholic, in his first five or six days goes through Gethsemane and in the hospital he is cared for not only by the doctors and the nurses but Alcoholics Anonymous keeps a member constantly there."

JINX: "I think we should repeat the telephone number—although we haven't mentioned the phone number—in closing, we do want anyone who is interested in this whole campaign to phone . . . and you suggest looking in the book, not giving the number."

VOICE: "I understand that you in radio do always repeat the telephone numbers. It's very simple in this case because you simply look in the telephone book for Alcoholics Anonymous."

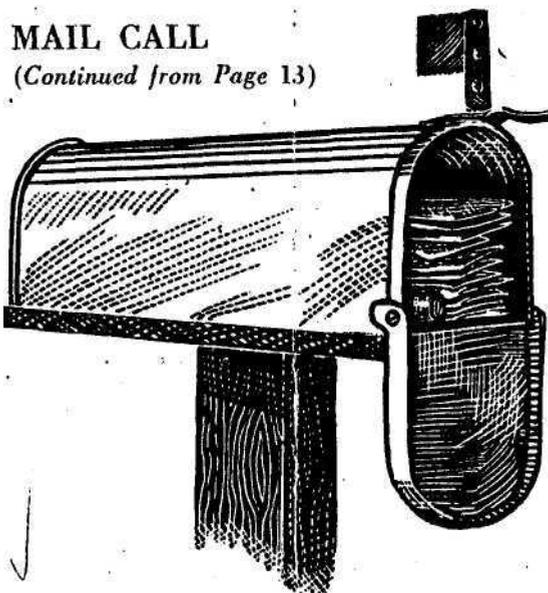
TEX: "Thank you very much for the story you've told this morning. I think it has been of tremendous interest to a lot of our listeners."

JINX: "And thank you for being anonymous this morning."

VOICE: "And Happy New Year to you both."

MAIL CALL

(Continued from Page 13)



individualism which said, "I am master of my fate . . .," remained as a barrier to contact with the Higher Power.

Yes, the ice is very thin, but the insurance against breaking through is ours for the asking. ~H.Y.

Spiritual—Not Religious

From Fairmont, W. Va.

Many alcoholics coming into A.A. object at first to the spiritual aspect. Perhaps they do not understand the definition of the word spiritual.

The dictionary defines it as follows:

1. "of the intellectual and higher endowments of the mind."

2. "of the moral feeling or states of the soul."

3. "of the soul or its affections as influenced by the divine spirits; pure; holy, opposed to carnal."

The word religion is not mentioned in this definition.

Now, how do these definitions apply to A.A.?

First, "of the intellectual and higher endowments of the mind." This simply means you begin to think on a higher plane. Your thinking becomes straighter and more intellectual. Remember—"It is your stinkin' thinkin' that causes stinkin' drinkin'." Therefore, as soon as your mind begins to think on a higher level, you have started on the spiritual phase.

Second—"of the moral feeling or states of the soul." The alcoholic is most certainly an abandoned soul. For the sake of liquor, alcoholics cut themselves off from everyone—God included.

Third—"of the soul or its affections as influenced by the divine spirits. Pure; holy, opposed to carnal."

Man is a creature composed of body and soul. He is both material and spiritual. He needs health of soul as well as health of body. Therefore, the spiritual help received through A.A. is no more than medicine for the soul.

The newcomer in A.A. commences to undergo a personality change at such a rate that he often cannot account for it. He is a new creature and all things become new. He is starting a "New Way of Life," which includes material help and spiritual help. Where does this help come from?—from "a Power Greater than himself"—from the A.A. group.

Is the word religion mentioned in this? Not once. A.A. is neither a religion nor a creed, nor a philosophy. There is nothing occult or mysterious about it. A.A. has a spiritual program, but not a religious program.

When a man has a sincere desire to give up drink, to give up that which has meant everything to him, he must find something to fill up the void. Now there is only one thing that will fully satisfy the heart and mind of man. Man in his extremity has ever turned to God. A.A. does not define God for you. That is for you to do.

A.A. asks you to believe in a Power Greater than yourself, and to live by spiritual principles and a simple spiritual discipline—to ask for help just for the day. Philosophers and saints practiced the need of living just for the present—neither in the past nor in the future. That program is as old as the Proverbs, and anyone who can follow this simple program for 24 hours can follow it for the rest of his life—a life of sobriety.—V.H.