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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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## One Swallow Doesn't Make A Summer

*From New Orleans, La*

THE price of worms is going up here and there around the country. The price of the more wiggly species is setting the pace, but quotations on all types are definitely turning upward. In fact, one might say—if he's prepared to duck after saying it—that the market on worms is bullish.

None of this has anything to do with inflation in the normal sense. Nor is it unusual for this time of the year. This is June; June means vacation time; vacation time means fishing; and, fishing to many means cane pole fishing.

The trout stream angler and the deep sea fisherman look down their noses at the cane pole fisherman, as do the troller and the plug caster to slightly less degree of disdain. The cane pole fisherman does not have social standing among the more active, versatile and skilled anglers.

### **Complete Loafer**

But whatever the cane pole fisherman lacks as a fisherman, he has no peer as an unregenerate, unreconstructed, unashamed and completely abandoned loafer. He is the epitome of relaxation, the personification of indolence.

That is, he is if he's a good cane pole fisherman. One truly versed in cane pole fishing and in whom the high traditions of cane pole fishing are well bred never worries about catching any fish. To hook a fish means you have to disengage it from the hook, and that requires effort. Any kind of effort, except one, is a violation of the code. All that a true cane pole fisherman wants is a reasonable succession of bites—about one every 15 minutes to start, coming along faster to one every two minutes, until the bottle is gone.

Taking a nip out of the bottle every time a fish takes a nip at the worm on the hook is ancient ritual. This is the primary reason, sometimes the only reason, why certain cane pole fishermen of the oldest clan among them, go fishing. Be there an alcoholic who has ever been in a rowboat who has not belonged to that clan!

Of course, the same kind of activity can be carried on aboard a sailboat, or in the rocking chair on the front porch, or at the 19th hole, or in the cottage at the lake, or after a swim—the same kind of activity has been fitted to any and all of the various things that one does on his vacation.

But the cane pole fisherman who happens also to be an alky seems to symbolize the whole idea more perfectly than any other kind of vacationer. Perhaps this is because he always comes home completely out of everything he started with. His worms are all gone, requiring that he either buy some more or dig some more before he can go out again. He has no fish. His bottle is empty. He is quite often dripping wet from having fallen in the lake. He's bleary-eyed. He's a mess and he'll be a worse mess by morning.

Someone's dear, sweet and innocent aunt might ask, "But why ruin a nice day in the beautiful outdoors by drinking too much? Why do you spoil your vacation that way. Why don't you just take a little each day—maybe even enough to 'feel good,' if you must, and then stop? I just don't understand it."

Lady, neither do we. It certainly does seem utterly ridiculous, stupid, asinine and just plain dumb to spoil a vacation by drinking too much. For many of us, vacation is just two weeks out of the year. We look forward all year to these two weeks.

We plan where we'll go. We make great preparations. We talk about it; we even dream about it. Then the day finally arrives and we are free of troubles for two whole weeks. So we promptly drink too much, create all kinds of troubles for ourselves and everyone else, become sick and wake up at the end of two weeks remembering very little of our vacation.

We sure wish, we could answer the dear lady, but we can't.

We do have the answer, however, to another vital question—how to avoid this kind of thing. How to have a vacation and stay sober and really enjoy it.

The answer is found in the devices, the friends and the philosophy we have discovered in A.A. If we use them, we, too, can have happy vacations. But don't set out unprepared. An older member who has now had nine happy summers in A.A. puts it this way:

### **Pack A.A. Book**

"I give as much attention to my A.A. gear as to my fishing gear. I pack the A.A. book to read at odd moments. I make sure I have my address book and I take along some penny postcards. Writing to my A.A. friends helps keep the right thoughts in my mind. I find out where the nearest group is to the place where I'm going. I make sure I'm firmly in the habit of starting the day with a little thought to the whole subject of A.A. Then I start out with faith, good cheer and a feeling of freedom."

He even goes cane pole fishing and get's the relaxation without the other. He has become an honorary member of that ancient clan. And the price of worms, no matter how high, is still way under the price of a binge.—D.T.

# Survey Results Are Announced

## Editors Ask for Reader's Vote On Pocket-Size A. A. Grapevine

The editorials which have appeared each month in *The A.A. Grapevine* show up, naturally enough, as the favorite feature of this periodical, according to the recent readership survey conducted among *Grapevine* subscribers.

Next, in order of their popularity, come the Group Meeting page, Vino Vignette case histories, Mail Call letters, general articles, News Circuit, cartoons, A.A. Digest (excerpts from A.A. group publications), Clip Sheet (excerpts concerning A.A. taken from the public press), Reference Library (reprints of pertinent pieces on the subject of alcoholism), Barley Corn, Pleasures of Reading (book reviews), and Bottoms Up.

Since the metropolitan New York area returned almost as many answers to the questionnaire as the rest of the country combined, the ballots for New York were tallied separately, and interestingly, preferences were identical with those expressed from other areas and from small isolated groups!

### Will Follow

Since the questionnaire was designed to serve as a guide to those editing *The A.A. Grapevine*, these indications of what our readers want will be followed as closely as possible, with regular monthly emphasis on features most appreciated by the majority. Those which ranked lower in approval will be used from time to time when they afford material of general interest.

Several excellent criticisms and suggestions are being taken under consideration also, as a result of the questionnaire. Inclusion of a hobby column will be the first addition, based on the number of readers who said they'd like to have *one*.

### Jack, You Daid!

Bottom is a combination of many things physical, mental, moral and spiritual. When the realization dawns that John Barleycorn is coming out fresher for each round, when one's thinking processes point out inevitable defeat, when there is no door in the vicious circle—bottom is right around the corner somewhere. Some find it sooner, some later and some never. If one of the latter—Jack, you daid!—*A.A. Rebound, Asheville, N.C.*

I LIKE THE PRESENT SIZE AND  
FORMAT OF *THE A.A. GRAPE-  
VINE* . . . . .

I WOULD PREFER A POCKET-  
SIZED *A.A. GRAPEVINE* . . . . .

It was recommended by several that instead of humor columns, our jokes be sprinkled throughout the pages of the magazine. The same was suggested for items previously used in the A.A. Digest and Clip Sheet, and we have already instituted this type of handling, with the idea that it will appeal more to a larger number. Book reviews and Reference Library reprints will be selected from time to time whenever any writings of special importance or interest to our theme comes to our attention.

So many suggestions for a pocket-size *A.A. Grapevine* were received that the editorial board is seriously considering publishing it in that form.

Numerous readers pointed out that a pocket-sized type publication would be easier to carry at all times and would actually remain more anonymous when in use in public.

Upon checking production figures we find that we could publish, at present subscription prices, a magazine 7½" x 5½" containing about 40 pages bound in an attractive cover. This pocket-sized format would enable us to publish approximately twice as much editorial material as now contained in *The A.A. Grapevine*.

Many have also stated that they like the distinctive appearance of the present format, find it easy to bind for permanent use, feel that it is more dignified than pocket-size and less monotonous than the average small magazine format.

The editors feel that this important question should be decided by the subscribers.

Will you please check above which size you would prefer and mail to us within a few days? If you don't want to tear this section out of *The A.A. Grapevine*, will you drop us a penny postcard stating your preference? Just mail to P.O. Box 328, Grand Central Annex, New York 17, N. Y.

## Read Further In A. A. Book For 12th Step Aid

from Detroit, Mich.

Anyone who is having trouble applying the second half of the 12th Step, the part that suggests, ". . . and to practice these principles in all our affairs," might get some help by reading a little further on that page of the A.A. book. It's Page 72 in my edition and the part I refer to reads:

"Do not be discouraged. No one among us has been able to maintain anything like perfect adherence to these principles. We are not saints. The point is, that we are willing to grow along spiritual lines. The principles we have set down are guides to progress. We claim spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection."

To me, at first, applying the principle of complete honesty alone seemed too big an order. How could one get along in business, the way business is constituted, if he were completely honest? How could one bargain? He would be taken advantage of if he were completely honest! First of all, how can one really be completely honest? How can one practice all of the A.A. principles of honesty, humility, tolerance, anonymity, etc., in a world rife with greed, competition, trickery, deceit and all the rest?

I didn't think it could be done. But I decided to take the book's suggestion and try anyway. Much to my amazement, I found it can be done. Strangely enough, too, I haven't been exploited half as much as back in the days when I used to try to out-connive the other fellow. I'm doing much better than ever before. To be sure, being honest requires a little more ingenuity, perseverance, patience and even hard work. But the satisfaction is much greater, too.—*D.O.R.*

### Kinda Dry, Ain't It?

"Al Tronzo, the housing official, tells of a friend who dropped into a downtown liquor store for a little something for his cold. The clerk who waited on him had a booklet sticking out of his shirt pocket and he gaped when he saw the title, *Alcoholics Anonymous*. He asked: 'Are you passing those out?' The clerk replied: 'Oh, no; I just read it in my spare time. It's very interesting!'"—*Post-Gazette, Pittsburgh, Pa.*

## Vino Vignette—Pampered Homer

*From New York, N. Y.*

Once upon a time there was a jolly little drunk named Homer. Everybody liked him. Everybody pampered him.

When Homer was drinking he was never objectionable. He borrowed money like mad but he was so appealing that he always got it. Nobody felt sorry about lending Homer anything because Homer was cute. It was a tragedy.

It was during the war years that I first came in contact with him at an A.A. meeting. He was, of all things, conducting the "beginner's" class, and he was doing a darn good job. I have thought since that I learned more solid A.A. that evening from Homer than I have ever learned before. It was only my third meeting, too.

### *Homer Grinned*

Homer's appealing manner attracted me. He grinned. He exhibited a wonderful sense of humor. He was thoroughly charming. When he told how he always did first things first, lived and let live and easy did it, I was impressed. Homer did a lot for me that night.

After the meeting he brought his girl friend over. She was charming, too. I couldn't remember meeting a more charming couple. Later we had coffee. It was a privilege to pay the check. We exchanged addresses and telephone numbers. That was a mistake—or maybe it wasn't. You be the judge.

Late one evening about two weeks after that first meeting the apartment buzzer sounded. My reward for an answering click was a slightly intoxicated visitor. It was Homer.

He bowed from the waist, grinned and sideslipped into an easy chair.

"I'm sorry to barge in on you like this but I've been through an ordeal. My girl friend has kicked me out. My family has kicked me out. I need a drink something awful and I'm broke," he announced.

My heart went out to him. Hadn't he confessed everything? Wasn't he humble about it? There wasn't any whisky in the apartment at the time so I couldn't offer him a drink. However, I gave him a cup of coffee and suggested that he allow me to buy him a few drinks. He accepted reluctantly. Feeling magnanimous, I practically forced \$5 on him and went for my hat and coat. Homer certainly had a way with him.

At the bar he explained that he had slipped up on the program somewhere; that he would soon get over his present drinking. He was most appealing. It was a real pleasure to see Homer's humility. I pampered him. To be sure he wouldn't suffer that night I forced a pint of bourbon on him. That was a mistake. I didn't see him at all for about two months.

About noontime one day, the receptionist in the office announced a visitor. She was a trifle skeptical because the visitor looked disreputable. It was Homer. And he looked simply awful. He reported that he had lost his job and, of course, was broke and in need of a drink. I felt sorry for him and took him out for a couple of drinks. I asked him to meet me at the end of the day.

I took him home and fed him. We patched up the quarrel with his girl friend. We were so sorry for Homer that we fed him off and on for months. Part of the time he was sober and full of good resolutions; but most of the time he was drinking and pathetic. His girl friend, who was working, fed him the rest of the time.

### *A Job*

When he got too bad, I would carry him to a city hospital for a few days. The doctors would dry him out and he would be back on our hands again. He was always full of plans for a job he didn't really want. He was so pitiful that I pampered him, fed him and lent him money.

One day it occurred to us that Homer could render us a service and make a little money at the same time. Our apartment needed painting and Homer had told us that he was good at such things. Another A.A., down on his luck, agreed to help him do the job. Homer gratefully accepted the offer.

We bought paint, brushes and a step-ladder and set the time for the job. We moved to a hotel so that the boys could work without interference. We felt happy to be able to do something for Homer. We were sure it would work out.

Two days later we met the other A.A. He told us the bad news. Homer was drinking when he appeared for the job. He had asked Homer to take it easy and sober up but he had refused. He had therefore finished the job himself. About a week later Homer appeared at the apartment again in a sad state. I was getting

annoyed with him by now although I escorted him again to the city hospital.

When I got home, my wife said: "This is the end for Homer. I refuse to cook him another meal. To hell with him." Sadly, I agreed with her. When he came out of the hospital, I didn't meet him. When he telephoned, we were not at home to him. After a time we only heard reports of him—all bad.

It has now been a year and a half since we saw him. The other day I heard something. An old friend reported that he had seen Homer who looked wonderful. It seems that when we gave up on him, many other A.A.s had given up on him. Force of circumstance had made him realize that no one would pamper him anymore. He was forced to do something himself.

In short, Homer found it necessary to stand on his own feet for the first time in years.

### *On Own Feet*

Last night we saw him at a meeting for the first time in months. He told us what had happened. When he realized that almost everyone was leaving him strictly alone, he got a job washing dishes. From that job, he went into a small company as a delivery clerk. From there he got a selling job with a small salary. He returned to active A.A. work in a distant group. He found sobriety through the program.

We asked him how long he had been sober. "Ever since the day you left me at the city hospital," he said. "It was then I realized that I had to find A.A. for myself." We congratulated him. As he left us he asked: "Are you two still pampering drunks?" We had to tell him that we were.—*J.T.*



# Group Meeting Methods Are Discussed

*(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.)*

There may be more types of A.A. meetings than the Greenwich Village, N.Y. Group offers on its five-times-a-week program, but it's hard to believe. About a year ago this club pioneered the now-popular "Panel" meeting, to supplement the orthodox schedule of "Open" and "Closed" meetings. Later they added a "One-Speaker" night to the list, inviting a prominent A.A., clergyman or psychiatrist to address the members. This short talk is followed by an informal social get-together. Next, the group chairman decided to precede the "Open" meeting on Tuesdays with a one-hour Beginners Session. And now a fifth type, called the "Spotlight" meeting and held on Friday nights, is underway and growing in popularity.

This latest addition to the Village activities may be of interest to outside groups which are looking for variety. The meeting is conducted by a leader and two speakers, who confine their talks to a previously assigned phase of A.A. On a recent Friday, for example, the topic was "Honesty", and both the regular talks and the informal discussion which followed were kept to this subject.—A.G. *Greenwich Village, N. Y.*

## **From the Reporters**

We are one of many groups who have discovered the need for a little more concentrated study of the mechanics of the Program than can be given in a general open meeting; so last week we instituted a small, closed "Study group." It is a bit early to tell just how successful the new effort will be but it has already aroused considerable interest. We sincerely believe it will be of great help to those who do not feel free to talk and to ask questions in a large open meeting.—H.E. *Whittier, Calif.*

Here in the East Akron Group our meetings are open. We like this type because they give our families an opportunity to learn something about us alcoholics and get a better understanding of our problem. We use the "one speaker" program. The speaker is introduced by our chairman,

and the meeting is opened with a prayer. After the talk (there is no applause) the meeting is open for general discussion, which is usually based on the topic which the speaker stressed. After the discussion, new members are introduced.—E.E.B., *East Akron, O.*

Less than a year ago our group was formed in Plymouth, and we now number close to 30 members. Outside speakers are brought in for our weekly open meetings, group singing is enjoyed, and movies are shown after refreshments.—H.R.K.—*Plymouth, Ind.*

In recent weeks enthusiastic interest has been aroused among the membership of the Baltimore Group with the scheduled interchange of scheduled visitations among neighborhood groups, all of which has borne a rich harvest in the wealth of sound ideas exchanged at these meetings.

This operational plan serves a multiple purpose, particularly in the discovery of talented speakers, the formation of new and lasting friendships, the opportunity to observe techniques used by other groups, and the genuine interest caused by visitors.—H.D.S. *Baltimore, Md.*

## **Radio Program**

The radio program "I Am An Alcoholic" of the Towson, Md. Group of A.A. was inaugurated about 10 months ago as a 15-minute program from Station W.F. B.R. at 7:15 p.m. Saturdays.

In connection with this program, the method of the Towson Group is to elect, each month, a radio chairman who asks for volunteers—both men and women—to participate in the broadcasts. These often include discussions by the wives or husbands of alcoholics, who give their views of the A.A. Program.

Many letters and telephone calls requesting information about various phases of A.A. have been received as a result of these broadcasts, and many new members have been added to the Towson Group. It is a fact that through this medium a great number of listeners have become sincerely interested in A.A. and the results have been remarkable.—E.L. *Towson, Md.*

Our meetings here in the South Dakota Penitentiary Chapter are opened by the singing of a couple of hymns. We have just finished going through the 12 Steps for the first time. At present we are picking topics at random from these Steps for our discussions, which have been aided greatly by visiting members from the Sioux Falls Group. Recently the topic was: "What can a member get from A.A.

while in prison?" Some of the men made quite pertinent remarks: "You can learn to be honest with yourself and with others." . . . "If we are willing to be humble and sincere and take advantage of all this extra time we have to build our characters, we can look forward to a happy future upon our release." . . . "We know about A.A. now and we're the biggest fools in the universe if we don't take advantage of it."

We recently discovered that newcomers were inclined to think that we were a religious group, and many of them fell off for that reason. We have now practically discontinued religious discussions, leaving that part of it for the member to absorb himself as he gets further into the Program. We also have a three-man committee to talk to the new member before he attends his first meeting.—F.O.R. *So. Dakota Penitentiary Chapter.*

In Phoenix we now have an active membership of over 300, with meetings held every night in the week. We hold four closed meetings, our big open meeting for members and their friends, a "Cup and Saucer Club" for A.A.'s and their wives and/or husbands, and a Saturday night social.

Six months ago our group formed an A.A. chapter within the walls of the state Prison in Florence, Ariz. During this time six of our members have been released, four of whom are still on the beam and leading useful lives.—L.W. *Phoenix, Ariz.*

Louisville now has seven neighborhood groups clicking and just recently the Ladies' Auxiliary held the first meeting of what we hope will become a happy habit of regular get-togethers for A.A. wives and sweethearts, sometimes referred to as "Dry-Mates."—J.S., *Louisville, Ky.*

## **Rotating Chairmen**

To help those who are shy or inclined to take a back scat, we have inaugurated a system of rotating chairmanship, thus allowing every one an opportunity to talk about ourselves and bring up our own particular problems. Open discussion follows, which is helpful to all, as we must *think* to make an interesting meeting, not just read the literature or repeat the words of others.—G.H. *Grand Rapids, Mich.*

We have not found it necessary in our new quarters to install pinball machines, fountain dispensers or carnival activities to maintain the club, as members have donated and pledged funds when and as they were able to meet the current expenses. In this manner, a dignified atmosphere has been maintained which offers a direct

## Group Meeting

contrast to that taproom atmosphere which the individual seeks to forget.

New members and visitors having an alcoholic problem are invited to the Conference Room following meetings to ask any questions of older members for a solution of their problems. This is of proven value here to the member seeking help and has contributed to a solid growth of active, interested members.—*Alany Club, Houston, Tex.*

Here we have hit on the idea of having small group meetings during the week. As an example, an A.A. will invite three or four couples up to his home for the evening—especially the newcomers. In fact, the best A.A. meeting I have attended for a long time took place on a street corner.—*P.B.M. Hastings, Neb.*

### *Okinawa Beachhead*

Well, at last we A.A.'s here on Okinawa have our own club house, all fixed with a coffee bar. We are now planning a special meeting, to which we are inviting the medical officers from the alcoholic ward of the army hospital, also two chaplains and company officials. Our group is going along nicely; we are all working hard on the 24-hour program and learning the "Easy Does It" way.—*S.K. Pioneer Group, Okinawa.*

We believe our situation is unique in that we number one woman among 15 men. Of course it's easy to see who handles the refreshments. We vary the routine of our meetings. Sometimes we have a round-table discussion; sometimes a main speaker with other members called on for short comment; or a definite discussion with a main speaker supplemented by remarks from members on the 12 Steps.

One of the main topics at each meeting is the old-time one of how much pressure to exert on prospects, and the "till ready" angle always gives us something to think about. There has been some talk about fixing up a horseshoe pit for the summer months, as a focus for our social activities.—*G.L.B. Westfield, Mass.*

Recently our Upper Darby Group sponsored an open forum on Post-War Alcoholic Problems, which attracted numerous guests. The forum was conceived as an opportunity to parade the name and aims of A.A. before the eyes of the local clergy and medical profession. This was done by direct contact where possible and by mail

to all members of both professions in the county.—*F.S.M., Upper Darby, Pa.*

The secretary of our group presented a paper on A.A. before the Medical Association of the District of Sudbury, at its regular monthly meeting, April 13, 1948, in St. Joseph's General Hospital, Sudbury, Ontario.—*Nickel District Group, Sudbury, Ont.*

The A.A. Winnipeg Group is making good progress and has endeavored to help out by assisting in the formation of new groups in this territory. During early February a number of members drove West to Brandon, Man. and got A.A. going there, with three members giving special addresses to a large gathering of doctors, nurses, clergy and interested business men in the auditorium of the Mental Hospital . . . largest in Western Canada. It woke 'em up. On following Sunday ministers were preaching on A.A., and after the open meeting we got Brandon A.A. Group organized.

French-speaking members from St. Boniface, recently started their own group—a wise plan to assist their compatriots. The St. Boniface Group are going ahead wonderfully. Some members also aided in starting a group at the lakehead Twin Cities of Fort William and Port Arthur, at Western end of Lake Superior.

At our meetings we have chairman and sub-chairman for each evening. Study is made of the analysis of the 12 Steps, and often special papers are given by some of the older members.

### THE ? BOX

for

#### Group Discussion

**Topics believed to furnish good material for group discussion will be presented here each issue in the form of questions, one question per month. No attempt will be made to present any discussion simultaneously with the question, but readers are invited to send in discussion letters on each question for publication in subsequent issues. If your group develops a particularly good discussion topic, you also are invited to send it in to The ? Box. This month's question is:**

**IS A.A. BECOMING TOO SOCIAL?**

The majority of neophytes we get in stay with it, and we try to assist them to do so by personal contact following meetings. Like all Groups we find it difficult to get the neophytes to give their opinions at large meetings, but at the Thursday special meeting for beginners they find expression, which helps them. We finance by the monthly pledge system and free-will offering at all meetings. The public at large now know that A.A. Winnipeg Group exists—our name is the first in the telephone directory—they can't miss it. By trial and error we have made steady headway since we started in 1945. A.A. Winnipeg Group is a going concern and will be glad to hear from the secretaries of groups in Canada and the United States.—*A.A.T. Winnipeg, Man. Can.*

### *What Is the Answer?*

Recently our group had a discussion about the member who has a relapse or slip. We couldn't agree on the answer to the \$64 question. We would like to know what others think about the problem. The case of our hypothetical "slippe" is this:

A man comes to a member of A.A. for help, he is down and out and has the jitters. He has no friends, no room and is in bad with the Veterans Administration. He does need help very much. Through the efforts of a small group of A.A. members he is taken care of. With the good breaks a person gets in A.A. he is, in time, well on his way to living a fine normal life. He has worked, has bought new clothing and has attended three or four meetings weekly. Then he drops away from the meetings. He is contacted and always gives the excuse that he had a date. On all the contacts made to him by members he promises to come to the next meeting, but fails to show up. All this time he is sober. Then comes the fall, in less than 48 hours of drinking, he is broke, lost his job, sold his clothes and lost his room. In that 48 hours he has lost everything he has gained in three months of sobriety. He comes back bumming money, and of course reminds us of our 12 Steps. He reminds us that we should never give up on another alcoholic.

Now comes the \$64 question. Do we start all over again? The man has been given the tools to work with, but did not use them. Are we supposed to go through all the same things? Sitting up nights, getting rooms, getting jobs, for this same man who ignored the members pleas to come to meetings?—*A.G., Rochester, N. Y.*

# A.A.s Voice Opinions On Speaker Expense

*The article, "Expenses of Speakers Pose Problem," which appeared in the April issue of THE A. A. GRAPEVINE brought forth many letters from readers. Following are some of the opinions expressed:*

I am slightly scorched after reading your Page One article in April—"Expenses of Speakers Pose Problems." Not scorched at you, understand, nor the writer of the articles, nor the good folks in the group who find themselves confronted with a problem.

But—completely burned up by any mugg who will accept a fee other than expenses for speaking at an A.A. meeting.

Actually, my thought on the subject can be boiled down to two brief sentences:

NO A.A. SPEAKER IS WORTH A FEE.  
NO SPEAKER WHO ACCEPTS A FEE IS WORTH A.A.

But the thing has a number of ramifications.

Almost all of us are proud of the fact that A.A. has been added to that pitifully small list of free things on this earth. Older members will give hundreds and thousands of dollars of their valuable time in guiding some unfortunate soul to sobriety. And it does not cost the lad on the receiving end one thin dime. If he is jobless he is not asked to contribute at meetings. If he cannot afford reading matter, someone will lend or give him literature. If he can't afford bus fare to a meeting, some one will pick him up. Even the coffee and doughnuts are free to those who are broke.

This state of being free does not stop there. I have seen men actually shocked into sobriety at learning that the fellows who are trying to help him expect absolutely nothing in payment.

One of the founders made a profound impression on me many years ago when I heard him say: "You don't owe me a thing, but you owe the man who comes after you everything!"

The person who charges to give a talk is undermining one of the very foundations of A.A. Those who aid and abet him are as guilty as he is.

Consider the early history of A.A. How did the first dozen or so pioneers manage to keep sober? Did they import a speaker from New York or Chicago to talk to them here in Akron? You know they didn't because the first couple dozen members came from Akron and vicinity. Yet

they managed to keep sober and build up a tradition that is keeping thousands sober today.

Today, with few exceptions, there is an A.A. group within easy driving distance from any new group—I am talking about within the United States. Out of the hundreds of A.A.'s of my acquaintances, I don't believe there is one who doesn't consider it the price of 10 gallons of gasoline well spent to go to a neighboring town to talk.

Our groups in Akron are forever having speakers from Canton, 22 miles; Cleveland, 35 miles; Youngstown, 45 miles; Mansfield, 60 miles. And unless the speaker must ride train or bus, I doubt if there has ever been mention made of expense. (During the war it was considered cricket to offer gasoline coupons.)

Speaking from an Akron viewpoint, when we are asked to go to Pittsburgh, Toledo, Columbus, Grand Rapids or some other point over a hundred miles away and virtually requiring that the trip take overnight, it seems only fair that the host group should pay hotel room and train expenses. Food? What the hell, we've got to eat, anyhow.

It is my own observation that there is no speaker in the world so important that we cannot do without him—and that goes quadruple if he thinks of his services in terms of dollars and cents.

And at any rate, thanks for listening.—*E.W., Akron, Ohio.*

## *Should Restrict*

I was interested in the article "Expenses of Speakers Pose Problem," which appeared in the April issue of *The AA Grapevine*. Personally, I think this a serious problem. I feel that some restrictions should be laid down so that these highly paid orators could not speak as representing the Program.

During the past 16 months I have traveled over 20,000 miles visiting A.A. groups, "loners," and have given many talks before service clubs. I have never collected a penny, even for traveling expenses. I realize that few men could do this as it costs money. I do it because of the help I received from the A.A. philosophy and I want to do what I can for the fellow who needs help. To the general public, I remain anonymous and there is never any publicity.

I know of one man who makes a business of talking at A.A. banquets and large

public gatherings. He usually takes his wife along on his trips. The group which has him for a speaker not only pays his expenses but also his wife's expenses, plus a fee. To me this is not A.A. When folks begin to find out about this racket it is going to hurt the A.A. Program. Some damage has already been done.

Some groups figure that they must have a "big name" instead of calling on the folks from nearby. I have never, in my A.A. experience heard a speaker, who collected a fee, whom I felt was really sincere. I believe that humility and sincerity, count the most.

My heart is in the A.A. philosophy and bitter against anyone who tries to use it for personal gains.—*G.A.S., Minneapolis, Minn.*

## *Should Pay Non-A.A.*

I believe that whenever an A.A. group invites a non-alcoholic to speak, that group should offer to pay expenses. In most instances the offer will be declined but it should be made.

I am rather doubtful if many persons are making a living out of speaking at A.A. meetings. If they are, such persons will be quickly detected and the warning will go out through the usual channels and invitations will gradually cease.

When a long trip is involved, it seems only right that the group should proffer expenses. It may be suggested that we pay our own way and make that a contribution to A.A. This, too, is unfair. We want to contribute to A.A. and take our part in its support.

My suggestion for a solution to the problem: (1) offer expenses to all non-A.A. speakers; (2) offer to pay expenses for all out-of-town speakers invited. If the group is too small to assume such expenses, explain this to the speaker invited and assure him that if he feels he cannot afford to come, the group will understand.—*J.P.L. Philadelphia, Pa.*

## *Were Surprised*

It seems unlikely that the group which voiced the problem of "Expenses for Speakers" is any more isolated than ours. Except for bus fare for one leader and a hotel room for another we have not had the problem since the group was formed. I believe that most A.A.s in this part of the country were equally surprised.

Because a cross-section of life is prevalent in our membership, different types of leaders are important to our meetings. For special occasions we like a colorful and interesting leader. If the person chosen by the hosts is one who devotes all of his time to A.A., certainly he is entitled to a fee as well as his expenses. Non-A.A.s should receive traveling expenses and either, their hotel expenses or the hospitality of one of the members.

An invitation to lead a meeting is an opportunity to do 12th Step work. If we are staying sober, and finding happiness in the A.A. program we know that we are receiving as much at least, probably more than we are giving the program. Since the chances are that we are getting more than we are giving we should consider the invitation to lead a privilege for us, rather than for our proposed audience.—*C.L.H. Defiance, Ohio.*

### **It is Free**

One of the best things ever said about A.A. is that no one is making any money out of it. Paying guest speakers is against the spirit of mutual help. This makes A.A. what it is. Applause is not consistent with humility. We alcoholics are too egotistical as it is.—*R.W.R. Plainfield, N.J.*

## **New Groups**

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

CALIFORNIA—Compton, Southern Western Group; Long Beach, West Side Family Group; Riverside; Santa Paula; Turlock.

FLORIDA—St. Augustine.

ILLINOIS—Moline.

INDIANA—LaFayette; Rensselaer.

IOWA—Hampton.

KENTUCKY—Paducah.

LOUISIANA—LaFayette.

MAINE—Dexter.

MICHIGAN—Cadillac.

MISSISSIPPI—Yazoo City.

MISSOURI—Lebanon.

NEW JERSEY—Lakewood; Kirksville.

NEW YORK—Bronx, Molt Haven Group; Williston Park, L. I.

OHIO—Oak Hill.

PENNSYLVANIA—Latrobe; Lewistown.

TEXAS—Corsicana; Beeville; Kingsville; Texas City.

VIRGINIA—Bluefield; Orange.

WASHINGTON—Everett.

CANADA—New Brunswick, Grand Falls; Nova Scotia, Kentville; Quebec, Sherbrooke.

ALASKA—Fairbanks.

## **San Diego Women's Group Tells Of Organisation Procedures**

*From San Diego, Calif.*

In answer to the request by the editors of *The A.A. Grapevine* for suggestions from women alcoholics, we feel that we are justifiably proud of what has been accomplished here in San Diego, Calif. We are happy to share our experience with other women's groups.

The first women's meeting was held, September 9, 1945.

### **Gold A.A. Pins**

In February of 1946 a sufficiently strong nucleus had been attained, numbering about 15, and an outside meeting place was rented for regular meetings. A weekly meeting has been held every week since September 1945.

In September 1946 we inaugurated the custom of presenting tiny, gold A.A. pins to the women who had achieved a year of sobriety in the group. Forty-two of these one year pins have been given to members. Our records now show more than 20 women with over six months of uninterrupted sobriety. We feel that nothing can now disturb the stability of our Women's Group.

In the past year, a second group has been started confined entirely to women under 35 years. There are now about 20 of these young women who are holding their own weekly meetings. Another Women's Group in the outlying area is in the making, and we have also been able to help one of our northern cities get a group started.

During the first year and a half of operation, the group used the plan of having a leader and a secretary who served terms of three months and were required to have a minimum of three months sobriety. As the group grew the work of these members grew also. In February 1947 the setup of the group was reorganized and the present plan seems to work well.

We set up a rotating committee of five women, two seniors and three juniors; the seniors are required to have over one year of sobriety and the juniors over three months but less than a year. Each month the woman who has been longest on the committee serves as chairman for the month and then steps out. She is replaced by another senior or junior as the case may be. The seniors are named in order of duration of sobriety and the juniors

are elected by blind ballot at the regular monthly business meeting.

All business is confined to meetings which are held once a month, prior to the regular meeting; any emergency business which comes up is brought to the chairman of the group who consults with the other members of the rotating committee. They decide whether the business is important enough to bring up at a non-business meeting. This is evidently a good idea, as it gives us the entire meeting time for A.A. study and discussion. The rotating committee through its chairman is responsible for the manner in which the meetings are conducted. This also seems a very fine plan, as it gives the chairman confidence and a chance to use her own ideas.

A hospital committee of three is also appointed and changed each month. The responsibility of this committee is to check on new prospects who may be hospitalized.

We also have an elected secretary and treasurer. Each have at least one year of sobriety and serves for six months, their terms, corresponding to the A.A. Directory issued by the General Service Headquarters, New York City.

The 12th Step work with women prospects is the responsibility of the members, who make calls in pairs whenever possible. The follow-up contacts are made by the women making the original call.

### **Complete Card File**

A complete card file is kept on all contacts, including the names of sponsors and dates of calls. Most of the requests for help come through our Central Office, which we find invaluable. The women who make the calls report back to the office so that their records also may be complete.

We have recently opened a club house which we feel will be of great help. The Women's Group is entirely self-supporting and on several occasions has been able to raise funds to help with various A.A. projects in the area.

We feel that the growth of our group is due to the rotation of responsibility, keeping business and personalities out of the meetings as far as humanly possible. We would be very glad to offer any help we may and when we hear that old cry "Women can't get along together" we know it isn't so.—*Women's Group.*

# EDITORIAL:

## On the 7th Tradition

By Bill

*The A.A. Groups themselves ought to be fully supported by the voluntary contribution of their own members. We think that each group should soon achieve its ideal: that any public solicitation of funds using the name of Alcoholics Anonymous is highly dangerous, whether by groups, clubs, hospitals or other outside agencies; that acceptance of large gifts from any source, or of contributions carrying any obligation whatever, is unwise. Then too, we view with much concern those A.A. treasuries which continue, beyond prudent reserves, to accumulate funds for no stated A.A. purpose. Experience has often warned us that nothing can so surely destroy our spiritual heritage as futile disputes over property, money, and authority.*

Our growth continuing, the combined income of Alcoholics Anonymous members will soon reach the astounding total of \$250,000,000, a quarter of billion dollars yearly. This is the direct result of A.A. membership. Sober we now have it, drunk we would not.

By contrast, our over-all A.A. expenses are trifling.

For instance, the A.A. General Office now costs us \$1.50 per member a year. As a fact, the New York office asks the groups for this sum twice a year because not all of them contribute. Even so, the sum per member is exceedingly small. If an A.A. happens to live in a large metropolitan center where an intergroup office is absolutely essential to handle heavy inquiries and hospital arrangements he contributes (or probably should contribute) about \$5.00 annually. To pay the rent of his own group meeting place, and maybe coffee and doughnuts, he might drop \$25.00 a year in the hat. Or, if he belongs to a club it could be \$50.00. In case he takes *The A.A. Grapevine* he squanders an extra \$2.50!

So, the A.A. member who really meets his group responsibilities finds himself liable for about \$5.00 a month on the average. Yet his own personal income may be anywhere between \$200. and

\$2,000. a month—the direct result of *not* drinking.

"But", some will contend, "our friends want to give us money to furnish that new club house. We are a new small group. Most of us are still pretty broke. What then"?

I am sure that myriads of the A.A. voices would now answer the new group saying, "Yes, we know just how you feel. We once solicited money ourselves. We even solicited publicly. We thought we could do a lot of good with other peoples' money. But we found that kind of money too hot to handle. It aroused unbelievable controversy. It simply wasn't worth it. Besides, it set a precedent which has tempted many people to use the valuable name of Alcoholics Anonymous for other than A.A. purposes. While there may be little harm in a small friendly loan which your group really means to repay, we really beg you to think hard before you ask the most willing friend to make a large donation. You can, and you soon will, pay your own way. For each of you these overhead expenses will never amount to more than the price of one bottle of good whiskey a month. You will be everlastingly thankful if you pay this small obligation yourselves.

When reflecting on these things, why

should not each of us tell himself, "Yes, we A.A.s were once a burden on everybody. We were 'takers.' Now that we are sober, and by the Grace of God have become responsible citizens of the world, why shouldn't we now about face and become 'thankful givers'! Yes, it is high time we did!".

## Good Reading

The A.A. Grapevine will publish from time to time a list of books worthy of reading and studying. The following are recommended for your bookshelf:

*Alcoholics Anonymous*, Works Publishing Co.

*Prophet in the Wilderness*, Herman Hagedorn.

*Words to Live By*, Edited by William Nichols.

*The Human Mind*, Karl Menninger.

*Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, G. G. Jung.

*Physic. Energy. Its Source and Goal*, N. Esther Harding.

*Alcohol — One Man's Meat*, Stretcher and Chambers.

*How Never to Be Tired*, Marie Beynon Ray.

*There's One  
In Every Group*



The pessimistic Pollyana. She's always prophesying a slip for one person or another. Right now she's looking around with sweet but ghoulish glee for someone to put the finger on.

### Alcoholics Anonymous

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

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

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

# An A.A. Discovers Psychiatric Therapy

*From Jersey City, N. J.*

Recently, I spoke before a class in psychology at a college in New Jersey. As the date to speak neared, I began to feel that perhaps I had acted too hastily. Ordinarily, I do not have much difficulty addressing a group. But, when I thought of talking to 75 embryonic psychologists the proposition became appalling.

Besides a sincere desire to give a good picture to these non-alcoholics, as to how A.A. works, something else bothered me. I have two sons who are majoring in psychology at another university. To say they would have been mildly critical, if they found out their father didn't know what he was talking about, is an understatement. So I consulted their books.

## ***With Misgivings***

With misgivings, I opened up the one nearest to hand. It was *The Psychology of Adjustment* by Doctor Lourance F. Shaffer. I noted that the purpose of the book was *An Objective Approach to Mental Hygiene*. As I began to read, little did I suspect that I would find fundamentals which A.A. has been practicing since its beginning.

The first thing I found was the word "rapport". I had heard it used and had a vague notion that somewhere it was necessary in the practical application of psychological concepts. This mysterious thing, I found—"implies a condition of confidence, trust and friendship, and the creation of a positive emotional response on the part of the subject toward the examiner."

## ***Through Rapport***

Only through rapport, I read, can the client be made to disclose the really important casual factors in his past experiences. When a desirable relationship has been established, the amount of personal information that the client will give concerning intimate affairs is often astonishing.

I paused, for this struck me singularly. Why, this was a description of the beginning of what we term a 12th Step call.

Usually we meet the person, call them by their first name and follow up with a statement like "Understand you're having a little trouble with alcohol." Unwittingly, without the benefit of any education in applied psychology, we have started in the manner in which the psychologist is so

earnestly trying to get his pupils to understand as a proper approach.

Many times, we have been astonished and pleased, because of the quick response we have had from the individual. If someone had inquired as to the reason for our success we might have had difficulty in trying to explain it. The reason was that we did the very thing which the psychologist teaches his students to do, to establish a friendly relationship with the one affected.

He says "The interviewer should show that he is interested in and knows about the things the subject values. A little flattery or humor is not out of place in getting the subject into a suitable mood. The interviewer should not give obvious praise or condemnation of the conduct of his patient nor show surprise or disgust at any disclosure. The interviewer must secure the respect of the subject without overawing him. It is necessary to have the patience to listen to a tale of woe without restlessness or boredom."

## ***Described A.A.***

Upon re-reading this, I recalled the first day my sponsors came to call on me. They were two business men, whom I had never seen before, yet they had been in my home but a few minutes when they ceased to be strangers. They had started the interview by describing the trouble they had had with alcohol. When they finished, I thought, "At last here's a couple of fellows who understand my language." From then on, I unburdened myself to them.

They then described how A.A. had helped them to obtain and maintain their sobriety. They informed me that if I was sincere in my desire to quit drinking, I would have to admit to myself that I was powerless over alcohol, for they and no one else could state that as a fact. To help in an understanding of my condition they advised that I go to an A.A. meeting, and go with an open mind and to listen. I did follow their advice, and I was helped considerably. I have often wondered why.

As I read further I found an answer. The psychologist states "The treatment of maladjustments presents two fundamental tasks. One is to remove or remedy the particular inadequate behavior that is the evident cause for seeking clinical assistance. This must be accomplished, of course, not by treating the symptoms, but by redirecting the entire present adjustive scheme of the individual. The second task,

which is more important and more difficult, is to modify the broader characteristics of the individual's personality and improve his persistent habits of adjustment. In practise, these two tasks are inseparable."

To accomplish these tasks the psychologist recommends psychotherapy as the most generally applicable technique. If we pause and think, we will discover that we are getting this treatment every day in Alcoholics Anonymous. It is in the form of mental hygiene for one's self.

Shaffer says: "Persons may legitimately demand of psychologists if there are not some principles of mental hygiene by which individuals may help themselves to attain fuller, happier and better adjusted lives. The answer is in the affirmative."

## ***Profound Significance***

This thought is constantly being expressed in A.A. "First things first" includes the positive suggestion that you correct your own behavior. You are the only one who can do it, the others, in A.A. can only assist.

This psychologist continues "One of the first steps in the improvement of adjustments is the understanding of one's own behavior". From the study of psychology the individual gets a clearer conception of his own motives, of their origins and of the ways in which they are satisfied."

As we read this, we cannot help but gather the profound significance of the value of the first step in A.A. "We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable." In this admission we are able to understand our own behavior.

## ***Confidential Relationship***

Besides advocating a confidential relationship with some other person as we do in A.A. to aid us, the psychologist also recommends social participation. The various groups of A.A. are indicative of this for he advises: "Social activity in work or in play is more healthful than individual activity. In a group, each person becomes forgetful of his own immediate needs and difficulties, while he finds satisfaction in joint achievements."

Like A.A. with its many facets upon which one can expound for hours, I found many things in psychiatry which can be readily compared to our way of life as alcoholics in A.A.—A.W.

# News Circuit of A. A. Groups From All Parts of the World

**Opens Club Room**—By way of celebrating its second anniversary the Beloit, Wisconsin, Group has opened club rooms which will be used for joint meetings, social get-togethers on Saturday nights, and weekly beginners meetings. A subscription to *The A.A. Grapevine* has been donated, to the Beloit Public Library by one of the members. The address of the Beloit A.A. is written on the front of the magazine so that anyone interested can contact the group, the librarian having put *The Grapevine* in "circulation so that it can be taken out on readers' library cards.

**Growing Up**—The little group down in Anderson, S. C., is growing up. After getting off to a slow start and dropping to one member a year ago, it now reports about 20 working members.

**Don't Spare the Rod**—Mississippi, one of the three "dry" states, has been going through a stormy session of the state legislature because of a bill which will legalize the sale of liquor. One state senator, a temperance leader, has prescribed for "drunks" a sentence in the state penitentiary including the use of the whipping post four times a day as a reward for the crime of drunkenness. It is reported that the press and intelligent citizens of Mississippi took the senator strongly to task for such an expression. A.A. took no part in the controversy but could not fail to note some of the fine things said about that organization by friends and the public press.

**To the Travel-Weary**—Texarkana, Texas-Ark., it is said, is the gateway to the Southwest. This location brings many travelers to the city. The Texarkana Group wants A.A. travelers to know that the welcome mat is out at new club rooms located at 102 Gazette Building.

**From Small Beginnings**—The group at Filmore, Utah, was organized last August with five members. It now has 12 with more becoming interested everyday. The most recent member drove 115 miles for help from the Filmore Group. Meetings are held every Monday, evening for members and their wives.

**Will Welcome Advice**—In order to reach the man under 30 with a drinking problem a new group was recently formed in Rochester, N. Y. The newly organized Young Men's Group would like suggestions from other groups of this type.

**Speakers Wanted**—Since its organization in September, 1947, the Cumberland, Md. Group has moved to new and larger quarters. Being relatively new in A.A. work this group would welcome speakers from other towns. Any group wishing to sponsor speakers may contact the secretary at P.O. Box 323, Cumberland, Md.

**Seven Years Old**—The Kansas City, Mo. Group recently celebrated its seventh anniversary. This was the second group organized in Missouri. More than 500 A.A.s and their friends were present at the two day celebration which was highlighted by speakers who had "dried out" during each of the seven years of the group's existence. The featured speaker was the founder of the Des Moines, Ia Group. There are now approximately 450 active members of the Kansas City Group, including 88 women.

**Open New Club**—Beginning with one member and one dollar in December, 1947, the Alano Club, San Diego, Calif., now boasts more than 100 members.

## Convention Dates

**The third annual Texas Conference and Southwest Convention of A.A. will be held in Austin, Texas, on June 18, 19 and 20.**

**The Southeastern Regional Convention will be held in Jacksonville, Fla., on September 3 and 4. Convention headquarters will be at the George Washington Hotel where registration will begin September 2. All communications may be addressed to Southeastern Regional Convention of A.A., P.O. Box 621, Jacksonville, Fla.**

**Officials "Sold"**—Officials of Santa Clara County, Calif, are "sold" on Alcoholics Anonymous. So firmly do they believe in the group therapy offered by A.A. that Judges, the Sheriff and the District Attorney have agreed to the use of the County Jail Farm and the County Hospital for rehabilitation of those who cannot afford hospitalization or treatment in private institution. Alcoholics who have hit "bottom" and desperately need care and confinement may approach a group committee and make known their need for confinement. If the screening committee believes them to be sincere, the cases are turned over to a "contact man" for the four San Jose, Calif, groups. He in turn notifies the District Attorney and applicants are sent to the "farm" without submitting to legal red tape. Should the alcoholic require hospitalization he may be transferred from the Jail Farm to the County Hospital for treatment. Facilities at both County institutions are excellent. The plan is now in operation and Alcoholics Anonymous members as well as officials of the county regard it as a step forward in the move to consider alcoholics as sick people rather than moral parasites.

**Just a Line to Tell You**—That nearly every A.A. group in Vermont was represented at the first anniversary meeting of the Valley Group, Bethel, Vt. . . . The Montrose, Calif. Beginners Group uses this bit of wisdom for a motto; "There is no limit to the amount of good a man can do so long as he doesn't care who gets the credit." . . . Out of town speakers go over big in Louisville, Ky. Any travelers who want to exchange ideas with the Kentuckians can get in touch with the Token Club. . . . An A.A. of a year's sobriety found himself in Okanogan, Wash. He contacted two alcoholics. Result: A thriving little group. . . . A hangover on May 12, 1947 developed into a new group on May 27, 1947. That was in Storm Lake, Iowa. Now a year later it is going strong as the Buena Vista County Group—The Mayfield, Ky. Group has a husband and wife who do their 12th Step work as a team. They would like to hear about the methods other husbands and wives use. Do they work together or separately? . . . The Mishawaka, Ind. Group while still one big happy family, has divided into three sections for closed meetings. . . . The group down in Brazil that wants letters now has a post office box: Alcoholics Anonymous, Caixa Postal 254, Rio de Janeiro.



"Oh say can you see... by the dawn's early light?"

## News Circuit

**Never Underestimate**—The ladies took charge of a meeting held recently in Tacoma, Wash., when four members of the Seattle Women's Group spoke. In the audience were ten persons, attending an A.A. meeting for the first time. Proof of the power of a woman came the next week at the Step Meeting. Of the ten who came to listen, eight returned to learn. The County Sheriff also spoke.

**It Is Rumored**—The Jefferson City, Mo., Group is tossing around the idea of organizing a "Slipper Group." It will be designed for those boys and girls who really want A.A. but for some reason or another fall off the beam now and then.

**Weekly Radio Program**—The Fairmont, W. Va., Group is sponsoring a weekly program over the new radio station WVWV. The program, heard at 12 noon every Saturday, has been running successfully for several weeks. Four members of the group appeared recently on an open forum which proved so successful that more programs of this type are being planned by the radio station.

**Change of Address**—The Chattanooga, Tenn. Group outgrew its old quarters and has now moved to 801½ Broad St. The new clubrooms have four times as much space as the old, the furniture is in place and the membership is awaiting any or all travelers who find themselves in the vicinity.

**Young and Thriving**—The Fulton, Ky. Group, now six months old, reports 30 active members. . . . A new group has also been formed in Beacon, N. Y. boasting three charter members. The group meets weekly and recently held its first open meeting. Approximately 138 members and friends turned out. . . . Another new group is thriving in Oxford, N. C. Starting with five members last December the group now has 20 members and reports no slips to date. . . . Plans for a first anniversary dinner to be held sometime in July are being made by the Goshen, Ind. Group. . . . A few months ago three men with an interest in A.A. started a group in Princeton, Minn. Just three weeks after the first open meeting the group opened its new club room with more than 40 guests present.

## Any Takers?

From Brooklyn, N.Y.

I have been around A.A. for three and one half years but now, because of my job, I find myself unable to attend as many meetings as I used to. I wonder if there aren't others in the same boat who would like to exchange letters?

During my first years in A.A. I achieved little more than physical sobriety. But all the study, physical effort and lip service I gave did keep me constantly conscious of A.A. The knowledge, if not the spirit of the Program became mine.

After a year which included four slips, I suddenly was blessed with the spirit of our ideas. The only thing that kept me going during that second year was the knowledge of the mechanics of the Program.

When that knowledge was added to the spiritual faith I found, I saw that everything given to this cause comes back a hundred-fold. I had no fear of the new way of life that would interrupt my A.A. activities when I accepted this new job. I knew that I could take the A.A. principles right into my new surroundings. I'd like to add 12th Step work by mail to my daily schedule. Any takers?—B.L.

## THE WINNER!

Here it is—the winner of the Contest Contest.

That's not double talk, either. Or a typo. For those who came in late, *The A.A. Grapevine* got into the contest business a few months ago with the *Best Hiding Place Contest*. When that was completed and the winner announced, it was decided to hold a contest to decide what kind of a contest to hold next. The winning suggestion, in the opinion of the eds, is:

### MY BEST ALIBI

So here we go on the *Best Alibi Contest*.

What was your best alibi, or at least the most novel, that you gave the boss for not showing up, or the wife for not showing up until morning—or for not showing at all? Or maybe your best alibi was conceived for some other occasion. Whatever the purpose, send it in to:

The Best Alibi Editor

P.O. Box 328, Grand Central Annex  
New York 17, N. Y.

# Mail Call For A.A.s At Home and Abroad

## Wants Letters

From Toronto, Canada

Six months ago I was rescued by members of Alcoholics Anonymous, Toronto, Canada.

Prior to this over a two-year period I had gone through physical, financial and mental hell.

But I know as I pen these words that I am free of both drug addiction and alcoholism. And having had a bad case of both I can definitely testify that the A.A. therapy, so effective for alcoholics, is equally effective for addicts.

Out here again it is of utmost importance, first to free one's mind of whatever upset or disturbance it was that caused the addiction in the first place and secondly to have a deep, sincere, inward desire to quit.

I was down on my back with both bare shoulders in the gravel when A.A. men were called in. I was impressed by their sincerity. When I attended their meetings and met their members I was convinced these men were so "sold" on their Program and so imbued by the spirit of it—so obsessed—that it amounted to a religion; and I am not using the word "religion" loosely.

I was a tough one and had a relapse—(lost my reason for nearly a week)—had a seizure that fractured my spine—spent 32 days on boards in bed, 52 days, in all, in hospital, yet the ideas and thoughts these A.A. men gave me stuck with me. It is, I believe, to their everlasting credit that the kindly and helpful thoughts given me by these men stayed with me all through the terrible ordeal that I underwent.

So I would like to invite anyone who reads this and who has had the misfortune to be addicted to drugs to write me. For I shall consider it a pleasure to correspond with anyone—so happy am I that I am well and am experiencing the oft-quoted but little understood "peace that passeth all understanding."

To all addicts; I would feel it a privilege to correspond with you if you write Hugh in care of *The A.A. Grapevine*.—Hugh.

## Contagious!

From San Francisco, Calif.

Alcoholism as a disease is unique in that it is not contagious, but its effects are felt by all who come in contact with those afflicted. How often the alcoholic's

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

family, friends, and employers must have thought a light case of tuberculosis would be more welcome! ;

Now, we alcoholics who are arrested cases via A.A. still have something which can affect those with whom we come in contact; and what we have now *can* be contagious, to the happiness of the infected.

Let us be as unselfish in sharing our new way of life as we were in sharing the ways which went with our drinking days.

Each day try these simple experiments on at least one person:

Smile. . . . *You* were a sourpuss before!

Be Tolerant. . . . *You* could be wrong!

Be Understanding. . . . And soon others will want *your* way of life!

For your way (practice of A.A. principles) is the road to peace and serenity for which all are searching, whether they know it or not.

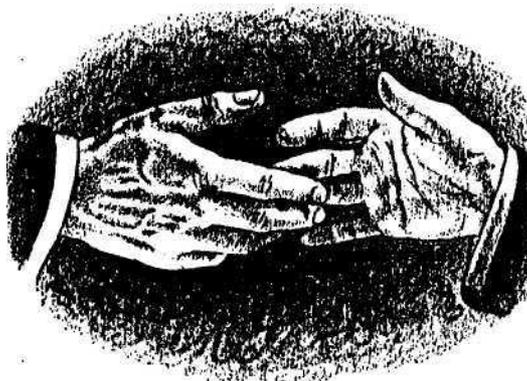
Whereas others lived in terror of your former condition, they will now want to be a part of the life lived by the new you.

With a sense of humility and a sincere desire to help others, let us be generous with ourselves. *It works.*—Jane

## In Reverse?

From Philadelphia, Pa.

I recently read in *The A.A. Grapevine* and have heard elsewhere that A.A. works in reverse. I certainly scoffed at that sug-



gestion at the time. Being dry since January, 1946 has brought many changes in my thinking.

When I was dry about 13 months, I applied for a position which I did not get. However, I did get as much personal help out of that interview as I have from some meetings. The man who interviewed me was interested in A.A. and the problem of alcohol. In discussing A.A. with him I told him of some of the things we talked about in meetings.

"Gosh," he said, "I should think that always talking about your drinking would actually drive you to drink more!"

I replied in effect that it might seem that way to a non-alcoholic but that I was like the woman talking about her operation. She may do a lot of talking about it but I have yet to hear a woman say that she would want to go through with the operation again. I used to do a lot of drinking but very little talking about it, except to lie. Now, I do an awful lot of talking about it but I don't do any drinking.

How many times have I vowed never to drink again. Each time I expected everyone within hearing to believe me and was highly insulted if they didn't. Down deep in my heart I didn't believe it myself but I expected everyone else to.

Now I see no reason why I should ever drink again if I continue to think as I do—and I can add without malice that I don't give a hoot whether anyone believes me or not. A.A. does work in reverse because I believe it does.—P.A.C.

## On Attending Meetings

From St. Paul, Minn.

I wish it were possible to get a check on slips due to non-attendance at A.A. meetings. I am sure the percentage would be much too high.

The person in A.A. for three, six or nine months is not firmly enough on the Program, in my opinion, to stay away from meetings. It took most of us years to mess up our lives. We cannot expect to clean up the debris in such short order.

I think that the new member should attend meetings twice a week, or at least drop by the club (if such is available). For us alcoholics our drinking problem was number one. Now we should make our A.A. meetings our number one MUST.—E.J.F.

## I, Too, Have a Shrine

From *Bala-Cynwyd, Pa.*

Last summer while in Quebec, I visited the world-famous Shrine of Sainte Anne de Beaupre. Evidences of cures, including testimonials, were on display. The miracles were many and I couldn't help but think of the faith and devotion of those who were cured.

I did some further thinking.

Until May 18, 1947, I had been having trouble with my hearing. That was normal for a man of my age, I reasoned. Especially one whose left ear drum had been slightly punctured as a youth. I thought I'd get a hearing aid. I didn't realize, of course, that with a befogged brain I couldn't hear or comprehend what was going on.

My left knee often buckled. This, I protested, was natural. What more could I expect? Hadn't I had poliomyelitis when a young man? I should carry a cane. I would get one. Even Atlas's legs would have collapsed under the drinking I did.

My sinus condition was becoming progressively worse. That was due to my advancing years. I was 49. Perhaps I required an operation. I would get in touch with the doctor. Of course, my drinking would have aggravated a sneeze.

For the past 10 years I have been secretary of a corporation. As such I was required to read the minutes of the meeting before the Board of Directors. In September, 1946, I suddenly became mute. I could not read the minutes. I developed claustrophobia, I said, and asked to be excused. I didn't realize that my heavy drinking made me self-conscious, if indeed I remained conscious at all. I tendered my resignation.

Finally, I confided to my wife that a man of my age should retire. At least I should relax a bit by moving to a New England town. I decided on Springfield. I could get a job in a branch office of a Stock Exchange firm and work about five hours a day. I wouldn't drink so much in Springfield.

I didn't realize that now I had become a complete escapist.

I attended my first A.A. meeting on May 19, 1947, and on sober reflection, my visit to the Shrine of Sainte Anne de Beaupre made me realize what A.A. and the Higher Power have meant to me.

I have discarded the thought of a hearing aid.

I know I need no cane.

My sinus condition does not bother me and I certainly need no operation.

My resignation as secretary of the cor-



**JOHNNY ONE-STEP THINKS IT'S AN ESCALATOR—  
—JUST SIT ON THE FIRST STEP AND RIDE UP.**

poration was held in abeyance for a year. It was withdrawn at the request of the Board of Directors. Again I perform my duties normally.

Again I start my day's work with the energy and hopeful outlook that befits a man who is in the best and most productive years of his business life. Any thought of retiring or tapering off is a thing of the past.

It is little wonder that I look upon A.A. as my shrine.—*E.G.S.F.*

**Wish I'd Said That.** Gerri Gale: "Alcoholics Anonymous takes a drunk apart and finds out what makes him hic." —*New York Post, New York, N.Y.*

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# Mail Call

## Thinking Brings Problems

*From Waukegan, Ill.*

When alcoholics first come on the Program usually they are so fouled up that they evidence no reluctance to turn the whole sordid mess over to a "Power greater than themselves." They say with no reservations, "Thy will be done" and immediately they get the honeymoon ride. Then they go to meetings and begin to *think* and form their *own* opinions which immediately brings problems. It should be very simple to see why we have to hasten back to the very simple truth which worked so beautifully at the start—*"Turn our will over to a Power greater than ourselves,"* and mean it.

This is such a simple operating principle that most of us cannot appreciate its potency. As soon as we begin to learn about the Program we want to make it complicated and we revert to our old ways of thinking. No doubt if we honestly searched our innermost being we would find it was our assertion of our own will that has caused us the difficulty we are experiencing.

It seems too that when we are capable of meeting problems, they come to us to be solved. This serves to keep the knowledge we have acquired in good working order. Somewhere I read we are never given a cross to bear that we do not have the strength to carry. It has proven itself for me because whenever a problem has come I have found it keeps coming back until it is solved.

The A.A. Book gives us the tools and tells us how to use them. Perhaps the reason everything else failed for us in our search for sobriety or the answers to our reasons for drinking, was the fact that all we found was "what we should do" but nothing showed us "how to do it."

Knowing the theory is fine but unless we watch for every opportunity in all our daily actions and learn to apply it we cannot benefit or grow. We may stay sober for a time but that is all. There is unlimited opportunity to demonstrate the principles as laid down in the 12 Steps, in our daily contacts with our families and business associates.

When you begin your day with a prayer for guidance you cannot help but find opportunity to be of service, to counsel one in trouble, to show consideration for your fellow men, and to put another first in your thoughts. Then you need to express

gratitude for these opportunities and for knowledge of their existence as opportunities, for the friendly handclasp and even for just the accomplishment of a good day's work. In this manner we are going about "Our Father's business" and for those who don't acknowledge a God—you are simply putting into operation a philosophy that works.—*Jerry*

## Careful—Slippery Road

*From Chicago, Ill.*

From time to time it becomes necessary for some very plain speaking about slips. It is high time to abandon finesse and come out in the open with some plain truths and facts.

If we look at it squarely and honestly, we ask some very pertinent questions, such as: Is the Program insufficient? Are its Steps too difficult to grasp?

The answer is definitely no, for does it not teach all of us the futility of trying to subordinate reality in alcohol? There is no point in trying to put the blame on anything but ourselves. Reasoning will show lack of interest in the Program, and an unwillingness to understand it, mental and moral reservations as well as the desire to keep on drinking. These are the causes of slips.

Furthermore the unwillingness and refusal of the slipee to bow in humility to the Power greater than himself, the only thing that can restore him to normalcy, will cause trouble.

Grousing and griping about real or fancied wrongs doesn't help. Why not instead do something about these things yourself? The Program can't do it for you.

Be open and aboveboard in your dealings with others, quit kidding yourself, your wives and families, above all don't try to kid your fellow A.A.s. All this pretense and sham must cease if you are to be sober happily instead of dry miserably.

Lip service to A.A., once a week or just once in a while won't get you anywhere. This is a 24-hour program, yes, but 365 days a year, 24 hours at a time until death severs your wedding to alcohol. You must work at it and be of it wholeheartedly if you want to retain your sobriety and sanity. Nothing less can or will do. There is no compromise.

On the proposition of dealing with others, why not do your first 12th Step work at home where it is so sorely needed for the others of our families to readjust themselves? The more they know about the Program the more they can help us. The teachings and Steps of the Program

are not secrets or anonymous, only the persons and their problems are, so feel free to discuss A.A. with your loved ones as it makes for better understanding and lessens the chance for domestic problems.

Above all, talk; don't be the silent type. It doesn't work in our case. If problems arise let's talk them over with the parties concerned, and then when that has failed it is time to call in a third party as arbitrator, who may help us to see things more clearly.

All through the period of our drinking our constant wish was "God restore me to sanity and normalcy." This prayer therefore should make us hesitate to excuse ourselves for alcoholic thinking and slips by saying, "Well, I'm alcoholic." You can't be normal and be alcoholic, so make your choice. Either face life as a normal person in sobriety or hide from it in a bottle. An honest drunk is more to be admired than a lying dry.—*Ernie of Ravenswood*

## Ringside Table

A member of A.A. had occasion to take two business clients to one of the better night clubs in Chicago. Having no reservations or special pull, the three were seated at a table fairly far removed from the floor where the show was about to begin.

A waiter appeared to take orders. Both of the business clients ordered Scotch.

"A coke," said the A.A.

"Coke and Scotch?" asked the waiter.

"No. Just a plain coke without anything else, please," the A.A. explained.

"Just coke? No whiskey?" said the waiter, looking at the A.A. somewhat quizzically. The latter nodded.

Soon the waiter reappeared with the orders and as he set the coke down, he asked: "Do you always drink just plain coke?"

Somehow the question didn't seem to be offensive. The waiter wasn't that kind. He really seemed to want to know, for some good reason.

"Well, coke, or maybe gingerale or a seven up. Why?" countered the A.A.

"Just curious," said the waiter. After an instant's pause, he added, "Did you ever have a 'slip'?"

The A.A. looked up quickly to find the waiter grinning broadly at him. The A.A. grinned back as broadly. They spoke the same language and later met at the downtown meeting of A.A. Now, when the first A.A. takes business clients to that night club, he always gets a ringside table.

# Alberto Finds the Good Way of Life with Friends

*From Seminole, Texas*

Fate was unkind to Alberto. South of the Rio Grande, he would have been altogether at home, an integral part of his own race; with people whose soft and fluid vowels were part and parcel of himself. It is even possible that he might in time have become a Jefe, in a minor way of course, for his eyes were calm and level, and widely spaced beneath a forehead showing much character.

## In Impish Mood

Other than that, Mother Nature must have been in an impish mood when she formed his head, for the rest of his features were ungainly. The profile was pure Indian, after the pattern of his forebears, hooked nose and high cheek bones on reddish brown skin. Full faced, his ears were large and angular, stuck straight out from behind the thick black hair, as with all Aztecian sons and daughters.

Unfortunately Alberto was not born south of the river, but among the Texans to whom he and his people were merely "Pelados", hewers of wood and drawers of water. Tolerated because of their usefulness but certainly not encouraged or accepted socially.

Although born in America, he was not considered American. To his puzzled childish mind this attitude was incomprehensible, for he thought of himself as much a unit of his native state as anyone.

Because his mind was good, absorbing and easily retaining all knowledge that came his way, such discrimination was even more mystifying. Since it was a matter of daily occurrence he came to accept as fact the thought of being an inferior of an inferior race, doomed to serve and be subservient to a lighter hued dominant humanity.

Creation of this belief in turn created a subconscious sense of frustration, a psychosis or complex that caused Alberto to become a "Wino" drunk, he ceased to be Alberto the Pelado. He became, instead, a person of importance. A man to whom doors opened as long as his money lasted. After that, bleary eyed and hopeless, he'd start another round. He would wander to another job, accumulate another stake, get on another drunk. Each bout was worse than the one before.

Between sprees Alberto was a good employee. Even when drunk there was no malice in his makeup. He remained as he

was sober, a kindly gentle soul, given to generous impulses and friendly polite attitude.

Somewhere along the road and for some obscure reason, destiny changed its course in Alberto's case, directing his wanderings to a small southwestern town and to the doorsteps of two men who lived there.

These men after long search had found for themselves a way of life where, among other things, intolerance, discrimination or distinction of race and creed played no part. Finding Alberto in his usual post pay day condition they took him in hand.

Again Destiny played a part. Within reasonable distance was a small Clinic, where advanced practice, competent medical attention, understanding and sound theory for the care of alcoholics could be had. After dark, because they too were working men, these two in the exercise of their creed, drove Alberto to the Clinic. In a demonstration of their practical Christianity the men underwrote the cost of his care.

## No Interest

For three days Alberto took small interest in his surroundings. Gradually understanding returned. A smiling nurse ministered to his needs. Doctors listened to heart and lungs, ribbing him meanwhile about the brand of liquor found in his pocket. He noticed that there were no bars nor locks. Instead of the dingy furnishings and soiled wall paper of a cheap flop house, his room was spotless. He was coaxed to eat good food and treated with vitamins. He became Alberto the Welcome Guest. Friendly comradeship replaced usual abuse and disdain.

On the fifth day Alberto became helpful and help was needed. In his friendly way he filled water pitchers, swept rooms and halls and became an extra pair of hands for the nurse. On the eighth day Alberto was ready to leave.

Several hours before departure he was called to the main office. He was asked to stay on as night attendant. The physician in charge, himself an alcoholic, pointed out how difficult constant sobriety was to attain, even at best and for the most favored. "Remain with us," the doctor said, "Among those who have the same problem as your own. They need your help and by helping them you help yourself."

All of this was some time back. So

far there have been no slips, but Alberto being human there may be. Whether there is or is not is a matter of conjecture along with the fourth dimension and origin of species, but one thing is sure. Alberto has formed ties of mutual respect that will endure for life. He has found in humanity a group whose creed builds structures of hope and contentment. Alberto is only a neophyte in that creed, but the 12 Steps he now faithfully follows, are a shining reward for human effort.—*C.O.B.*

## Parents and A.A.

"The most important new human welfare movement in America today is the organization called "Alcoholics Anonymous." At least that is the way I feel about it.

"Frequently, in these columns, I've talked about the seeming increase in alcoholism among parents. I have described the tragic results of that alcoholism in the lives of children and loved ones. Let's look at the other side of the picture today, the remedial side.

"America desperately needs Alcoholics Anonymous. Increasing numbers of psychiatrists and general physicians are refusing to treat alcoholism. Many hospitals don't want to be bothered with them. Apart from A.A. they can turn chiefly to quacks who take their money and give them little or nothing.

And usually they receive from family and friends only condemnation which intensifies their troubles.

No wonder it was commonly said that 'alcoholics can't be helped. They are beyond treatment. They are incurable.'

"The geniuses who organized Alcoholics Anonymous a few years ago, themselves alcoholics, knew more about human nature than the rest of us did. They knew that a person suffering from alcoholism desperately needs friendship, companionship, and affection. They provide it. Day or night, anywhere, any time, there is someone willing to help.

"Theirs is a Christian doctrine of service, applied even more directly than most of our churches have applied it.

"And the men who started this organization knew that another basic human need is for religion. Most of us can feel secure only if we can sense that there is a power greater than ourselves whose strength we can draw upon."—*by Richmond Barbour, Californian, Salinas, Calif.*

# A.A. Program Makes Its Own Chance

*From Big Sur, Calif.*

People who have read my story, *If A Man Be Mad*, often charge me with having stubbornly resisted A.A. My personal opinion is that A.A. makes its own chance, often having its greatest effect on those who seemed to resist most. Something in them isn't ready and they are honest enough to know it. But when they are ready they will remember. My sponsor gave A.A. to me in a humble and believing abundance. From the point of immediate results, they were wasting their time. I believed in them but not in myself.

Somewhere a reviewer said, "When the disciple is ready the Master will appear." Parenthetically, he added that, of course, the master and the disciple are one. He has, I feel, a key to the success of A.A. Each disciple can in time become a master.

## *Everything Ganged Up*

*If A Man Be Mad* recounts a story that ended on New Year's 1944-45. I started writing the book in April 1946. In that month everything that had made me an alcoholic ganged up on me. Drink was no longer a great problem in itself. Everything was out of hand; I had no more foundation in life than a toy balloon.

"We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable," came to me with startling clarity. I had long since admitted that I was powerless over alcohol but never, I then realized, had I admitted that my precious life itself had been unmanageable. For me, the *1st Step* had to be worded in reverse. "We admitted that our lives had become unmanageable—that we were powerless over alcohol." That my alcoholism was a product of one way of life, just as much as my sobriety would have to be the product of a new way of life, had never occurred to me.

I have since been told that I wasn't an alcoholic in the ordinary sense (none of us are) but that my problem stemmed from a larger neurosis or conflict. A neurosis, the authorities tell me, is simply a situation in the individual that stems from his inability to make a choice, or compromise. Wanting everything at once, he is unable to choose anything. The method of evading the responsibility of making a choice determines the type of neurosis and its intensity. All right, I couldn't make up my mind whether to go my own way or my stepfather's way, and so I did both

and got drunk when I was near success at either extreme. Was I a business man or a writer? Alcohol kept me from ever having to decide. I wanted the joys of marriage with none of its responsibilities. Alcohol quite logically kept me from having either. Although I had succeeded in losing guilt feelings I hadn't lost an unquenchable vanity.

What I needed to do was humbly and simply say, "I am powerless." I had to withdraw from the whole baffling struggle, drop the vanity that kept me fighting a losing battle and really give up. The *1st Step* applied to me as much as it does to the least complex alcoholic. This is probably the most difficult thing an American ever has to do. Our society is based on the ideal of victory and the ignominy of defeat without a valiant struggle. Competition is our basic formula of life.

Most of our popular fiction is based on the "comeback." Probably it was this will to win that kept me, and keeps many others, on a destructive course. I had so little idea of what one did with survival besides fight for it that I hated to give up the fight. Pure survival was, to me, more frightening than the D.T.'s.

And yet it is by giving up—by accepting ourselves as we are—that we find peace for ourselves, a realm beyond craving. We are almost unique among the men and women of our time in that we learn that a spiritual experience, the great, calm flow of freedom, comes only when we have accepted defeat and refuse to fight anymore. Cowardly? I think not. Cowardice has no meaning to a man who has given up vanity, even if only in a small area of himself. How simple this is, and yet how terribly difficult to come by.

To me the words, "I admit I am powerless," have come to have an extraordinary meaning. Man's hope is in a direction opposite to the one he has been taking, whether he be an alcoholic or a nation of men. Once a true giving up takes



place one is capable of free choice and can move onward.

I often wonder how many alcoholics have truly studied Bill's life. We all know that he was a successful man in the popular sense, that he held a position of wealth even though he was powerless over alcohol. But I wonder how many of us have asked why he didn't try to make a spectacular *comeback* just to show his old friends what he could do when he was sober.

We who didn't understand—worried about our own resentments and at Bill's calm answer to our questions. That all of these resentments were a natural product of our own strident vanity, we wouldn't allow ourselves to know. What he had come to know each man has to find out for himself. Some of us admitted readily enough that we were powerless over drink while still holding out a reservation as to our power in other areas from which our drinking sprung. We weren't humble. Often, indeed, we were vain about being smart enough to find A.A.

## *Great Impression*

The impression Bill made on me in that old 24th Street club house was great. I had experienced a free man. He could afford to be impersonal, anonymous.

Back in April of 1946 I did learn what can come of a man truly giving up. I had always supposed that when a man gave up he cowered in a figurative corner. Then suddenly I knew there was nothing to cower from. I had given up fear. While I was writing *If A Man Be Mad* I was at most entirely emancipated from pride. The book was a sort of *4th Step*, a moral inventory of myself. There were many things about myself that I didn't say, but I recognized them and you can be sure that they weren't deleted because of fear. I knew that I could display before I was investigated; admit instead of protest. No one could say anything about me that I couldn't say about myself. Here was freedom as I had never before dreamed it. Only when I had given up did I realize what a vicious tyrant my pride had been.

As I look back on it now I am amazed at the fidelity with which I was following A.A. without being conscious of it. To me the idea that I was suggesting that the path followed by me in my book was the way out for anyone else but me is fantastic. The histories in the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* were written on the same principal of catharsis, or moral inventory.—H.M.