

August 1954

Another former editor helps us celebrate our Tenth Anniversary (June 1944-June 1954) by choosing a favorite selection to reprint.

Letter from An Editor

CONGRATULATIONS! May *The Grapevine* bear even better fruit in the next decade than it has in these first ten wonderful years!

When you asked me to participate in this Tenth Anniversary by selecting my own favorite pieces from *The Grapevine* during my time as its Editor,* I thought it would be a cinch, and a pleasant one. Trouble is, it was *too* pleasant! Browsing through more than three years of back issues revived more memories than rediscovering an old family album. I ended up with so many "favorites" you'd need six full issues to reprint them.

Here were stories by The Deacon, surely one of the most colorful drunks ever to find his way into AA. The old "calendar drinker" turned out some of the liveliest writings ever seen in the GV, before or since.

Here too were *Grapevine* reports of momentous AA events. The First International Conference in Cleveland in

1950. The first General Service Conference in 1951. In reporting that one we ran pictures, remember? Then we ducked! And got a number of scathing reminders about anonymity. One I still remember—from my dear friend Bob H. of Richmond, Va.

Here was the saddest moment in AA history—the tragic loss of our beloved Dr. Bob. If I were choosing the most significant thing printed in the GV during my stewardship, it would of course be the January 1951 issue, dedicated to Dr. Bob and Anne who had passed on seventeen months before.

Even when I excluded these events, I was still in trouble. But I finally settled on a piece that is completely out of season. It was the lead story in the December 1949 issue, "Christmas in the Place for Drunks." It was written by Les D., then of West Redding, Conn., and as reliable a contributor as any editor ever had to lean

on when he needed a good piece to balance off an issue. "The Place for Drunks" is, in my estimation, one of the finest pieces of writing we ever ran.

Here is all the emotional horror of the alcoholic, handled with the great tenderness of humility which AA teaches us. And with a final paragraph which will make even a hard-bitten drunk grateful for having Christmas come in August this year.

Bill has characterized the years when it was my privilege to edit the GV as AA's time of "Coming of age." Part of the process of growing up is the ability to laugh at ourselves. So I had to include some of G.G.'s drawings. In my opinion, these wonderful cartoons and wash drawings, more than any other one factor, helped the GV to grow up as a publication. His Alibi Albums were perfect mirrors. And I nominate the man-on-the-phone as the best portrayal of the inner tur-

moil of a drunk ever done, with words *or pen**.

In closing, I hope you'll indulge me to the extent of allowing me to pay my personal tribute to others who made my job so easy. First, there's B. H. who started designing our covers with the September 1949 issue and is still doing them. Then there's R. McK. who used to do "The Chairman" every month. There were many others but these were the handful a guy could rely upon to work into the wee hours of the morning if necessary. And, finally, there's J. A. D., a Vice President of the GV, who worked tirelessly behind the scenes, reading proof, catching mistakes, right up until his death last April. I'll miss him and so will hundreds, yes thousands, of AAs around New York who knew and loved him. The *Grapevine* was, is, and always will be a *lot* of people!

Al S., Great Neck, L. I.

* Dec. 1948-Dec. 1951.