



## THE SEARCH FOR HAPPINESS

### ABOUT SEEKING HAPPINESS

It is legitimate to seek happiness. We cannot help observing that while followers of some schools of thought are telling us to avoid seeking happiness, they intimate that if we do so we shall be happy.

The search requires a plan. We need to know what sort of happiness we seek, what the ingredients are, what are our strongest wants, and what we have to start with. We should train ourselves to keep the programme simple and free from complications and side trips, to pay attention to little things, to deflate quickly after being praised and to bounce back quickly from disappointment, to seize or create opportunities to put our special abilities to work, to seek excellence in everything we do, to remain modest, and to review and revise periodically.

Most of us do not really have to seek far and wide. Happiness grows at our own fireside, if we cultivate it.

The romantic minds of young people are likely to imagine that happy events and happiness-bringing people will make their entrance to the sound of drums and trumpets, but when we look from the vantage point of maturity we see that they came in quietly, almost unnoticed. As Benjamin Franklin remarked in his autobiography, "Human felicity is produced not so much by great pieces of good fortune that seldom happen, as by little advantages that occur every day."

### AIDS TO HAPPINESS

There are some things which will make our search for happiness easier, though never easy. Good habits, for example, will accustom us to free our minds and hands of petty chores so that we may devote our strength of mind and body to our life job.

Civilization advances by extending the number of important operations we can perform without thinking of them. The skills which we develop into habits save time and energy, accustom us to disposing of unpleasant tasks, make us exercise the virtues of punctuality and shun the vices of procrastination, and, generally, free us to pay particular and undistracted attention to matters that are significant.

If pattern living takes over the routine tasks, freeing us from the necessity of deciding less important things afresh every day, that is a good thing, but we must not carry habit to the point where it becomes our master. The year in which a man's habits become sacred and un-

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## HELP

A member of AA who honestly tries to follow the Twelve suggested Steps for even a short time will find himself involved in helping others. This is an important part of our program but let's not forget what part of the AA program it is! The 12th Step, the last Step, followed by such as turning our lives and our will over to God as we understand Him, the clean up and inventory steps? Admission and restitution, the Eleventh Step in which we seek God and His will for us?

Yet, this job of helping others has become a modern phenomenon. Never in the history of the world are there people occupied with the improvement of their neighbors and never in the history of the world as there so many people depending on others for help. It seems that there are too many preachers and too few sinners, too many leaders and too few followers and none has the time to improve himself.

There are many sincere and honest people in AA who are getting hurt because they become too busy with the job of improving their neighbor and they neglect to spend some time to improve on their own character defects. They fail to work that part of the program which is mainly to improve their conscious contact with God and the result is the deterioration of the quality of service to others. They neglect to cultivate in themselves, the things they are urging upon others. There really is a need for a balance between attention to ourselves and attention to others.

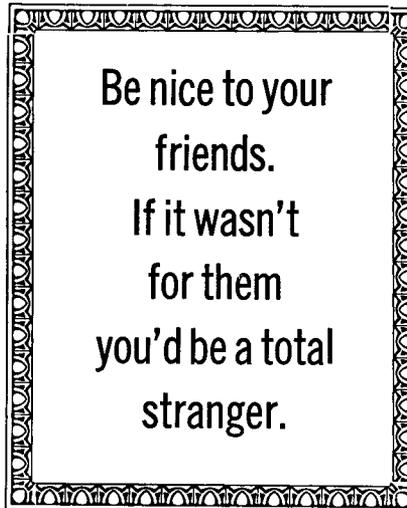
Some people can do more than others, so we all need to find out our own point of equilibrium and stay with it.

Our Fellowship is a brotherhood of love and service and it has demonstrated the capacity to serve with good results. There are times however, when the slip in some purely personal notions with a note of coercion or a hint that they must, or else.

The desire to help others can be transformed into fanaticism and tyranny. We can take a lesson from the religious wars that are going on today throughout the world. Note the bitterness between the rival reform groups. It is a well known fact that human beings tortured and killed one another in trying to force their own belief in God on others. They sometimes forget when we say "Our Father," that every man is our brother and every woman our sister.

If by the grace of God we do not have to plead guilty to some of those weak points, we should recognize their potentialities and frankly face their danger. It is helpful to know where all of our activities will lead when they are not pursued with humility and the constant reminder

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CENTRAL BULLETIN

Published monthly by the Central Bulletin Foundation, Inc., a non-profit corporation dedicated to service. Address all letters to Central Bulletin, Box 6712, Cleveland, Ohio 44101. Subscription price — \$3.00 per year.

Harry D., Pounder and Editor 1892-1968



Vol. 35

January-February, 1977

No. 4 and 5

### BENCH MARKS

"Happy New Year!" is a terse greeting that expresses so much in three short words.

Have you ever stopped to think how much can be said in only three words? Consider the power that has been packed into these three-word statements, hymn titles, questions, affirmations and divine commands:

I love you. God is love. Thank you, Father. Praise the Lord. He is risen. Share your faith. God bless you. Pray without ceasing. Come unto me. Trust and obey. Be not anxious. Peace, be still. Onward Christian Soldiers. Expect a miracle. Love conquers all. Sing for joy. Be not afraid. Please forgive me. I forgive you. Forgive and forget. If you please. Prince of Peace. King of Kings. Lord of Lords. Were you there? Lamb of God. Love thy neighbor. Jesus is Lord. Abide with me. America the beautiful. God bless America. I pledge allegiance. Ask, seek, knock. Service above self. Brighten your corner. Here's to you. Bless your heart. Do it now. You can win.

What are some of your favorite three-word expressions?

Think it over!

### FALSE FACES

by Wilfred Peterson

The four-year-old youngster next door makes this observation about Santa Claus: "He must be real, for no man could wear a false face all the time!"

If that were only true! Too many men and women are not what they seem to be.

False faces and politics. The politician campaigning for our vote wears a different face when he is making promises than he wears when he takes office.

False faces and business. What a great change would come over the world of commerce 'if all businessmen would rip off their false faces, stop putting on an act, and be honest, sincere, and genuine.

False faces and world peace. What if all the leaders of the world would stop hiding behind false faces, lay their cards on the table, face the facts, and enter into negotiations in a spirit of goodwill?

False faces and society. We all wear false faces at times. What if we would simply be ourselves without so much pretending?

How can we rid the world of false faces. I can start by taking off my own!

— The Art of Living Day by Day

### FAITH

Faith does not create, it reveals . . . Faith is to the soul what the telescope is to the astronomer or the microscope is to the scientist. These instruments reveal but they do not create.

## MINUTES OF CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING FEBRUARY 1, 1977

Herman W., Moderator, opened the meeting and lead the representatives present in the Serenity Prayer. Roll call showed that 39 persons were in attendance representing 37 groups. Purpose of Central Committee and the Twelve Traditions of AA were read by Art Z., Vice Moderator, followed by reading of the minutes of the last meeting held January 4th by the Secretary. After correction was made on the date of the next Areawide Meeting — the date was given as March 10th — correct date is Friday, March 11, 1977 — minutes were accepted as read. Treasurers report given showing a balance in our Treasury, after expenses, of \$222.13 as of February 1, 1977. 15 speakers were supplied by the District Office for non AA meetings for the month of January, 1977.

### COMMITTEE REPORTS:

**Action Committee:** Dick F., Chairman, reported that he had contacted the AA and Alanon special weekend that was held at Shadybrook House and the party he spoke with would give him no information that would satisfy this Committee. In the matter of the Central Bulletin, the Editor is here tonight to give his explanation.

**Areawide Committee:** Betty M., Chairman, reported that the next Areawide Meeting will be held Friday, March 11, 1977 at the Cleveland Plaza in the Ohio Room at 8 : 00 p.m. Speaker for the evening will be Father John McCarthy of Rosary Hall.

**Central Bulletin:** George M., Editor. Reported on the conditions that prevented the publishing of the Bulletin and stated that within the week we will have a combined November and December issue then in about ten days after that, we will receive the January and February edition — then hopefully, from that time on they should come with more regularity. He reminded all present and urged them to carry the message back to their groups that those receiving the Bulletin should check the date on the label . . . this is their expiration date . . . and follow from there if they wish to renew. With this unexpected and unforeseen stoppage on the Bulletin come, once again, the reminder that we should try to take steps to get help so that the Bulletin does not have to be retired. Groups should continue to promote the Bulletin to their members.

**Rosary Hall:** No representative present.

**Bay View:** No representative present.

**Brecksville:** No representative present.

**Merrick Hall:** Minnie C., representative, wanted to remind all women who are sponsoring or have sponsored *someone* at Merrick to encourage them to attend the after care program — also — many women do not know about the monthly Women's Auxiliary meeting that they hold and would like more of the women to attend. The next meeting February 15th will be a session on Counselling. Meetings are held at 1:30 p.m.

**NEW BUSINESS:** The question came up that since Jordan Hall is open again — are we considering moving our Areawide Meetings back there? There followed a lengthy discussion on what arrangements could be made with

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### CLEVELAND AA DISTRICT OFFICE

The Cleveland AA District Office is open to anyone, male or female, who is seeking an answer to an alcoholic problem. The office, located in Mezzanine 6, 1 Public Square Building, is open weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. but maintains a 24-hour telephone service which responds to calls made after the office is closed. The telephone number is 241-7387.

TEACH US TO NUMBER OUR DAYS

Psalm 90: 12

Someone has stated how a lifetime of 57 years may be spent: "We sleep 18 years and 7 months; 15 years and 5 months we work; 8 years are spent in recreation and cultural interests; 5 years are required for meals, and 5 more for travel; three years we are sick, and we spend two years getting dressed.

Truly : "The seconds of life are rubies, the minutes are pearls, the hours are emeralds, the days sapphires, and the years are diamonds." Time is too precious to wantonly waste any of it. Thomas Lister, famous maker of grandfather clocks, pasted inside his clocks this reminder of the rapid flight and proper use of time:

Lo, I stand by thee upright,
To give thee warning day and night:
For every tick that I do give
Cuts short the time thou has to live.
Therefore, a warning take by me.
To serve thy God as I serve thee;
Each day and night be on thy guard,
And thou shalt have a just reward.

There is so little time! Nothing is more important than to hear God's Word. Pray, praise, and serve God and man out of love to Christ.

SOMETHING FOR NOTHING

There is a beautiful notion afloat in our literature and in the minds of our people that men are born to certain "natural rights." If that were true, there would be something on earth which was got for nothing, and this world would not be the place it is at all. The fact is, that there is no right whatever inherited by man which has not an equivalent and corresponding duty by the side of it, as the price of it.

The rights, advantages, capital, knowledge, and all other goods which we inherit from past generations have been won by the struggles and sufferings of past generations; and the fact that the race lives, though men die, and that the race can by heredity accumulate within some cycles its victories over Nature, is one of the facts which makes civilization possible. The struggle of the race as a whole produce the possessions of the race as a whole. Something for nothing is not to be found on earth.

The most loveable quality that any human being can possess is tolerance. It is the vision that enables one to see things from another's viewpoint. It is generosity that concedes to others the right to their opinions and their own peculiarities. It enables us to let people be happy in their own way instead of our way.

— Exchange

A DROP OF WATER

The power of ideals is incalculable. We see no power in a drop of water. But let it get into a crack in the rock and be turned into ice, and it splits the rock; turned into steam, it drives the piston of the most powerful engines. Something has happened to it which makes active and effective the power that is latent in it.

So it is with ideals. Ideals are thoughts. So long as they exist merely as thoughts, the power latent in them remains ineffective, however great the enthusiasms and however strong the conviction with which the thought is held. Their power becomes effective only when they are taken up into some refined human personality.

— Albert Schweitzer

Hope colors and transforms every area of man's existence. It is as necessary to him as breathing in and out.

— Irene McDermott

YOUR HUMILITY IS TESTED WHEN:

- None of the newcomers at a meeting you've been attending for years asks for your advice and they treat you like a stranger.
- You're out of town on business and go to a neighborhood AA meeting and no one seems impressed that you are from a distant city.
- You throw out a few funny incidents during your talk, and nobody laughs - or even smiles!!
- Part of the regular group goes out for ice cream after the meeting and you are not invited to come along. New people are often asked.
- The Chairman's glowing introductory remarks exactly fit, you and you're half way out of your chair when he calls on someone else.
- You accept an invitation to speak at a special event, only to find out later that you were a last minute choice.
- Your baby credits someone else for a bit of wisdom you passed on to him.
- From Secretary's Newsletter, San Francisco, Ca.

SUCCESS

Success is not something that fortune lays at our doorstep. It is, rather, the result of planning, of dreaming, of working, and of responding, to opportunity.

Success is not a surprise to that person who has set a goal, sketched a plan and stretched his faith to bigger dimensions.

Success is only a part of the dividend that man receives for his involvement in a truly great cause. The other part - the greater part - is the joy of feeling that life has been engaged in a worthwhile thing.

Success comes to that life that has a hope that makes life worthwhile, a dream for getting life on its way, a faith to keep it going, a goal to show it where to go, and a plan for getting it there.

Success cannot be built on shattered hope and shredded dreams. If success is to come, then these must be reconstructed, until they channel optimism and faith into life. For only with these ingredients, among others, can man put success back on the drawing board.

— Quote

PLEASE!

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### BELLOWS-PUMPING

A trait quite common among young boys is that of being easily distracted. An AA friend was describing what resulted from his being distracted during his boyhood 'assignment of bellows-pumping for the local church organ. By way of explanation, bellows pumping behind the scenes forced air through the pipes of the old pipe organ; without this air, no music was created no matter how many keys the organist frantically pushed.

So, when the bellows boys allowed their attention to waver, the music drifted into nothingness and then the boys had to "pump like Hell," as he put it, to get the music started again.

Do you find yourself in this spot in the AA program? Is your music drifting off into flat chords or into "nothingness" because of your failure to pump energy through the bellows? Then it is necessary to "pump like Hell" to get serenity, high standards, values and enthusiasm back into your sobriety?

When a life of sobriety is not quite as contented as it was, when a little of "Is this all there is?" sets in, when we are distracted from daily reading of our literature, when our behavior does not seem to be conforming to our standards and values, what are the contributing factors?

There is a great deal of merit in the answers from those whose opinions we have learned to respect: Not enough meetings, not enough gratitude, not enough honesty, not enough 12-stepping, lack of daily inventorying, failure to take Steps 4 and 5, failure to think often (without dwelling on it) of how it was in that, world of addiction.

The music — the vibrancy — the aliveness of our program is surely dependent on good, positive attitudes in all the areas above. More than any other omission that might lead to a "low key" day-to-day living is lack of attention to Step 11 — or so it has been in my life. When I "came to believe," I was sure that I **would** always seek to improve my conscious contact with the God of my understanding. It had **taken** such a long time to come to believe and it was such a miracle; somehow, I felt I would never forget to nurture that. I don't "stop believing" when I slight the daily meditation, but the closeness of contact is not the same.

It is that closeness — that total awareness — that makes daily living an adventure instead of a chore, that gives us that something that newcomers want, that levels our attitudes toward little daily irritations and that makes it possible to accept the things we cannot change.

With my hands in the "Hand of the Guy that stills the waters," I not only hear the music, I can **dance** it and live it — in its light, airy tunes and in its depths. When the bellows need pumping, I have to go back to that quiet place and fill them once more, knowing that if I don't keep the music flowing, this Way of Life may lose the sparkling tones and reverberations — it's too neat a way of life to chance that!

— Ruth T., Park Group, Denver, Colo.

### ON JUDGEMENT

One of the most serious mistakes we can make is to confuse the thing we call "intelligence" with another thing called "judgement." The two do not always, or necessarily, go together; many persons of high intelligence have notoriously poor judgement.

— Sidney J. Harris

Believe in yourself that you, even you, can do some of the work which God would like done, and that unless you do it, it will remain undone.

— Henry Drummond

### DOUBLE CHECK

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### EACH PERSON IS UNIQUE

In AA we have pointed out that we have many likenesses in our behavior patterns before we reached, admitted and found AA.

We have often said our stories are much the same in the fact that we all lied and tried to cover up our problem by attempting to con our way through life. I, for one, believe that it also very **important** that we recognize our differences. Because we are individuals, we are unique. God didn't make any two blades of grass alike or any two leaves exactly alike. Because we are unique, no one else can know exactly how we feel or what we think (not even our wives or husbands or our AA sponsors).

No one can really understand another human being. For that matter, we really can't understand ourselves. I believe a myth has sprung up to the effect that marital partners, for instance, in order to live together must understand each **other**. These efforts have been leading to a great deal of frustration. Who says you have to understand he or she. In any close relationship, that is successful, it is necessary that individuals understand what makes each other tick. It is most essential that they respect each other and accept one another as they are. We alcoholics are great to want to change other people when we **were** drinking and I did my share of both. Now that I am sober, I still catch myself with this character defect both at home and at work.

It is so important to accept things we cannot change. Persons who treat mental patients today do not worry so much about how they got that way, as they used to in time past. No longer do they attempt to lay the blame here and there. Modern therapists have taken the approach "What do we do about it?", and are having much greater success. When God created man, he gave him a freedom of choice and the right to do wrong. He told him that if he did wrong, it would cause him unhappiness. God did not use his almighty power to prevent him from freedom of choice. I don't believe He gave that ability to any of his creatures.

We have three slogans in AA that are particularly meaningful to me — "First things first," take care of yourself first before you try to impose your standards on others. "Live and let live," be tolerant of others. "Easy does it," don't expect to change the world, or anyone else overnight, — if at all!

— Ken G., in Silver Dollar, Fargo, S.D.

### WE DRANK . . . PERIOD

We drank for happiness and became unhappy. We drank for joy and became miserable. We drank for sociability and became argumentative. We drank for friendship and made enemies. We drank for sleep and awakened without rest. We drank for strength and felt weak. We drank "medicinally" and acquired health problems. We drank for relaxation and got the shakes. We drank for bravery and become doubtful. We drank to make conversation easier and slurred our speech. We drank to feel heavenly and ended up feeling like hell. We drank to forget and were forever haunted. We drank for freedom and became slaves. We drank to erase problems and saw them multiply. We drank to cope with life and invited death.

— Uncredited — Broward County (Fla) Newsletter

### WRONG WAY TO GO ABOUT IT

I read an article about a reporter who was sent from a city newspaper to interview a rustic character whose fame as a marksman had reached far and wide.

When the newsman arrived at the marksman's home, he found the trees, fences, barns, covered with bulls eyes. In the center of each bulls eye was a bullet hole. The reporter praised the man for his good marksmanship and he accepted the kind words with great pleasure.

After a half hour or so in conversation with the reporter and his refusal to show him how he had accomplished this fine shooting, he finally confessed, "There wasn't anything to it, all I did was shoot first and then draw a circle around the bullet hole."

So many of us try to appear what we aren't — to other people. We may think we are fooling them, but sooner or later the truth will come out. Actually, we fool no one as much as we fool ourselves.

If all of us would strive to be honest in little things as well as big things, the world would be a much happier and less confused place for everybody.

The twelve steps of our AA program will show us the way, if we give them an honest try. God gave you the tools to work with. Don't borrow from someone else.

Leo R., in Silver Dollar

### THE FOX WITHOUT A TAIL — A FABLE

A fox had the misfortune to have his bushy tail caught in a trap. When he saw that it was a question of his life or his tail, he left his tail behind him. He felt himself disgraced, however, and for a time did not go near his friends for fear of ridicule.

But one day the idea came to him how he could make the best of a bad bargain. He called a meeting of all the rest of the foxes and proposed to them that they should follow his example.

"You have no idea," he said, "of the ease and comfort I am enjoying. I do not know why I didn't cut off my tail long ago. I could never have believed it if I had not tried it myself. When you come to think about it, friends, a tail is such an inconvenient and unnecessary appendage that it is strange we have put up with it so long. My sincere advice to all is to share this new freedom and part with your tails at once.

As he concluded, one of the older and wiser foxes stepped forward and said: "There is not one of us who does not believe that you found it convenient to cut off your tail. However, we are not so convinced that you would advise us to part with our tails if there were any chance of recovering your own."

MORAL: MISERY LOVES COMPANY. By Aesop

Just as the fox lost his tail in the trap so too did we lose our respect and friends or jobs and even families when ensnared by drinking and inwardly we felt ashamed and disgraced at times, though we wouldn't admit it.

In our sad state we tried to change the life of others to suit our lonely and pitiful way of life but to no avail.

We were miserable and were to have our misery until we got honest and accepted the things we couldn't change.

As the wiser and older fox so plainly stated the true facts, so too, did the wiser and sober sponsors, explain the facts to us and the adjustments that were necessary to enjoy a new way of life.

— Frank J. D., Akron (0.) Intergroup News

### 39 AND HOLDING

You can stay young indefinitely if you eat wisely, get plenty of sleep, work hard, have a positive mental outlook — and lie about your age.

### ITCH FOR SOBRIETY? SCRATCH FOR IT!!

AA is a strange program. Each of us works it alone, by his own effort, yet we are utterly dependent on help from others like ourselves. We lean on others for encouragement but ultimately we have to depend on our own efforts. If we itch for sobriety then we must do our own scratching for it. No one can work the twelve steps for someone else. Nor change his thinking, nor alter his attitude. Each must do it for himself. These things come from WITHIN through honest desire and willingness. And of course through the help of each person's Higher Power, which makes all this possible.

There have been many discussions about whether we get only as much out of AA as we put into it, or whether we get more. But you can bet it's a dead cinch that we get nothing more from it than we put into it. Furthermore, we believe that there is a basic minimum each of us must deliver to AA in order to gain any sort of contented sobriety. It can be said in a few words, and might make an excellent yard stick for the newcomer.

"I will give AA an honest try. I will be willing to do whatever is asked of me by AA for my own good."

### SERENITY

Rabbi Liebman, well known American writer in the 1940's told in one of his books how, as a student, he was asked by his master to draw up a list of what he considered the most desirable aims in life. After thought, he rather proudly handed up his choice as Health, Beauty, Love, Talent, Power, Fame and Riches. But his master only tore up his list and told him . . . "You have left out the most important aim of all — the one thing which, if you lack it, could turn all these others into just intolerable burdens. You have forgotten Peace of Mind." In AA we call Peace of Mind — Serenity. And in our Serenity Prayer we rightly set it at the top of our spiritual shopping list. For how can we use our wisdom and our courage aright if our minds are beset with doubts or plagued by fears? Raymond Postgate once wrote of Serenity as — the summer of the mind. In AA, we try to reach that summer of the mind — that serenity — through recovery back into sobriety. And alcoholics who practice our Steps, honestly and willingly, do secure a great measure of it. It seems to come not from perfection of practice, but from the effort of practicing and the willingness to persevere in practice.

— Toledo Area News via Slainte

### MARK TWAIN SAID

We should be careful to get out of an experience only the wisdom that is in it — and stop there; lest we be like the cat that sat down on a hot stove lid. She will never sit down on a hot stove lid again — or a cold one.

To paraphrase his remarks: "We should be careful to get out of our meetings, the wisdom that is in it — and stop there; lest we be like the member who thinks he has sat through a bad meeting. This member vows he will never sit through a bad meeting again — and misses a lot of good ones."

No such thing as a bad meeting — unfortunately, we sometimes have bad attitudes.

— New Hope

### NON-SUBSCRIPTION TO C.B.?

"What kind of man deserves the most pity?" someone once asked Benjamin Franklin at a dinner party. Replied Franklin: "A lonesome man on a rainy day who does not know how to read."

**THE PEOPLE KEEP A'COMING  
BUT THE TRAIN'S DONE GONE**

I know about missing trains — took me three days to get out of El Paso once when I was drinking. Traveling from California to Texas with a change of trains in El Paso involving a four hour layover, which is not quite long enough to take a side trip to Juarez — but it took three trips to find that out.

There may have been a time in the early years of drinking when, given all the facts about alcoholism, the symptoms, the danger signs, and the certain consequences, I might have been able to stop on my own. But I doubt that I would have stopped, because the mental and emotional illness, the obsession to escape the pain and boredom of everyday existence progressed faster than the physical addiction.

It has been often said that by the time we realize we have the disease of alcoholism, even then it is too late to do anything about it without help.

I wonder just how many people there are in the world today, still chasing the elusive "good time," searching desperately for happiness in a bottle of booze, laboring under the impression they still have the power of choice where alcohol is concerned.

Face it, friend, "The train's done gone,"

— M. C., Houston, Texas

**MINUTES OF CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING**

*(Continued from page two)*

this meeting to get a better attendance. One suggestion was that we alternate — have one on the west side and then one on the east — every other one to carry these meetings closer to the members. This to be discussed among the groups and discussed further at next meeting. Possibly hold the meeting on Sunday afternoon.

Announcement made about a film "TWO STONES" which will be shown on Channel 25 on Friday, February 11, 1977 at 9:00 p.m.

N.E. Ohio General Service Report: John B., representative. The next General Assembly meeting will be held February 20, 1977. Reason for meeting will be the annual up-dating for the World Directory. A General Service worker will be visiting groups to pick up the correct information for listing.

There being no further business, meeting closed with Lord's Prayer.

— Imogene Z., Secretary

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**THE YEAR 'ROUND GIFT**

**HUMILITY —**

The most misunderstood virtue in the fellowship of AA.

To many AA's the word Humble evokes a picture of a plainly dressed, self-deprecating person, who will admit to the possession of no talent, who always takes the last place and is a doormat for everyone. This is not a true picture of a humble person.

No, if you are looking for a person 'who has true humility in the fellowship of AA, look for a person who is at ease with God, with himself, and with his fellow alcoholics. He does not flatter the wealthy or famous. He has a sense of humor because he can laugh at himself. He has a great tolerance and understanding with the ignorance and stupidity of others because he knows where his wisdom comes from. He is generous with his time, talents, and materials things because he knows he must answer to God for the use of God's gifts. He is compassionate and patient towards slippers because he is ashamed he has had so much more grace than they, and has used it so poorly.

His prayer and spiritual life are strong because he knows how much he needs God.

— Paul R., Warren, Ohio, Here's How, Chicago

**HELP**

*(Continued from page one)*

that it was God who gave us the ability to help others in the first place.

It is easy to have faith in ourselves and in our ability to solve any problem without any help from God when life is all smiles, but when the smile changes into a frown, it is then the time that we have to depend on our spiritual savings. Spiritual savings however, are like a bank account. There must be a deposit made before we can use them and when we need them there is no substitute for them.

— Edward B. Akron, Ohio, Intergroup News

**THE SEARCH FOR HAPPINESS**

*(Continued from page one)*

touchable marks the beginning of his old age.

Good health is an essential part of happiness. When our nervous system has a surplus of energy at its disposal we take pleasure in working it off and in recuperating. Absence of health, or indulgence in pleasure beyond the limit of our stored force, causes unhappiness.

In keeping the balance so often referred to between income and outgo of energy, emotion, social feeling, and the other forces which influence our happiness, we discover the virtue that resides in self-control.

Self-control does not mean merely surface composure. Down among our nerve cells and fibres the molecules are counting every discomposure and every mental disturbance. Nothing we ever do is, in strict scientific literalness, wiped out. The emotions we allow to seethe under a tranquil exterior appearance leave their mark upon the record, and we must make an accounting, debit or credit.

To sit quietly in a room with nothing but one's thoughts, or with the companionship of someone with whom we are in intellectual communion in an atmosphere of tranquility and the appreciation of vital matters — that can be a happiness in itself and the parent of more happiness.

From Royal Bank of Canada Letter May, 1954

Reprinted December 1976

False friends are like our shadow, keeping close to us while we walk in the sunshine but leaving us when we cross into the shade.

— Christian Bovee

**Support Your District Office**

# THIRTY-FIFTH YEAR

## CENTRAL BULLETIN

Mar.-Apr. 1977

VOL. XXXV — No. 6 and 7

PUBLISHED BY



CENTRAL BULLETIN FOUNDATION, INC.  
BOX 6712, CLEVELAND, OHIO 44101

### IT'S THE LITTLE THINGS

Over the years I have seen many men and women come gloriously through the valley of deep sorrow, suffering great financial loss and the loss of a much needed job. Yet, they held on to their sobriety because they used the things which AA keeps in plentiful supply. I have also seen other men and women accept defeat and long periods of sickness and even the loss of a loved one, courageously, and then let some little thing give them an excuse to go out and get drunk.

It is mostly the accumulation of little things that cause us the most trouble, the little resentments, the little envies and the little self-pities. These are the things we must look out for because they have a sneaky way of getting into our train of thought and stalling our mental engine.

The real purpose of Step Four is to check our train of thought periodically and when we find any little irritations on the train, we should kick them off immediately and not wait until they overload the train and stall our mental engine.

Taking our inventory is a very important part of our lives and we should take our own inventory instead of the other fellow's. Most of us find it easier to take the other person's inventory because we like to carry the banner of righteousness and poke our finger of correction into the open wound of our neighbor. Some of us have that superior charity of a zealot and we think that we are right and so continue to rub that fact in.

Perhaps the real reason for our selfish pattern of behavior may well be that there is a missing ingredient in our lives, and that ingredient is "love." "Love" transforms everything and gives it a special value of dignity. It is the river of life in this world of moral and spiritual confusion. Love touches the smallest and most trivial gift, wrapped in cheap paper, and changes it into a thing of beauty. Love is the magician that changes worthless things into things of joy.

It is the little things that crowd "love" out of our hearts and darkens our life. It is the little things that line our face with grimness, arrogance and pride, or creases it with a smile. It is the little things that lift our head and shoulders with hope and joy, or slows us down and bows our head in gloom and despair. It is the little things which express themselves in all the things we do or say. It is the little things that build friendship or destroys it.

Someone once said that there are only two vital things needed to build a good human personality. One is to be in love and the other is to know the truth. Now, this bit of wisdom is not only for the starry-eyed lover,

(Continued on page six)

### THE GLASS CATHEDRAL

One chilly windy day while walking a deserted stretch of California coast, I saw a lone woman standing on a flat rock left exposed by the outgoing tide. She stood there looking intently seaward, motionless, as if not aware any one else was on the same beach. That vast view of ocean sparkling in winter sunlight, those great masses of snow-white clouds on the horizon, seemed to hold her as deeply fascinated as they already held me.

This day I'd come here to fish from the surf, but it was too fine a day and I had not yet bought bait nor rigged a sinker to practice casting. I did, however, have my rod and reel along on my walk, and when the woman saw me I expected the usual question a stranger asks upon seeing a man with fishing gear: "Any luck?"

But she didn't say that, not at first. She glanced at me with a Mona Lisa smile and gesture to include all the natural beauty within our vision. "How," she asked, "could anybody see all that and not be a believer?" Before I could reply she must have realized she'd spoken a very personal thought to a stranger; she added hastily; "Any luck?" "This fishing outfit's only an excuse," I said, "I'm here for the same reason you are."

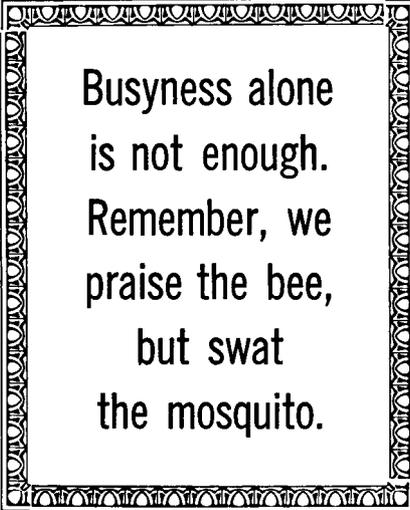
From early boyhood I had had no trouble associating a feeling of goodness (Godliness) with the sea or the mountains or any isolated place where nature's work prevailed over man's. This I owe to my dad. He was a city man by necessity; an outdoor man by preference. In the days

when an automobile was still a luxury, he owned a powerful car — not to show off in but to drive my mother and me from San Francisco to far-off mountain regions. He was forever looking for "a good place with a view" and when he found one he'd stop, stop the big car, step out, and for a long time just stand there looking in reverent silence. At such times he respectfully removed his hat, the same as he removed it upon entering church, and the expression on his face was exactly what I saw, decades later, on the face of a lone woman standing on a cold winter day looking out to sea.

"Conscious contact with God," was a phrase unknown to me, in boyhood, but it was an experience, even then. I first felt it at the side of my dad in the Sierra Nevada mountains. I felt it again, long later, on the day I stopped beside the lone woman on the wintry beach. What, I wonder, happened to my, "conscious contact," during the decades between those two experiences?

Looking back on years of adulthood, I can't find a time when the contact was ever totally lost. Thanks to the message of example carried by my dad, a seed had been planted, the seedling never died. What really hap-

(Continued on page six)



Busyness alone  
is not enough.  
Remember, we  
praise the bee,  
but swat  
the mosquito.



Published monthly by the Central Bulletin Foundation, Inc., a non-profit corporation dedicated to service. Address all letters to Central Bulletin, Box 6712, Cleveland, Ohio 44101. Subscription price — \$3.00 per year.

Harry D., Pounder and Editor 1892-1968



Vol. 35

March-April, 1977

No. 6 and 7

### THE ALCOHOLIC PARADOX!!!

An alcoholic, of course, is many things, as we all know. He drinks, not because he would, but because he must. He does not drink for pleasure, he drinks to pain, yet he drinks. He will mortgage the wealth of the future to pay off the debts of the past so that he may drink up the non-existent present. He is the only one in nature, I think, who seeks stimulation in a sedative, only to find that it acts upon his nerves as excited misery.

He seeks to inflate his puny little ego in the provocative wine of Bacchus and succeeds in shriveling his soul in the bitter gall of remorse.

He escapes desperately to free himself from the facts of reality and runs headlong into the prison of fantasy. Success is just as fatal as failure to an alcoholic. He will drink with exhilaration to success and to sadness and misfortune. He drinks to get high in the evening, knowing how low he will be in the morning.

When an alcoholic smilingly gets to the first drink he can get, he is transported to heaven and when he is unable to get the last drink he can pour, he is transported to hell.

An alcoholic, like most people, thrills to the beauty of life and then how frequently he seeks the ugliness in existence. When he is drunk — he prays to be sober. Such is the weird paradox of the alcoholic, that the only way in which he can feel better is to drink that which makes him feel worse.

He starts out on his drinking, no matter who he is, with all the dignity of a King, and winds up his drinking like a Clown.

So he goes his incredible, incomprehensive, paradoxical way, leaving in his wake his human wreckage, that which he does cherish most. Down the road to oblivion he staggers and stumbles, until he either finds himself at the door of AA or death intercedes.

— The Silent Rostrum — Houston, Texas

### OS UNITY

The loneliness of man is the loneliness of the animal. We must have each other. The baboon seeks his troop, the bookkeeper his busy office, the buffalo his herd on some far savanna, the weary bricklayer his fellows at the corner pub, the starling his chattering flock, the hyena his clan, the farmer his wife when the last chores are done, the herring his school in the cold North Sea, all for quite the same reason; because we cannot survive without each other.

— Robert Ardrey



Silence is never more golden than when you hold it long enough to get all the facts before you speak.

### MINUTES OF CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING MARCH 1, 1977

Meeting was opened with the Serenity Prayer, lead by Moderator Herman W. Roll call showed that 46 were in attendance representing 43 groups. Vice Moderator, Art Z., read the Purposes of Central Committee and the Twelve Traditions of AA. Minutes of the February 1st meeting were read by the Secretary. Minutes approved as read. Treasurer's Report given, showing a balance in the Treasury as of February 28, 1977 of \$214.80. Treasurer's Report also accepted as read. 28 speakers were supplied by the District Office for non AA meetings for the first two months of 1977.

#### COMMITTEE REPORTS

**Action Committee:** Dick F., Chairman. Nothing to report.

**Areawide Committee:** Betty M., Chairman. In Betty's absence, Jean B. reported that the next **Areawide** Meeting will be held Friday, March 11, 1977 at Jordan Hall, St. Vincent Charity Hospital at 8:00 p.m. Father John McC. of Rosary will be the speaker and it should be a very good meeting.

**Central Bulletin:** George M., Editor. No report.

**Rosary Hall:** No representative present.

**Bay View:** John F., representative. Everything o.k. They have a nice reception room now for the women patients at Serenity Hall.

**Brecksville:** Don E., representative. They have been having considerable attendance at all Tuesday, Wednesday and Saturday afternoon meetings. They are having trouble getting someone to help with the Tuesday night meetings.

**Merrick Hall:** Minnie C., Representative. Everything going along very nicely. The next Women's Auxiliary meeting will be March 15th. Tom C. of Rosary Hall will discuss the after care program.

Discussion was held about the location of the **Area-wide** Meetings in order to promote better attendance at these meetings. At the last meeting of this committee it was decided that those in attendance go back and talk to the groups about any suggestions they might have. The idea of alternating **Areawide** Meetings which are held four times a year — from east to west side and the time —possibly Sunday afternoon — should have been discussed with the group members and the survey reported to this Committee. Most groups failed to discuss this but those who did were satisfied with the idea of meeting at Jordan Hall and were in favor of the alternating meetings if this should be decided upon. Matter to be brought up again next month. Also suggestion was made that this be brought forth at the **Areawide** Meeting on March 11th to see how the people present feel and to see if they can offer any suggestions. When Jordan Hall was decided upon for this next meeting it was because Betty M., the Chairman, had given Dick P. at the office permission to contact the hospital to see if we could use the hall as the Ohio Room at the Plaza was booked for that night and they could offer no accommodations that could handle the crowd we expect to hear Father John.

**S.E. Ohio General Service Report:** John B., representative, brought flyers and hotel registration forms for the upcoming East Central Regional Conference in Columbus this year which will take the place of the usual state conference. John also asked if we could enclose some of the flyers with our next mailing. They had a fine meeting on Sunday, February 20th. The next one will be Sunday, March 20, 1977 at the American Legion Hall in Brecksville (southeast corner of Routes 21 and

(Continued on page five)

MINUTES OF CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING  
APRIL 5, 1977

Moderator, Herman W., lead the members present in the Serenity Prayer to open the meeting and roll call showed that 44 members were present to represent 40 groups. Art Z., Vice Moderator, read the Purposes Of Central Committee and the Twelve Traditions of AA. The Secretary read the minutes of the March 1st meeting — minutes corrected to change the date on the upcoming 1978 Women's Conference to read February rather than June — then — minutes were accepted. Treasurer read the Treasurer's Report through March 31, 1977 showing that, after expenses, there is a balance in the Treasury of \$382.40. 52 speakers were supplied by the District Office for non AA meetings for the first three months of 1977. Treasurer's Report accepted as given.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

**Action Committee:** Dick F., Chairman. Nothing to report.

**Areawide Committee:** Betty M., Chairman, ill — Herman W. asked another member to report on this meeting held March 11, 1977. This meeting was a huge success and the next **Areawide** Meeting will be held on June 10, 1977 at Jordan Hall. Speaker to be announced. Herman W. added that it was the best **Areawide** meeting since he had been in the program and thanked the Committee for spreading the word and all who came.

**Bay View:** John F., representative. No report.

**Central Bulletin:** George M., representative — not present. Dick P. reported that he had talked to George and in about ten days there will be another issue of the Bulletin in the mail.

**Brecksville :** Don E., representative, reported that they are having good attendance at all meetings. There is turnover going on at the hospital and they are losing **counsellors** but they are being replaced by people who are AA oriented.

**Rosary Hall:** Lou W., representative. Quiet and filled to capacity.

**Merrick Hall:** Minnie C., representative, says that they are very encouraged about the unit — it is running full capacity most of the time. Upon inquiry they found that the family **counselling** program has been a big help to the families of the patient — the overall picture is very good and the after care program is coming along beautifully. Next Women's Auxiliary meeting will be April 19, 1977. They have been having good programs and they are very informative.

Tom G., a member, presented himself to the Committee to request opening of an AA meeting at Hope House to be held on Friday mornings. After much consideration the new group was given the blessing of the Committee provided the group is run according to AA Traditions.

Two members appeared before the Committee to announce the opening of a new group which has had four meetings to date — the Open Door Discussion Group on Monday evening in Mentor — right on the Kirtland border. It is a closed mixed discussion group, greatly needed in that area. The sole purpose of this group is a Twelve Step study group on the suggested 1.2 steps of AA. Good luck was also wished this group.

In the matter of the meeting place for the **Areawide** Meetings — this matter has been carried over for two months. Our representatives here were to go back to their groups and just as a way of trying to raise the attendance at these meetings, the groups were to be asked for suggestions on location and time of these meetings. One thought was — do we return to Jordan Hall? The

(Continued on page five)

THE FINAL PROOF

When I was drinking I believed in the old saying that God looks after Drunks and Babies. Even in those days I leant towards the theory of a Benevolent Deity rather than to the materialistic opinion that infants and alkie fall relaxed. This, because when I did a **Brodie**, I would usually be off balance due to clutching a bottle to my bosom and would be anything but relaxed. On the contrary, I would fall in an anxious frenzy of tension lest the precious burden be broken.

However, although I had this and many other reasons during my drinking career for thinking 'God looks after the drunks,' it was in AA that I found the final, true, proof. It had been there all the time, but I had been holding it upside down for years. It is apparent now that it doesn't merely mean **blucking** one from under traffic or away from high windows, helping to drive the car home, finding a wallet or leading one home in the dark. The proof is still there, though different from my previous conceptions. It, is now apparent that He looks after drunks in a hundred different ways . . . NEW ways . . . In the first introduction to AA . . . in the gradual absorption of the Programme . . . in the slow flowering of faint hope into blinding certainty . . . in a new concept of life and one's duties to others . . . in laughter and the warmth of friends . . . In so many ways all adding up to AA and the simplicity of being able to say **THANK YOU**.

I know myself at last. I am sure now. I am at peace. I am come home.

— P.T., The Road Back — August 1953

OMNIPOTENCE

"Of course, this is only **my** opinion — but here's what you should do . . ." This opening remark has frequently preceded advice which the speaker in many instances is woefully unqualified to give. The resulting damage to the recipient of this advice may be grave . . . even though given with supposedly good intentions. Becoming sober does not qualify a plumber, for example, to act as a marriage **counselor**; a janitor to offer medical advice, or a meat cutter to take over the couch of a psychiatrist. Alcoholism, drug abuse, marital difficulties, divorce, etc., are all grave social problems . . . but, we should also be aware that by our becoming sober we are not miraculously rendered the power to become, "all things to all people."

Such vanity is rightfully termed "omnipotence" and is in strange contradiction to the pretense of humility.

— New Hope (via Boomerang)

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— Be a Bulletin Booster —

## THE STORM

It was late in the afternoon on this memorable August day and the closeness, the discomfort of a hot, humid day was soon to come to an end. Dark, swirling, foreboding clouds with towering thunderheads were mobilizing in the west and the sun was about to lose its battle with the clouds.

A settled stillness, an ominous calm, the omen could not go unnoticed.

As the wierd sky became more unruly, giant gusts of wind developed, driving and whirling leaves, dust and litter, giving warning of what was to come. Soon, the continuous, uncontrolled, frightening streaks of lightning bolted down and stabbed at the earth unceasingly, accompanied by a torrential rain which whipped through every crack and crevice by the fury of the wind.

I have always been somewhat of a coward when the elements are disturbed and vent their **vengeance** but in all of my life, I had never been in a storm of this magnitude. I unconsciously found myself asking God for help. Who during such a period of time dares to argue or debate whether there is a God, a Guiding Force or a Higher Power.

It was during this terrible storm that I become completely void of my ego, which was for me, my strongest point in acting out my role in life. In my anxiety, I felt now, how utterly insignificant, a being I was.

The fury of the storm increased, the gale force tearing limbs from trees, uprooting shrubbery and trees and carrying with it, anything it fancied. The reddened sky seemed ablaze as it continued to unleash, fiery bolt after bolt upon the helpless earth and its creatures.

I was afraid and for the first time in a long time, I prayed. Yes, I prayed. All the ego and cockiness, I had so often displayed when pulling my bluff, was now dormant. In those few moments of accepted fear, I knew who and what I really was. I was but a poor creature of God, put on this earth for a purpose and I was not fulfilling that purpose. I had done little, ever, if **any** thing for others or myself. I was running my life to suit just myself without a thought for my fellowman or my God. I had been so sadly wrapped up in my egotistical approach to life that I had ignored the **power** of the Man upstairs, relying foolishly, only on my own.

During this seemingly endless storm, many things came to mind and many changes in my thinking for future living were made by me, which have aided me tremendously in the years that have come to pass.

The most important thing in my life happened to me that day. It was the day I had my last drink of alcohol. You see I am an alcoholic, something which I would never admit to anyone, before. I had previously been told about Alcoholics Anonymous and I was aware that it was available to those that wanted help. I knew now, I needed help.

So, out of a fear during a storm, a fear of God was developed. Not the fear of God which one dreads but the awe and respect which is due Him, Now a storm no longer instills that dreaded fear although I still **re-**spect its every potential. The tempests and storms of everyday life are now more readily accepted and dealt with in a different light and with a different attitude.

Thank God for that storm and for Alcoholics Anonymous.

— The Passerby

Make no little plans, they have no magic to stir men's blood, and probably themselves will not be realized. Make big plans, amid high in hope and work, remembering that a noble and **logical** diagram once recorded will never die.

— Daniel H. Burnham

## S M I L E S

Policeman: "Have you an explanation for wondering about this time of night?"

Drunk: "Look, stupid, if I had a good explanation I'd have been home a couple of hours ago."

Two drunks talking in a bar. One said to the other, "My best friend ran away with my wife, and let me tell you, I miss him."

A man who knew nothing about the game of golf was walking across a golf course. Suddenly, he was smacked on the head with a golf ball and was knocked out.

"I'll sue you for \$5,000," he said to the golfer, when he revived.

"I hollered 'fore'," said the golfer.

"All right," said the injured man, "I'll take it."

"Why does the menu call this 'enthusiastic stew?'"

"Because the chef put everything he had into it."

"They kicked my son out of medical school for cheating."

"I'm sorry to hear that. What were the circumstances?"

"They found him counting his ribs during an anatomy test."

Two drinking buddies on a camping trip retired for the night, only to be mobbed by a merciless swarm of mosquitoes. Pulling their sleeping bags up over their heads helped, but they almost suffocated. Finally one of them peeked out, and saw a group of fireflies nearby.

"It's no use," he reported. "Now they are looking for us with flashlights."

"A fine time, 3 a.m., for you to come in," exclaimed the wife. "I want an explanation and I want the truth!"

"Better make up your mind which you want, honey," he replied, "you can't have both."

"I've been seeing spots in front of my eyes."

"Have you seen a doctor?"

"No, just spots."

"Oh! Oh! I'm hit!"

"You shot bad, Tex?"

"You ever hear of anyone being shot good?"

Wife: "I think you only married me because my daddy left me a lot of money."

Husband: "That's not true. I didn't care who left you the money."

Employer: "You're asking for a lot of money for someone with no experience."

Applicant: "Well, the work is much harder when you don't know what you're doing."

Psychiatrist: "Do you have much trouble making up your mind?"

Patient: "Well, yes and no."

Wife: "I don't have a thing to wear. If anyone new came over, they'd think I was the cook!"

Husband: "Not if they stayed for dinner."

A husband came home after spending a couple of hours at the tavern to find his wife crying because the dog had eaten a pie she had made for him.

"Don't cry," he told her. "I'll buy you another dog."

## ON SLIPPING

"Tis said that a little education can be a dangerous thing. A little sobriety can also be a dangerous thing for it can lead to a sense of false security. One of our copy book maxims told us that "a little bit goes a long way." Not so for sobriety. A little bit of sobriety just won't work. Complete sobriety, we know, is the only answer.

That is what we in AA try to achieve. Yet there are among us individuals who, when sober, attend every AA meeting possible. When the urge to take a drink recurs they aren't there, where help is available. They are in their basements or the nearest tavern. They are the recurrent slippers, the **backslidders**, the men and women who can take their AA or leave it alone.

That somewhere in their **makeups** is a desire for sobriety is self evident, else they wouldn't bother with AA at all. They will tell you they have been on the program for certain periods, then had slips. But they refute themselves. For lurking somewhere in their thinking has been the thought that once again they can control their drinking. Few of us ever set out deliberately to get doering drunk.

If we coddle the idea that we can control our drinking, then we can't take the first step. And until the first step is taken, effort on the rest of the program is futile. Our experience has shown it just won't work.

Frequently we hear the excuse: "He slipped because he was sicker than we were." With this we can't quibble. It is also said that, "He's better off in AA than he was before. He doesn't drink nearly as much now." With this, too, we won't argue.

But AA means sobriety. Sobriety means no drinking. No drinks means no slips.

Maybe it is up to those of us who have had successful records of sobriety in AA to exert greater efforts with those who **haven't** been so fortunate. Remembering our own periods of booze fighting, possibly, we can work on the slippers' latent desire for sobriety, make him see the stupidity of his reasoning and induce him to quit the slippers' corner, associate with those of us who are making the grade, and join Alcoholics Anonymous. For there only lies his salvation and ours.

-From Silver Dollar, Fargo, N.D.

## SOOT

A conscientious pursuit of Plato's ideal perfection may teach you the three great lessons of life. You may learn to consume your own smoke.

The atmosphere of life is darkened by the murmurings and whimperings of men and women over the non-essentials, the trifles that are inevitably incident to the hurly-burly of the day's routine. Things cannot always go your way. Learn to accept in silence the minor aggravations, cultivate the gift of taciturnity and consume your smoke with an extra draught of hard work, so that those about you may not be annoyed with the dust and soot of your complaints. More than any other, the practitioner of medicine may illustrate the second great lesson, that we are not here to get all we can out of life for ourselves, but to try to make the lives of others happier.

This is the essence of that oft repeated admonition of Christ, "He that findeth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for my sake, shall find it, "on which hard saying if the children of this generation would lay hold, there would be less misery and discontent in the world.

— Sir William Osler

## GENERAL SERVICE MEETINGS

Northeastern Ohio General Service Committee meetings are scheduled as follows during the balance of 1977. All will be held at the American Legion Hall, Brecksville, Ohio, at Routes 82 and 21.

June 19, Open House, covered dish, and speaker; August 21, Committee Members Meeting; September 18, General Service Representatives Third Legacy Meeting.

Combined Regional and State Convention will be held July 15-16-17 in Columbus, Ohio; October 15 and 16 are dates for 2nd Annual Third Legacy Mini Conference and November 20 will be Gratitude Sunday. There will be flyers sent out prior to these meetings.

## MINUTES — MARCH

(Continued from page two)

82). Meeting will begin at 10:00 a.m. break for lunch then continue till about 4:00 p.m. This meeting will be the last opportunity to get together before the delegate goes to New York.

New **Business**: Bonnie L. announced that the 14th annual Women's Conference will be held in Cleveland June 17, 18 and 19th of 1978 and asked permission to use our mailing permit. Dick P. told her to have someone come into the office to make the request and it would be taken up with the Operating Committee. He thinks a favorable solution can be found,

There being no further business, the meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Imogene Z., Secretary

## MINUTES — APRIL

(Continued from page three)

other was a suggestion to alternate meetings between east and west side with the possibility of holding these meetings on a Sunday afternoon so that more people would be able to attend. Some groups did discuss this matter and were in favor of the east-west meetings on Sunday — only to come here and find that now the meeting is going to be held on Friday, June 10 at Jordan Hall. This was because of the great success of the last meeting and we do not want to lose out on what might promise to be a winner. Since the date of the next meeting has been set and Jordan Hall has been booked, it was decided that we let it stand as is now and depending upon the attendance — know then whether to continue thinking along the lines of Jordan Hall. After the next **Areawide Meeting**, the representatives should have discussed this matter at length with their group members and their findings brought to the Committee. If the east-west should be decided upon — on a day that is more favorable with members — then the matter of locating east-west meeting sites would have to be decided upon. This would all take time and could not be done overnight.

**STILL UNDER THE AREA OF NEW BUSINESS**: Representatives should have been at this meeting to discuss the opening of another new group but in checking the attendance found that they did not send a spokesman.

**N.E. Ohio General Service Report**: John B. reported on the great success of the last meeting that was held Sunday, March 10th and comments from members at this meeting confirmed their feelings of success. The question came up as to the success of their drive to get all of our groups in the new directories with the proper up-to-date listing and John said they got information from all they were able to contact.

There being no further business, the meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Imogene Z., Secretary





## A TRIBUTE TO AA

If you have ever been inclined to snicker when you heard the words, Alcoholic Anonymous, you owe a lot of people an apology. Thousands have come to scoff but remained to pray. We have often heard about these AA groups but it is just recently that we have had occasion to take an active interest in their undertakings. It may sound like a Hollywood press release but "terrific" was the word that came to mind when we fully realized what they are doing. Here indeed does the rejected cornerstone become the keystone of the building. Here is an example of the impossible becoming the possible.

The alcoholic makes no bones about conceding what he was. A rummy, a bum, a derelict, a no-good down-and-outer. An alcoholic's life runs along as though cut to a pattern. In some cases the dip from normality and respectability to abnormality, degradation and disgrace is a sudden one. In most cases it is a gradual descent from sane living to a slow enslavement to drink. Once the thin thread that separates the social drinker from the alcoholic is broken, there is no fool-proof remedy known to the medical profession that can cure the illness. The usual spiritual remedies are at best a temporary relief. The non-alcoholic world has never been able to penetrate the alcoholic mind successfully.

The groups that are known as Alcoholics Anonymous have performed that miracle and their success is increasingly astounding. If you are not familiar with their therapy and technique, you will find it the most intriguing study, you have entered upon. Two things stand out, first there are no half-way measures, it is all or nothing. Second, the approach is so basically sound and so soundly spiritual that you will say without hesitation, "The finger of God is here!" The alcoholic who is really determined to quit, gives himself to God completely, without cavil, without reservation. He follows it up with a graduated program, consisting of Twelve Spiritual Steps. He's in and he knows it. For the rest of his life, his one and only, all-consuming purpose is to stay in. He does that by becoming an apostle to other alcoholics.

Analyze it as you like. Question it. Scoff at it. Say, it's impossible. The simple fact is that it works and it does the job no one else, no other agency has been able to do it. The reason? One — The candidate for AA must throw himself into the arms of God, as he understands God. Two — He makes it a day-to-day, 24-hour struggle to stay in God's graces and presence. Three — He aims to make any sacrifice to share his new-found blessing with another alcoholic in need of help.

*(Continued on page four)*

## THE PROPER SPIRIT

Most of us who have attended meetings with some regularity have heard this familiar statement repeated many times at AA meetings. "This is a selfish program," — which is partially true. However, to the new person, it is confusing and particularly when he sees his AA friends, giving so much without asking for anything in return.

What really makes this so called selfish program difficult to explain to the new person is when he hears his AA friends talk about the midnight telephone calls, the Twelve Step calls, the hundred mile round trip to speak at another AA meeting, and the five dollar bill handed

to someone under the table, whom is in need. What makes it more confusing is that the people who are sharing with others seem to get a sense of satisfaction every time they go out and help another human being.

In our drinking days, most of us were great sharers as long as it was the other fellow's share. We had to depend on others to share with us because we didn't have anything to support our drinking habit. We added up every penny and nickel to see if we had enough to buy a cheap bottle of wine and if we didn't, we would beg or steal, for many of us came into AA with the habit of counting our pennies and nickels. Some of us became so conservative with our money that we palmed our dime and dropped it silently in the basket, but it looked strange among the dollars and the sight of that

dime gave us a feeling of guilt.

As we continued going to meetings and watched our AA friends contributing generously to every AA cause, our dimes gradually became quarters, eventually half-dollars and finally dollars. Today we can look back over the past years and see how the AA principles are working out, and how our association with our AA friends was actually the thing which broke the chain of our selfish attitude and opened the door to a sober and a better life.

Perhaps the real reason why our selfish program is difficult to explain is because it has to be lived, and as we live it, a day at a time, the mystery of our AA principles unfold, slowly but **surely**, and gradually we begin to understand that it is in sharing that we receive. In the measure in which we share with others, our own burdens become lighter. In measuring up to life's demands, our character will grow in widening sympathy and deep understanding.

There is no question to the meaning of sharing with others. Everytime we share something with another human being, we add something to our spiritual and

*(Continued on page four)*

Footprints  
in the sands  
of time are  
never made  
by  
sitting down



Published monthly by the Central Bulletin Foundation, Inc., a non-profit corporation dedicated to service. Address all letters to Central Bulletin, Box 6712, Cleveland, Ohio 44101. Subscription price — \$3.00 per year.

Harry D., Founder and Editor 1892-1968



Vol. 36

October, 1977

No. 1

## PERSONAL RECOVERY

Within this Fellowship of men and women, "our primary purpose is to stay sober." We help each other maintain sobriety by sharing our experiences encountered while drinking. Some details are rather morbid but they are not exaggerations. Many of us travelled down that road of degradation and reached that final point of no return — "our bottoms." We relized it! We admitted it! We accepted it!

Alcoholism to us is a very progressive disease, not only spiritually and mentally, but physically as well. Many drunks, -luses, or stew-bums (alcoholics) have lost their "power of control" when it comes to drinking. Our method of treatment for this malady consists of "group therapy" individually administered as we tell of our personal suffering and misery. Then, this is all pushed into the background by the reciting of our miraculous recoveries.

Our enthusiasm for this Fellowship, our description of the benefits we are receiving, our gratitude for Life itself, is unexplainable. This Power motivates us "to stay sober" and then endows us with an unselfish concern for our fellow-being which enables us to "help other alcoholics achieve sobriety."

— Toledo (O.), Area News

## ON COMPASSION

Compassion is daring to acknowledge our mutual destiny so that we might move forward all together into the land which God is showing us. Compassion also means sharing another's joy, which can be just as difficult as suffering with him. To give another the chance to be completely happy and to let his joy blossom to the full. Often you can do nothing more than present a bleached smile and say with some effort, "That's really good for you," or "I'm glad to see you made it."

But this compassion is more than a shared slavery with the same fear and same sighs of relief, and more than a shared joy. For if your compassion is born of prayer, it is born of your meeting with God who is also the God of your fellowman. At the moment when you grant that God is God who wants to be your God, and when you give him access to yourself, you realize that a new way has been opened for the man who is beside you. He too has no reason to fear, he too does not have to hide behind a hedge, he too needs no weapons to be a man. The garden which has been unattended for so long is also meant for him.

— From "With Open Hands"  
Henri J. M. Nouwen

Efforts are always success. It is a greater thing to try without succeeding, than to succeed without trying.

## BACK TO BASICS

Somewhere out there is a woman as sick, helpless, and miserable as I was one night in October of 1966. Should there be within that agonized body a mere spark of wanting, a whisper of willingness, or only that inner yearning for someone, somewhere to help her, maybe, God willing, help will come through Alcoholics Anonymous. The Twelfth Step call we make on her, or our being a part of one of the first meetings she attends, becomes, through the sharing of our experience, the beginning of another new way of life for someone else, as it has been for us!

Help for her could come from other programs, in a dozen ways. The alcohol would be removed. She might not drink again. Some of the alcoholism facilities are having good results, or they wouldn't exist long.

We, too, offer help to find a way to stop drinking, and stay stopped. Through the years since our co-founder Bill discovered the key for us — helping another alcoholic — we have found, through basic AA program set down in our Big Book and our Twelve Traditions, something much more than dryness. We have a way of life.

I am concerned that, because of our compulsive natures, we may still try to perfect the ideal! We keep trying to incorporate different or experimental ideas of others into our program. Now, in public information work or at meetings, we often hear about our "addiction" to the "drug" alcohol. These words have come from the medical profession. Our Big Book refers to our malady as a "disease" or an "illness." As these other terms become more common within our Fellowship, we may soon be but a step away from identifying as a "drug addict." Let us not take that step! Keeping our "disease" concept may seem old-fashioned, but it has worked. As a newcomer, I understood "disease" because it compared somewhat to diabetes, while "addiction" and "drug" seem related to the heroine needle. Let us keep our record unique, our basics unchanged! This applies to where we try to incorporate religious or self-improvement program that has proven itself over and over ment group-therapy ideas. We lose, in the process, the again.

I am convinced the AA program contains all the ingredients for a complete, satisfying way of life. Constant searchers for "more" to enhance their program seems to always end up drunk! Could be a lesson for us there, when we tend to wander away from our basics? Do we forget, also that this is a spiritual program? We soften or eliminate the words about God to the newcomer. We are, in effect, saying that God had nothing to do with the newcomer being there! Then we actually deny the validity of our Twelve Steps.

Within our meetings, are we telling newcomers exactly what AA is? We should make an effort to study and learn about it, so that we can pass it along. Have we helped to keep it alive and well, even if it might cause resentment now and then? Do we wander away from the basics in AA meetings? We read from books which may be good, but are not AA. We include prayers of religious annotations. We promote club functions, but skip reading the Twelve Traditions. We see people come to AA alone, without a sponsor, and remain without one. We minimize the importance of the Twelfth Step, and because our members are arriving from other sources, we dismiss our obligation! If the performance of the Twelfth Step is questioned or weakened, the other eleven will also be in jeopardy, and if the Twelve Steps are gone, the heartbeat of AA will slowly stop, because then God would have been written out of our program!

— Joan A. B., (Excerpts) Nevada Delegate

**WANNA BE A KING**

Just because your wife says she would like to crown you, don't get the idea she thinks you're a king. Anyway, who wants to be a king? When reading the history of this vale of tears in which we live, we discover that the books are studded with the sordid chapters of tippling despots who sat on thrones, firing their greed and vanity with fermented juices, setting a helleva rotten example for their subjects, eventually leading their nation and their people to ruin. If these fleshpot hoodlums had practiced the principles of AA we would not have had the tragedies of Munich and Dunkirk, Rotterdam and Cologne, Bataan and Manila.

The seeds and roots were planted long ago, but we reaped the harvest. It is easy enough for us ordinary mortals to find an excuse for drinking, and we must presume that a king had a wider range of excuses. Henry VIII was fairly adept at hoisting the cup that cheers(?), but we often wonder if he tripped to gather the courage to lop off the heads of his numerous wives, or if he got soused to forget the fact that he had them lopped off.

There is never, however, the lack of an excuse. The most blown-in-the-bottle tippler rarely takes a drink without an indirect excuse or apology. His whole life is a history of worry, major or minor, conscious or subconscious, and the amount he takes through the years, scales up and down until his consumption diagram looks like a fever chart or the plus and minus graph of a woman trying to reduce. It is always well to remember that there are 90,000,000 nice people in America who don't drink. It is well to remember that most of those 90,000,000 people do not live in Dubuque, Iowa.

But we should give the devil his due. Not all kings, emperors or monarchs spent their lives in their cups. In 285 B.C. a Chinese emperor banished the man who invented rice wine. But banishing the inventor did no good; he forgot to banish the invention. In 1122 B.C. Mencius, a disciple of Confucius, ranking drinking with such deadly sins as "Unfidelity, gambling and chess playing." Yes, next to deuces wild, chess is the worst game we ever heard of. And don't think those boys didn't have some terrific hangovers without benefit of bromos. As far back as the first century, tremulus hands which spill the full cup were described by Pliny and Elder as a hangover with, "Pallor pendulus cheeks and bloodshot eyes."

Our old friend Seneca who lived at the same time has this score card; the results are pallor, quivering of the muscles soaked in wine, and an emaciation due to indigestion and not to hunger. Hence the swelling of the skin and distention of the belly which has taken more than it can hold; hence the jaundice and discolored complexion and the nerves dulled, or without feeling, or, on the other hand, constant twitching. Why need I speak of the giddiness, or the disturbance of vision and bearing and the insidious pains in the head.

Yeah, that's what we say, why speak of it Seneca, old boy. We knew just what you mean. Reminds us of the times we thought we were dying and hoped we would.

— The Missing Link

**CLEVELAND AA DISTRICT OFFICE**

The Cleveland AA District Office is open to anyone, male or female, who is seeking an answer to an alcoholic problem. The office, located in Mezzanine 6, 1 Public Square Building, is open weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. but maintains a 24-hour telephone service which responds to calls made after the office is closed. The telephone number is 241-7387.

**DON'T RUSH**

One of the most important virtues for the alcoholic to learn and practice, is PATIENCE. It seems that there are some new alcoholics in AA who are so desperate in their haste to force this program on everyone they come in contact with, before they learn to use the tools themselves. They usually took their liquor in large doses and gulped it down as fast as they could, so it seems only natural for them to try and take AA with the same gusto.

A moderate amount of enthusiasm is fine for all of us, but there are some who are so eager to gulp it down whole instead of chewing it slowly and digesting it, thus missing the full flavor of AA in all its goodness. They speed into the AA program with such rapidity that they don't have time to take in all the beautiful scenery along the highway, that could normally be better seen at a more conservative pace.

EASY DOES IT was adopted by this fellowship just to slow down the speeders, so that they can get a better view of the AA panorama and carry the picture to other alcoholics.

Anything learned slowly will leave a greater impression than anything viewed with a quick once-over, and we are apt to grasp the program with a clearer understanding and a keener perspective of AA in general.

Our advice to anyone who is exceeding the speed limit is to slow down as you may miss a right turn and find yourself right back from where you started.

— Ed. W., Akron, Ohio

**FUNDAMENTALS**

The "Big Book" tells us that when we get disgusted with meetings and get tired of hearing talk of others in the group, to look within ourselves, that probably there is something wrong with our thinking rather than that the group is wrong.

Group meetings do tend to stagnate at times, and the group can examine its group conscience just as the individual must on many occasions. Hilarious antics in pre-AA days are screamingly funny, psychiatric reactions of the alcoholic are interesting, arguments on religion are worthwhile, social service discussions have their place. But they don't fit into AA meetings.

Our primary purpose' is to get sober and stay sober. We do this through our book of experience. Deviate for long from this fundamental course of action and experience shows that group unrest starts to grow.

The longer one is in AA the more he appreciates the value of fundamentals. No finer meeting can be enjoyed than that devoted to basic AA concepts.

— Here's How, Chicago, Ill.

AN UNGRATEFUL PERSON IS LIKE A HOG UNDER A TREE EATING ACORNS . . . never looking up to see where they came from.

**ARE YOU PLANNING TO MOVE?**

If so, clip this coupon and mail to Box 6712, Cleveland, Ohio 44101, immediately.

It is urgently needed before the next issue of the Central Bulletin.

Name .....

New Address .....

City..... Stete ..... Zip Code .....

It will help you and it will help us.





## Our Prejudices

**PREJUDICE** is our number one problem in human relations.

It is prejudice that closes our minds to the truth and knowledge which would enable us to work together in friendship, vote with intelligence, worship in understanding, and avoid international disputes.

This *Monthly Letter* does not particularize prejudices such as social, racial, sectarian, and so forth, but deals with the improvement of individual and social living brought about by tolerance.

In one of Aesop's *Fables* he tells how Jupiter, in a mischievous mood, made mankind a present of spectacles. Every man had a pair, but they did not represent objects to all mankind alike. One pair was purple, another blue; one white and another grey; some were red, green and yellow. "However, notwithstanding this diversity", says Aesop, "every man was charmed with his own, believing it the best, and enjoyed in opinion all the satisfactions of truth."

Many civilizations in the world at different times and places have had widely different patterns of behaviour. Almost anything in social and personal life which we now deplore was somewhere and at some time acceptable. Out of those practices, which were right and proper in their age, have come today's cultures. A respect for the traditions of other people will lead to understanding and avoid prejudice.

All of us are entitled to our own petty prejudices. Most of us have been biased against books we were told we should read, though later we liked them. Many business men are prejudiced against people who sign letters "dictated but not read." Elevator operators are prejudiced against people who press elevator buttons needlessly; we all are prejudiced against people who stride imperiously through revolving doors.

### *Everyone makes mistakes*

That is not the kind of prejudice this letter is about. The hurtful prejudices are the mental fixations of the 100-percenters, people who won't admit you have a side to your case, and demand that you either agree wholly with their opinions, or disagree.

It may be true that the more ignorant a person is, the more positive he is in his opinions, and the more belligerently inclined to look upon your doubt of his statements as a sin against him.

Intelligently alive people have no such delusions. They know that absolute certainty is regarded by scientists as an

(Continued on page four)

## CHANGE

Notwithstanding its many years of publication the task of preparing and mailing of Central **Bulletin** is much more than routine and it requires many hands and a great deal of time to put each issue into the hands of each subscriber.

Over the years many hands have contributed nobly to the task; yet the devotion of volunteer help has frequently been found wanting and the result has been that to few have been **inclined** to give the time needed and much of the time the job entailed the continued follow through of one individual.

The need for Central Bulletin has been established and its continuance for the purpose it serves each month in helping its readers to sustain and maintain their sobriety is paramount.

To that end, effective January 1, 1978, an Advisory Committee will prepare and supervise the publication of Central Bulletin on a continuing monthly basis under the auspices of the Cleveland Central Committee which sponsored it at its inception in 1941.

Effective at once, therefore, all mail, subscriptions, etc., should be addressed to:

### CENTRAL BULLETIN COMMITTEE

c/o Cleveland A.A. District Office  
Room 6, Mezzanine  
1 Public Square  
Cleveland, Ohio 44113

The present postoffice box number will be maintained for a **limited** time to assure delayed mail, etc., not going astray.

It is planned that volunteers under the direction of the District Office force will prepare each month's issue for mailing. Volunteers are needed and those offering their assistance should do so with the knowledge that their commitment shall be a devoted one on a continuing basis month-in-and-month-out.

There are many ramifications to the work to be done and to learn procedures and perform well is imperative for a smooth operation. Too often in the past a-catch-as-catch-can operation has been ineffective, if not at **time** chaotic.

Beyond the task of publishing and mailing is perhaps the most important function of all — increasing subscriptions, **both** new and renewal, for therein is the lifeline for continued publication.

It has been arranged that in the future all subscriptions will expire in a month ending a quarter of the year and renewals should be mailed in advance of that data shown on your address label to assure continuity. Quarter ending months are, March, June, September and December. If no advance notice is given to your moving, subscription will automatically expire.

It is the pledge of the advisory Committee that Central Bulletin shall continue its high standards of editorial policy all in keeping with the Purposes of Central Committee and The Twelve Traditions of A.A. It is also a purpose that the high quality type of publication shall be maintained to the benefit of our subscribers and friends.

May we all lend a hand in any way our talents and service commitments dictate to extend ad infinitum the first thirty-six years of publication, by George!



Published monthly by the Central Bulletin Foundation, Inc., a non-profit corporation dedicated to service. Address all letters to Central Bulletin, Box 6712, Cleveland, Ohio 44101. Subscription price — \$3.50 per Year.

Harry D., Pounder and Editor 1892-1968

Vol. 36

November, 1977

No. 2

## MINUTES OF CENTRAL COMMITTEE November 1, 1977

Herman W., Moderator, opened the meeting leading the members present in the Serenity Prayer. Roll call showed that 59 groups were represented at this meeting — total attendance 64. Minutes of the October 4, 1977 meeting were read by the Secretary. Minutes were approved as read. Treasurer reported that there is a balance in the Treasury of \$329.68 as of October 31, 1977. 127 speakers were supplied by the District Office to non A.A. meetings for the months January through October 31, 1977.

### COMMITTEE REPORTS:

**Action Committee:** Dick F., Chairman. At the last meeting,

Dick was appointed to make a committee to talk to George M. about the take over of the Central Bulletin by this committee. They met and had much conversation and came up with what he feels is a good relationship with unity, etc. At this time Dick F. made the motion that the Central Committee of Alcoholics Anonymous take over the sponsorship of the Central Bulletin Foundation including all assets and liabilities beginning January 1, 1978. Also, that a committee of three members of Alcoholics Anonymous in good standing be appointed to manage the issuance of the Central Bulletin on a monthly basis. This committee being comprised of Dick P., George M. and Dick F. The Treasurer of Central Committee to be a non-voting member of this committee to disburse the funds for publishing the Central Bulletin. In the future this committee may be increased to five members.

**Central Bulletin:** George M., Editor, said the bulletins should be in the mail this week. George is in complete accordance with the Central Bulletin decision. There is no problem with the dissolution of the Foundation. The pamphlets • The Four Absolutes — Misunderstandings and Who Me will be assets which will be transferred to the Central Committee and it will be the policy that the only source of distribution of the pamphlets and perhaps others that come will only be through the Cleveland A. A. District Office — all funds to be handled by the Treasurer of Central Committee under a separate report. There are many unnecessary expenses, returned mail, etc. The District Office mailing address will also be used. Editorial representative will be George M., Dick F. will be make-up editor and Dick P. will be the liaison between the District Office and this Committee.

Motion made, seconded and carried that Central Committee take over publication of the Central Bulletin.

**Areawide Committee:** Betty M., Chairman. Next meeting will be Sunday December 11, 1977 at 2:00 P.M. at Scott Auditorium of Cleveland Metro General Hospital. Speaker will be Esther R. from Alaquippa, Pa. The hospital wants a letter of confirmation letting them know just what we will need.

**Rosary Hall:** No representative present.

**Bay View:** John F., representative. Everything quiet.

**Brecksville:** Don E., representative. In spite of requests for A.A. help for their Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday meetings not many members have shown up to support them so tonight he invited members to attend and help with the meetings.

**Merrick Hall:** Minnie C., representative. Maintaining almost 100% capacity. Called attention to seminar "Johnson Institute" beginning November 2nd for three days. The next women's meeting will be November 15th. They are having four women with over 20 years sobriety speak-this will represent over 100 years of uninterrupted sobriety. Minnie would like this announced at all meetings as all A.A. women are invited. Meetings are held the third Tuesday of every month at 1:30 P.M. Called "Friends of Merrick Hall".

**Metro:** Regina D., representative. Nothing to add since last report except to announce that they are not just a de-tox center but also a rehab center . . . after care, family counseling, etc.

**Woodruff Hospital:** Dena P. from Woodruff made her first appearance before this committee to explain the new policy that Woodruff has for dealing with the alcoholic, outlined her program and requested help, chairmen, speakers, etc. for the meetings that are held there seven days a week.

**NEW BUSINESS:** Member appeared to state that a new group had formed at St. Augustine Church on W. 14th where there is a dire need for a meeting. Meeting is held at 8:30 on Monday night and the group name which they had selected came up for much controversy. It was suggested that they change the name and follow the A.A. Principles exactly in order that they might be recognized as an A.A. Group even though they might be of help for others who have different problems. Discussion was quite lengthy and matter was tabled for next meeting.

**N.E. OHIO GENERAL SERVICE REPORT:** Greg P., representative. Mini Conference was held at the Ramada Inn on October 22nd and 23rd — only had 74 members in attendance. Gratitude Sunday will be held Sunday, November 20, 1977 in Lordstown, Ohio. Dick P. of the Newburgh Group will be the main speaker. General Service Committee members' meeting will be Sunday, January 21, 1978 at the American Legion Hall in Brecksville. The state advisory meeting will be this Saturday, November 5, 1977 at Columbus, Ohio to discuss the State Conference which will be held in Toledo in 1978. He has asked for contributions from all groups for operating expenses. If anyone has failed to send in contributions, he asked that you carry the message back to your groups — they can mail them to him.

Dick P. referred to a paper that had been sent to him from Bridgeport, Connecticut that stated that Spanish speaking offenders had not been getting the proper aid for their drinking problem so the judge ordered a Spanish speaking group through the Central Office of Bridgeport be formed. We have a Spanish speaking group in Cleveland now that meets on Friday nights — without court order.

Borton group representative invited all to attend the 38th Anniversary of the Borton Group on November 14th. Speaker will be Tom T. who has 37 years of sobriety.

Moderator reminded that next month election will be held for Vice Moderator who should be from the east side. Members should start thinking about their nominations.

There being no further business, the meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Imogene Z., Secretary

## A CHRISTMAS LETTER

Dear Santa Claus,

Its been a long time since I have written a letter to you. More years than I really care to remember. I excelled at telling you all I wanted. I don't remember ever asking you what YOU wanted, whether it'd be too much trouble or whether you thought I deserved anything. After all these years, thats why I am writing this letter now, Santa. At last I have what I have I want for Christmas. . . I'm SOBER.

I don't go round telling everyone about it. But you, Santa, I think you'd understand and I think you'd be glad that one who for so long was one of God's problem children has found lasting happiness. I joined AA.

Is it too late to say "Thank you, Santa"? There truly isn't anything else I want for Christmas, except to keep sober and live this satisfying AA way. If you want to help some of those other alcoholics who are still fumbling around, if you want to show them how Christmas can be a time of joy instead of the mockery it was for so many years, it would be wonderful. I'm still sort of afraid to ask for anything for myself, even after all this time. I've learned that what God thinks is good for me, I'll get. He always answers my prayers; sometimes He says 'Yes'; sometimes 'No', sometimes 'Maybe . . . Later'. But after the mess I made of running my life myself, I'm not going to decide I again know what's best for me. Truly, Santa, I have so very much, and I don't deserve it. Just for keeping sober for 24 hours at a time and trying to think of the other fellow I've acquired self-respect and a host of good friends who'd do as much for me as I am willing to do for them. These are the real blessings of life, I've learned at last. I can believe in you again, just as I can believe in the Holiday Season whose' patron saint you are.

I can believe in and revere the Christ whose birthday this is, the God as I understand Him, who made mine a sober life at last.

Have a lot of fun, Santa, take care of yourself, bring a lot of happiness and love to all . . . and don't worry about me . . . I've got what I want for Christmas.

Secretary's Notebook, San Francisco,  
December 1975. Many thanks.

Beware of  
half  
truths:  
It may be  
the  
wrong half.

### ARE YOU PLANNING TO MOVE?

If so, clip this coupon and mail to One Public Square, and, Mezzanine #6, Cleveland, Ohio 44113. immediately. It is urgently needed before the next issue of the **Central Bulletin**.

Name .....

New Address .....

City . . . . . State . . . . . Zip Code . . . . .

It will help you and it will help us.

## WISHFUL THINKING

A member of the local lodge, sober for better than a year, did a little wishful thinking out loud the other evening. "It's just possible," he drooled, "that I'm not an alcoholic." His audience gave him the old fish eye. They didn't have any doubts and Old Wishful didn't seem too enthusiastic about his own doubt. But such thoughts do come to a lot of us after we haven't pulled a cork for a long time and the past gets pretty hazy. What we mean is that we wish we weren't alcoholics and the next step is a wishful notion that maybe we are not. Might ask ourselves a few questcions as such a time.

Do we honestly believe we could go out tonight, take half a dozen drinks and then go home to bed. Perhaps we could with sheer will power and a planned quota. When we awoke the next morning, would we or would we not want a drink right then? Would we go through the day without constantly thinking about a drink or desiring a drink? If we didn't drink all day would we also keep away from it that evening? Wouldn't we very likely decide to take six more and wind up taking a dozen or two dozen? Wouldn't the next day involve the same routine with less chance of any restraint?

If we did manage to stay dry for a day or even several days, wouldn't all our waking time be filled with drinking thoughts? Wouldn't we honestly have to admit that the old obsession is merely dormant and not dead? That just one drink would wake up the sleeping giant? That we might not win a second alcoholic war? Maybe we better postpone that first drink one more day . . . just one more day . . . if we do that, we'll never catch up with tomorrow . . . and tomorrow will never catch up with us.

— The Missing Link

## IT IS NEVER TOO LATE

Life can begin at any time. For all of us this has definitely been proven. If the first half of our allotted span was a blank (years of pain and unhappiness), we should not demand that the remaining span be boubly rich and abundant in happiness and pleasure. But with a new outlook, we can make the most of our years, no matter what our age.

It is not the years that count, but our attitude towards them. With a courageous philosophy of living and a healthy inner vitality, we can always remain young in spirit. In the matter of living, our lives cannot be divided into equal halves. There is a vast difference in their densities. We have found a way to accent the density of pleasure and accomplishment in the present, far beyond the density of pain and failure in the past. And we must endure to the end of the book. For even if we falter on the last page of the final chapter, it will be the old story of the one drop of bitter gall in the barrel of molasses.

"Age --- Age --- Age" --- always the question of how old or how young we are. We see the warning light ahead. Can't teach an old dog new tricks. Too late for a new philosophy of life. Is it? A whole world was given a new philosophy of life twenty centuries ago. Its promises of humility and love, sacrifice and faith were guaranties of happiness. Not the kind of happiness attributed to financial security or the big leather chair in an lcexusive club, but the happiness you feel when you come home to your family after work, the happiness you experience when helping another out of his alcoholic wilderness, the happiness you feel at the end of a day when you say, "Good night God, thanks for everything."

— The Missing Link





## Our Prejudices

### *What causes prejudice?*

Many of our prejudices are due to unquestioning acceptance of the beliefs commonly held by members of our group; others may be traced to the way in which we make snap judgments; still others can be blamed on our wishful thinking.

Envy is the cause of much prejudiced thinking. The person who cannot mend his own case is tempted to do what he can to impair another's. In fact, some who would go to great and good lengths to help someone who fell on evil days will become annoyed if that same person should have good fortune.

**Prejudice** is a personal thing. Even if the conduct of others has roused our emotion — envy, anger or fear — it is really we ourselves who create the prejudice by the way in which we think about the objectionable conduct.

Our opinions should not be blamed upon others. We ourselves can so manage our opinions as to save us from worry and prejudice and a host of other thoughts that are bad for us. It is quite true to say that our prejudices do not hurt others as much as they hurt ourselves, **physically**, mentally and spiritually.

It is easy for us to be tolerant of others' opinions when we like them, but we must build up a certain philosophy if we are to stand what we don't like. Tolerance distinguishes what is essential, and lets the unessential go. It admits that firm convictions are splendid when they relate to important matters, but they are a public nuisance when they provoke a row over petty things.

### *The open mind*

It is not necessary to have an opinion on every matter. All that we know is still infinitely less than all that still remains unknown. A scientist may search for days and years, and return without a single opinion. His habit of life and thought demands that he shall believe nothing without evidence. Like him, we shall profit if we learn to be painstaking in the discovery of truth, and to identify it before expressing opinions. That is much more exciting and rewarding than trying to prove something.

When we approach the choices and judgments of life with open minds we are likely to find that nothing is altogether good or true, and nothing is altogether bad or false. What may appear to the casual person as a stain on someone's character will perhaps reveal itself to you as a scar **from** a hard-won field.

### MILL ENDS AND REMNANTS

One of our stalwart members of years past who passed away a number of years ago in his booming **voice.was** went to greet AA gatherings with the resounding cry—"Isn't it wonderful to be sober!"

During the holiday season I know of no better time than to reflect on this statement. For, whether it is a week, a year or many years, it is truly wonderful to be sober.

In reflecting on the present state and term of our sobriety it is a time also to recall those "not so dear" days of holiday seasons past.

There is nothing we can do about the disappointments and shame of them, even though we would like to put them out of our minds completely; yet in recalling them we embellish our strength for today knowing full well that we can "celebrate" just as effectively, and more so, in our sober state.

The pains of the past seem never to heal fully, yet continuing to live in sobriety to the best of our ability, we have been and are able to diminish the hurts and mistrusts for which we have been responsible through our **wilfulness**.

As we close out an old year, a day at a time, we approach the New, with hope and anticipation, on the same twenty-four hour plane which has stood us so well, by George!



### WHEN YOU WRITE USE

All mail, subscriptions, etc., should now be addressed:  
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**Room 6, Mezzanine**  
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## CENTRAL BULLETIN



Published monthly by the Central Bulletin Foundation, Inc., a non-profit corporation dedicated to service. Address all letters to Central Bulletin, Box 6312, Cleveland, Ohio 44101. Subscription price ~~was~~ \$3.50 per Year.

Harry D., Founder and Editor 1892-1 968

Vol. 36

December, 1977

No. 3

### MINUTES OF CENTRAL COMMITTEE December 6, 1977

Meeting was called to order by Moderator, Herman W., who lead the members present in the Serenity Prayer. There were 20 members present for this meeting. Weather conditions held many back from coming downtown. Art Z., Vice Moderator, read the Purpose of Central Committee and the Twelve Traditions of A.A. Minutes of the meeting of November 1, 1977 were read by the Secretary. Minutes approved and accepted as read. Treasurer gave her report showing that, after expenses, Central Committee has a balance of \$251.86 in the Treasury as of November 30, 1977. 150 speakers were supplied by the District Office to non A.A. meetings for the months January through November, 1977 inclusive.

### COMMITTEE REPORTS:

No representatives present for:

Action Committee  
Central Bulletin  
Rosary Hall  
Bay View  
Brecksville  
Merrick Hall  
Metro  
Woodruff.

**Areawide Committee:** Betty M., Chairman, announced that this Sunday, December 11, 1977 the Areawide Meeting will be held at 2:00 P.M. in Scott Auditorium of Metro General Hospital. Speaker will be Esther R. from Alaquippa, Pa.

**OLD BUSINESS:** In reference to the meeting that was being held on W. 14th that was discussed and tabled at the November 1st meeting-could not be reconsidered tonight because there was no representative present to continue this matter.

**NEW BUSINESS:** A representative from Trusty Hall was present to make a request for literature on behalf of his group. He was informed that in November a \$20.00 gift of literature had been presented to them and since we no longer have a Literature Fund, it would be impossible to supply further literature. They would like more men to come out and support this A.A. group.

**Election of officers for 1978 was scheduled for this meeting.** In view of the fact that attendance was poor a discussion was held to decide whether or not to go on with the election and it was decided that it should be held. The names of Warren McClelland, Friendship Group and lean Bishop, New Way of Life were submitted in nomination (the post of Vice Moderator was to be filled by an east sider). Voting was held by written ballot which came out in a tie and the matter was finalized by flipping a coin. Warren McClelland, Friendship Group will be the new Vice Moderator. The Treasurer's job is also an elected one and Isabel G. was unanimously voted in.

Herman W., outgoing Moderator, thanked Central Committee for the honor of being the Moderator for the year. Herman did a very good job up in front and we hope he will continue to attend and be active in Central Committee.

**N.E. OHIO GENERAL SERVICE REPORT:** Greg P., representative. Gratitude Sunday was held Sunday, November 20, 1977 in Lordstown, Ohio. 90 people attended this successful meeting. The next General Assembly Meeting will be held Sunday, January 21, 1978 at the American Legion Hall in Brecksville at 2:00 P.M. Could still use contributions from the groups.

There being no further business, the meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Imogene Z., Secretary



**Advisory meeting January 10, 1978 at the Cleveland Plaza 8:00 P.M. Intergroup dinner & dance tickets will go on sale at this time. Tickets will be dispursed in usual manner.**



The 14th Annual National AA

Women's Conference

February 17, 18, 19, 1978

Holiday Inn North Randall Mall

For further information write to: National Women's Conference, P.O. Box 16234, Cleveland, Ohio 44116.



BECOME INVOLVED

It seems to be a trend, in this day and age, to not allow ourselves to become involved. Just have an accident in your car on a street corner and see just how hard it is to find someone who saw "anything". We seem to have the idea that we are going to let someone else do it or we are not going to get involved because that way we'll stay out of trouble.

Look for a moment at the national scene and see how very often we will express ourselves as to the ways to solve all the problems, but how few really get themselves involved.

We, as alcoholics, cannot afford not to get involved. We must get involved if we are to attain contented sobriety and to keep it, we must be involved in the program of Alcoholics Anonymous or it just isn't going to work.

Oh, yes, we hear a lot of complaining about the way things are being done, even in our fellowship, but until we become involved, we cannot change anything. We must become so involved that not a day goes by that we don't repeat the "Serenity Prayer" or turn to our "Little Black Book" for a thought for the day. This way we have our daily reminder.

Our program is a program of action and in the "Big Book" we read, "practical experience shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics".

Further on we read that "life will take on a new meaning..." and is an experience you will not want to miss". You cannot help others without becoming involved.

Ken G. in Silver Dollar

THIS NEW DAY

Write it on your heart that every day is the best day in the year. He is rich who owns the day, and no one owns the day who allows it to be invaded with fret and anxiety. Finish every day and be done with it. You have done what you could. Some blunders and absurdities, no doubt, crept in. Forget them as soon as you can, tomorrow is a new day; begin it well and serenely, with too high a spirit to be cumbered with your old nonsense. This new day is too dear, with its hopes and invitations, to waste.

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

CLEVELAND AA DISTRICT OFFICE

The Cleveland AA District Office is open to anyone, male or female, who is seeking an answer to an alcoholic problem. The office, located in Mezzanine 6, 1 Public Square Building, is open weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. but maintains a 24-hour telephone service which responds to calls made after the office is closed. The telephone number is 241-7387.

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SINCERITY COUNTS

Big as a grizzly bear and about as well poised, the man on the rostrum didn't seem to belong there at all. He couldn't talk worth a hoot. His grammar was atrocious, his delivery poor, his manner diffident. He essayed no oratory, and it was passing strange that he held this audience of 300 men and women in the palm of his ham-like hand. Sincerity explained it. It showed in the sparkling eyes and the quiet tones of this self-effacing gent who was well-groomed and expensively dressed but was definitely the outdoorsy type and fairly exuded well being. He was an ex-drunk, accent on the first syllable. He was no public speaker, but the had things to say.

"So this psychiatrist gave it to me cold," he spoke into the microphone. "He said I was a fake and a liar and never intended to quit whiskey. He said I was opinionated and obnoxious, that I had come to be analyzed but had wound up pointing out HIS faults. He said I was wasting his time and he wouldn't take my last few bucks because already I'd lost my job and wife and home and hocked most of my things."

Back in the 20th row, a newcomer in AA, hunched forward and listened hard. He, too, was presently jobless and wifeless and all but penniless.

"I asked him what I was supposed to do now," the big guy went on, "and he said nothing — nothing at all. Just get drunk and stay drunk, and die drunk. It didn't matter to this bird — this psychiatrist. He and I were washed up. So I shrugged and said okay. I knew it all the time. I was hopeless and so what? I would say that! I went out of there and for the first time in my life, I tried to follow somebody's advice. I got drunk and stayed drunk and only missed dying drunk because the noose I'd fashioned in my drunkenness was too loose. I awoke in a souse-trap and it was there I met up with Alcoholics Anonymous."

The newcomer in the 20th row marveled at the big fellow's utter candor. He hadn't quite realized yet that about two-thirds of the listeners were alcoholics and had been as bad as the speaker: and the others were wives and husbands of ex-drunks and they, too, had been through the wringer. "You see," nudged the newcomer's sponsor, "In a setting like this, with everyone understanding and everyone on an equal footing, a guy just naturally lets his hair down. Every man and woman in this room knows alcoholism is not a disgrace but a disease." The speaker was making it clear that his first "souse-trap" contact with AA had been four years ago. What he said about his return to sobriety, his moral rehabilitation, his regained self-respect, his gratitude was brief and simple yet tremendously dramatic. What he didn't say was even more impressive. For the man had attained humility — not the kind you talk about but the inward kind — and that, it developed, is one goal of every AA member. This big man, so ill at ease in the public eye, had found the power somewhere to rise from depths of suicidal despair to retrieve his family's love his rightful place in society and a good job in his chosen craft. Along the way he had discarded the big-shot complex which had stamped him as "opinionated and obnoxious," and had substituted a new and humble self-appraisal, a new sense of values which rewarded him with serene contentment.

"Can I do all this?" the newcomer asked wonderingly. "Not alone," his sponsor quickly replied. "But if you actually use the tools AA will supply, you can't fail. Man, look around you. Some of this program you must take on FAITH at the outset. But as to its effectiveness here is the living, breathing proof. "I can't believe they ever kicked the gong around like I did" murmured the impressed newcomer, but his sponsor just laughed,

—Alky Alley, Denver Colo., 1949

Hard work is an accumulation of easy things that you didn't do when you should have.

Nature gives five senses — touch, taste, sight, smell and hearing. Everybody needs two more — horse and common.

# Our Prejudices

The opinions of three eminent men, widely separated in time and in qualities, may be brought together on this point. Socrates, the Greek philosopher of the fourth century B.C., said: "I am extremely desirous to be persuaded by you, but not against my own better judgment." Thomas Carlyle, the Scottish essayist, said: "It is useful, nay essential, to see his good qualities before pronouncing on his bad." And Thomas Edison, the inventor, said: "I haven't any conclusions to give; I am just learning about things myself."

## Human relations

Human relations are the result of a complicated interplay of thought and emotion. The result may be understanding, not understanding, or misunderstanding.

Our attitudes toward particular people may be affected by our attitude toward people in general, but there are exceptions. One may be sincerely fond of a particular member of another race or creed, and still possess race or religious prejudice. A man may be in love with a particular woman, elevate her on a pedestal, and sincerely feel inferior to her: but at the same time, if he is an employer, he may refuse to hire women.

If we see a person whom we believe we know very well acting in a manner which doesn't meet our expectations, we may be shocked or we may try to save our own false conception by declaring something is wrong with him. It all too infrequently occurs to us that something might be wrong with our own assumptions and interpretations; that we might have a trace of prejudice in us.

Misunderstanding is particularly likely if there is hesitancy to communicate thoughts and feelings, or a barrier of some other sort, between us. Business people are up against this problem continually, because it is the nature of business to require co-operation among those engaged in the same sort of work. We cannot escape the dilemma by the simple technique of avoiding problems.

People who are inclined toward introversion find it difficult to understand those who are inclined toward extroversion. They are moved by different impulses and by different ways of looking at life. The thing to do is to realize that people are different in their personality structure. It is the fate of human beings to see the world differently, and to develop different meanings and values of life. Insight into this fact will go far toward avoiding prejudice.

Once again, as has been said so often in these Letters, emphasizing the positive has its virtues. When we look for the good we are likely to appreciate a person's excellencies and find that they far outweigh his faults.

Reprinted From  
Royal Bank of Canada  
Monthly Letter

(Continued in next issue)

## THERE'S MORE TO IT THAN TALK

No man can consider himself a real member of A.A. just because he doesn't drink. There is such a thing as having a sober body and a mind that retains its drunken stupidity. The body will express lip service to the A.A. program, but the mind still wallows in an alcoholic quagmire.

The physical sobriety is used only as a cloak to cover the same corruptive thinking and conniving that was always present in the mind. Dishonesty of thought and action is just as vicious in the sober man as in the drunken man. In fact it has a more foul odor in the sober man, because the sober man has not the excuse of befuddled judgment.

Anyone addicted to this form of hypocrisy is still controlled by alcoholic thinking. He still retains his false pride, his complete selfishness, his super-ego. He seeks no advice and rejects any that might be offered. His moral and ethical standards are fabricated on a loom built to suit his own perverted specifications. The cloak he weaves is transparent as daylight. No one is deceived except the deceiver...and even he must have his moments when he must admit life is a sham.

The solution for this problem is the same as it is for all of us: "We practice these principles in ALL of our affairs."

Chit Chat

## HONESTY

Honesty requires the determination to follow principles rather than expediences, ideals rather than conveniences which are in conflict with right principles and high ideals are but the solace of the blind or the dishonest.

A right principle is timeless. An expediency, on the other hand, is an act in which a timeless principle is violated. An act of expediency is, therefore, wrong: there is no such thing as a short-term good deriving from a long-range evil. An act which bears an ill effect in the future, no matter how distant, is an evil act when it is committed.

Our blindness to the losses may give the appearance of net gain from an evil act, but it is only a false appearance. The failure properly to weigh the time dimension in our calculations, signifies the inability to think correctly.

-Contributed

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