



Published by
Cleveland Central Committee of A.A.
One Public Square
Mezzanine Room #6
Cleveland, Ohio 44113

VOL. XLI-No. 4

HOW DO YOU BECOME A GROUP MEMBER?

We usually say that anyone is a member of A.A. If he or she says so. Tradition Three says, "The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking," and none of us can pretend to judge the desire in another's heart.

To join a group is usually the simple process of attending its meetings fairly regularly. Most groups have long ago given up such things as any formal procedure or ceremony for "joining"-although, of course, most groups do try to keep *confidential* lists of the names of members who wish to be notified of special A.A. meetings or other events, or are available for Twelfth Step work, and to record general membership information for the A.A. directory.

Most members feel more at home in one particular group than in others, and consider it their home group, where they accept responsibilities and try to sustain friendships. They do not meddle in the business or policy of groups which they visit but in which they would accept no service assignments.

A.A. is not a contest designed for individual or group rivalry or competition-to see which group is biggest, or who stays sober longest, or which group contributes the most service, or who is the most sought-after speaker. Therefore, all A.A. members are usually welcome at all groups' meeting, and will feel at home in any A.A. group.

Quotes

"A.A.: sip it don't gulp it."

"If you say no, you don't grow."

"God never frowned on a gathering of A.A."

"We're in the big leagues; it's the only way to save our lives."

"How does A.A. work? It works just fine."

"A.A. - just like taking a journey."

The Big Book is our road map and the 12 steps are our road signs."

"Resentments eat away at the road to sobriety."

"There's a thin line between humility and stupidity."

"As long as we're in A.A., we'll always be in the recovery room. We've had a big operation on our personalities."

"A.A. is good medicine; it's cheap and won't kill anyone."

"Never them or God, it's only us that's got to be changed."

ENOUGH ABOUT ALCOHOLISM ALREADY!

OK, it's a problem. You know it. I know it, and by now, everybody in the whole darn world must know it. TV commercials for this or that "treatment facility", hundreds of books, and for all I know maybe even match book covers proclaim the "disease concept" of alcoholism. (from what seem more and more to be self-erected soap boxes too.)

It's time, in my view, to stop talking about the problem and start talking about the solution. After all, does anyone really think that the unique part of Bill and Bob meeting in Akron was that they discovered that drunkenness was a problem? or disease? Of course not. What made this meeting meaningful was the discovery of an answer. An answer as described on page 64 of the book we follow, and from where we get our name, "Alcoholics Anonymous".

When the spiritual malady is overcome, we straighten out physically and mentally."

It's time, in my view, to stop mealy-mouthing those who are better educated or perhaps just more specifically educated than we who just don't drink anymore. (Just don't drink anymore?) The overwhelming majority of us know darn well where we got the power to stop and stay stopped too. Don't forget, more than 60% of the people in our program didn't go through a treatment facility, not even once. Now don't misunderstand me, I am not against treatment, some seem to need it. But let's not forget where the power source is. Pages 18, 27, 43, and of course the rest of page 64 pretty well spell out what we are all about.

While I'm getting in trouble over "treatment", I might as well comment on this idea of "after-care support groups". That's how I heard AA described the other day, and I think the whole idea stinks. A partnership was what our program began its relationship with the professionals as, and yet in just a very few years we've become very junior partners. The evidence is though, that we're mostly at fault. After all, we are the ones who drop a drunk at their door and meekly accept our role as visitors rather than sponsors. The average drunk in the average treatment facility is treated for all his or her problems, drinking, job, sexuality, marriage and heaven alone knows what else. (It's for sure the sponsor isn't a part of the package though.)

It's time, in my view, (notice how I keep reminding you this is opinion?), it's time to remind ourselves that we are a program of recovery, and not the "after-care" concept of some well meaning social worker.

Terry W.
Bay West Discussion

CENTRAL BULLETIN



Published monthly by the Cleveland Central Committee of A.A., a non-profit fellowship dedicated to service. Address all letters to Central Bulletin, One Public Square, Mezzanine #6, Cleveland, Ohio 44113. Subscription price \$3.50 per Year.

Harry D., Founder and Editor 1892-1968

Vol. 41 January 1983 No. 4

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, February 1st, 1983-8:00 P.M.
OLD STONE CHURCH-PUBLIC SQUARE
CLEVELAND, OHIO
BE INFORMED-SEND YOUR GROUP REPRESENTATIVE TO THIS MEETING

G.S.R. THIRD LEGACY MEETING
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 20TH, 1983-2:00 P.M.
ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH-MANTUA, OHIO
STATE ROUTE 44 & PIONEER TRAIL
ONE MILE SOUTH OF ROUTE 82

LONERS INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION
UNIVERSITY OF AKRON
JUNE 24TH, 25TH & 26TH, 1983
MR. GEORGE M.
3387 MEDINA, AVE.
COLUMBUS, OHIO 43224

IM MEMORIAM

DON (COWBOY) KERST, Member of W. 25th Street Group and others passed away. Our sympathy to the Family.

FRANK MOSS, Active member of the Garden Valley Group and the Fellowship. Passed away Dec. 21, 1982 our condolences to the family.

NORMAN MAUER, Member of Several West Side Groups. Active in the fellowship. Passed away Dec. 24, 1982, Our Deepest Sympathy to the family.

JOE HART, Active member of our fellowship passed away. our regrets to the family.

"WHEN THE CAT'S AWAY . . ."

Responding to a knock on the door, a housewife found a man standing apologetically before her.

"I just ran over your cat," he said "and I'd like to replace her."

"Well, get busy," snapped the housewife. "There's a mouse in the pantry."

JACK'B. IN AUSTRALIA

"Many will recall our friend, Jack B., who led the Southwest Sunday Group Anniversary a number of times. Jack's friends will be happy to learn that he is well and very active in A.A. in Australia. Jack now lives in Helena Valley, west Australia, with his daughter.

Bob L. of Southwest Sunday had a long letter from Jack at Christmas time. Among other activities, Jack told of a speaking tour which was arranged for him by Australian A.A. On the tour, Jack travelled to nine cities and spoke at twenty meetings in a two week period.

Those who knew Jack when he first began to visit Cleveland will remember that he lived in New York at that time. Jack's home group there was the Sobriety Unlimited Group of Mt. Vernon, N.Y. Sobriety unlimited also was known as the "Cops and Robbers Group" because, as Jack said, they had some of both!

A.A. DOESN'T GUARANTEE TO OPEN THE GATES OF HEAVEN TO LET YOU IN, BUT IT DOES OPEN THE GATES OF HELL TO LET YOU OUT.....

TRADITIONS: WE ARE RESPONSIBLE

* It is not the media's responsibility to maintain our Traditions; it is our own individual responsibility.

* A.A. members generally think it unwise to break the anonymity of a member even after his or her death, but in each situation the final decision must rest with the family.

* A.A. members may disclose their identity and speak as recovered alcoholics, giving radio and TV interviews, without violating the Traditions — so long as their A.A. membership is not revealed.

* A.A. members may speak as A.A. members only if their names or faces are not revealed. They speak not for A.A. but as individual members.

Experience suggests that A.A. members:

● Respect the right of other members to maintain their own anonymity at whatever levels they wish.

*When speaking as A.A. members at non-A.A. meetings, usually use first names only.

*Avoid the use of titles such as "A.A. counselor" when employed as professionals in the field of alcoholism (the title "alcoholism counselor" is preferred).

*Use last names within the Fellowship, especially for election of group officers and other service jobs.

(From the revised pamphlet, "Understanding Anonymity"

A.A.W.S., Inc.)

SUCCESS

There are no secrets of success. Success is doing the things you know you should do. Success is not doing the things you know you should not do.

DO YOU HAVE A "VOICE" IN AA?

DO YOU BELONG? • of course you do, if you have a desire to stop drinking. You are an A.A. member if you say so. But have you joined a "Home Group"? Are you taking advantage of all that A.A. has to offer? You can really strengthen that sense of belonging that we all crave by getting involved and participating in all of your group's activities. Assuming responsibility for at least voting in your group conscience, you are deciding the future and effectiveness of A.A. as a whole. If you are participating, the answer to "Who is running things around here?", is "YOU ARE." If you are abstaining, then the answer to that question is: "THEY ARE." Next to the individual, the A.A. group is the basic unit of our service structure; and, it is your conscience that your group representative is voting at Intergroup and the Service Assemblies. And what's more, it is your vote that determines how the group itself is to function. If there are things that you don't like about the way things are being run, whose fault is it really?

DO IT MY WAY

A lush who was pandhandling on Wall Street tried to put the touch on a broker who worked there. "Is this the only way you can make a living?" asked the financier.

"No," said the bum. "Actually, I once -wrote a book called 100 Ways to Make Money."

"Then why are you begging on the street?" asked the broker.

"Well," said the dipso, "this was one of the ways!"

A.A. Grapevine, March 1976

WE ARE ALWAYS OPEN FOR CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM, YOUR PREFERENCES, YOUR LIKES AND EVEN YOUR DISLIKES. DO -NOT BE BACKWARD ABOUT VOICING YOUR OPINIONS FOR IT IS THE ONLY WAY WE HAVE OF SERVING YOU BETTER AND IMPROVING YOUR BULLETIN.

— Be a Bulletin Booster —

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THE ALCOHOLIC'S WORST ENEMY— RATIONALIZATION

Alcoholics are masters at rationalizing, which is nothing more than the science of arranging to do what we want to do, then making it appear reasonable. Rationalization is probably the greatest nemesis of the alcoholic. It plagues him before he gets into AA and often after he arrives. It is a mental process that consigns him to his own private hell of worry and frustration, of fear and loneliness. Alcoholic rationalization is a built-in antidote to recovery. It is the process of illogical reasoning employed by the alcoholic to justify unreasonable behavior and attitudes in a (for him) reasonable manner. From the first troublesome drink, this fantastic process is evident. His startled dismay at the adverse results of drinking cause him to blame anything and everything but the real culprit. **alcohol.** If the alcoholic applied logic to the situations, alcoholism would never get beyond the discovery stage. PROBLEM: When I drink, I get in trouble. SOLUTION: Don't drink. It would be that simple. However, at this point logic is seldom applied, because the ego is shattered by what the alcoholic feels is a humiliating discovery. His inability to handle booze reflects on his manhood and the quality of his worth as a person. So he convinces himself that if he refuses to admit to the facts, it will somehow make the reality of his discovery disappear. It is at this point that the alcoholic rationalization begins. Distorting the facts and unwilling to accept his inability to learn, he must justify his decision. Reason won't do it. So he isolates himself in a world of self-pity, defiance, frustration and anger. He becomes totally self-centered, hypersensitive to criticism or suggestion, resenting intensely any interference with his God-given right to drink. Obviously, the only thing that would induce any one to deliberately continue using alcohol-having a complete awareness of its destructive qualities for him-is perverted thinking, alcoholic rationalization. And just as obvious is the only possible solution-a complete reversal of this kind of thinking. Constant contact with a solid sponsor is a great way of holding rationalization in check.

Here's How
Chicago, Ill.
Nov. 1973

A SMART SHOT

Two drunks at a county fair approached a stand where little balls bobbed about on top of water spouts. One tried his luck with a rifle, but couldn't hit a one.

"Let's have a shot", said the friend, and taking the rifle, fired. Every ball dropped.

Walking away from the stand, the first drunk said, "That was good! How did you manage to stop all the balls with just one shot?"

"Easy," replied the friend. "I took a shot at the guy who was working the pump."

DEPRESSION

Reprint of an article published in June 1971 based on Bill's personal experience.

I asked myself, "Why can't the Twelve Steps work to release me from this unbearable depression?" Suddenly I realized what the answer might be. My basic flaw had always been dependence on people or circumstances to supply me with prestige, security and confidence. Failing to get these things according to my perfectionist dreams and specifications, I fought for them. And when defeat came, so did my depression. . .

This passage came from a letter written by Bill to a friend, after a period of depression in his own life in 1953. A little later, he very kindly sent me a copy. When I asked permission to print the whole of the letter here, (and it appeared in fact in our December 1953 issue, some years before being reprinted elsewhere) Bill wrote me:

"Certainly, you may use it any way you like. Since that letter was written, I have held up pretty well. There hasn't been anything resembling a depression, though I do go into an area which might be called a region of indifference. When there, the lights of the world seem to have gone out. One still sees the stars, but complains they do *not* shed enough light to work or write. But the sunrise always comes, if one can only wait. After all dear Sackville, when a fellow has been scratching his left ear for a lifetime, it does require a pile of scratching the right one, to impress the dark and dumb registering machinery which seems to be in the interior of us all. It's a hell of a strain on one's patience. But once on the right track, time and effort will bring the pay-off to practically all of us. Of that, I am deeply convinced, I truly am. . .

Depression seems to attack anyone at times, even those most active in A.A. or with periods of lengthy sobriety behind them. It may at times be due to causes adjustable by medicine or psychiatry. Or it may be due to a-fading gratitude for one's recovery, forgetfulness of the immensity of that great free gift to us. Forgetfulness it must be, it will allow our Peace or Mind to be over-affected by transient situations or cares. But most often, perhaps, it is due to the cause mentioned by Bill in his case.

There may be, though, in some cases, another more subconscious reason, which Thomas Merton described like this:

"In the vivid darkness of God within us there sometimes come deep moments of love that deliver us entirely, for a moment, from our old burden of selfishness and number us among those little children of whom is the kingdom of heaven. And when God allows us to fall back into our own confusion of desires, we carry a scar over the place where that joy exulted for a moment in our hearts. The scar burns us, the sore wound aches within us. . .and we long for the time when we will never fall back from the paradise of the simple and the little children into the forum of prudence where the wise of this world go up and down in sorrow and set their traps for a happiness that cannot exist.

The Road Back

TOUGH JOB

During my drinking career I, like many other alcoholics, developed the phony "pride protector", the alibi system. This to me was one of the biggest, and the most difficult jobs to perfect that I have faced in my lifetime. I had to make my stories believable and I had to be good enough to convince myself and those around me that what I was telling them was the truth.

I suppose it is much the same as a person who writes fiction. What is written must be believable so it will sell books, and it is a very difficult job. Not everyone can become proficient in this skill.

I was also so afraid I would be found out that I often told another lie to cover the first one. This to me was one of the most uncomfortable situations I could get myself into. What a relief that I don't have to do this anymore! But I believe it is a trait that I must watch even in living sober, and since this is an honest program, I must constantly strive to be brutally honest.

At times I find myself doing something that may not be too smart (after all, I am human). Maybe there is a little doubt in my own mind, and I will try to justify my actions to the living end. I may even stretch this justification to the point where it will make me look good (or so I think). I must be honest and examine my reasons carefully and admit when I am wrong and didn't act very wisely. This is real tough, but very vital to my sobriety. I must do this as soon as possible or it may mushroom into a monster I can't handle, a monster which could be a threat to my serenity and my program.

Some of these actions I took while drinking have caused me to have to make amends, or admit the truth in steps eight and nine. Hard to do? Yes, but when I have done the best I can with these tasks, the benefits are mine and the rewards are great.

Our founders really knew what it takes to straighten out a phony. It never ceases to amaze me that all of these really tough jobs in our program work to provide us with the feeling of self-worth, and enable us to proceed with our lives in a Godly and orderly manner.

Ken G.
Silver Dollar

ARE YOU PLANNING TO MOVE?

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

Name

Old Address Zip.....

New Address

City State Zip

It will help you and it will help us.



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Cleveland, Ohio 44113

VOL. XLI-No. 5

NORTHEAST OHIO GENERAL SERVICE MINI-CONFERENCE

Dear Fellow AA's

The 8th annual Northeast Ohio Mini-Conference will be held March **18, 19 & 20** at the Ramada Inn Northwest - State Route 18 & 77. Registration fee is \$10.00 - \$0.50 less than last year. Other costs (optional) are: Saturday lunch - \$4.50, dinner, Saturday night - \$10.50 and Breakfast, Sunday \$6.10. A double room is \$52.41. No extra charge for four to a room.

The Mini-Conference is very important to both the Delegate and the interested AA member - an excellent way to obtain the informed Area Group Conscience before the Delegate attends the General Service Conference in New York April 17-23, 1983.

ALL interested AA's are welcome and will gain a great deal from the experience! General Service and Intergroup representatives should come and report back to their groups. No one has been in the program too long or too brief a time to gain something from the weekend.

EVERYONE participates! Registration starts Friday night for the early birds. Introduce yourself in a special meeting and enjoy the old and young timers panel. Join in on the Alcathon later that same night.

During the conference itself there will be three workshops, presentations, an askit basket session, the Traditions Play and plenty of time for fellowship. Our Regional Trustee, Buck will give an up to date report on AA world wide and Vinnie from our General Service Office will tell us what is happening there. Vinnie will share her story with us Saturday night. Sunday morning all who care to will have a few minutes at the mike to share their feelings about the weekend at the spiritual meeting.

Because times are hard, we are hoping that the groups will help their interested AA's attend this very important event.

You may register by mail (see flyer) through March 11, 1983, directly with Joan through March 17th and on Friday night and Saturday morning at the conference. The Motel needs to know about meals before the weekend. Register directly with the Ramada Inn if you plan to stay there.

Love in AA

Your trusted servant
Joan H.

Chairman, Mini-Conference
N.E.O. Mini-Conference
1326 **Orland** Ave.
Akron, Ohio 44320

See you there!

FUND DRIVE IS UNDERWAY

When you support the Downtown Office, you are doing an important **12th-Step** job. Your dollars make it possible for hundreds of calls for help to be received and turned over to groups. Your dollars provide a central place for those seeking help and AA visitors to call; a clearing house for our AA literature; a source for speakers; a telephone answering service which handles almost **20,000** calls a year. No single individual could do such widespread good. But, as an individual your dollars actually do this tremendous **job!**

And the opportunity is again almost here. During March, Greater Cleveland's AA will be asked to contribute to the support of the District Office. This money pays the salaries of a full time Secretary and her assistant; office rent, telephone, electric light, night-time telephone answering service, literature, printing, postage, and other mailing costs.

Last year, 316 groups and 2582 individual AA members pledged money to support the work of your Office. This year it is hoped that even more of the Greater Cleveland groups can see their way clear to making a group pledge. Experience has shown that the combined effort of the groups is the greatest single factor in raising the money necessary for this important work.

As in the past years, you and your respective groups will be contacted for your practical help. If each group will assume their proportionate share of the load, and if individuals who are financially able will continue to supplement group contributions — we can succeed.

It is our fervent hope that District Office may be able to continue the invaluable services for which it was organized almost 39 years ago. We all know how AA has grown-let's see to it that the important services of your Office can keep pace!

Thank you, in advance, for your understanding and assistance.

THINK

If I think —

I won't drink.

If I drink —

I can't think.



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Harry D., Founder and Editor 1892-1968

Vol. 41 February 1983 No. 5

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING
 Tuesday, March 1st, 1983 - 8:00 p.m.
 OLD STONE CHURCH-PUBLIC SQUARE
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 BE INFORMED-SEND YOUR GROUP
 REPRESENTATIVE TO THIS MEETING

LONER'S INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION
 UNIVERSITY OF AKRON
 JUNE 24TH, 25TH & 26TH, 1983
 MR. GEORGE M.
 3387 MEDINA, AVE.
 COLUMBUS, OHIO 43224

IN MEMORIAN

JOE CORRIGAN, a active member of Angle and our fellowship, passed away in Florida, Feb. 3, 1983 Our sympathy to the family.

SELF PITY

I want somebody to feel sorry for me! Nobody will. Well, I'll just feel sorry for myself then! This is the attitude I had today for a little while. I received some news last night that's rather ridiculous. I did not take it seriously, although, it was meant to hurt me. As the evening went on, and I thought more about it, I recognized it as an opportunity to have everyone feel sorry for me.

So, I went to the clubhouse today, to let people know what had happened to poor little ol' me. Well, it didn't work!

So, I left, feeling alone, like no one understood and really felt sorry for myself (for a number of reasons now). I headed for my mother's, where I knew I could find some understanding. But, even my mother knew I had nothing to feel sorry about.

I decided I did not want to exclude myself from the human race, I called someone who could verify the absurdity of what was said last night (by this time, I had convinced myself that this was a REAL PROBLEM).

We talked, and I feel good now, and I can laugh at myself. A.A. works, but not always when and the way I want it to.

Footsteps
 Anonymous

DISTRICT OFFICE CORNER

Your friends at District Office would like to call your attention to the annual Fund Drive Campaign to be held again this year during the month of March. Your groups and members will be asked to contribute so that we can keep the doors of A.A. open for the alcoholic who still suffers and for all the other services the office renders in working with and for you to the best of their ability. Elsewhere in this bulletin YOU will see another article explaining all that is done here at the office.

We know that last year was a very difficult year for a lot of us and we also are aware of the fact that this year might be even worse - so believe us, we understand but ask that you just do a little soul searching and give what you can if you can.

Unfortunately prices have gone up for us here just the same as they have for you in your own home and we must deal with it accordingly. Your Operating Committee, in your best interests, have proposed a budget this year that addresses as many cost-cutting areas as it can... we are sure, though, that we will not be able to accomplish this 100% and still give you the services required... but we are going to try!

All of the above has brought on some serious thinking - and perhaps has enabled us to take a little better look at who the "winners" are in our Fellowship. . . some times the "winner" has been described as the person who has been able to climb back up the ladder to success in job, home, church or any other area where alcoholism deterred them from being the people they could be or it might be the serene, well-dressed member who assures you "it wasn't all that hard" and goes on to praise themselves for making such a good impression... or, it could be the person who has gained many years of sobriety in this program just "One Day at a Time" . . . if YOU have been able to stay sober, gained back your place in society and have accumulated many years - we congratulate you. Today, as we take a look at the "winners" in A.A. we see them as the unemployed, whose benefits have all run out, whose children might be going to school hungry, who have had to file for help in paying utilities and just keeping warm . . . the person who has learned that clothes can have patches and still be worn - people who have no idea what to expect from one day to another and ARE STILL STAYING SOBER, going to meetings, helping others who by these same circumstances have drunk to the point where they had to call for help, sick enough for treatment and no coverage to pay for that treatment and learn how to stay sober in spite of all this - to all those who can fit this description - we think you are the "winners".

We join with you in praying for better times and encourage all of you to remember that 'today - you don't have to drink' - we are never given anything we can't handle just "One Day at a Time".

Your Trusted Servant

“HUMBLY DEMAND HE REMOVE OUR SHORTCOMINGS”

To some outsider listening in, or to a newly impressed individual filled with the seeming sainthood of sobriety or even to those “bleeding deacons” that Bill W. wrote about, the above undoubtedly seems sacreligious and then some. But to me and I suspect to others who somehow keep bumping into ourselves coming back from the altar of our own ego, this pretty much sums up an all too frequent application of a constant character defect. Its not that we don’t try, mind you, its just that we tend to allow our attention to wander amongst our priorities and become just a little impatient with our higher powers progress. We tend to, as someone wrote somewhere, turn over the steering wheel of our lives and will ok. But we then become back seat drivers.

Too often the fast pace of our daily living catches us up in a headlong rush and we forget that these shortcomings may still be a part of us until such a time as we can muster the same intensity as we had when seeking a relief from drinking.

It’s interesting to read over what Bill. W. had to say on the subject, and if any guy ever had similiar problems. . .he did. In the Big Book Bill devotes just 53 words to step six. . .its just a review of step five. But, what a difference when we read the chapter in the 12 & 12. Bill had 17 years to consider his own life and to observe those who strove along side him (and those who failed too.) Here we have seven pages and a **completely** new slant. The most important point seems to be that these defects require attention for a long period of time and need our seeking of Gods help on an almost daily basis. They can and are removed from many though, it seems to be for those who take heed of the entire message of the Serenity Prayer. I’m looking forward to that day. . .

Terry W.
Bay West Discussion



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??DISTRICT OFFICE-SATURDAY??

On January 25th at the Advisory Committee meeting several matters were reported and discussed. At this time I only wish to say a few words pertaining to an issue of paramount importance to the A.A. membership of this area: closing the doors of the Cleveland A.A. District Office and a half day on Saturdays.

It will be repeated here that practically every A.A. office throughout the country is open a half day on Saturday. It would be too lengthy of a discourse to mention here the numerous reasons as to why this practice has been almost an A.A. tradition. The majority of the A.A. membership work five days a week so these hundreds or perhaps thousands of members cannot visit their office during the first five days of the week. The only opportunity they have is Saturdays. It would be impossible to say precisely the many reasons why many members want to stop at **the** office on Saturdays.

However, judging from thirty-six years of being in and around the Cleveland A.A. District Office, many of our members visited the office because in some cases their groups do not have much literature on display at their meetings. Some have questions and problems they do not want to divulge in their groups. Many are just curious to know what their office looks like and just exactly what are all the responsibilities of the downtown office. These visitors see the magnificent variety of literature that the office carries to satisfy their needs. After a member visits the office and they have been helped with their questions and problems whenever it is possible they leave extremely pleased, knowing that the Cleveland A.A. office is a grand A.A. service center.

The office is visited more in the winter months than if it was open in the summertime because in **the** summer there is a lot of house and yard work to do and the baseball season enters into our homes, and after being cooped up all winter folks prefer to be outdoors as much as possible. Also many of the membership **have** their vacations and go away for some time.

For us in Cleveland to have the A.A. District Office open a half day on Saturdays would really be no more than compliance with the dictum of our adage or creed: “I am responsible.

When anyone, anywhere,
reaches out for help.

I want the hand of AA always to be there.
and for that: I am responsible.”

Dick F.

A PAINFUL TALE

The sales manager complained to his wife of aches and pains. This went on for 2 weeks. One day, he came home feeling better.

“I’ve found out what was wrong,” he told his wife. “You see, we got some modern office furniture 2 weeks ago. And I just learned I’ve been sitting in the wastebasket!”

"NOT GOD"

I am NOT GOD. I must stop playing God. I only want to be better. I played God to my children. I made all the decisions. I chose the Christmas tree each year until they finally rejected me in a symbolic way by buying their own Christmas tree. The same was true on the job. I was the boss until the calculator kids came along and took over: The computer kids. I couldn't accept this so I drowned my self in alcohol . . .

I denied that anybody could tell me anything about my excessive drinking habits. My lifestyle came to revolve around alcohol and places where alcohol was served and sold. Nobody could tell me anything. I played God. And denied any power greater than myself. I had to do that to continue my drinking as my morals and ethics were also going down the drain . . .

Now I am free from the slavery of alcohol. I have accepted the fact that I am NOT GOD. By accepting my limitations, I have gained the greater freedom of my lifestyle. I can now plan to go and want to go out to a restaurant for dinner on a Sunday or of an evening. I can keep my appointments. I can enjoy the fellowship of an AA meeting.

I no longer seek control. I have accepted my limits as a human being. I do not seek the perfection of God. Only God is perfect. I accept myself as me . . .

A WEALTH OF WISDOM

Active alcoholics do not see the world with themselves in it; they see themselves with the world surrounding them. And, most of the time, the world is on the attack!

It is wise to cultivate a good supply of patience, but foolish to allow everyone who comes along to encroach upon it.

If you can't find the bright side, try polishing the dull side.

A.A. doesn't help us to escape from all problems . . . it helps us to face them squarely. And most problems fade away when examined closely.

If you growl all day it's only natural to feel dog-tired at night.

Nearly always, the man at the top is the one who started at the bottom.

For every minute you remain angry, you give up sixty seconds of serenity and peace of mind.

We know you can't fool all the people all the time — but most of us keep right on trying.

When we're right, we can afford to hold our tempers; when we're wrong, we can't afford to lose them.

A poor memory is the greatest aid to a clear conscience.

Thanks to Jim M. and DRY RUN - Boston, Mass. A.A.

A DIFFERENT KIND OF FREEDOM THROUGH SURRENDER

A young newcomer to our group recently asked, "But how can you have a good time if you don't drink?" I've been thinking about that question, and tying it in with my thoughts of gratitude for freedom.

I don't have a controlling master dominating my life any more, because I'm sober. Booze said to me at first, "You can have a good time with me." Eventually, it said, "You can't have a good time without me." As the years went on, alcohol told me more and more, "You can't relax without me, have confidence without me, feel alive or think without me, or spend a day without me."

When I was a teenager, full of an independent spirit, inquiring into take-for-granted ideas of the past, I would have been appalled if anyone had told me that I would be willing to turn my mind and feelings over to the control of anyone. As it happened, I did just that, and the growing years were surrendered to the control of alcohol. There was never a more dominating taskmaster or rigid disciplinarian than my alcoholism. Within me, there was no healthy, independent rebel strong enough to break the hold until I completely surrendered to the A.A. program.

"Surrender" was another distasteful word in my book. I conjured up pictures in my mind of humiliation and defeat. How glad I am to learn that only this trusting surrender could finally have given me freedom, growth, choices, and life. I certainly see things differently now.

FOOTSTEPS
CINCINNATI

A TWIST IN THE TALE

A chap had stopped off at a tavern and had a few too many before going home. His wife was chewing him out about it, and finally, during a short lull in the harangue, he said, "*Hey, I ran into that old boyfriend of yours today, the one you're always telling me you should have married.*"

"*I hope you were nice to him,*" the wife remarked acidly.

"*I sure was,*" he answered. "*Very nice. I bought two pencils from him.*"

A.A. Grapevine — Oct. 1976

ARE YOU PLANNING TO MOVE?

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

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Cleveland, Ohio 44113

VOL. XLI-No. 6

OBEDIENCE TO THE UNWRITTEN LAW

We cannot always ignore or separate ourselves from **people** that drink and whose moral standards do not measure up to ours. This does not mean that we place ourselves on any higher pinnacle which some of us tried in the past. But most of us have to work with and are in daily contact with those whose ideals and standards do not measure up to ours and so we are put to test to ever guard and control our instincts to maintain our standards. We can all well recall what took place when we permitted our lower instincts to dominate our lives.

From the very beginning of the human race, man had to make laws and build institutions to confine and discipline people that could not control their lives. At the same time people built places of worship and centers of learning to help people spiritually and mentally to prepare themselves for a better life.

The mere fact of living imposes chores and responsibilities upon us. We are never free from the necessity of working, resting, nourishing our bodies and attending to the daily essentials of cleanliness and health.

Let us consider the obedience to the unenforceable. One cannot be forced to practice the Twelve Steps or the Twelve Traditions. And people cannot be forced to stop drinking or to join A.A. We cannot be forced to attend a certain amount of A.A. meetings or make a Twelve Step call in another person's behalf. There are no laws which force us to attend church services or to even worship God. After we become of age, we are regulated by statute to attend school for our own good. Yet, our sobriety depends on our obedience to the unwritten law of right conduct, even though there is no one to enforce it.

Honest obedience is important for sobriety and in the daily living with others. Honesty is the bedrock upon which character is built. Without honesty, virtue and love become a thing of flimsy passion. We must be honest so that it will sustain us in our dealings with others where the eyes of the law do not penetrate.

An honest, controlled life will carry us safely through this world of greed and brutal self-indulgence. The ultimate achievement of many sick alcoholics has resulted from their courageous battling to keep their lives under control. Every obstacle that confronts us is a challenge of effort, both physical and mental. Our honesty will be tested when we come face to face with temptation and will prove itself if we in daily practice are able to keep our instincts under control.

So life must be lived. The ultimate control of our lower instincts is of supreme importance, for it determines the direction of our journey and gives purpose and meaning to life.

Ed B. Akron, Ohio

A PICK ME UP

On our introduction to A.A. most of us feel an exhilaration due to the fact that here at last we have found the solution to our alcoholic problem.

This feeling does and may last for varying periods; with some, a few months, others a year or more, but unless we do something about our A.A., there is bound to be a time when a certain staleness creeps in.

The repetition of meetings begins to produce a little staleness and boredom. We have heard it all so often before; so and so is speaking tonight, and his story is so well known to us that we could tell it ourselves. We know this is true, but personal stories are directed at the NEWCOMERS, and once upon a time we were newcomers. But maybe this was a long, long time ago, and we have forgotten the state of hopelessness we were in.

We can for a time pull ourselves out of this staleness by a quick flashback to our drinking days. But there comes a time when after a year or two even this method loses its efficiency, and then we are on dangerous ground. We are ripe for those odd thoughts about A.A.; about our sobriety, about attending meetings. We required something stronger to really jerk us into facing the reality of our being an "alcoholic."

In our opinion, there is no finer means for doing this than TWELVE STEP WORK. GO AND FIND A DRUNK OF YOUR OWN.. .AND WORK WITH HIM OR HER. The worse he or she is the better for you. Give him or her A.A. but do not drive it down their throat or preach. Give the program of A.A. as it was given to you. Your own drinking story, told simply and sincerely, will sink in. It may not help the newcomer...but it will help you and your feeling of staleness will not last long.

WHO IS QUALIFIED TO DO TWELVE STEP WORK? We would say any member of A.A. who knows anything about recovery in A.A. The man or woman you are trying to help knows nothing about A.A., so, in comparison, the A.A. of only a few weeks has something to share. Believe...the benefits of TWELVE STEPPING has to be experienced to be believed.

You change places with the drunk and his plight brings you out of your staleness with a decided jolt and the phrase.. ."There but for the Grace of God" becomes a living thing.

The Voice
via Brighter Side



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Harry D., Founder and Editor 1892-1968

Vol. 41 March 1983 No. 6

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING
 TUESDAY, APRIL 5, 1983-8:00 P.M.
 OLD STONE CHURCH-PUBLIC SQUARE
 CLEVELAND, OHIO
 BE INFORMED-SEND YOUR GROUP
 REPRESENTATIVE TO THIS MEETING

THIRTY-SECOND ANNUAL
 INTER-GROUP DINNER • DANCE
 SATURDAY, MAY 7, 1983
 STATLER OFFICE TOWER-GRAND BALLROOM
 SWINGO'S AT THE STATLER
 E. 12TH AND EUCLID-CLEVELAND, OHIO
 TICKETS \$12.50 PER PERSON

LONER'S INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION
 UNIVERSITY OF AKRON
 JUNE 24TH, 25TH & 26TH, 1983
 MR. GEORGE M.
 3387 MEDINA, AVE.
 COLUMBUS, OHIO 43224

IN MEMORIAM

WALLY BROOKS, of Northfield Non-Smoking Group, passed away after a illness of several years. Our sympathy to the family.

ALEX MARCONA, a 43 year member of our fellowship and one of original "First One Hundred" members passed away January 29, 1983. His passing will leave a void in the hearts of those who knew him.

A drunk plopped into the seat next to a Priest on the bus, wreaking with gin and started reading a newspaper.

After a few minutes he turned to the Priest and asked, "Say, Father, what causes arthritis?"

The Priest figured this was his chance. "I'll tell you what causes arthritis, he said, "it's caused by loose living, to much alcohol, and contempt for your fellow man."

"Well, I'll be damned," the drunk mumbled.

The Priest thought about what he had said and felt he had come on too strong. He said, "I'm very sorry • I didn't mean to be so rude. "How long have you had arthritis?"

"Oh, I don't have arthritis," the drunk muttered, "I was just reading here that the Pope has it."

WILLINGNESS

A few weeks back, I was at a discussion Meeting when the topic of willingness was talked about. As we went around the room, I started to think just how much that this word meant to me, and how it affects our lives.

I had to realize that when I hit my bottom, I was willing to do something about this mess I had made over the past years. That had me to the decision that I had a drinking problem, and needed AA.

After arriving here, I still had to have a willingness to see what it was that AA and the fellowship had for me. I didn't fall right in with everything at first. I had to see just how hard I could make myself miserable while not drinking.

After about a year and a half, I had to muster up my willingness to start living this way of life the right way, and start growing and living the AA way, if I was to get better at accepting the things that were happening in my life. The good and well as the bad.

Today my willingness is a very important part of my program, for without willingness to grow in AA is the first sign of sliding back to the old way of life.

I am now ready and willing to do whatever anyone asks me to do within the confines of AA.

I have learned to accept things the way they are, and I have my God of my understanding. So, with God, AA, and the fellowship, I have my life back!

I know that I can spend the rest of my life here and never learn all there is to know about the disease of alcoholism or about the conflicts within AA.

I pray that with God and my willingness to grow, that I may keep sober one day at a time!

Mike M.
 FOSTORIA GRP.
 AAREANEWS
 TOEDO, OHIO

DEALING WITH DUAL ADDICTIONS

What with the progression of Dual Additions today, what we are best qualified to help others with is Not Alcoholism Only.

Besides "Drinking" their intoxicants our members are increasingly • Shooting • Popping • Sniffing • Mainlining • Window Paning there intoxicants • in 1955 we in A.A. adopted an "Oath of Responsibility • to wit • when anyone • anywhere reaches out for help I want the hand of AA to be there and for that I am responsible.

Remembering that we deal with alcohol cunning-baffling-powerful, it thus becomes necessary for me to recognize that I am not really qualified to help you deal with anyother intoxicant. But I am, thru the grace of God and working these 12 steps, at liberty to discuss the fact that if God as I understand Him, can change my personality flaws into those "absolutes" we sometimes talk about He can • if sought • relieve your other problems for you • if you are sincere.

Ed W. Gordon Square

"KEEP COMING BACK"

Hearing this so often at AA meetings, it has been my "Lifeline" for 8 years in and out of the program.

This simple phrase has kept me alive and trying to achieve and maintain sobriety.

With the fact of being hospitalized twice in 8 years, Rosary Hall & Brecksville VA. I now feel I have accepted that I am an alcoholic and the only way to recover is **TO WORK THE PROGRAM AND GO TO MEETINGS.**

It is with gratitude I thank all the AA's who sincerely welcomed me back and accept me once again into the program.

After a quarter of a century of consuming copious amounts of alcohol, I now know that I knew nothing about alcohol or alcoholism, but in the past 8 years I have learned quite a bit because of the patience and understanding of many people, and especially a few of my home group "Parma Saturday."

But knowledge alone will not keep you sober. I found I have to go to meetings and change my thinking and my life.

Being one of the fortunate ones, my family has been supportive in my treatment, my recovery (so far) and my attending AA meetings.

At present I am unemployed, but so are many in these hard times. With the strength of the program, I have been able to survive with sober thinking and even help others to realize its not the end of the world and to accept "the things we cannot change" and pray for a better tomorrow.

It is my humble belief, I have been "ransomed from the legion of the damned," (as Father John said in his book the ABC's of Addiction) for a purpose to help others and to achieve sobriety.

So to come back to AA after going out again has been made easier by the Grace of God and the wonderful persons in the AA fellowship.

The next time you hear these words at an AA meeting, don't think they are hollow words, they may save a life by inviting people to stay sober or bring them back again.

A recent column of Ann Landers said alcoholism is the No. 1 health problem of the United States and many countries of the world.

- This message was printed in the column:
- We drank for joy and became miserable
- We drank for sophistication and became argumentive
- We drank for friendship and made enemies
- We drank for sleep and awakened exhausted
- We drank for strength and felt weak
- We drank for exhilaration and ended up depressed
- We drank for "medicinal purposes" and aquired health problems
- We drank to calm down and ended up with the shakes
- We drank for confidence and became afraid
- We drank to diminish our problems and saw them multiply
- We drank to feel heavenly and felt like Hell
- We drank to cope with life and invited death!

Isn't it strange when we came back into AA the 1st step still was:

WE came to believe we were powerless over alcohol and our lives had become unmanageable. **KEEP COMING BACK.**

Pete K.
Parma Saturday

'KEEP COMING BACK

One important aspect of the AA program is Step Eleven, where we seek to learn our Higher Powers will for us and ask for the power to carry it out. Occasionally I hear the question, "How do we know if what we're doing is our Higher Powers will? I think all of us ask this question from time to time, wondering if we're headed in the right direction or not. For myself, I believe I've found a partial answer to this question.

A consequence of doing our Higher Power's will is that we end up doing what is right for us. In one of Jess Lair's books he talks about doing things in our lives that "fit like a glove." I believe that when I'm doing my Higher Powers will for me that circumstances "fit me like a glove." When I'm doing what's right for me it feels natural and comfortable and I have an inner conviction that I'm on the right track. Conversley, when I'm not doing what's right for me, it seems that an inner voice almost screams at me that I'm doing the wrong thing. So I contend that I can sometimes tell if I'm doing my Higher Power's will for me by how I feel and by listening to that inner voice.

I also find that if I'm doing my Higher Power's will for me that it is also the best thing in relation to other people in my life. It is a paradox, but when I seemingly selfishly do what is right for me. I make less of a **comotion** in other people's lives than I would if I made decisions based on their needs.

Sally M.
Pick-Me-Up
Wichita, KA

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DIPSOMANIA

I've been called a lot of things in my days as a practicing alcoholic. Including such derogatory terms as sot, drunk, **goddam** drunk, wino, tippler, boozier, lush, barfly and alky.

The thought crossed my mind recently that in my three years in this God-given fellowship I have not heard the word dipsomaniac to describe a qualifying alcoholic. Seems to me the word "**dipso**" was in common use during my teens in the early **1940s** to describe an alcoholic.

DIPSOMANIA is from the Greek, dipso-"thirst" and mania-"madness." the dictionary defines it as: a morbid and insatiable craving for alcohol, often of a paroxysmal (a sudden attack or intensification of the symptoms of a disease) character.

As early as **1843** the state of dipsomania was described thusly: a state which is called in law as frenzy or is regarded as a temporary form of insanity. I see **similiari**ty with this description and our second step.

In any event, we have come a long way since Bill W. and Dr. Bob founded AA in Akron in 1935.

Before AA there was no known successful treatment of our disease. Indeed, it wasn't until the early 1950s that the medical profession recognized alcoholism as a disease. And before AA alcoholics were sometimes sentenced to prison as felons upon being convicted as habitual drunkards.

Even more horrifying. Many alcoholics were banned to and warehoused in insane asylums.

Included in my daily meditation on my attitude of gratitude is the thought of how grateful I am for the first brave pioneers who, when they joined the fledgling AA group, admitted they were alcoholics.

In those days, almost 48 years ago, there existed a stigma, a fear of ostracism by society and employers if one admitted he was alcoholic.

Today I feel there is little shame connected with admitting our disease. But there is shame when we realize we have a problem and do nothing about it.

For too many years I denied I had a drinking problem. I resisted joining AA because I thought that to live life without liquor was to die. How wrong I was. Thank God. Life can be beautiful without liquor.

And to my way of thinking; if you feel you are serving penance or serving time (as in a court sentence) in AA- if you feel sorry you have to attend all those meetings-then, my friend, I'm afraid that you have not yet surrendered to this beautiful way of life.

Don B.

Abner Scott loved Sophie **Simson**, a spinster, but never had courage enough to propose because he was always overwhelmed with shyness whenever he met her. At last he determined to put his fate to the test and phone her.

"Miss **Simson**?"

"Miss **Simson** speaking."

"Er • will you marry me, Miss **Simson**?"

"Yes! Who is speaking?"

FEELING SOBER

Isn't it strange? It is socially acceptable for a man or woman to "fall around drunk," to "drink too heavily" or "get messy," but for that person to be a member of Alcoholics Anonymous can be totally unacceptable. What strange "animals" we human beings can **be!**

Oh, no, an **alcoholic** is the "down and out" drinking wine and such, and I'm above that person. My foolish pride.

When I came through the doors of A.A. two and a half years ago, it was a tremendous thing to know what was wrong with me, that I was NOT different and there was a solution; so right away, I got hope. A.A. made it simple for me again. All the things I suffered from were brought under the disease of alcoholism and there were many.

I had tried many ways to stop drinking but I could never stay stopped. But a day at a time was different. Again, the simplicity of A.A..

Getting sober was painful, sad, funny but very, very necessary for me. Through it all, I had the love of my sponsor whose patience and **tolerence** I sorely tried many, many times, and at times still do. But that is another beautiful part of my sober life.

My fellow members also gave me their time, love and understanding. Above all, I found God (as I understand Him) in the felowship of A.A., and in finding Him, I found myself.

And today, well, I'm still an alcoholic and always will be, but a mostly contented, sober one through my loving God, the program of A.A., constant meetings and the hard and soft love of sponsorship.

I am proud of my sobriety because my life stems from it. I am always willing to help if and when I can. This too, is very important because it was done for me. So, day by day, this very imperfect human being is learning to live but always with the love and guidance of God and the fellowship behind her.

"Things will happen beyond our wildest dreams." Believe it, if this idiot can get and stay sober, anyone **can!** My heartfelt thanks to God, my sponsor and the fellowship of A.A., without whom I wouldn't be here today.

ARE YOU PLANNING TO MOVE?

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

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It will help you and it will help us.



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VOL. XLI-No. 7

DISTRICT OFFICE CORNER

Thank you and congratulations! Our Fund Drive was conducted during the month of March - the goal was **\$90,000**. At the Victory Dinner held April 4th for the captains, co-captains and workers we were able to announce that through the efforts and dedication of the workers and the gratitude of our A.A. members - we had surpassed the goal - figure that night was \$101,000 plus..and not all returns are in. These, we must remember, are pledges - not money. At the end of the year we will know just how successful we have been in the payment of pledges. The exact figure will not be available until all posting is done at the office - then, after that time, it will appear on the **Financial** reports. Once again - thank you for coming through for us and allowing us the privilege of "keeping our doors open".

Now - something is troubling us and we feel we must speak out. We are very concerned over the lack of interest shown when our groups receive mail from the District Office. We have the feeling that it is not felt important enough to open - to read - and then to carry back to your groups. For instance, our A.A. District Office operation is carefully watched over by an Operating Committee made **up of** eleven A.A. members who are nominated and selected from various areas that the District Office covers. These members meet once a month from September through May for a period of three years and help formulate many plans and make decisions with respect to the operation of the Office - always with the concern of our A.A. Fellowship uppermost in their minds. Even though they do not hold meetings during the summer months, they are available year round for anything that might need their time and attention. Some members know about the Operating Committee and are acquainted with some of the members because they are approached at meetings, etc. to ask questions - but never seem quite interested enough to come down to the Advisory Committee meetings and get the answers. Our Advisory Committee meetings are held quarterly for the purpose of informing groups in our area of what is happening at the District Office. These meetings are presided over by the Operating Committee and they are prepared to answer any questions you might have. All groups are notified, by letter, that these meetings are being held - but no one comes. The January meeting is the meeting when the Intergroup Dinner tickets are placed on sale by the raffle method to insure fairness in the distribution of tables and this meeting usually brings members in because they want to make sure their group members have a good table. This year at the January meeting only 3.5 group representatives were present. Out of this number some came prepared to pur-

chase tables and others who did not have the money took tables out on consignment; then the March meeting of the Advisory Committee meeting should be very important because this is the Election meeting to replace members on the Operating Committee whose three year terms have expired - at this meeting a grand total of 23 members were in attendance. This year two members were being replaced and out of our District Office area that can boast of close to 500 A.A. groups and meetings a week - we think this is a sad disclosure! Is it apathy? We hope not. Are you concerned about what is going on at your District Office? We hope so. We hear from many with complaints, other matters where we are asked for advice, information, etc., questions about secretaries lists (complaints) but we never hear a word when something is done that is really constructive and benefits A.A. as a whole. Could it be that we are approaching our A.A. program with less zeal and with the shifting of action and activity to the "new member who needs to learn"? What about the "old member who needs to learn"? We feel justified in asking these questions because, very often, we are privately **approached** with suggestions by some who think we should do this or that thing so that A.A. could work better but when that invitation is extended to attend the special meetings - these people are never seen.

We also have the Central Committee meeting once a month - on the first Tuesday. This committee meets **12** months each year and it is this Committee that acts as guardian of A.A. Traditions. Suggestions and complaints pertaining to groups are aired at these meetings and sub committees are set up to handle specific matters that cannot be dealt with by the group conscience of the Committee.. **again**, every month each group receives an announcement and a copy of the minutes from the previous meeting. Unfortunately, attendance at this meeting is also very poor. Occasionally a subject is brought up, discussed and the meeting gets interesting. Once a question is answered - we do not see the **concerned** members again. Isn't this a sad commentary for A.A.? What if our co-founders had been as lax in our beginnings A.A. - how many of us would be able to stand up and say, "I am _____ a grateful, recovering alcoholic? THINK ABOUT IT.

Your Trusted Servants.

"AA WON'T OPEN THE GATES OF HEAVEN TO LET YOU IN, BUT - IT WILL OPEN THE GATES OF HELL TO LET YOU OUT!"



Published monthly by the Cleveland Central Committee of A.A., a non-profit fellowship dedicated to service. Address all letters to Central Bulletin, One Public Square, Mezzanine #6, Cleveland, Ohio 44113. Subscription price \$3.50 per Year.

Harry D., Founder and Editor 1892-1968

VOL. 41 April 1983 No. 7

**CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING
TUESDAY, MAY 3RD, 1983—8:00 P.M.
OLD STONE CHURCH-PUBLIC SQUARE
CLEVELAND, OHIO
BE INFORMED-SEND YOUR GROUP
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**G.S.R. THIRD LEGACY MEETING
MAY 15, 1983
ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH, ST. RTE 44&
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DELEGATES REPORT
GENERAL SERVICE
CONFERENCE IN N.Y.**

**LONER'S INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION
UNIVERSITY OF AKRON
JUNE 24TH, 25TH & 26TH, 1983
MR. GEORGE M.
3387 MEDINA, AVE.
COLUMBUS, OHIO 43224**

IN MEMORIAM

JIM NANK, Active old timer of Doan's Men's Group. Passed away while leading St. Albans Group. Our deepest sympathy to the family.

BOB SOMMERS. A fine member of the Fairview Group. Passed away recently. Our sympathy to the family.

THE GREATEST SERVICE we can do for another is to help him help himself. There is no better way to help one to help himself than to bring him to a knowledge of himself. There is no better way to bring one to a knowledge of himself than to lead him to a knowledge of the powers that are lying dormant within his soul.

RALPH WALDO TRINE

PHYSICAL-EMOTIONAL-SPIRITUAL

When I came into the fellowship it was taught that alcoholism is a spiritual, emotional and physical disease. The physical part was the closest one to death for me, so it was into the hospital, vitamin shots, and an open refrigerator. There was an important part of this program that I learned from the belly outward, and my aching muscles and fractured nerves understood the goodness of this way of living in a way so superior to my other faculties, that I began to pay some attention to the wisdom of the body. HALT, don't get too hungry, too angry, too lonely, or too tired, was the second greatest tool I got (after meetings). I was amazed at how many of my "unsolvable problems" disappeared when I stopped abusing brother body. "Profound" problems were dissolved by breakfast, and overpowering temptations for a drink disappeared after a drink of water. I found that normal appetites of my body, if denied, transferred themselves into a demand for alcohol.

When one has stuck around long enough to see how that single physical addiction to alcohol has affected almost every emotional and spiritual perception, one appreciates the link among body, soul and mind. And that is why this program treats the disease as physical, spiritual, and emotional. Yet after perhaps, an initial hospitalization, and HALT, rarely does one meet in the program a call for a complete physical inventory.

We alcoholics seem to suffer disproportionately from a number of physical disabilities that have a large effect on our emotional life. Problems with sugar are the most common, making us glum, or hyper, babbly or depressed depending. Again, chronic depressions have been diagnosed as physical-chemical defects totally controllable by treatment with non-intoxicating drugs.

A good AA physical, my sponser assures me, used to be a well recommended procedure. I should like to see a pamphlet on what comprises in light of all our present knowledge and experience, A good and complete AA physical for the well sobered up AA. In fact, the old timers I know seem to show a greater respect for beast body. Their meetings end with tables of pamphlets and lots of food. And whatever happened to the widely available vitamin shot?

Let's show some gratitude and appreciation for our physical rescue, and come up with a complete AA physical that we can generally recommend, and pay more attention to the good things of the body that have been given back to us by the grace of God through this program of His.

Al K.
Doan Mens

SIMPLE . . . BUT UNNATURAL

By Vic McM., Central Orlando Group

The Big Book tells us that **the** simple concept of making God the director of their lives was the keystone of the triumphal arch through which the early AA's passed to freedom. It is the keystone to my sobriety, too. But it goes against my nature. It is unnatural.

Another simple thing is the golf swing. The entire difference between a tournament winner's results and those of the worst golfer lies in the last six inches of slubhead motion before hitting the ball. **And yet it is a difficult sport, demanding constant practice and inventory even for the experts.** Arnold Palmer says that it is a hard game because "the golf swing is unnatural."

Maybe that's why A.A. is so simple and yet so hard for me. It is simple to make a decision to turn my will and my life over to God. Maybe it is so hard to actually do because for me at least it's an unnatural thing for me to do. I want to take control. I "know" I can do it better with my will. Sure, that's alcoholic thinking because I know in my mind it won't work for me . . . **BUT I am stubborn.**

Maybe AA is like golf in another way, too. I cannot keep my sobriety unless I work at it by practicing every day, and taking inventory repeatedly, and learning things I thought I already knew. Like golf, it's hard, but the results are worth it. The quality of my A.A. life is better than any tournament prize.

The day after a sedate schoolteacher bought a second-hand sedan, she drove it back to the dealer's yard.

"What's wrong?" asked the dealer anxiously.

"Nothing at all," said the teacher sweetly. "I just want to return these things for the dear, little, old lady you told me owned the car before you sold it to **me**. She left this plug of tobacco in the glove compartment, and this half-empty bottle of gin under the seat!"

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NEWCOMERS DO HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY

"For the newcomers," the 'old timer' with **all** of eight months of sobriety thupdered, "I'd like to tell you what was told me by my sponsor; in your first few months of sobriety, just shut up and listen."

I remembered hearing that in my early days of sobriety and I winced. I remember looking through all the A.A. literature to try to find out where this piece of folk wisdom originated, and not finding it — certainly not in the Big Book or 12 and 12.

I am not attempting to deny anyone the privilege of interpreting this program in whatever way he or she wishes, so long as it helps them keep sober. I only wish to go on record as saying that, for me, that particular order, "shut up and listen," makes me uncomfortable.

Why?

We are told newcomers are the life blood of our program. No one I've ever met argues with that. We are additionally told the reason for that statement is that listening to newcomers we are reminded where we came from and how easy it might be to return. Therefore, we are grateful to newcomers for this reminder, which has saved more than one member's sobriety over the years. Mine included.

This, then, is the question that puzzles me. How are you going to listen to the newcomer and receive his often valuable message if he is told to shut up? Will we perceive it from the expression of his face? Or from his body language as he hunches down in his chair?

I understand there are newcomers - and I have heard them - who because of a need for approval or attention seem to find it necessary to pop off on every possible occasion at discussion meetings. My experience, however, is that the majority of newcomers, maybe 19 out of 20, are so confused, so shaky, so overwhelmed by this new experience, they are reluctant or too shy to speak unless pressed. And for that one out of 20 loquacious newcomer, there is usually an older member who will take him aside after hearing his fourth monologue and say, "Don't you think it might be a good idea for you to just listen? It's what I had to learn to do."

In my opinion - and maybe mine alone - newcomers should be **encouraged** to speak up, to ask the questions that are confusing or bothering them either at meetings or of their new friends or sponsor. The answers are certainly there, and most A.A. members are happy to give them.

But, you can't answer questions that aren't being asked because the newcomer has been told to shut up. That way, I feel, we all lose.

(Ben I., Studio City, in the October, 1981
Hello, Central. .)

JUST A THOUGHT. ...A.A. IS MEANT TO BE BREAD FOR DAILY USE, NOT CAKE FOR SPECIAL OCCASIONS.

PERSONALITIES BEFORE PRINCIPLES

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

This is A.A., the principals we exist by are those set out in our 12 Steps and 12 Traditions. The foundation on which A.A. was formed (and exists today) was for the alcoholic. This is our footing and our roots, to change this would destroy what A.A. is and has stood for all these years.

We cannot make A.A. something it is not. It would be like trying to make a Ford into a Rolls Royce. Granted it would be nice, but you either have a Ford or you have a Rolls. The same is true with A.A. It would be nice to make A.A. cover all drugs, but it cannot, for then it would not be A.A.

It may well be the time or the dawning of a new fellowship, one that would intake all chemical addictions. With the use of **A.A.'s** 12 Steps and 12 Traditions, followed by Unity and Service, it would succeed. Perhaps this is a new and growing need. For more and more are now dual-dependent and cannot find the fellowship in A.A. that they need.

We cannot change that, that is, yet it is possible to take what works and make anew, using the old as a pattern (guide) to construct a modern design.

This may well be your purpose, for we all have one, if it is yours, then do it.

"Chemical Depended Anonymous" or C.D.A. For there are many chemical depended people, united you can build that Rolls Royce, making that dream into a reality.

One thing I can say for certain, A.A. will not and cannot change. Therefore, it is up to those who are looking, wanting or needing such a program or fellowship to create it. The tools are here, the **program** is here, all that is needed are the people, the fellowship (unity).

This can be the only answer to our controversy. We all know the need exists, and I do believe it is time to act. It is time to gather and form that fellowship, that so many believe in, yet have lacked the direction they have needed.

There is but one direction for A.A., therefore there is but one direction for a Chemical Dependency Program. It must be created.

"God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference."

Paul M.-contributor
Beaver Lake Group

A speeding motorist was stopped by a police officer. "I'm a good friend of the mayor," pleaded the speeder. "That's great," said the officer as he wrote out the ticket. "Now he'll know I'm on the job."

WHAT IS GRATITUDE?

Gratitude is often referred to in AA circles as a most important word. Without gratitude, we cannot hope either to give or receive the healing power that is to be had in AA.

Of all the gifts of AA, gratitude is the most precious and, by probably for some people the most elusive, the least understood and the easiest to lose.

Once after a careful realignment of our lives into the AA way of life, gratitude comes very naturally for most of us - it becomes habit and we like it. To begin with, however, we must look for and recognize these good things that are happening.

The Higher Power does not ask great deeds but rather self-surrender and gratitude. Let us not get the feeling that we ourselves are our own virtues, start bragging about our own length of sobriety, etc. Neither should we get the feeling that we have paid our debts, both temporal and spiritual. If this happens I am afraid we are on our way to being ungrateful. Our prayers will no longer seem to have meaning, the old fears will be returning, and you know the rest of that story.

How can we show our gratitude in **AA**?

- By thanking the Higher Power for AA.
- By attending AA functions.
- By carrying the message to those who still suffer.
- By living the AA way of life.

I once read a story about an old Zen Master when asked if sending his students into the streets to beg was to teach them humility. "Oh no," he said, "it is to teach them the joy of gratitude and to give pleasure to those who give."

Silver Dollar

SOBRIETY is the most important thing in your life without exception. You may believe your job, or your home life, or one of many other things comes first. But consider, if you do not get sober and stay sober, chances are you won't have a job, a family, sanity, or even life. If you are convinced that everything in life depends on your sobriety, you have so much more chance of getting sober and staying sober. If you put other things first you are only hurting your chances.

(from CHIT CHAT FARMS)

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VOL. XLI-No. 8

LEARNING HOW TO FAIL.. .

I always tried my best. I was taught by school and church to seek perfection..I tried and I tried but I could not live up to my expectations. So I turned to alcohol in my despair. I kept climbing the mountain, falling off the heights, and then drowning myself in alcohol.. .

Now in AA, I have learned it is OK to fail. I don't fear rejection because my comments are scrambled. I accept the fact that I can't please everybody...Only God is perfect.. . that some people are going to dislike me and my efforts. People can laugh at me and I can join them in clowning if I know their intentions are well meant. I still get tense when I lead an AA meeting but I know there is acceptance and understanding in the group. The important thing is to try.. .

HIGHER POWER.. .

The Twelve Steps teach us to accept a Higher Power.. . AA is not a religious Program as is stated in the Big Book in the Forwards. Then why?? Because the chronic alcoholic plays God. He has rejected everything and everybody in the necessity to maintain his habit...He has built walls around himself/herself to justify his alcoholic actions, his lying, his stealing. He denies conformity, sociability and even his disease of alcoholism after he has been forced to become aware of his problem. He will accept the possibility of insanity rather than acknowledge a drinking problem. Because his drinking compulsion makes him continue.. .

Jung a psychiatrist, the Father of group therapy, studied world cultures. He found that civilizations and cultures from the beginning of time always had a Higher Power. And when they lost their God, they lost their civilization. Jung's thesis was that man is thus genetically coded to have a Higher Power. And when man rejects that HP, he/she become mentally unwell.

The drinking alcoholic becomes very paranoid. He feels people and the family are against him, are out to get him are following him. (This is also real. The cops are for real to get us off the highways.) One cannot be very paranoid without assuming extreme importance. Self importance.. .The sick alcoholic is still struggling in a survival battle of/for self worth...He thinks he is a great writer, actor, inventor, etc. who the world does not appreciate.. .So, on sobering up, the AA must reject his grandiosity, his big shot ways and thinking.. .must accept himself for what he is and ask humbly for others to accept him also. He must accept a HP - a power greater than himself.

Ralph W.

ROAD TO HAPPY DESTINY

In the April issue of the CENTRAL BULLETIN Paul M., of the Beaver Lake Group expressed some thoughts that are very disturbing. Paul M. would have all those with a dual or multiple chemical **dependancy** form a new organization (he suggests "Chemical Depended (sic) Anonymous" or C.D.A.). How this would differ in any respect from Narcotics Anonymous he does not explain. He does however suggest that A.A. represents a excellent model for the new organization, a point that is hardly arguable.

What is disturbing is the fact that Paul M. and many good **A.A.'s** like him are apparently blind to the fact that A.A. has been saving and salvaging the lives of dual dependents for years. For starters: how about one of our Founders, Doctor Bob? (ref. 'Doctor Bob and the Good Old Timers', pg. 32)

My own life is one that can be counted as having been saved by A.A. and I arrived at the doors of A.A. something over eight years ago with addictions to alcohol and other substances. Am I now to depart the Fellowship because I became hooked upon substances other than ethanol? Am I to be told that my participation in a continuing program of recovery and growth must be in another completely independent organization? I hope not. This Fellowship has served me well and I have done my best to respond in kind.

Today perhaps more than half of those entering our **Pro**-gram have addictions to more than one chemical substance, the incidence is higher than this in the younger age groups. I look about me at meetings and see many in these rooms who share this experience with me. Some really never did get too far into alcohol - but they would have and the Third Tradition still stands.

Finally I must take issue with Paul **M.'s** statement, "A.A. will not and cannot change;" It has changed and will continue to change. Indeed the only thing that can be counted upon as unailing in this universe is change. A.A. has undergone many changes in 48 years. It has survived them all and prospered. We have found that A.A. is not the answer to all problems. Each prospective member must make his or her own determination. N.A. is the answer for some. But in the Greater Cleveland area it has been A.A. that has proven to be the salvation of countless suffering souls with multiple addictions. I for one will not leave or ask another to leave, neither will I deny or even discourage those who seek to find out if this God-given Fellowship represents their salvation too. It is my own firm belief that God is showing us the "road to happy destiny".

Cole F.
Edgelake Group

WHY NOT USE THE CENTRAL BULLETIN AS A RAFFLE PRIZE AT YOUR GROUP. ALSO FOR PERSONS SOBRIETY ANNIVERSARY.

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Harry D., Founder and Editor 1892-1968

VOL. 41

May 1983

No. 8

DISTRICT OFFICE CORNER

Since the Comer took a complete page last month, we will try to go a little easier this time and give someone else a chance...all members are reminded in all of the Central Bulletin minutes that they can submit articles for the Bulletin and perhaps in that way we can furnish a Bulletin that does not need to borrow from other parts of our country!

We have had a few questions reach us about groups that think we are letting them down and passing them by with 12 step calls..we are not..it is funny but some groups have a long dry spell and then suddenly are hit with so many that they are hard to handle. Calls for help come to us in strange patterns for instance, we might have a few days when Lakewood and Euclid are calling - seems all the drunks are there at a given time and then it might be Strongsville and Walton Hills, get the picture? Even the way the calls come to us are baffling! One thing your group might take into consideration, and we have mentioned this before, does your group secretary have a phone? Is your Secretary available to take calls during the day at home or at work? Do you have a spouse or another responsible person at home to take messages on calls for help when you are not there? In these days when all members of the family are working, in school, etc. we suggest that, if this is the case, you might ask another member of your group who is at home all day to accept calls for you and then you could check with them for any messages when you do return home. If we get a call during office hours we try to have that call turned over to some group before we leave the office..if the caller is from your group's area and no one can be reached we must try the next nearest group and so on.

By the way wasn't the Intergroup Dinner great??? There were a few minor inconveniences but with our ability to "accept the things we cannot change" - we all had a good time and hope all who attended liked it enough to return next year.

YOUR TRUSTED SERVANTS.

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IN MEMORIAM

ED POWELL, Active member for 20 years, Home Group J&L. Passed away. Our sympathy to the family.

HAROLD CAMTANARA, Former secretary of West Side Midnight with 7 years of sobriety. Passed away recently. Condolences to the family.

WILLIAM ADAMS, Passed away May 14, 1983. Member of Saharad Social Center. Sympathy to the family.

OLIVER PEARSON, Member of Day At A Time & V.A. Groups passed away after years of sobriety. Sympathy to the family.

SHIRLEY SUSEVICH, a 26-year member from Ashtabula, Delegate to the General Service Conference 1971-1972, died April 5. Survived by her children.

GENEVIEVE DOWNES, 25 year active member Westside Women, passed away May 14, 1983. Our condolences to the family.

BIG BOOK SAYS IT ALL!

Dear Editor:

I just read the February 1983 "Lifeline". Yes, you are right. I have been in the program and fellowship for 5 years. Been to many meetings and met lots of people. The Big Book says it all.

Now in the '80's people want to change A.A. to fit their needs. A.A. has one goal and that is to help people stay sober and have sobriety.

People have drug problems and other things. But the name of the game is I am an ALCOHOLIC. The program works and people make it work.

Loren V.-contributor
 John White Bear Lake

ALWAYS . CAREFUL . To . INVESTIGATE . OTHERS'S . NEEDS

JUST AS NO ONE CAN

Sneeze for you
 make love for you
 blow your nose for you
 cough for you
 breathe for you

No one can work YOUR A.A. program for you. A.A. is truly a **DO-IT-YOURSELF** program.

Remember, any way YOU apply A.A. principles to your life, no matter what anyone says, if you are staying away from that first drink, you are working the program - 100 per cent correctly for you.

We learn a lot by attending A.A. meetings, we are able to exchange thoughts and ideas with our friends, talk about the **12 Steps**, but in the last analysis, it is up to the individual concerned to apply what we learn to OUR OWN WAY OF LIFE.

We didn't join A.A. to become intelligent - to go beyond - to rise above - to gather untold monetary wealth - to become socialites - to lecture - or - to educate.

When we came to A.A. we were looking for an escape hatch from beyond. We were trying to save your own lives. If we are still sober today - WE GOT THE MESSAGE. Our primary purpose is to carry the message (after we get it) to those who still suffer. (Take a peek at Step **12** and Tradition **5**).

(Intercounty Fellowship of A.A.
 S.F. Calif)

How about the Swede who noticed the sign, "Wet Pavement." So he did.

Sandy **McTavish**, a true and thrifty Scotchman, in a burst of generosity, decided to give his wife a mink set for her birthday: a trap and a **rifle!**

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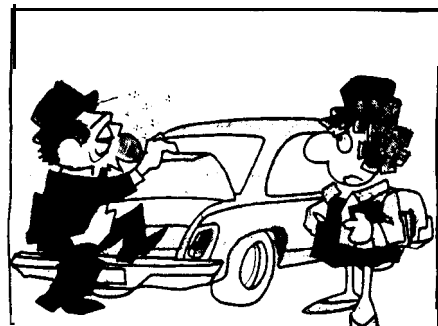
"If you have nothing better to do, would you come home and have a **cuppa** with me?" asked a member one night. **He** was one of the quiet type who don't speak at meetings, but always comes to them; and he had been with us for about six months. When we got settled down he remarked, "I expect I'm a bad member, but I simply can't stand to speak in public; but I do like going to the meetings and listening to the others talking about themselves. It's a queer thing, but in all I've heard, I haven't heard anyone say he joined for the same reason I did. I joined A.A. because a friend apologized for something he had said to me." I made **suitable** noises of surprise 2nd encouragement and he continued. . . .

"It was just about a week before I came along; I was drinking hard 2nd flat broke. I thought my last hope of raising the wind **was** 2 man called Fred. He'd always stuck by me and he **was** well off. . . he wouldn't miss what he gave me. So, I went along to his office and asked his secretary if I could see him. She rang through and I could tell there **was** some reluctance in his answer. However, he told her I could come in for just two minutes. I went in and started the well-known, hard-luck story, but he cut me short. He said he was sick and tired of being annoyed by me. I had never been any good and never would be. He was giving orders that I was not to be let in again, either at his office or his home. He said this was the last time, he hoped he would have to see me. He gave me two pounds and 2 word of advice. His advice was to get as drunk as I could on the two pounds, pluck up my courage and go throw myself in the Liffey. And then he said..."Get Out." I was groping for the door when he called me back. He said, "I'm sorry, I shouldn't have said that to anyone, not even 2 dog. But, it is still Goodbye."

Yes, I drank up that two pounds **alright**, though I didn't have the guts to drown myself. But I kept thinking of that remark of **his**... "not even to 2 dog." I think that was the first time I had ever looked at myself from the outside. A couple of days later, I read about A.A. in the Evening Mail, and I thought I'd come along to see what the sub-humans looked like. I've been with you ever since. Funny thing is that Fred has asked me home to lunch next Sunday."

He gazed into the fire and the past and absent-mindedly asked me, "What's yours?" "The same again," I said, passing up my cup.

From the Road Back, June 1953



"IF I'M SOBER ENOUGH TO UNLOCK THE CAR AND GET IN I'M SOBER ENOUGH TO DRIVE!"

KEEP THE LINES OPEN

In our drinking days we tried to solve all our problems with the bottle. When life seemed to hand us a bad deal, something we could not change, we ran to the nearest bar and failing to get help there, we went home in an ugly mood and took out our frustrations on family members. We made life miserable for those who tried to help us and used them as objects to be exploited for our own benefit.

The battle with the bottle went on and on and some of us really took a beating before we admitted that we could not win the fight along and finally asked for help. The very sad part in all this was that so many good people had to suffer because of us.

Many things we cannot change now, but we can and should make amends to those we have harmed. We should set free those who love us from those prison cells of isolation, where they took refuge to escape from all the embarrassment we brought upon them. We should strive to bring peace and happiness into their lives, and how to deal with life's **disap-**pointments and failures without blaming it on others.

Our first and primary purpose is to stay sober and accept ourselves as human beings with limitations and defects. We must accept too, that our sobriety does not guarantee us health, wealth and a continuous road to peace and happiness. Every worthwhile life has trials, reversals and at times burning heartaches, but we can come on stronger in spirit, everytime we pass through the gates of sorrow.

We know in A.A. that we have no rules or laws. We have however, the Commandments of God which He gave to the world as regulations to govern our lives. Down through the centuries people have tried to change God's Commandments to suit their own moral standards of living but in the end, they destroyed themselves.

During our **drinking** days we broke all of God's laws and as a result, we lost complete control of our lives. We disregarded all the moral, civil, and social laws and in the end, we lost our self-respect. We had no concern for others, living only for the appeal of the present, finding many doors closed to us.

Now, as sober alcoholics, we have the choice to turn our will and lives over to the care of God and follow His Commandments. This is not an indication that we are weaklings. No person can live in peace and contentment when he will not accept the help of God and the help of others. The philosophy of going it alone is not sufficient enough to fulfill the needs of man's soul.

Prayer is a vitamin for the soul. Just as important as the vitamins we take to replenish the vital substances that are essential for our physical well being. Our soul needs nourishment for much of the turmoil in daily living is due to the breakdown in our communication with God. We have now the choice to repair those broken lines of communication and keep in daily touch with God. Unless these lines are kept open, man will flounder in helpless bewilderment.

Ed B. Akron, Ohio

The doctor came out of the bedroom and said to the anxious wife. "Frankly I don't like the way your husband looks at all."

"I don't either, **Doc,**" the wife replied, "but he's nice to the kids."

GOOD SUGGESTION

A very shocking telephone call was received at the Central Office recently. The pastor of a church in which one of our groups meets called and gave **the** group 30 days in which to get out. He said we left his church in a mess everytime we used it, also other unfavorable actions.

My beloved Alcoholics Anonymous! How could anyone permit criticism to fall on AA?

Certainly you and I know this was not typical Alcoholics Anonymous. We know it, but the minister does not know it. If he never before had an opinion of recovered alcoholics or AA members, he has one now, Our sponsors have so often told us, 'You may be the only copy of the Big Book that someone else will ever read.'

The first part of our Eleventh Tradition reads: "Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion..." If we are going to attract people, then we must be attractive to people.

This is not the first call our Central Office has received regarding these conditions. We pray it will be the last.

(Reprinted from the 1981 Reporter at the request of Chairwoman Ann W. **Lee** D. was WAIA Chairman at the time).

How about your group being a pioneer in promoting clean air and clean lungs?

Be a good sport and open a window or crack a door during your meeting. Quite often the meeting room is filled with people and smoke, and no circulation of fresh air. Recently, I attended a crowded Open Speakers meeting-the room was heavy with **cigarette** smoke, and all windows closed tight.

There are people in our midst who have difficulty inhaling smoke, yet are reluctant to speak up for fear of criticism. However, we should take more of a lead role to see that all members are as comfortable as possible, whether they are smokers or non-smokers.

Another idea is to designate a section (or a few chairs in an area) as reserved for non-smokers. This may not be as convenient in some meetings as it is in others, but if we try hard enough, something can be done.

So, let's do our part to try and make all members comfortable in our meetings.

-Yours in love and service, a member

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VOL. XLI-No. 9

TRASH!

I watched a rather disveled man move furtively toward a trash can, looking about to see if anyone was watching. He hastily pushed back the **swinging** lid and dug around in the can. He became so involved in his search that he completely disregarded any onlookers. Every few seconds he would bring out an object that he deemed worthy of saving.

This puts me to wondering how many of us searched in trash in our lifetime? Not the trash cans along the street ■ we were too sophisticated for that ■ but the trash cans on different levels of life. We do find what we look for in life. The cheap and tawdry things of life are always there if that is what we are looking for, but there are also the fine and the beautiful.

The man at the trash can found what he was looking for -TRASH. You can always find it if you seek it. You can also find the better and good things in life, if you but search for them. When you discover the best things in folks, they will love you for it. But bring out the worst in them and they may despise you. Life is largely made up of what we seek and whatever we look for, we can usually find, which will determine our pattern in life.

Akron Inter-Group News ■ Anonymous

A VISION FOR YOU

Our book is meant to be suggestive only.

We realize we know only a little.

God will constantly disclose more to you and to us.

Ask Him in your morning meditation what you can do each day for the man who is still sick.

The answers will come, if your own house is in order

But obviously you cannot transmit something you haven't got.

See to it that your relationship with Him is right, and great events will come to pass for you and countless others.

This is the great fact for us.

Abandon yourself to God as you understand God.

Admit your faults to Him and to your fellows.

Clear away the wreckage of your past.

Give freely of what you find and join us.

We shall be with you in the fellowship of the Spirit.

and you will surely meet some of us as you trudge the road of happy destiny.

May God bless you and keep you ■ until then.

"Alcoholics Anonymous"

(Pg. 164)

HAPPY BIRTHDAY ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

Alcoholics Anonymous was 48 years old on June 10, 1983. Footsteps would like to suggest that it would be a great idea if all A.A. groups in our area set aside their meeting or a part of their meeting during that week in June and celebrate **A.A.'s** birthday in some special way!

We as individuals in A.A. can also set aside some time in our daily meditation during that week to thank our Higher Powers for Alcoholics Anonymous and to say an extra prayer for those alcoholics who have not yet found the A.A. way of life.

It all started in May 1935 when the first two alcoholics of our fellowship came together in Akron, Ohio. The day of Dr. Bobs last drink was set aside as **A.A.'s** birthday ■ June 10, 1935. From those first members of our fellowship in 1935, we have grown to well over **1,000,000** active members today.

IT WORKS.

"... **It** was five years **ago** I first met, you, Bill... I shall **never** forget, nor cease to be **grateful**."

DR. BOB

"*Simplicity, devotion, steadfastness, and loyalty; these were the hallmarks Of Dr. Bob's character which he has well implanted in so many Of US.*

BILL

WE ARE RESPONSIBLE!

Some of us, sometimes, are fearful of the future. We fear this development or that problem may destroy us. Fear not, my friend.

If this Fellowship ever falters, it won't be because of **AAs** working as professionals in the field, nor '**Rand-type**' reports, **NOT** members with other problems.

It will simply be because of **US**-because we can't control our own egos, not get along well enough with each other, because we're not just wise enough nor good enough to hold this thing together, because we think too much about our "rights" and too little about our obligations and responsibilities.

But don't think we are going to fall apart. We'll stick together and make A.A. strong.

San Francisco
A.A. Newsletter



Published monthly by the Cleveland Central Committee of A.A., a non-profit fellowship dedicated to service. Address all letters to Central Bulletin, One Public Square, Mezzanine #6, Cleveland, Ohio 44113. Subscription price • \$3.50 per Year.

Harry D.. Founder and Editor 1892-1968

Vol. 41

June 1983

No. 9

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING
TUESDAY, JULY 5, 1983 — 8:00 P.M.
OLD STONE CHURCH-PUBLIC SQUARE
CLEVELAND, OHIO
BE **INFORMED**—SEND YOUR GROUP
REPRESENTATIVE TO THIS MEETING

27th OHIO STATE CONFERENCE
8th FIVE STATE EAST CENTRAL
REGIONAL CONFERENCE
JULY 22-23-24, 1983
CINCINNATI MARRIOTT INN
CINCINNATI, OHIO

IN MEMORIAM

VIRGINA "GINNY" C. HALLMAN, Died June 3, 1983 in a motor vehicle accident in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Ginny was 64 years of age and had been sober for 32 years. She was Delegate from Southern Wisconsin to the General Service Conference 1973-1974, and was General Service Trustee from the Central Region of Alcoholics Anonymous 1977-1981. A warm-hearted, dedicated, tireless member of the Fellowship, she was well-known to many, many members in Northeast Ohio and elsewhere. Her death will be acutely felt by all who knew-her.

KRISTAN (RED) HANSEN, active oldtimer of the Geo. Gardner Group, passed away. Our sympathy to the family.

TOM CUMMINGS, co-founder of West 25th Street Group, passed away June 11, 1983, at Blaine Medical Center, Hailey, Iowa. Our condolences to the family.

AND YOU DON'T DRINK

THE PAIN is worse than you can ever remember. You look up and say the Serenity Prayer, and nothing happens. You pace the floor and then sit down and light a cigarette and then get up and fix another cup of coffee and then take a deep breath and wait.

"This, too, will pass" is like a scratched record in your brain, and you wonder: When? And you don't drink.

You drive and turn the radio up loud to drown out the thoughts, then stop to look over the city from the hill. You cry, and you hurt.

Each day after each sleepless night, you ask, "Is this the day, God? Is this the day when it will be over?" And each

COMPLACENCY

A.A. offered me a better way of life. It set down guidelines which were guaranteed to work if I did. Working consisted of applying the tools and principles of the program to help me in my recovery.

I never fully recover, but I am assured of arresting my disease provided I work the Twelve Suggested Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous.

During my first recovery period, I was told by my sponsor, "Don't drink, read the Big Book and go to meetings." I was strongly advised by all the winners in the program, the care unit, and the Big Book to work the Steps.

My ideas on working the Steps were vague, so I began attending Step meetings. There the Steps were covered, one through twelve, on a weekly basis. It became clear how to work them and I proceeded to do so. And as promised, my life got better.

After a period of time (two years), I grew complacent. I didn't drink, I read the Big Book and I went to meetings. But somewhere between the 8th and 9th Steps, I quit working the Steps. After six dry months I was unable to resist the first drink.

I am strongly convinced that A.A. is a spiritual program. With A.A. I can build a spiritual foundation which can be the basis of a total spiritual recovery and way of life.

The Steps are available to help me construct that foundation. Not working them, I was sure to relapse. Evidently I was spiritually bankrupt and was once again relying on my will and way to keep me sober. I took the program for granted, expecting it to work without me doing the necessary leg work.

Now I know I have to watch for complacency, work the Steps vigorously twenty-four hours at a time, one Step at a time for the remaining period of my recovery, which is the rest of my life. And by the grace of God, I'll never take anything worth having for granted.

Bev. F.
Footsteps
Cincinnati

Two Indians were having their first look at water skiing. Asked one. "Why boat go so fast?" Said the other, "Lunatic on string chase 'em."

day, it isn't.

You stay in when it rains. You stay in when the sun shines. You don't notice the difference. Food doesn't go down. You go to meetings.

You cover up, and you smile and ache. You call a friend, and it doesn't help. You feel as if you will explode if you do not unload on someone, and then you finally do. It brings a little relief. And you don't drink.

You say the Serenity Prayer ten times with closed eyes and clenched fists and smoke some more. You beat the pillow with your fists, look at the clock, and know you have made it through one more day, one minute at a time. You hurt some more.

Then the day comes. You open the door, and the sun is shining and warm. You see the trees. And you say, "Is this the day, God?" And it is.

-----GRAPEVINE

ALWAYS • CAREFUL • To • INVESTIGATE • OTHERS • NEEDS

THANKS FOR THE MESSAGE!!

Alone and afraid, I found myself standing on the edge of Insanity. Why had I failed so often? Why couldn't I stop destroying myself?? My life had no meaning-I was just along for the ride. **What** was wrong with me? Were there any answers? Could I be helped? Was there HOPE?

Someone thought so 10 months ago when I called the Central Off. of A.A. An understanding voice took my name and number and contacted someone to call me. I was scared to death and hurting deeply, but the fact that someone else was willing to reach out seemed to help.

That one phone call has made a lot of difference in my life today. I was fortunate enough to be introduced to people who worked a tough, strong program-and they proceeded to try and teach me whatever I was capable of and willing to learn. I didn't like that at all - this was no fun! !! But I've stuck around and things have begun to get a little better. Not easier, though-I still have mountains of work to do on me, Because when I entered through those doors I had no idea what was going on. I had never related my inner turmoil to ALCOHOL. I didn't know what an Alcoholic was. Today I'm beginning to accept myself as one.

There has been joy in my life these past 10 months, too. The guy who made that 12 step call became my sponsor, and is one of my best friends. I'm learning to make decisions and accept responsibility. I feel **healthier**-inside and out. I'm growing, and sharing and caring. I attended the state conference and New Year's Eve dance and enjoyed them both. I'm beginning to get active and involved in the program and am finding out many avenues to learn and grow-to carry the message. And, always will I thank God that someone was there at Central Off. to share the message when I needed it.

Leonard S.
Young People

Every hunting season some accidents happen because both the hunter and the gun are loaded.

Be a Bulletin Booster

AA CENTRAL BULLETIN	
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ALCOHOL ALWAYS 'LIED' TO ME

(Alcohol is the greatest liar we have ever known. If we need proof of that, think back on the reasons you gave yourself when you drank . . . and compare them with the reality.)

I drank for courage . . .and woke up night after night terrified.

I drank for sophistication . . . and became crude.

I drank to find peace . . .and ignited a war within myself.

I drank to be friendly . . .and became argumentative and nasty.

I drank to be sexy . . .and turned people off.

I drank so I could relate to people . . . and I babbled.

I drank to put down loneliness . . . and found myself retreating more and more into my shell.

I drank to relax . . . and woke up tense.

I drank to be entertaining . . . and became an obnoxious clown.

I drank to live more fully . . . and contemplated suicide.

I drank for adventure . . . and discovered disaster.

I drank to be more honest . . . and insulted my friends.

I drank to quiet my nerves . . . and woke up with hangover jangles.

I drank to feel better . . . and ended up sick and throwing up.

I drank to have fun . . .and passed out in the middle of the party.

I drank to pep myself up . . . and ended up totally exhausted.

I drank to feel successful . . . a big shot . . . and ended up feeling a complete failure.

I drank for security . . . and became afraid of my shadow.

I drank to feel better about myself . . . and ended up hating me.

I drank to prove I could handle alcohol . . . and ended up knowing it controlled me.

A friend said: "But surely now that you've been sober a while it would take **alot** of alcohol to put you back in that condition?"

"Just one drink:" I answered.

Benl

Reprinted from Los Angeles "Hello, Central . . ."

VOICE FROM THE CORN

"I'm made to be eaten . . .not to be drank, To be threshed in a barn, not soaked in a tank. — I come as a blessing when put in a mill, — But a blight and a **curse** when brewed in a still. — Make up into loaves your **children** are fed, — But made into a drink, I'll starve them instead. — In bread I'm a blessing, as all of you rule, — In drink I'm a master (the drinker's a fool!) — Remember my warning! My power I'll employ, — If eaten, to strengthen; if drank, to destroy:

FROM A RIPPLE TO A WAVE

When a pebble is cast into a pond, it starts undulations on the **water's** surface, creating a circle of ripples that eventually reach the shore. So it was when two men cast their lot upon the waters of hope to find the answer that would enable those addicted with alcoholism, and who had reached those dark shores of despair, to once again be restored to sanity and the normal life.

At first, the ripples caused by these two men created but little interest. Two men that could not be trusted with any responsibility; two men that had never met before; two men with a **drinking** problem but with different personalities, but, two men who understood each other's problem. These two men were chosen from among inillions of alcoholics to demonstrate His redeeming qualities and power, that would permit frustrated and troubled men to live again.

For ages the alcoholic was considered a derelict, an out-cast, a menace to society. A stigma was attached to him and his family by nondrinkers as well as the social drinker (though their conduct was on the same level when they overly imbibed.) Doors were closed to that person that had lost control and was powerless over alcohol. Too, they did not fit into the pattern of daily living and often the family would attempt to hide their addiction out of shame.

He was prayed over by the family minister, cussed out by his friends and neighbors, cried over by wife and mother, **threatened** and lectured by judges and locked up by the police, But all of this had no effect on his **drinking**. It seemed that one so addicted, could never recover, but by the grace of God and the efforts of these two men this came about.

Confronted with this baffling disease, the two men were aware what a difficult task lay before them, to prove that the sick individual was afflicted with a disease, and that only by abstinence, could it be arrested. Their path was blocked by **those** that did not understand the alcoholic and his illness, and though their progress was slow and discouraging at times, their **determination** and their faith could never be doubted.

These two wonderful men, 'Bill W. and Dr. Bob are no longer with us for they have passed on to their eternal reward. They left us however, a rich legacy with two sets of instructions. One, how to achieve sobriety and then how to preserve it, the other, the means for protecting our **Fellowship**. If we follow their instructions, we are able to thwart our compulsion and lust for drink and we will be able to protect our Fellowship from any outside source or force that would endanger it.

Here in Akron, Ohio, the birthplace of A.A., we again celebrate Founders Day and honor these two wonderful men. Every member that joins in this celebration **will** become aware that the **little** ripples started by these two men years ago, have created a wave of sobriety that now reaches the most distant and remote shores of our world.

But for the grace of God, **Bill W.** and Dr. Bob, where would we be?

Ed B. Akron, Ohio

SELF PITY . . I was a **very** active **drunk**. I traveled and sought the motels that had "Happy Hours." One free drink when you bought one. I thought I was seeking people and companionship but I know now that I am an alcoholic. I was seeking alcohol and lots of it at a low price . . . People would leave at seven PM, go home or go to dinner. I would drink all alone at the bar getting into my pity pot routine where I repeated my resentments, hating the world and its people: my exwife, my boss, my traveling job, etc. I now realize it was another excuse to continue drinking . . . I would then go to the jukebox to play my favorite self pity song: Elvis Presley: "Are you lonesome tonight? Do you miss me tonight, Are you sorry we drifted apart?" . . .

By Ralph W.

I am known in AA as Ralph W . . . I sometimes act the clown but I am very serious about stating in AA meetings . . . "My name is Ralph **W!**" I believe in preserving the Principles of the Program. And anonymity is the number one principle of the program. This does not mean I do not give my full name to everyone in the Program. I am available to any **AA** on my phone. I no longer have any professional reason for anonymity as I am retired from a corporation . . . **BUT** I must respect those who work for companies without alcohol programs . . . "We don't have any alcoholics; we fire drunks." Also the new man in the Program often wants some anonymity until he gets adjusted. One time I took a new man to a club. He worked for a local super market chain. AA's asked him: 'Where do you live? Where do you **work**?' . . . He **never** came back.

By Ralph W.

I used to say my first drunks happened in the Navy. But now I **realize** I was legally drunk many times when I was about thirteen years old. It was then that my parents each year would rent a cottage on Cape Cod. The cottage had an old player piano that one pumped with his legs. At Saturday night parties I was chosen to pump the player piano. And I was allowed to drink beer. . . Only beer. No hard stuff. What my parents didn't know: Alcohol is alcohol. It isn't what you drink but how much . . . I also learned to associate alcohol with Good Times . . . parties, fun, and games. Years later alcohol was no longer Fun and Games but Hell.

By Ralph W.

ARE YOU PLANNING TO MOVE?

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

Name

Old Address Zip

New Address

City State Zip.....

It will help you end it will help us.



Published by
Cleveland Central Committee of A.A.
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Mezzanine Room #6
Cleveland, Ohio 44113

XLI-No. 10

THE ABSOLUTES-A SUMMARY

Our consideration of the Absolutes individually leads to a few conclusions. The Twelve Steps represent our philosophy, the Absolutes represent our objectives in **self-help**, and the means to attain them. Honesty, being the ceaseless search for truth, is our most difficult and yet most challenging objective. It is a long road for anyone, but a longer road for us to find the truth. Purity is easy to determine. We know what is right and wrong. Our problem here is the unrelenting desire to do that which is right. Unselfishness is the stream in which our sober life must flow, the boulevard down which we march triumphantly by the **grace** of God, ever alert against being sidetracked into a dark obscure alley along the way. Our unselfishness must **permeate our whole life**, not just our deeds for others, for the greatest gift we bestow on others is the example of our own life **as a whole**. Love is the medium, the blood of the good life, which circulates and keeps alive its worth and beauty. It is not only our circulatory system within ourselves, but it is our medium of communicating to others.

The real virtue is in our striving for these Absolutes. It is a never-ending journey, and our joy and happiness must come each step of the way, not at the end because it is endless. Cicero said, "if you pursue good with labor, the labor passes and the good remains, but if you court evil through pleasure, the pleasure passes and the evil remains." Our life is a diary in which we mean to write one story, and usually write quite another. It is when we compare the two that we have our humblest hour. But lets compare through our self-inventory and make today a new day. Men who know themselves, have at least **ceased** to be fools. Remember if you follow the Golden Rule, its always your move too. To love what is true and right and not to do it, is in reality not to love it, and we are trying to face reality, remember? The art of living in truth and right is the finest of fine arts, and like any fine art, must be learned slowly and practiced with incessant care.

We must approach this objective of the Absolutes humbly. We pray for those things and sometimes forget that these virtues must be earned. The gates of wisdom and truth are closed to those wise in thier conceit, but ever open to the humble and the teachable. To discover what is true and to practice what is good are the two highest aims in life. If we would be humble, we should not stoop, but rather we should stand to our fullest height, close to our Higher Power that shows us what the smallness of our greatness is.

Remember our four questions, "Is it true or false?" "Is it right or wrong?" "How will this affect the other fellow?", and "Is it ugly or beautiful?". Answering these queries every day with absolute integrity, and following the dictates of those answers one day at a time, will surely lead us well on our journey toward the Absolutes.

Central Bulletin June 1960

WHAT A.A. DOES NOT DO

The following is excerpted from **the Pamphlet**, "AA in Treatment Centers, Reminders of **what A.A. does not do**." Thanks A.A. World Services.

One - Solicit members or try to persuade **anyone** to come to A.A. if he does not **want to**.

Two - Keep membership records or case histories.

Three - **Engage** in or Sponsor research.

Four - **Join "Councils" or social agencies, although A.A. members, groups, and service officers frequently cooperate with them.**

Five - Follow up or try to control its members.

Six - **Make medical or psychological diagnoses or prognoses.**

Seven - **Provide drying-out or nursing services, hospitalization, drugs, or any medical and psychiatric treatment.**

Eight - Offer spiritual or religious services.

Nine - Engage in education or propoganda about **alcohol.**

Ten - Provide housing, food, clothing, jobs, money, or other welfare or social services. (Of course, sometimes as a private individual, one of us may house, clothe, or feed a newcomer temporarily **but this** is NOT part of A.A. services.

Eleven - Provide domestic or vocational counseling.

Twelve - Accept any money for its services or any contributions from non A.A. sources.

Thanks to Plain 'N' Straight
Seminole, Florida

FACING CRITICISM

Sometimes, we register surprise, shock, and anger when people find fault with A.A. We are apt to be disturbed to such an extent that we cannot benefit by constructive criticism.

This sort of resentment makes no friends and achieves no constructive purpose. Certainly, this is an area in which we can improve.

It is evident that the harmony, security, and future effectiveness of A.A. will depend largely upon our maintenance of a thoroughly non-aggressive and pacific attitude in all our public relations. This is an exacting assignment, because in our drinking days we were prone to anger, hostility, rebellion, and aggression. And, even though we are now sober, the old patterns of behavior are to a degree still with us, always threatening to explode on any good excuse.

But we now know this, and there I feel confident that in the conduct of our public affairs we shall always find the grace to exert restraint.

As Bill Sees It-p. 56



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Harry D.. Founder and Editor 1892-1968

Vol. 41

July 1983

No. 10

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING TUESDAY, AUGUST 2nd, 1983-8:00 P.M.

OLD STONE CHURCH-PUBLIC SQUARE
CLEVELAND, OHIO
BE INFORMED-SEND YOUR GROUP
REPRESENTATIVE TO THIS MEETING

IN MEMORIAM

RICHARD KOSEY, Member of Mantua Group passed away suddenly. Our condolences to the family.

MARIE CARTWRIGHT, Member of West Side Womens & Southwest Sunday Group passed away after her 4 year illness. She was a active member of our fellowship for 32 years. Our sympathy to the family.

CHUCK HUSHA, Old time member of The Union & Corlett Groups passed away. Our sympathy to the family.

A TIME FOR NEW BEGINNINGS

Every year I establish for myself goals for the coming year. This invariably prompts me to review the past year. This year, and I hope this will become a habit, my principal goal is to retain my sobriety.

Yesterday I visited an old timer. He expressed the opinion we AA's in N.E. Ohio do not really have Groups, but rather we have meetings. His concern about what he perceives as a lack of group loyalty started me to thinking. I can recall numerous AA's griping that they can't find **anyone** to open up, chair meetings, accept group offices, etc.

Usually the comment is along the lines of "We have a fair attendance at our meetings, but only one or two who call us their "Home Group." I also hear comments on our lack of support. In my own case, I have changed my \$1.00 contribution to \$2.00. I probably would have done this sooner if something had jogged my conscience sooner1

The intent of this article is to urge individual AA's to look at their actions and decide if they are satisfied with their participation in this fellowship. I'd be glad to take your inventory for you . . . but I am not qualified to do so. Besides, I'm busy trying to take care of me. by ANONYMOUS (known but to the writer and your editor).

WE

What can we do to preserve unity within our lifesaving fellowship? We can speak of "my religion" or "the religion I was raised in" at AA meetings. We can avoid praising or attacking a particular faith, mentioning religious jokes at AA meetings and conventions. We can remember that what was sacred to us, may enrage others, and that what we dislike may be holy to others. For the same reasons, we can avoid mentioning the treatment center we went to and praising or attacking any treatment center, especially at an AA meeting at that particular treatment center. We can remember the 6th and 10th Traditions; we do not "endorse.. any related facility or outside enterprise" and AA "has no opinion on outside issues."

We can focus on "our common problem," the first *drink*, when we talk about the first step or tell our stories at a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous. We can remember that many alcoholics do not have a problem with compulsive overeating, drugs or loved ones who get drunk and that OA, NA, and **Alanon** focus on these problems. We can remember that what helps us stay sober is hearing *sober people* (happy or not so happy) talk about "the hopelessness of alcoholism" "from actual experience." pp. 92, 180 *Alcoholics Anonymous*, 3rd Ed., (How come they are sober?) We can remember the 5th Tradition, that our "primary purpose" is to help "the *alcoholic* who still suffers."

We can avoid racial slurs, ethnic jokes, judgmental remarks about people's sexuality, and provocative sexual behavior during AA meetings. We can remember the 3rd Tradition and try to keep the doors open to all alcoholics.

We can avoid interfering in groups, for which we would do no service work, if asked, no matter how long we have been sober or how much experience we have. We can remember the 4th Tradition, that groups are not required to do it the way "the good old Such and Such Group" does, "my good old sponsor told me," or "they do it back in good ole' Wherever."

We can avoid whispering, coughing, leaving the room or glaring at people we don't like when they are speaking at an AA meeting. We can write inventory. We can remember the 12th Tradition and try to put "principles before personalities."

We can avoid leading non-alcoholics to believe that they are members of Alcoholics Anonymous by inviting them to closed meetings, asking them to chair open meetings, discussion meeting, including them on a group list of an Alcoholics Anonymous group, or letting them serve as trusted servants of an AA group. We can remember the 1st Tradition and that "our common welfare" is based upon the fact that we share a "common problem."

If I went trembling into a house in Brooklyn filled with strangers.. and found that I had come home at last, to my *own* kind. p. 228 *Alcoholics Anonymous*, 3rd Ed.

We can learn about those who went before us, the Washingtonians, who, for a brief time, held out hope to the hopeless alcoholic, and, then, disappeared almost a century before Bill W. and Dr. Bob met. We can learn why over 100,000 of them lost the gift of sobriety and how AA's Traditions evolved by trial and error. Whether it is a small, new group or the General Service Conference of AA, decisions

can be based upon ignorance, noise and junior high school politics, or upon an *informed* prayer and thoughtful reading of AA books and pamphlets to learn the previous, nationwide experience of the fellowship. Tradition meetings, service work, AA Comes of Age and pamphlets about the Traditions are not "garbage," "that political b.s." or "more propaganda from New York." They are the lifeblood of the fellowship we love.

We can do these things to preserve AA for ourselves and those who are to come.

-Anonymous

Reprinted from 'the last drop', Denver, Colorado.

February 1983

RESENTMENT

Most of us are familiar with the story about the little selfish boy who picked up his ball and went home because the boys he was playing with wouldn't let him pitch, and as a result of his resentment, the game was discontinued.

No doubt most of us can still remember our drinking days when our behavior was like that of the little lad. No doubt too, many of us can recall when we habitually used family and friends to sate our lust and desire for drink and when our demands were not met, we would slink off to some secluded part of the house or den and sulk like an ill-tempered brat. Continually we took the joy out of the lives of our loved ones and made life miserable for them. We demanded love and respect from our wives and children but offered nothing in return toward their welfare and security. When a family member complained about our demands, we pick up our hurt pride and hustled off for the nearest bar to have it dressed and bandaged.

Some of us bring this little boys' temperment into A.A. and we don't want to let go of it, as it may come in handy when a disagreement arises. This enables us to pick up our wounded pride and ego and head for some bar where we can always find a sympathetic listener, who will listen to all our troubles as long as we furnish the drinks.

A.A. too, has some group jumpers, they bounce from one group to another for various reasons or for no reason. Some members have picked up their ball of resentment and joined another group at the slightest provocation. As an example,

men have left and joined another group because they were not asked to serve on the committee for the group anniversary celebration. Others leave a group because the coffee is too hot or too cold, too weak or too strong. There is no such thing as finding the perfect group because groups are made up of people and there is no perfect human being, consequently, there is not perfect group. They will seek in vain until they realize their own imperfections.

We have also some in A.A. that are not mentally mature and take it upon themselves to attempt to reform the whole A.A. program. They try to assassinate another persons character that opposes their plans by using the shield of anonymity to hide their identity. They resort to this cowardly trait to spout their poisonous envy at the men and women who take on job or position which they themselves could not ably handle. Yet, we should not and best not condemn them but rather pray for them, for they know not what they do.

We, the recovered alcoholics are both fortunate and aware that our main body is composed of many, many level-headed men and women, who freely devote their time and talents in carrying the message and helping others because they feel and are responsible. These solid A.A. members stand up, discuss and handle problems in an efficient manner. As long as such honorable men and women serve as guardians in A.A., our program will continue to grow.

Ed B. Akron, Ohio

MEMBERSHIP IN AA

In our complex society, just about everything you plan on doing must conform to some kind of law or rule. If you work at a factory, the rule tells you when to punch in and out. If you run a restaurant, you have inspectors telling you what to do. If you operate a tavern, they tell you when you can open and when you must close, and what and to whom you can sell. If you want to go fishing or hunting, you must first buy a license. If you're applying for a job, you have to meet certain qualifications. If you join a lodge you must pay dues, and maybe use a password. If you want a public office, you have to stand a vote test. You have to buy a license to drive a car, and you cannot wed a woman without a license. And we could mention a a hundred other rules and regulations that circumscribe the lives of people.

Now, in A.A. we do not do things that way. We don't have any rules. We don't care if they're fat or thin, Sophie Tuckers or Marilyn Monroes. We don't care if they're bean-poles or midgets. We don't care if they are rich or poor, whether they can drive a car or not, even whether they have a job or not. We don't care if they were rejected by every lodge on earth, whether they bought a license when they were wed or if they are bigamists. We do not charge any dues and we do not have any passwords.

The A.A. doors are wide open. You are a member if you admit you are an alcoholic and quit drinking. People who pretend to be in A. A., but who sneak a few drinks, and if not honest, are not members of A.A. at all. Everyone knows about them, but we really do not fire them. You see, we have no rules. Can't fire anyone when there is no violation of the rules. And since no rules were broken, it's easy to get back in.

But there is a reinstatement fee.. .sobriety.

-Dubuque, Ia., Ilanews

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ANONYMITY

The question of our anonymity is a perennial in AA jam sessions. There seems to be one view that is and always has been virtually unanimous. The opinion seems to be that anonymity is a question to be decided by each individual. Is it? Have you ever reflected on the divinely aided wisdom of your founders which made anonymity a cornerstone of our foundation in the first place?

It so happens that this writer doesn't care who knows about his AA affiliation, but it has ever been a belief of mine that there is no useful purpose in revealing the fact in the absence of a good constructive reason. Sometimes it may seem helpful to let it be known to the alcoholic we know who still suffers, He may not be ready for us yet, but if he knows about me and if he gains a good impression from watching me, it might mean salvation a little earlier for him.

Actually, the same result may come sooner if he merely suspect AA affiliation. Its the power of example that does the trick and probably he knows without being told. Is not that the better way? Certainly we should not try to sell.

But assuming for the moment its an individual question without reservation. Should we mention others, even in meetings? At least several times a month I hear leads in which the speaker mentions from two or three to six or eight names of people who helped a great deal in his or her early days. None of them are present. Many non-alcoholics are. Perhaps the speaker knows that those he mentions do not care. Does that make a difference? This writer believes not. When we say its an individual matter, is that not far enough to go without saying that anyone doesn't care, cannot only reveal his own affiliations indiscriminately but delegate countless others to do the same?

Let's get into the meat of this anonymity question. Why did our founders do this? Why have our traditions, which grow from the wisdom of our experience, come to show that the element of our anonymity is "the spiritual foundation of all of our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities?"

The reason would seem to be that this fellowship, this way of life, our twelve steps, our twelve traditions, and all of the principles developed through adoption and experience, are all bigger than we are, any one of us or any group of us. This fellowship is needed by us. That is the basis of our humility, toward the fellowship, and toward God as we understand Him.

How many times have all of us noted that the one who blatantly and defiantly broadcasts his identification with us, is not one we would choose as a living symbol of this beloved fellowship of ours, especially to those who are relative strangers to us and our ways? And to put it yet another way, who among us would step forward enthusiastically to fill that role, even if called upon?

The quality of humility in such a one would seem at least open to question. And so a little thought should lead us all to the realization that this anonymity of ours is a mighty precious ingredient of the whole and we had best protect it as we do other precious elements of this sobriety which is a life and death matter to us all.

And so perhaps anonymity is a question for the individual to handle at least with great care, thinking of the fellowship as a whole. "How will this affect the other fellow," should come ahead of the question of "How will this affect me?"

YOU CAN'T HAVE EVERYTHING

If I told you that four words could change your life you wouldn't believe me. They changed mine. They aren't new words. You've heard them all your life and here they are. 'You can't have everything.'

Most of us do want everything, at least more than we got. It took me umpteen years to discover that nobody has everything. Then what can you have? Take everything over 50% and run.

My yardstick is called 6139. The theory applies to every kind of behavior but it is most applicable to alcohol. If I am happy at 51% being sober, I'm going to stay sober. If I was 51% happier drinking, then I would drink.

All your life there will be a tug-of-war. 49 - 48 - 47 - 46 - 45 per cent of you may be trying to pull you back to those drinking days. Your mind will be bombarded with memories, only the good memories of course. But where are the bad ones? They are best forgotten. I hold onto one of the bad — that terrific hangover. That brings me back to the middle of the road 50-50. Then I try climbing up. You may say to yourself, "Sure, some of it was fun." but then stop and think what Hell there was — at least 60%.

Lay your life before you and study it. Admit what you like about your present life and what you don't like about it. Evaluate everything. Then choose the way in which you are the happiest. It may be a close decision but majority rules. Maybe God wants it that way.

Many times I have been in the middle of the road, 50-50. What a tug-of-war! Then I went to God for help and he whispered in my ear, "Remember, Leo, you can't have everything;" and gave me the wisdom to know the difference -that I'm an alcoholic and always will be.

Leo R.

TRADITIONS! THE HEART OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS. THEY ARE THE GUIDELINES, AND SHOULD NOT BE TWISTED AND REPUDIATED AT WILL BY ANYONE'S OR ANY GROWS SPECIAL INTEREST OR WHIMS.

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VOL. XLI-No. 11

WHAT IT IS ALL ABOUT!

Where are the strokes? The pats on the back? Why aren't the bands playing and the flags flying? Where is the cake and coffee and the red carpet? Where are the accolades for my having lived the good life?

Ohh! I know, I told my family I didn't want anything special done for that anniversary of a years sobriety. But, **goshdarn** it to heck when they took me at my word I was, to put it mildly, ticked off.

Geez, I thought, didn't I deserve something for that momentous day? After all it was a tough year. Look what I had deprived myself of. I gave up the drink. I gave up my old friends. I gave up the laughs and the good times. **And...** I could go on with a long list of things I had given up.

Sure I could. That is, if I wanted to revert to my old "stinking thinking" way of life. If I wanted to go back to being totally, thoroughly dishonest with myself, my God and my fellow **AA's**. And if I wanted to put myself back on that old pity pot.

Was I going to do that? You bet your serenity I wasn't.

God, through his grace and the AA program gave me something I put to good use. That **something** was the ability, after drying out an alcohol-soaked brain, to think before I react. To hesitate and reflect before I violently, verbally lash out at my loved ones.

And I did think. I thought that after one brief year I have exactly what AA promised me. That promise was and is **SOBRIETY**.

Nobody in AA ever lied to me. And AA never promised me economic security. Never promised me a life free from problems. Never promised me fame or fortune nor star status.

AA promised me sobriety. And a better way of **life**. And an inner serenity and an ability to face reality. And a way of living God intended for me all along.

The applause and accolades I was looking for were all around me. They are the freedoms I am now enjoying. Freedom from fear. Freedom from insanity. Freedom from the paralyzing self-pity party. The blessed, blessed freedom from the Godless person I was. Freedom from the **self**-destructive life of a drunkard. Freedom from the disease of alcoholism.

An AA lead I recently heard perhaps put it best. "I don't consider sobriety a virtue. I consider it a matter of life and death." It is that simple.

Rewards? I get them each day I am sober.

Amends to make? I have quite a few. I am perfectly aware that it is possible that some mental scars I inflicted on my wife may never be healed. But, I can work each day at trying to heal these scars. And if it be His will, not mine, the healing will happen. And that is called growth. And if we don't grow, the Old Timers tell us, we will go.

(Reflection after a lunch
with Harvey J. Seven Hills Serenity)
Don B. Parma Hts.

SPONSORSHIP

Don C., one of our concerned **Oldtimers** in AA recently stated at the Sister Ignatia group: 'We must get back to sponsorship. It is the backbone of the AA Program that the experienced AA guide and assist the new person with his new found sobriety.'

Yes, AA has changed. With the great awareness of Alcoholism on the media level and with the addition of at least four alcohol and drug rehab units in the Cleveland area alone, we find our AA meetings turning into large groups. And perhaps just as important most of these people coming into AA are now young people under thirty who have not hit the bottom stages of Alcoholism. We are happy to welcome these young men and women..

Those that come in off the street by phoning AA Central Office usually do get a AA sponsor with years of experience in sobriety.. **They** are the smart ones. Because there are so many young at this time, many seek help from each other. The blind leading the blind OR like one drunk leading another.. The last group used as their sponsor their hospital rehab outpatient counselor program.. **These are** impersonal. Chose an **AA** sponsor that will tell you his years of coping with our problem, a sponsor you can dump on, one who will go to meetings with you, and one who will come rescue you if and when the need arises.

Sponsorship is a concept that goes back to early times. In the crafts and guilds the older taught the younger their skills & experience. Then in America we had the union movement. Still the older teaching the younger. We see the same in management with trainees. The older giving the younger his life experiences.. **.GET A SPONSOR!!** !

FIRST AA: 'YOU ARE A BURN OUT!! TOO MUCH BOOZE.'

SECOND AA: "YUH, WELL AT LEAST I HAD A **FLAME** BURNING FOR SOME THIRTY YEARS.. "

Ralph W
Shalom Group

July 17, 1983

Hi **Everybody**—

I'm renewing for another year. You've maintaining very high standards in Cleveland-I pass the Bulletin around the group and we all enjoy it.

Keep up the good work-AA is great down here but I still miss the special something that Cleveland AA **has!**I'll be celebrating my 20th year in '83 and I'm very grateful.

God bless,
Kathy D.
West Side Women's
Naples Fla.



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Harry D. Founder and Editor 1892.1968

Vol. 41 AUGUST 1983 No. 11

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING
TUESDAY, **SEPTEMBER 6, 1983-8:00 P.M.**
OLD STONE CHURCH • PUBLIC SQUARE
CLEVELAND, OHIO
BE INFORMED
GROUP REPRESENTATIVES WELCOME

OPERATING COMMITTEE
ADVISORY MEETING
MONDAY SEPTEMBER 12, 1983
8:00 P.M.

OLD STONE CHURCH
PUBLIC SQUARE
CLEVELAND, OHIO
REPRESENTATIVES FROM EACH
GROUP IS URGED TO ATTEND
THIS IMPORTANT MEETING.

G.S.R. THIRD LEGACY MEETING
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 1983-2:00 P.M.
STATE ROUTE 44 & PIONEER TRAIL
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MANTUA, OHIO

SHEFFIELD LAKE MEN
21st ANNIVERSARY
WEDNESDAY SEPT. 21, 1983
8:30
Jim M.

IN MEMORIAM

DON SHILLING, who found our fellowship in 1940 and active for many years. He and his wife moved to Florida. His wife passed away about two years ago. Don passed away in late June 1983. Our sympathy to the family.

FRANK YESPONSKY, Active member of Superior Group passed away Aug. 9, 1983. Our sympathy to the family.

IF YOU DON'T TAKE AA WITH YOU WHEN YOU WALK OUT OF THE DOOR, SOME "KIND" SOUL WILL TAKE YOU BY HAND AND LEAD YOU TO A DRINK... Don't drink and go to meetings! And take it with you!

DISTRICT OFFICE CORNER:

Hello again • we have been so busy we have found no time to talk to you for a couple of months. There has been a lot going on • one thing, now that it's almost time to send out reminders on the pledges again • we would like to thank you for the response received on the June reminders • you really prove to us what makes this Fellowship so successful!

There are so many things going on! Anonymity breaks, one after the other; judges sentencing drinking drivers to A.A. meetings; Probation Officers telling their clients to attend A.A. meetings; sick alcoholics being admitted to hospitals for treatment and, unless admitted by an A.A. member, groups are lax in trying to get someone out to see them and offering to sponsor them, on and on it goes and One Day at a Time we, here, are trying to deal with the questions, complaints and all that goes with these problems.

We think that any good A.A. member knows about Anonymity and for the unfortunate few who do not we receive a lot of hassle. We just have to make an attempt to straighten out their appreciation of A.A.'s principles and, because we are not punitive in any way we do not want to make their lives any harder on them than their fellow members have already done . . . you see, we cannot set rules.

In thinking and re-thinking this thing about the judges and probation officers (and this was discussed at Central Committee) we cannot reach all of the judges and get them to fully understand . . . all they know is that A.A. has been successful but some of these offenders are not what one could term alcoholics and they are not willing to admit it if they are . . . they just go trudging off to meetings and get their slips signed for the time required . . . BUT . . . there is a chance that a few might get the message and can salvage their lives. We cannot ask them to call for sponsors either because if they tell us they don't think they have a problem, it makes no sense to turn them to a group. The question has come up about the necessity of signing the slips . . . that is entirely up to the group . . . no one is required to sign but for years we have been doing so out of courtesy and perhaps with the thought that they might stay 77777

Now • as to getting sponsors for those admitted to hospitals for treatment by others than A.A. We are supposed to cooperate with all these facilities and they are alcoholics who need help and aren't we responsible? Someone was responsible when we came in. We have to remember that the A.A. program itself will never change but other things change and now there are other agencies, companies, doctors and psychiatrists with more knowledge about alcoholism and they admit a patient. All successful treatment centers use the A.A. principles to treat their patients and to orient them to continuing sobriety after discharge into the A.A. program. Even though all this is so • in advertising their treatment facilities we feel they are giving the public a false impression when they mention Alcoholics Anonymous in their ads • to us and to our members • it is a **dis-service** because they are trying to **denote** A.A. Affiliation which is far from **true** . . . but all of us in A.A. know they are being shrewd because this makes a good selling point . . . you see we do wish to understand rather than be understood! **OUR PROGRAM IS SUCCESSFUL BECAUSE OF COOPERATION RATHER THAN AFFILIATION.**

We all thank God for 1935 when Dr. Bob and Bill met; we all thank God for the thinking, planning and wording (taking a little from everyone) of our 12 Steps to Recovery and we also thank God for the year 1950 when the Twelve Traditions were established and announced **right** here in Cleveland, Ohio. Arrival at these Traditions came through trial and error and loads of mistakes before they could take form and, most of all aren't we all thankful for Alcoholics Anonymous . . . Think about it . . .

YOUR TRUSTED SERVANTS.

ON OBEDIENCE TO THE TRADITIONS

A lot of mental horsepower has been generated and expended to define what is unique about A.A. I would like to submit that it's our obedience to the Traditions.

We **have** proved **that** by spiritual means large numbers of drunks can recover. But the Washingtonians and the Oxford Group proved that too.

Our obedience to the Traditions is most unique in that we voluntarily submit ourselves to them. They are not a bunch of things set up by "them" and hands down to us saying "This is what you are going to do, or else!"

When speaking about the Traditions, we are speaking about **the** things that mean life or death. I cannot live without A.A. You cannot live without A.A. Yet, you and I are A.A. We have to be, in spite of ourselves, responsible for us.

The Traditions provide us **with** a manner and direction so our society can survive. And if our society survives, we are going to live . . . When we love one another, we learn to serve . . . and when we serve, we guarantee that A.A. will be here in **the** future to carry out its missions of carrying the message to those alcoholics yet to come, even to those yet unborn.

Recovery. Enlightenment. Unity. Responsibility. Love. Twelve Steps. Twelve Traditions. Twelve Concepts. Our Three Legacies.

Jack B.
Oregon A.A. Newsletter

— Be a Bulletin Booster —

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KEEP COMING BACK

Occasionally within the structure of these pieces that I write for the Pick-Me-Up, I voice personal concerns that I have. Lately I have observed some things going on in the AA groups that I attend that alarm me.

Our Fifth Tradition states that "Each group has but one primary purpose - to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers." I have wondered lately if the message we carry hasn't become somewhat diluted. I have tried to put myself in the position of the newcomer who has walked into his first AA meeting. Without prior knowledge of the AA program, would I be able to identify with the other alcoholics in the meeting? Would the stories of their drinking make a bell ring in the back of my mind? **Would** I look at my own drinking and say - yes! - my drinking was like that?

Many of the meetings I have attended lately sound like a "self-awareness" meeting or a "how I changed my behavior through the benefit of psychological analysis meeting" or an "assertiveness training" meeting. Although these things have some value for all of us, are they really a part of the AA program? At the risk of being labeled a 'purist' or a 'nitpicker', I have to say that, isn't the AA program as it's presented in the Big Book what we need to discuss during the meetings? Nowhere in the Big Book do I find the notion that the way to sobriety and contented living is through enlightened behavior modification. The message that I receive from the Big Book is that I can attain a day's reprieve from alcoholic drinking through abstinence and the working of AA's suggested Twelve Steps. I believe that this is the essence of the message we carry to the newcomer. That one day at a time we do not find it necessary to drink alcohol and one day at a time we live a contented, useful existence through the working of the Twelve Steps. It's hard enough for the newcomer to get the A.A. message. Let's not water it down for them.

Sally M.
Wichita, Kansas

HOW TO AVOID PLAYING GOD!

- OFFER** no advice unless it is asked.
- LISTEN** to other people's dreams and help them in the way that they wish to be helped.
- ENCOURAGE** them to find their own strength.
- RESERVE JUDGEMENT** at all times.
- ADMIT** that you don't know all the answers.
- BUILD CONFIDENCE** in the other person until his own judgement becomes clear.
- DWELL** on what is right, instead of what is wrong.
- REALIZE** the core of Divine Being in each person. Respect it.
- NEVER DISCOUNT** the other person's good intentions.
copied-The Voice, Atlanta, GA

A citizen was walking up Fifth Avenue when he was but-tholed by a character who said: "Shay, can you tell me where to find an **Alcoholichs** Anon-Anolymush meetin'." Why, do you want to join?" "No, the citizen announced. "I want ta resign."

STUDY MY AUNT FANNY

If I read just one more study on alcoholism, I'm going to get sick to my stomach. This last one by the Rand Report has probably caused more pain and suffering than can even be measured. Not only those studied, but just as much among the families of those poor drunks who thought they might duplicate the "wonderful" results reported initially by these medical wizards. You can darn near fill a suitcase with the newspaper clippings of this or that "new" study or new approach to treatment. Most generate nowhere near the publicity when they fail as they do when they are first announced, and that's the real shame. What's the big deal anyway? The solution to the problem has been working just fine since Bill and Bob got together that Sunday in Akron.

After all, the difference between well and unwell is just a matter of degree. Fantasies are developed by everyone as a means of dealing with life's very natural inadequacies and turned then into a personal reality. The well person, whether recovering or not, learns to adjust in the pursuit of his happiness, adapting as he goes. The un-well individual develops symptoms: depression, addiction, alcoholism or whatever "ism" you are comfortable with.

But, and this is a big but, attempting to understand this by studying each individual component of cause/ef-fect; **action/re-action**, effort/motive, or most of all, anything to do with feelings, is like trying to learn about water by studying hydrogen and oxygen. Nothing in either element even remotely suggests that combining two parts of one with one part of the other produces something wet that pours.

I know, studies such as these are outside issues and as such are none of our concern . . . as a program. But, this bulletin is just for us drunks, and my personal opinion is that we should speak of them among ourselves, so that we can perhaps save some new guy from wandering into the next trap that comes along. After all, we know darn well what the price of failure can be, and we are the ones who pay the price for being lab rats in some researcher's pipe dream.

Terry W.
Bay West Discussion

A man who rode his horse home from a bar in Fremont, Calif., was arrested for investigation of drunken driving after a policeman saw him nearly fall out of the saddle.

John C. Clack was released on \$1,500 bail. He was also accused of resisting arrest because the horse allegedly galloped off when the pursuing policeman turned on his siren.

His wife, Tammi, said she and her husband often ride home on horseback from bars. "After all, you can't hurt yourself on a horse and the horse knows its way back," she said.

But police said a horse falls under the state Vehicle Code definition of a vehicle: anything that can be "propelled, moved or drawn upon a highway!"

AROUND THE TABLES

I have changed in many ways — but in some areas, it is only a matter of degree. I know from all the sharing of other AAs that there are seasons of change for each of us, so I need not get excited or worried; rather, I must continue to work the AA program.

During a recent discussion of Step Four, I realized that inventory is essential for me to make progress; I agree completely with the Big Book that there is danger involved if I neglect Step Four. I make a distinction between Steps Four and Ten. The former calls for effort renewed at intervals; the latter, for continuous effort.

As a result of that discussion, I also realized that I have no desire or need for a drink, but lurking in the background can be what I call an excuse to drink. You know — when you arrive home from work, and your wife asks, 'Why are you five minutes late?' Something insignificant like that can set off a riotous chain of thinking that seems to completely justify a drink. The immediate remedy is Step Ten, promptly admitting that such thinking is wrong. And if I check my Fourth Step inventory, I find the underlying aspect: the selfishness of oversensitivity.

There are no excuses left for me. That is simple fact. Yet I must guard against defects and shortcomings that would permit me to find and hold on to an excuse. Nowhere but in the AA program are there tools for me to cope with this excuse business. I continue to work on Step Four; I grind away at the facades subtly covering imperfections that, if left alone, could lead to disaster. Step Four helps me to do away with excuses, and I like the result to much not to keep at it.

GRAPEVINE

Woman: "I want to return this parrot my husband bought me."

Shopkeeper: "Doesn't it speak?"

Woman: "On the contrary. It never stops interrupting me."

The chap had one too many at the cocktail party. "Excuse me," he hiccuped to his hostess "but does a lemon have wings?"

"No, of course not," she chided.

"Well then I'm terribly sorry," he said, "I'm afraid I've just squeezed your canary into my martini."

ARE YOU PLANNING TO MOVE?

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VOL. XLI-No. 12

SPONSORSHIP

Sponsorship is sharing one's experience, strength and hope with another alcoholic who is attempting to attain or maintain sobriety. It is a way of expressing our gratitude for a beautiful way of life and of giving back what has been given to us by the oldtimers in the program. Today I am responsible and knowing that feels great. It doesn't mean that I sit on my laurels, because I didn't get this far by myself.

I had a lot of misconceptions as to what sponsorship was all about when I first came into the program. I thought it meant finding someone of the same age, background, and of course on the same wave length. It would be even better if they went to the meetings, and I'd call to find out what happened. I heard "stick with the winner", so I looked for someone with a Ph.D. or a Rolls Royce.

Having more than one sponsor meant calling until I found someone to play my games or agree with me. I had to become teachable, willing to listen to learn, and I got that from keeping the plug in the jug, going to meetings, and having sponsors subtly suggest that I read page 59 in the Big Book. I once had a sponsor say it was amazing we both stayed sober through my **taking** the Steps. I needed to hear that because I had a hard head and a big ego, yet always stopped short of success.

Like most alcoholics I find it difficult to be close to people, to be honest with me, to have peace in the midst of turmoil and to make changes. I needed to learn how to trust, how not to react, how to try new things, and to be open to new ideas. Sponsors to me are people who listen and care with tough love. They tell me what I need to hear when I don't want to hear it and I need it the most.

A while back someone said to me that I put my sobriety above everyone and everything. Yes, I do. I once put another person first and when the relationship ended I got drunk. As a woman, this has been difficult to learn. Learning it has made me a better person: I know this because now I have something to give.

Anonymous Contribution via
Tri-County Central Office
Tampa, Florida

ADD IT UP

When you total up the amount each of us has spent on drinks it turns out that A.A. has the highest membership dues of any fraternity on earth. If you paid that much money to get into a golf club, would you not make every effort to use its facilities as often as possible.

Are you doing the same with A.A.?

Reflection: Wouldn't you feel privileged to be allowed, indeed invited, to help such an exclusive club to run smoothly? So, wash the cups, sweep, act as secretary, make 12th Step calls!

The Reviver, Australia

SERENITY-ACCEPTANCE-COURAGE- WISDOM

The road to peace and happiness often runs through the valley of sorrow and disappointment. It is difficult at times for the man or woman that comes into A.A. to accept the Serenity Prayer without reservations, because they are not spiritually and morally conditioned to take the daily life in stride like their non-alcoholic friends do. Perhaps it was an act of God that brought the Serenity Prayer to the attention of the founders. It was not an accident that this prayer became a part of A.A.

This is a simple prayer for simple people—only 25 words that fit snugly into our mental purse, where they can easily be found at any time. It acts as a lubricant to take the squeaks out of our emotional vehicle when it gets overloaded. It can serve as a shield to protect us against the heat of resentment and jealousy.

It takes real courage to accept the heartaches and trials that life deals out but they are only the penalties that we must pay for living in this world.

We, who have found sobriety and a better way of life through our fellowship, are more fortunate than our non-alcoholic friends. There is an abundance of spiritual material in the A.A. storeroom, and we have many friends who are ready to give us a push when stalled on the highway of life. A.A. provides us with all the necessary resources to improve upon character defects. We have the 12 Steps to direct us toward our goal, but along that road, we do not know what awaits us.

Yet, we are assured that God will give us courage to accept that which we cannot control. We can set up a proper standard of living by making use of the Serenity Prayer. We have the 12 Steps, a guide for removing our defects, which gives us greater strength to move forward, and to avoid frustration when adversities arise.

Life's road is not a straight one, but hilly and winding, and **not one** which we can travel free and unhampered. We must seek our way with caution, sometimes even confused and lost, but if we travel with faith in God, we will reach our destination, due to His guidance.

Some find this A.A. road harder to travel than others as it often demands pain and sacrifice, but if we persevere, we will reach our ultimate goal and find worthy attainment and happiness, and it will prove to be worthy of the effort. Through the use of this prayer, we can grow in character and meet the unexpected without stooping to the irresponsible and impulsive acts of the yesterdays. We can take it on the chin, we no longer need alcohol to sooth our emotional rash.

Alcohol has never solved any problems, eased any pain, assuaged any grief, or brought back any loved ones. Now however, we can better accept these reverses just by humbly saying, "Take my will and make it Thine, it shall no longer be mine."

Ed B. Akron, Ohio

CENTRAL BULLETIN



Published monthly by the Cleveland Central Committee of A.A., a non-profit fellowship dedicated to service. Address all letters to Central Bulletin, One Public Square, Mezzanine #6, Cleveland, Ohio 44113. Subscription price is \$3.50 per Year.

Harry D., Founder and Editor 1892-1968

VOL. 41 SEPTEMBER 1983 No. 12

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 4TH, 1983-8:00 P.M.
OLD STONE CHURCH • PUBLIC SQUARE
CLEVELAND, OHIO
BE INFORMED
GROUP REPRESENTATIVES WELCOME

IN MEMORIAM

BILL WEBSTER, active member of the fellowship and The Superior Group. Our sympathy to the family.

LONDON BISHOP, 15 year member of the fellowship and Garden Valley Group. Our condolences to his loved ones.

OTTO KUNDTZ, member of The Baxter Group. Our sympathy to the family.

SECRETARIES

AT A RECENT CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING. THE SIGNING OF SLIPS FOR THOSE SENTENCED TO ATTEND A.A. MEETINGS. THE FOLLOWING SUGGESTIONS WERE MADE:

1. SIGN GROUP NAME ONLY.
2. SIGN IN FULL. IF DESIRED.
3. DO NOT SIGN ANY SLIP.

THE GROUP CONSCIENCES IS THE ULTIMATE AUTHORITY.

RESOLVE IN FAITH

If we grown-ups **are** contented only when we're getting what we want, we're going to be discontented most of the time. That way our happiness depends on circumstances over which we have no control. No human being is so wise and powerful that he can control circumstances.

Since we can't get what we want, we must learn to enjoy what we have. As a matter of fact, we can find something enjoyable in any situation, no matter how disagreeable, if we look for it.

If alternatives don't work, there is only one thing left, plain, simple, rock-bottom. acceptance. Stop pitying yourself, stop rebelling, throw in the sponge and surrender to the fact that since God allows it, and you can't escape it, it must be best for you and everyone. Pray for faith to believe and to accept it.

Vincent C.
Akron Intergroup New

PLEASE! PLEASE! PLEASE!

Don't close the doors of your heart. Remember the second of our traditions. (For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority - **A Loving God** as he may express Himself in our group conscience our leader are but trusted servants). Take God into your group conscience meetings and an answer will come. You see what I'm getting at is I was one who was sent to A/A. I was the one, the last one to realize I had a drinking problem. In 1978 I was the one who was saying if you coffee drinking doughnut eaten, basket passers, had a few good belts before the meeting's you could really laugh, laugh like I did. I really didn't know, I didn't know. You use to say bring your body your mind will catch up. (What a relief, when it finally turned to belief.) I asked, please don't close the door of your heart. You see you can't close the door's of A/A. We our people of love & compassion we are grateful, and we will be there to reach the soul of another suffering alcoholic. We understand, we don't forget. We are different in only the way we came to A/A. We now walk in unity and we will place **principale** before personalities. I am eternally grateful for God and A/A, and the people who cared, shared understood, and signed my paper saying my body was present at a meeting. I now know longer have to get a paper signed for the court. But I hope to always remember where I came from.

Frank Hennie
Fresh Start

GOD TALK

When I first came to Cleveland AA I was very turned off by all this "God talk" during leads . . . "Let God speak through me." . . . It is God's will . . . " God directs me, etc. It took me two years to be tolerant as I am recovering from alcoholism. I now recognize that Cleveland has very spiritual AA. I now realize that much of this mid European church language is not meant literally but loosely . . . "God Bless You." is just a goodwill gesture of language similar to today's "Have a Good Day."

The Law of Compensation: You win a few; you lose a few. This is translated in 17th century language: God gives and God takes away. I think it is a good idea to limit "God talk" in leads as the suffering alcoholic is angry at God, has rejected God, and he is apt to run out the door of the AA meeting. The paradox is that the drinking alcoholic is seeking God using alcohol to fill the **vaccum**, the emptiness of his **un**-completeness. This wholeness can only be gained by his acceptance of God as he understands him after he/she quits drinking.

Ralph W
Shalom

IT WASN'T THIS YEAR!

New Salesman: *I almost ran over a man on my way to work this morning. and I think he was a native Californian.*

Boss: *What makes you think he was a native?*

Salesman: *I heard him mumbling something about the sun and the beach.*

Fargo A.A. Silver Dollar

THE TWELFTH TRADITION

Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

LET US ALWAYS REMEMBER THAT ANONYMITY-NOT TAKING CREDIT FOR OUR OWN OR OTHERS RECOVERY— IS HUMILITY AT WORK.

Most alcoholics possess defects of character. Our very own 7th Step prayer (pg. 76 the Big Book) requests that only those that "...stand in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows" be completely removed, thereby leaving this alcoholic with plenty. It is because of this that the spirit underlying all our Traditions, Steps and Concepts for World Service is one of consideration of others and their well-being.

I personally have experienced the joy of carrying the recovery message to thousands of people in institutions, in high schools and at A.A. meetings.

I have also experienced a strong lust for prestige at one time or another in every one of these undertakings. At those times it seemed proper for my pride to surge up and say "God, I amaze myself!" This particular attitude is one that has also placed me in a position to hurt myself on numerous occasions.

After leaving many committee meetings, business meetings and Intergroup sessions with an unpleasant feeling God finally showed me what was wrong: anonymity was not the founding stone of my motivation for doing these things, spiritual pride was.

I now feel I understand the 12th Tradition and I feel really useful in service work. Thank you for your examples, both good and bad.

-Mr. Bill

Writing is very easy. All you have to do is sit and stare at a sheet of paper until drops of blood form on your forehead.

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MAKINGAMENDS

At a meeting the other evening we were talking about Step 9 and making amends and how we had to change our routine of life. How easy it is to say, "Well, I'm not going to change. I'm sure if I made amends it would dig up an old wound."

I did it, and guess I still have some trouble with that. However, I found out one thing. That was that when I made amends to someone, it became easier to do the next one. I achieved much more serenity and I'm sure it did more for me than the person I felt I had harmed. I also found it gave me a better understanding of the people I still resented. My values began to change and consequently my whole attitude began to change. At first I couldn't see much merit in making these direct amends to people because many were far away, but it does say "direct", and it does say whenever possible-not to worry about those far away, or who have passed on. There were plenty of people right around me so I didn't **have** to worry too much about the others.

Then I had to begin making amends to myself. I had been pretty hard on myself up to this point-to the point of having to deal with a great deal of self-pity. Now I am able to look back on some of this with humor, which helps, and not be afraid to share some of these pity trips with someone else.

There may have been some wrongs we have done that we can never make right. Here we have to ask for spiritual guidance and forgiveness. I feel we should also share this with another A.A. member or group. At least that helps me forgive myself, and it may help others.

Ken G.
Silver Dollar

PROFANITY = UNWILLINGNESS TO CHANGE

You've been getting a pretty steady diet of "suggestions" from speakers, writers to Dry Run, Central Service and others that the use of profanity and vulgarity from the speakers podium should be stopped. This is not because of the offended sensibilities of your listeners (although there are plenty of offended sensibilities) but because the continued use of foul language is clear evidence of an unwillingness to change.

And, in case you refused to absorb the last part of the preceding paragraph, here it is again: Continued use of foul language is clear evidence of unwillingness to change. (No reference to the occasional offender who simply hasn't managed to gain control of his language use. Time, good old time, will take care of that misuse.)

The person, male or female, who continues to insist it is his or her right to insult the audience with intentional vulgarity is merely expressing aloud the unwillingness to change that he or she may not recognize. Whether it is an ego problem (and the occasional guffaws from the audience are somehow boosting to the speaker's ego) or a flat refusal to grow up, the vulgar speaker cannot but **realizes** he or she is refusing to change.

Quoted from "Dry Run" Boston, MA

LIFE BEGINS AT 75?

I read a headline to this affect in the local Afterblatt recently. The gist of the article was that at 75 you can get by with anything . . . because people think you are a little soft in the head. I suspect that they sometimes get serenity mixed up with senility. If this lasts long enough you've got it made.

In A.A. however, life does not begin at 75, or 40, or 20, or 15. Age has nothing to do with it. In A.A. life begins when you stop sloshing the sauce over the bridgework.

In A.A. life begins when you stop worrying about what happened yesterday and stop being scared to death about what might happen tomorrow.

In A.A. life begins when you realize that you don't have to do it yourself - that everyone in A.A. is on your side and that you can call on a Higher Power that most of us call God. In A.A. life begins when you start unloading your resentments, guilt feelings, loneliness, fear, anger and frustration.

In A.A. life begins when you accept yourself as you are without feeling inferior and if someone tries to give you a bad time you can look 'em right in the eye and tell 'em to go to hell.

I want to thank all the members of A.A. living and dead, who helped me over the years and along the way with a kind word, a friendly smile, a warm handshake, a slap on the back or a pat on the head. I want to thank especially my loving wife who has encouraged me in all my A.A. activities over the years, all my friends, and last but not least by all means, the A.A. program - the 12 steps - the 12 Traditions - which enabled me to live a happy and comfortable life without the use of alcohol.

Paul, San Francisco

I AM AN ALCOHOLIC

I am an alocholic. AA tells me this means I am allergic to alcohol. Every time I drank alcohol I got drunk. I am also allergic to penicillin. One more shot of penicillin and I could die instantly. One more shot of alcohol would not kill me instantly but my chances of recovery from another drinking bout are nil.

I kept drinking heavily as a stop and go drinker and not being aware that I was not a social drinker. Over a period of many years I became addicted to alcohol. This means I became obsessed: could think of nothing but where the next drink was coming from. I was not aware but I physically craved alcohol . . .

I couldn't wait until I got to the next drink. I was hooked and I had a habit. Subsequently I developed character defects. I had to deny to myself and to those I loved and worked for the fact I had a drinking problem. I had to lie, borrow, steal to maintain my supply of alcohol. I had to con people. I had to play the games of using one against the other: My parents, my wife, my children.

Now I am sober five years. I am one of the fortunates who was introduced to Alcoholics Anonymous . . . I must each day work the Twelve Steps taking a continuous inventory of myself.

LET GO AND LET GOD

I heard a story recently - it was fiction I presume - of a man who had fallen off the edge of a high cliff. He managed to grab onto the root of a tree growing out of the side of the cliff, and was literally hanging on for dear life.

He began to pray. Then he heard the voice of God asking him: "Do you really believe in Me." "I do, I do!" protested the poor man, whose life hung in the balance. "Do you trust Me?" asked the voice of God. "Yes, yes!" the man answered. Then the voice of God came back, "Then I will see to it that you are saved. Now do what I tell you to do

"NOW LET GO!"

J.P. British Fashion

FAITH . . .

Faith is a gift of God. It is not a material that can be seen, heard, smelled, tasted, or touched; but is as real as anything that can be perceived with these senses. One can be aware of Faith as easily as one can be aware of earth. Faith is as certain as the existence of water. Faith is as sure as the taste of an apple, the fragrance of a rose, the sound of thunder, the sight of the sun, the feel of a loving touch. Hope is a wish, but with the expectation of getting it. Faith adds surety to the expectation of hope.

HAPPINESS IS NOT HOW MUCH WE HAVE BUT HOW MUCH WE ENJOY . . .

Don't forget to smile . . . It increases your face value! The nurse told the Swede to strip to the waist. So he took of his pants.

Have you ever wondered if the fish goes home and fibs about the size of the bait it stole.

Alone I can't do it. Together we can.
With apologies to Robert Browning:
"Come, Grow Sober Along with me.
The Best Is Yet to Be!!

ARE YOU PLANNING TO MOVE?

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

Name

Old Address Zip

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It will help you and it will help us.



DELEGATE'S CORNER..

The longer I stay sober, the more I seem to need traditional meetings. I don't mean the nice get-togethers that I have been running into more and more • more like therapy sessions, but those meetings that remind me why I am there-to make sure that my disease of alcoholism stays in its' arrested state.

Webster defines the noun "tradition" as the "handing down of information, beliefs, and customs by word of mouth or by example from one generation to another without written instruction." Within the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous, I translate that to mean-meetings that ascribe to the theory that regardless of what has/is/can happen to me, I can find an answer that will bring me peace as stated within the Twelve Steps or Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous and as transmitted through the Higher Power that is within each of us in the A.A. rooms. The only proof I need is that "it works" and has worked for the million or more sober in Alcoholics Anonymous.

Recently I have had to take a look at the meetings I suggest to the newcomers that I sponsor and take my own inventory as to why I found some more favorable meetings than others. When I was able to sort it all out, I found that the meetings I liked the best were those where the Steps and Traditions are referred to as a constant. These are usually meetings with more of a format such as a Big Book Meeting, a Step meeting etc. The meetings that I find less favorable are those where there is wandering from the subject matter and very little reference to our Steps and Traditions. There is in the latter very few people with long-term sobriety and many new people who have not been in long enough to know that "Step 6" or "Tradition 4" might have the answers they are looking for.

My "powerlessness" over alcohol is evident. Today I am very much aware that I have power only to change me, and that I am also powerless over many other things, including A.A. meetings. I am free to choose the ones I like (which I do) -but I am also allowed to have the "I wish-urns" and I do!

Elke F., Delegate
Wilmington, Delaware

Sometimes people abstain for **40** days from certain foods or habits they should have given up long ago! This does exercise the spiritual muscles for it is a form of self-discipline. But there are spiritual daily facts that can take even more willpower and offer greater rewards. We could all try giving up the sweetness of revenge, the bitter herbs of resentments, the sharp spices of gossip, the bland puddings of complacency, the ego-building proteins of vanity, the strong stimulant of prejudice, the heavy bread that nourishes unkindness, and the drugging wine of self-pity.

Anonymous

(Reprinted from THE FRESNO PIPELINE)

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS IS FOR ALCOHOLICS

At a recent meeting of my home group, an unfortunate **occurrence** took place. The person **chosen** by the chairman to speak to the group, that night, was a young girl whose only problem was substance abuse. She did make one or two **remarks** concerning the consumption of alcoholic beverages, but, in no way, did she describe it as uncontrolled or causing any consequences. The experiences that she shared were, in some ways, similar to the experiences of true alcoholics, but they were not identical. Her use of the principles of our program of recovery were limited and not satisfactory. The most regrettable consequence was that two people were present for their first meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous, and they failed to derive any benefit from what they heard. They departed from the meeting more confused than when they **arrived**.

Let's make matters clear: Alcoholics are people who drink alcoholic beverages compulsively, immoderately, and uncontrollably. Their illness is such that they cannot predict what will happen after taking the first drink. Whether their **drinking** experience covers a short period of time in their lives or for many years does not matter. Whether the troubles that result from their **drinking** are major or minor does not matter. Whether the troubles that result from their drinking are major or minor does not matter. Whether they develop another unmanageable problem does not matter, be it drugs, over-eating, thumbsucking, or bed-wetting. Of course, we hope that our program of recovery helps them with their coincidental problems, and quite often this happens. To sum up, an alcoholic drinks alcohol. I might add that a member of Alcoholics Anonymous quits **drinking** alcohol.

I feel that it is time to make meeting chairmen completely aware of their responsibility to our fellowship. Only alcoholics are qualified to speak at our meetings. Our group secretaries have a responsibility, also: that is to see to it that chairmen comply with this practice. And, if that fails, then those of us who have enjoyed the priceless privilege of many years of unbroken sobriety must make our influence felt. We owe this to the fellowship which has been so good to us.

J.T.B.
North Olmsted
Past Delegate to the
General Service Conference

WE MAKE A LIVING BY WHAT WE GET. . . BUT WE
MAKE A LIFE BY WHAT WE GIVE

WINSTON CHURCHILL



Published monthly by the Cleveland Central Committee of A.A., a non-profit fellowship dedicated to service. Address all letters to Central Bulletin, One Public Square, Mezzanine #6, Cleveland, Ohio 44113. Subscription price \$3.50 Per Year.

Harry D., Founder and Editor 1892-1968

VOL. 42 OCTOBER 1983 No. 1

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 1ST, 1983-8:00 P.M.
 OLD STONE CHURCH - PUBLIC SQUARE
 CLEVELAND, OHIO
 ALL GROUP REPRESENTATIVES WELCOME
 BE INFORMED

GRATITUDE SUNDAY

NOVEMBER 20, 1983
 UAW HALL 1250
 17250 HUMMEL ROAD
 BROOK PARK, OHIO

NOTICE TO ALL MEMBERS

THE CLEVELAND DISTRICT
 OFFICE OF AA IS MOVING
 TO LARGER QUARTERS AS
 OF NOVEMBER 5, 1983
 NEW ADDRESS:
 940 ROCKEFELLER BLDG.
 614 SUPERIOR AVENUE N.W.
 CLEVELAND, OHIO 44113
 PHONE 241-7387
 COME IN AND VISIT US.

IN MEMORIAM

JOE SHARKEY, former Collinwood and Night and Day Groups member died in Virginia where he had been living the past years. Our sympathy to the family.

CHARLIE KUDLATY, member of Parmatown Men's Group, passed away after a long illness. Our condolence to his family.

JOHN BRANDT, active member of our fellowship from Eylria, Lorain and Sheffield Lake Groups, passed away after a long illness. He was a example to all who know him. Our sympathy to his family.

WILL HARPER, active member of Southwest Sunday Group, passed away in Ft. Meyers, FLA. Our deepest sympathy to the family.

DISTTUCT OFFICE CORNER:

NEARING THE END OF OCTOBER 1983 MOTHER NATURE IS OUTDOING HERSELF, AS SHE USUALLY DOES THIS TIME OF YEAR, WITH HER BEAUTIFUL PANORAMA OF THE FALL SEASON. THE LEAVES ARE BEGINNING TO CHANGE COLOR AND THE WINDS ARE MOVING THE GRAY CLOUDS SWIFTLY ALONG JUST LETTING THE SUN PEEK OUT NOW AND THEN TO MAKE US AWARE OF THE LENGTHENING SHADOWS AND, IN CONTRAST, THE LUSH GREEN OF THE GRASS WHICH WE ALL TRIED TO KEEP GREEN DURING THE BLISTERING HOT SUMMER MONTHS JUST PASSED. THE VERY PLEASANT WEATHER DURING THE DAY AND THE CHILLING WINDS AT NIGHT ALL A PART OF A WAY OF BRACING US FOR THE SNOW AND BLUSTERY WEATHER TO COME.. SOMETIMES IN A.A. MEMBERS WONDER IF THAT IS GODS WAY OF REMINDING US THAT OUR VISION HAS CLEARED AND WE ARE BEING GRANTED THE PRIVILEGE OF NOTICING THESE THINGS ONCE AGAIN - SOME OF US FOR THE VERY FIRST TIME IN MANY YEARS, SOME WHO HAVE HAD THIS PRIVILEGE FOR SOME TIME AND THE PROMISE OF ALL THAT IS POSSIBLE FOR THE NEWCOMER TO OBSERVE ON THEIR PATH TO SOBRIETY.. AND THEN - ON TO ENJOY THE FRESHNESS OF THE FIRST SNOWFALL AND THE STARK BEAUTY OF THE BARE TREE BRANCHES ONCE AGAIN BECOMING BEAUTIFUL AS THEY REACH OUT AND HOLD THE SNOW FOR US TO SEE AND ENJOY. AS SEASONS GO FROM ONE TO ANOTHER IN A FULL CYCLE, WE, AGAIN, CAN RELATE TO OUR JOURNEY FROM WHAT WE WERE BEFORE, WHAT WE ARE NOW.. !

AS WITH THE CHANGING OF SEASONS WE ALSO NOTICE THAT THERE IS ALWAYS SOME WORK TO BE DONE. ..RAKING LEAVES, CUTTING GRASS, SHOVELLING SNOW.. AGAIN REMINDING US THAT WE MUST PICK UP THE TOOLS AND PUT THEM TO USE SO THAT WE CAN CONTINUE TO ENJOY CONTINUING SOBRIETY. WE KNOW THAT THERE WILL BE THOSE WHO WILL NOT BE WILLING TO TAKE THAT ONE EXTRA STEP, WOULD RATHER STEP ASIDE AND LET ONE OF THE OTHERS DO IT FOR THEM, AND CUT THEMSELVES OUT OF THE PLEASURE OF A "JOB WELL DONE".. SO WE GIVE THEM TIME HOPING THAT SOME DAY THEIR VALUES WILL CHANGE AND THEY WILL JOIN THE WORK FORCE TO LEARN THE TRADE AND, WITH THAT, BE ABLE TO SEE THEIR LIVES AS UNCLUTTERED AS THEIR EXAMPLES.

I GUESS WE ARE JUST TRYING TO POINT OUT THAT A LITTLE EFFORT IN A.A. GOES A LONG WAY IN MAKING US MORE CONTENT.

ELSEWHERE IN THIS ISSUE YOU PROBABLY HAVE NOTICED THAT THE A.A. CLEVELAND DISTRICT OFFICE IS MOVING TO A DIFFERENT LOCATION ON NOVEMBER 5th. WE ARE ALL LOOKING FORWARD TO OUR MOVE, HOPE THAT THOSE WHO CAN WILL DROP IN AND SEE US WHENEVER YOU HAVE THE

CHANCE - WE WILL ALWAYS HAVE A CUP OF COFFEE NO MATTER WHAT THE WEATHER..BUT, GETTING BACK TO THE CHANGING OF SEASONS AND OUR IDENTITY, THINK ABOUT IT!!

YOUR TRUSTED SERVANTS

WHAT PRICE FRIENDSHIP?

Not long ago, I read in one of our popular magazines this startling question. 'What price do you demand for your friendship?' Every member of A.A. should ask themselves the same question. They should also ask themselves if their friends can afford to pay the price they are asking.

It has been noted that our fellowship is infected with a few men and women who have not solved their selfish demands for their friendship. They use their friends as pawns on the chessboard of their desires and ambitions. They are often hurt by something that someone said or didn't say. True, they yearn for friendship but at the same time, they carry a grudge against the world, because people are not willing to pay the price they demand for their friendship.

Actually though and fortunately, there are more wonderful men and women in A.A., moreso than anywhere else, who gladly share their friendship freely with others. They are the people we see at every group meeting and who add something to the emotional bank of others. They help to make the lives of others worth living, enjoy a friendship worth treasuring, their efforts are rewarding and their service to their group is stimulating and appreciated.

They are the givers instead of the takers and they put themselves out for the benefit of others. They have a mind equipped with an eraser to rub out the faults of others, eyes that overlook the physical defects others may possess, and ears that are deaf to disparaging remarks made about other persons, and hands that are not too busy to give a lift to another in need of help. They give their friends an unconditional loyalty without a price tag attached to it.

How expensive are we to our friends? How many unreasonable demands do we make upon them? Think this over and if the price is too high, let's do something about it!

Edward B. Akron, Ohio

Be a Bulletin Booster

AA CENTRAL BULLETIN ORDER BLANK. Please write distinctly . . . or print . . . to avoid errors. Includes fields for Name, Address, City, Zone No., and payment options.

ONE "AND" IS ENOUGH

We introduce ourselves at A.A. meetings with our name and the fact that we have the disease of alcoholism (if we have even admitted that.) Some say "alcoholics" and some "powerless." But some add at least one more "and". This was true at a recent meeting when one person said, "My name is. ..and I am an alcoholic and an addict and an abuser of just about any mind-altering substance." I wondered why the list was not continued ad infinitum. After all, we have all abused people, places and things and alcohol.

That is the point entirely! Why bother with the list? Attention, pride or Ego? It is crying out for help? That others will identify? One could add to the list of "reasons" for the list forever.

Sure! There is a place in A.A. for people with problems in addition to their alcoholism. Thank God! However, alcoholism is always the ultimate "topic" at A.A. meetings. Alcoholism is the only common problem with which we in A.A. have all been afflicted. Those who don't have alcoholism don't keep coming back. Our other problems come out of identifying and relating with those who share with us during the discussion of the topic or problems at the meeting and afterwards. Our responsibility is to help when we can whenever anyone asks for help to go on or to just get going. If an alcoholic feels that a problem other than alcohol may lead toward active drinking, then we must help if it is within our capacity to do so. To do less would be to deny our traditions.

But alcohol is the common problem which brings us together in search of the solution. Therefore, the only "and" needed in our initial introduction should relate to the only description which matters in the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous, alcoholism

After that things get complicated and confused enough on their own. Let's keep it simple at least at the level of introduction.

The Voice Akron Intergroup

A BANK CALLED "TIME."

If you had a bank that credited your account each morning with \$86,400 that carried over no balance from day to day -allowed you to keep no cash in your account - and every evening cancelled whatever part of the amount you had failed to use during the day - what would you do? Draw out every cent of course, and use it to your advantage.

'Well, you have a bank - and its name is Time.'

Every morning it credits you with 86,400 seconds. Every night it rules off as lost whatever of this you have failed to invest to good purpose.

It carries over no balance. It allows no overdraft. Each day, it opens a new account for you. Each night, it burns the records of the day. If you fail to use the day's deposits, the loss is yours.

There is no going back. There is no drawing against tomorrow.

It is up to each of us to invest this precious fund of hours, minutes, and seconds in order to get from it the utmost in happiness, sobriety and serenity.

Franco C., Seva Niketan Group Byculla, Bombay via The Twelfth Step.

Real charity doesn't care if it's tax-deductible or not.

STARDOM ON THE A.A. CIRCUIT

Before alcoholism wiped me out, I wrote plays. After I got into A.A. and began going to open meetings, I was overwhelmed by the real theater of the personal stories of recovered alcoholics. Invariably, their stories were filled with an intensity beyond the capabilities of average professional theater, and I believed that intensity derived as much from the **no-nonsense** honesty of the speaker as from the incredible details of his or her story. By comparison, street theater and cinema verite in particular were all but spoiled for me from then on.

Although, I had written and produced plays, I had always been too shy and self-conscious to perform myself. A.A. changed all that. In freeing me from the guilt and shame once attached to the admission that I was an alcoholic, A.A. gave me the **self-respect** necessary to get up in front of people and talk. Before long, I was even able to tell my story before large audiences. I loved it. I became an eager volunteer. I was willing to go anywhere for my group, in fair weather or foul. I wanted to be a good A.A. speaker - the very best - so I paid close attention to the other speakers I heard, checking them out for technique of delivery as much as for what they said.

What I learned was that the best speakers are those with the least artifice, the least professional. I found that when I concentrated on timing my jokes, or alternating pathos with humor in **carefully** premeasured spates, or when I included information that was extraneous to my alcoholism but might raise my status a notch or so with this or that group - when I put pleasing the audience ahead of personal honesty - I lost a **great** deal.

The very character defects I had been wrestling with ever since my last Fourth Step inventory were unleashed again; pride, hunger for praise, laziness, dishonesty, vengefulness. My troublesome ego, that compost nourishing all my shortcomings, was well on its way to rotting my being again, just as it had during the nightmare days of my drinking. It would have been a great threat to my sobriety to have sought stardom on the A.A. circuit. I had nearly forgotten that my primary purpose in speaking was not to win a top Nielsen rating, but to help myself, by remembering and laying bare the enormous changes alcoholism had worked on me and the impact of God and A.A. in my recovery.

Deliberately, I stopped speaking altogether for a while and got back into the kitchen on coffee detail till I'd cooled out the ego problem.

Today, I cherish speaking engagements. I space them far enough apart that each occasion is a new event, a time when I must **review** the past and look at the present from a fresh perspective. Only in this way do I see how I have grown in the program. Only in this way am I constantly aware that I am speaking as an alcoholic, not as a superstar who has a captive audience to play with.

We **are** all alcoholics, first of all; that is our identity. And our serenity lies in our accepting this at all times - above whatever other persona we think we have - whether it be an occupational, sexual, ethnic, or **socio-economic** identification. Making speaking engagements precious, singular events relieves us of the stereotyping of these other secondary identities and, at best, reveals to each of us the spiraling development of our alcoholic souls.

SO. OKANAGAN INTERGROUP

RESENTMENT

When we hold resentment against anyone we are bound to him with a mental chain. We must loose him and let him go. We can set ourselves free by forgiveness and turn our steps toward peace of mind **and** happiness, The technique of forgiveness is simple enough, The only essential is a willingness to forgive. Once we have that desire, the greater part of the work is already done.

Sometimes we attempt to alleviate the full implication of, and our responsibility for, many of our actions on the grounds that we are perfectionists. However, may it not be true that the perfection we demand is not in ourselves but of others? And when we fail to find it, we seek escape in liquor.

We are advised to forgo self-pity, to forget self, think of others, but mainly to think as an adult, to make haste slowly, to develop a true sense of values, to appreciate that A.A. is the most important thing in our lives.

I am impressed that the A.A. program is basically selfish. With that thought in mind, I cannot feel too smug. I am on this program primarily for my own benefit. If in my attempt to practice the program some **good** to others has resulted, I take **no** credit. I have been rewarded by the peace of mind and happiness I have obtained for myself. If we maintain our balance, we shall appreciate real values and realize that our giving in A.A. is in fact giving so that it may be returned to us a thousand fold.

Actually, what we are doing is making an effort to use our minds intelligently, to develop a kindly and understanding approach to others, to use what God gave us to use - our intelligence. If we do possess intelligence, we can claim no great credit. The credit goes to our ancestors.

Another item that should not be missed in passing is the so-called return to normal living. First, the attempt to define normality is the same as to define average. It is impossible. Normal for an alcoholic was not pleasant. Normal for us should be what normal is for most people who are happy and serene. Such people invariably follow the same principles advocated by A.A. I believe that a greater number of people follow these principles than do not. We are normal **only** when we do.

via Bristol Fashion

ARE YOU PLANNING TO MOVE?

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

Name

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It will help you and it will help us.



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940 Rockefeller Bldg.
614 Superior Ave. N.W.
Cleveland, Ohio 44113

VO. XIII-No.2

HONESTY

Honesty is a simple word, one we are all accustomed to hearing and using frequently. What does it mean? How important is it? Can I recognize it in others? Are others able to judge my honesty? Basic questions, agreed...but important to **me!**

As I mature in my sobriety, it becomes clearer to me how important it is for me to feel honest. I feel honest when I've made a sincere effort to be honest, even though I may not have succeeded. **Learning** to recognize when I'm not being honest is important to me. It means I'm growing... **provided** of course I act on this knowledge.

What does honesty mean? I'm not about to try to define it for you. To me, it's something each person has to determine for himself. So, my definition only applies to me! How important is honesty? To me honesty is every bit as important as my sobriety. I don't believe I can stay sober unless I'm honest! Can I recognize honest in others? I think so, but only part of the time. My job here is to remind me that in most cases it isn't any of my business. Are other able to judge my honesty? I don't know. My effort here is to avoid trying to impress others with how honest I am. People pleasing is always a temptation for me, and that certainly involves honesty (or **dis-honesty**).

The longer I'm sober, the more I can look back on my life and recognize behaviour I used to consider honest, **but now** see as something entirely different. I hope this process continues, as I see it as progress! I hope I will always remain grateful for the life I've found in this fellowship!

M.R. J,
Marvin R. Group

REFLECTIONS

After ten plus years of sobriety in AA I am amazed at the lack of discussion and understanding of the traditions. The mere mention of a meeting on the traditions is enough to invoke moans and groans. AA Comes of Age states "unless there is appropriate conformity to **A.A.'s** Twelve Traditions the group can deteriorate and die." It is, therefore, vital that we have a working knowledge of these traditions; for our recovery depends on the groups survival. As an old-timer I share the responsibility for not pushing our traditions, as I too have shied away from having this topic. Times have changed, more groups formed, but our basic principles must remain, not only for us but for those who will follow. The next time I'm asked to chair a meeting I'll have it on the traditions. How about you?

Joanne B.
Pick-Me-Up, Kansas

ARE DETOXES BEING USED TOO READILY?

An article with a provocative slant on one aspect of twelfth-stepping has appeared in several newsletters recently. Entitled "Detox Dumping" and written by Dean K, the article reads as follows:

"As recently as ten years ago, AA members were sitting with the suffering alcoholic, sometimes through the night, in an attempt to help him (her) stay sober. **A few** were still taking the drunk into their homes in an effort to generate **sobriety**. These were activities above and **beyond the** Twelfth Step of 'carrying the message,' but often proved successful and certainly helped both the suffering and the sober alcoholic.

"Today, the scene has changed. Word **of** the availability of detoxification centers has filtered down into the community of practicing drunks, and many times the first thing the sufferer asks is to **be** taken to detox. AA members, too, for the most part, have succumbed to the 'easier, softer way of taking the practicing alcoholic to a detox center immediately, and without determining the circumstances. Now, this is not necessarily wrong, but it raises a question of whether we are shirking our responsibility to try to carry the message to the **alcoholic** who still suffers.

"Of course, we are not doctors, and we are not qualified to determine whether or not an individual needs medical attention-nor should we attempt to do so. But more and more instances **are occurring** where the drunk merely needed an assist to get through the night, perhaps sleep it off, then return to work without losing any more time off-but instead, he is dumped into a detox center and forgotten. Perhaps all of us need to reread Chapter 7, Working With Others,' in the Big Book, and once more begin to follow **instructions**.

"Twelfth Step calls are never convenient, and seldom easy. But in order to keep what we **have**, we must give it away. This means a giving of our time, ourselves, and sometimes our money. Where would AA be today if Bill had simply dumped Dr. Bob into another hospital and let the contact go at that?

"When, in the opinion of an **AA** member, referral to a detox center is absolutely necessary, this should not be the end of the Twelfth Step call. The sufferer should be contacted upon release from detox, and an attempt made to bring him (her) to an AA meeting. In such cases, follow-up is almost as important as the first contact.

"And remember, the successful Twelfth Step call is the one where you walk away sober!"

-Box 459, Oct.-Nov. 1981



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Harry D., Founder and Editor 1692.1966

VOL. 42 NOVEMBER 1983 No.2

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 6, 1983 8:00 P.M.

OLD STONE CHURCH - PUBLIC SQUARE
CLEVELAND, OHIO

ALL GROUP REPRESENTATIVES WELCOME
BE INFORMED

ELECTION OF A VICE-MODERATOR

20TH NATIONAL A.A. WOMEN'S
CONFERENCE.

FEBRUARY 23 to 26, 1984

ATLANTA, GEORGIA
P.O. BOX 98409

IN MEMORIAM

RALPH CHARVAT, active member of Berea Men's Group, passed away Nov. 14, 1983. Our sympathy to the family.

ROY BOCHUS, of the Orchard Grove Group, sponsored by Clarence S. in 1940. Our condolence to the family.

DISTRICT OFFICE CORNER

Well, fellow members, as you know your District Office moved into its new quarters on Saturday, November 5th and all who have stopped in to see us agree that it is a pretty nice place and would like to suggest that, if you are in the downtown area, you are most welcome to stop in and say hello.

Needless to say - a move like this keeps all involved moving at a pretty fast pace and on moving day when we left that office - we were ready for business on Monday - with only a few loose ends remaining. Two of our A.A. members came in on the next Saturday and took care of the wall hangings so by the 14th we were all set. The staff at the office showed the same spirit of cooperation that is experienced by every one of us every working day we are together - it just wouldn't work any other way.

We have been happy to note that the last two Central Committee meetings - the months of October and November have shown an increase in members attending although there are still many more of our members who are not interested. We really don't know what contributed to the new interest but whatever it was, let it continue. Maybe the letter??

By the letter, we mean the one we sent out to all the groups trying to address questions that come up in the groups regarding sponsorship, dual addiction, attendance at meetings by those sentenced to A.A., etc. What we did was to try to ex-

plain to the members what we have experienced through our duties as your Trusted Servants.. we do not want Alcoholism Anonymous to fade out, become diluted or to stray from our Basic - and it won't if we try to live by the Principles that our program has given us but it will take the effort of every member of our Fellowship, whether you came in through calling the District Office or whatever means - we are all here because we have the dis-ease called Alcoholism and we are one alcoholic helping another.

Through the kindness that we know exists in A.A. -we do observe some things that are being done that **should not** be done at our meetings.. we are aware that families who lose someone might be in dire financial circumstances and might need some help with paying funeral expenses but this should be done through individual members (if it is their wish) and not be made a part of an A.A. meeting through the collection basket any more than a lot of requests that are made to support anything other than A.A. The suggestion has been made that any tickets that are sent to any group for support through raffle be returned to the source. Any mail that goes out carrying anything of this nature puts the sender in blatant violation of our Twelve Traditions and indicates that the Secretaries list is not being used in the proper manner. The very first page of your list describes the purpose of the list: "This list is for the purpose of helping Group Secretaries to contact each other and for the general welfare of A.A. and it's members. **IT IS AGAINST THE EXPRESSED WISHES OF OUR A.A. TRADITIONS IF USED FOR ANY OTHER MAILING PURPOSE**". There also follows another matter that we can speak about now and that is - when you, as Secretary, receive your new list, please destroy the old one. Sometimes when a new Secretary takes over - there is either a pile-up of old lists or none at all! Also having your name listed as Secretary of your Group places responsibility on your shoulders - it should be the primary purpose of every group secretary to accept the information for the call for help from their area and get some of the members to make the call.. **members**, if you are listed on a group roster, this carries the same responsibility. We are ashamed to say that many are in office in name only and every time we try to place a call in their area we are told that they cannot take it. If this is happening in your group, get your program into action and see that your Secretary is **Responsible**.. we do not like hearing that we have worked hard on a call only to see it crumble after it leaves our office. The party that calls needs us and you better believe that we need them to keep our own program alive!

The things that we mentioned here today are not in any way, meant to be cruel but rather to get us all to THINK ABOUT IT.

YOUR TRUSTED SERVANTS.

NOTICE TO ALL EMPLOYEES

It has come to the attention of management that more and more martinis are being consumed at lunchtime.

It has also come to the attention of management that vodka is being ordered because of less alcoholic odor.

From this date forward, it will be a firm rule of this company that gin must be used in martinis.

We would rather have our afternoon customers know that **our** employees are drunk than to have them think they are just stupid.

ALWAYS • CAREFUL • To • INVESTIGATE • OTHERS • NEEDS

SOBER SAM

HE HAD ALL THE ANSWERS EXCEPT THE RIGHT ONE

There was this guy on the Bowery we called Sober Sam. Now, Sam drank the muscatel right along with the rest of us, and got just as drunk as we did-but Sam had gone to a few AA meetings, and he knew the score. He talked about a "Fit Step," and he'd say, 'You guys are powerless over alcohol, you gotta drink. But me-1 can quit any time I want.' And Sam would prove it! He'd quit drinking, get in a week or so working at some job, and then come back all cleaned up with a few bucks in his kick. Of course, he couldn't work more than a week or ten days at a time, what with his cirrhosis of the liver, and he had a bad ticker. Every once in a while, we'd think he'd quit drinking and gone to work, but we'd find out later he'd been in the hospital with his liver or his heart acting up.

Sometimes, we'd be passin' a jug around and ol' Sam would tell us, 'Ya know, you guys should smarten up! This stuff is deadly for people like you! It don't get better, it always get worse.' He sure knew all about that AA stuff and I guess they taught him how you can tell who can drink and who can't.

One day we're bummin' down by Houston Street, and ol' Sam does a Brodie. Just like that, he's layin' there on the sidewalk, kinda mokused, and moaning. The cops come and take him to a hospital. Next day, me and Dixie Bill go to see him. He don't look much different (we seen him with his face washed before), and hhs in a good mood. "Want a chuckle?" he says. And he points at the scoreboard on his bed-tells what's wrong with a guy. And right there at the top it says "acute alcoholism." "These dumb doctors!" Sam says. "I told 'em I ain't no alcoholic. Why, you guys know how easy it is for me to quit. And you know what? This time I'm quittin' for good! I ain't never gonna take another drink!"

Well, he did't. That afternoon, Sober Sam died.

A.E.R., Bay Shore, N.Y.

Oct. 1973-Grapevine

A man can stand a lot as long as he can stand himself.



AA CENTRAL BULLETIN ORDER BLANK

Please write distinctly... or print... to avoid errors

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Address
Street

City Zip

One Year at \$3.50 Amount enclosed \$

Mail to Central Bulletin 940 Rockefeller Bldg.
614 Superior Ave. N.W.
Cleveland, Ohio 44113

HOW DO GROUP PROBLEMS GET SOLVED?

GROUP CONSCIENCE, the tool by which AA members become enlightened and responsible enough to manage their Group affairs through chosen representatives and exercise the final authority granted them under Tradition Two.

There are two ways to arrive at a group conscience. The competitive way permits the individual with the loudest voice to push his idea across, take a vote and the majority carries the decision. This is not an informed group conscience. In the cooperative way, group members come together in mutual trust to come to a group decision. Members are dedicated to the thought of a group decision, rather than someone's personal triumph. This brings the Group together in a receptive mood to find an agreement. This is not in an argumentative spirit, but rather in finding a solution, and not arriving at a snap judgement.

In seeking a cooperative and informed group conscience, it is necessary to have facts (or presentations) on both sides of a question. The meeting is now thrown open for general discussion - this would allow the more vocal members to set the debate. It is suggested the chairperson call on each member in turn, allowing two minutes for each to speak. No member should speak a second time until all members have spoken once. This method gives even the least vocal an equal chance. The chairperson expresses himself only after all others have spoken. The cooperative method is the way we try to live - it's written in our Traditions.

It is important that the minority voice always be heard, but it should be borne in mind that while sometimes the minority voice is right, just as often it is wrong. Unless the minority voice is decidedly persuasive, it should be considered in its proper light - as a minority voice. To permit the minority always to influence the majority is to permit the tail to wag the dog.

Warranty Four, in Concept Twelve, states, "that all important decisions be reached by discussion, vote and whenever possible, by substantial unanimity." This principle guarantees that all matters, time permitting, will be extensively discussed until a heavy majority can support the decision the group is called upon to make.

Copied from SEATTLE INTERGROUP.

NOTE OF INTEREST

In talking to Lois Fisher, the Texas representative in New York, she told us that they recently returned \$112,000 to a lawyer of a deceased non-member. The lawyer called repeatedly, scarcely believing that A.A. would truly turn down such an amount. IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SEVENTH TRADITION: A.A. accepts no outside contributions at any level. Likewise, in accordance with the Sixth Tradition, A.A. makes no contributions to any outside organization or cause, no matter how worthy.

November 2, 1983

WHO SAYS THERE ARE NO MUSTS?
HERE ARE 57 EXAMPLES AND REFERENCE
PAGES TO THE BOOK "ALCOHOLICS
ANONYMOUS" WHERE THE WORD MUST IS USED!

MUST Be no reservations 33
MUST Come from a higher power. 43
MUST, **Find** spiritual basis of life 44
MUST Be **rid of selfishness** **62**
DRY RUN Boston Mass "AA"
Kentucky News, Louisville, KY

MUST or it kills us 62
MUST resentments must be mastered 66
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MUST Believe **XXIV**
MUST Have depth **XXVI**
MUST Be grounded in a power greater than
. **XXVI**
MUST Stop drinking **XXVII**
MUST Help **XXVII**
MUST Feel **XXVII**
MUST Admit **XXVII**

WE NEED ONE ANOTHER

We alcoholics, when **drinking**, seem to get the feeling that we don't need anyone, even to the point of not needing God. **First** of all, I suppose, it is guilt that makes us feel that God doesn't want any part of us. Yet we keep searching and searching and nothing happens except we got drunk.

I was reading some church material the other evening and ran across the following **lines**:

"I sought my soul and sought my God,
But neither did I see.
And then I sought my brother
and then I found all three."

Eric Fromm in his book "The Art of Loving" states, "the deepest need of a man is to overcome his separateness, to leave the **prison** of his aloneness. The absolute failure to achieve this aim means insanity, because the panic of complete isolation can be overcome only by such a radical withdrawal from the outside world that the feeling of separation disappears-because the world outside from which one is separated has disappeared."

The fellowship of AA provides this need-the need of all humans to be a part of a group, to feel needed again, to become a part of the mainstream of society, to be with others who have felt this aloneness and through the fellowship have overcome this lost feeling.

In accepting the spiritual aspect of AA, we have possibly regained our faith in others and above all faith in God, and now need never be along again.

Ken G.
Silver Dollar

OLD TIMER- a beginner who goes to a lot of meetings and knows he might make it if he doesn't graduate.

ARE YOU PLANNING TO MOVE?

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City _____ State _____ Zip _____

IT WILL HELP YOU AND IT WILL HELP US.

MERRY
CHRISTMAS

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Published by
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Cleveland, Ohio 44113

VOL. XLII-No. 3

AM I RESPONSIBLE?

We often hear it said at AA meetings that the new members are the most important persons in AA. It is true that without the new members AA would surely quit growing-

But the most important person is the member who is responsible to his Home Group and AA as a whole. For without the groups, the new member has no chance of recovery.

Therefore, the older member knows that as the Twelve Steps will hold him together as an individual, the Twelve Traditions will hold his group and AA together. He knows that his efforts and the efforts of others of his group in working the Twelve Traditions will create the Group Conscience.

This Group Conscience in turn assures us that the AA Group will survive and our own sobriety as alcoholics will continue. For it is in the Fellowship at meetings that we often find the much needed help to stay sober.

Unfortunately, some members have the attitude that they are just "average members" and have no need of working the Traditions. They believe that the Traditions are just for the group's officers.

But, if we are honest with ourselves we will see that there can be no group without everyone doing his and her part.

It is our responsibility to attend the business meetings and help to elect our group officers. We should also express our ideas and opinions on issues that will affect AA. It is here that we shall see the group conscience in action.

If we went a step further and attended our Intergroup meetings, we would see how each group's representative helps to form an even greater group conscience. This is the way that policies are set for the local area of AA.

It is the Intergroup that pays to have an answering service for the sick and suffering alcoholic to call and get help.

The General Service Representative (GSR) takes our group ideas to the Area Committee meetings. They are given to our Delegate, who in turn takes them to the General Service Conference in New York. It is there that they help to set the policies that AA will follow.

So, the next time we hear the Traditions read, let's pay close attention.

For, whether we like it or not, it is we, the individual members, that make AA a whole.

Reprinted from The Winner's Circle,
Fort Knox, KY.

GOD

"We trust, sir, that God is on our side." "It is more important that-we are on God's side."

Lincoln

LET GO

To "Let go" does not mean to stop caring, it means I can't do it for someone else. To "let go" is not to cut myself off, it's the realization that I can't control another. To "let go" is not to enable, but to allow learning from natural consequences. To "let go" is to admit-powerlessness, which means the outcome is not in my hands. To "let go" is not to try to change or blame another, it's to make the most of myself. To "let go" is not to care for, but to care about. To "let go" is not to fix but to be supportive. It is not to judge, but to allow another to be a human being. To "let go" is not to be in the middle, arranging all the outcomes, but to allow others to affect their destinies. To "let go" is not to be protective, it's to permit another to face reality. To "let go" is not to deny, but to accept. It is not to nag, scold or argue with, but instead to search out my own shortcomings and correct them. To "let go" is not to criticize and regulate anybody, but to try and become what I dream I can be. To "let go" is not to regret the past, but to grow and live for the future. To "let go" is to fear less and love more.

CONTENTMENT

In our circle we refer to contented sobriety as the ultimate achievement in AA. I don't believe I have achieved the ultimate, but it is much better than it used to be. Hopefully if I work at it, it will be even better in the future. Tho it has taken a long time, I cannot believe that I could achieve the degree of contentment that I enjoy today.

When I look back at the envy I had for those who could drink socially, or remember the resentments I had toward those who had it made financially, I think of how I also resented those who tried to tell me what to do when. If I did something that I thought was going to bring me contentment when I arrived at my goal, I still was not satisfied. I certainly was not grateful for long.

To others I could always blame my actions that were not always sane or pleasing. That left me with the guilt-ridden feelings that only another drink would pacify.

Webster says, "Contentment is a state of being satisfied and please with things as they are, with ease of mind and heart." In part, I certainly agree this is at it is, but I cannot sit and rest on my laurels. I must constantly work at it to stay at this level of contentment, and earnestly work on the program to see if I can shake some more of my character defects to achieve even a higher level of contentment.

There are a few things I must always remember. One is to take things one day at a time, be always mindful of the Serenity Prayer, and to try to be thankful, with serenity, each day, I must constantly take my daily inventory and seek to achieve a balance in my life. I need plenty of A.A., other social participation, and, above all, I must be thankful for what I have, and what this program and other people have done for me and my family.

Ken G.
Silver Dollar



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Harry D., Founder and Editor 1892-1968

VOL. 42 DECEMBER 1983 No.3

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

TUESDAY, JANUARY 3, 1984-8:00 P.M.
 OLD STONE CHURCH • PUBLIC SQUARE
 CLEVELAND, OHIO
 ALL GROUP REPRESENTATIVES WELCOME
 BE INFORMED

THIRD LEGACY MEETING
 JANUARY 15, 1984 • 2:00 P.M.

ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH
 STATE RTE. 44 & PIONEER TRAIL
 ONE MILE SOUTH OF 82
 MANTUA, OHIO

ADVISORY MEETING

MONDAY, JANUARY 23, 1984 • 8:00 P.M.
 OLD STONE CHURCH • PUBLIC SQUARE
 CLEVELAND, OHIO

SALE OF INTERGROUP DINNER-DANCE TICKETS

20TH NATIONAL A.A. WOMEN'S
 CONFERENCE.

FEBRUARY 23 to 26, 1984
 ATLANTA, GEORGIA
 P.O. BOX 98409

INTERGROUP DINNER-DANCE
 MAY 5, 1984

SPEAKER: LIZ B. JAMAICA, N.Y.
 \$13.00 PER PERSON

IN MEMORIAM

ROBERT C. GESCHKE, active member of the Angel Group. Our sympathy to the family.

JOHN HAYEK active in the Seven Hill Men's Discussion Group passed away after a long illness. Our condolence to the family.



ALWAYS • CAREFUL • TO • INVESTIGATE • OTHERS • NEEDS

BE YOURSELF

"Accept the things you cannot change." Don't try to be someone else. Maybe we all saw too many movies as children -at least movies depicting hard drinking as macho and glamorous. The John Wayne type - The James Bond type -Or glamorous ladies drinking in rich sophisticated settings.

My ideal was the traveling executive who drank at airports and luxury hotels. I achieved that goal. People envied me traveling to resort areas to attend hard drinking conventions. For many years it was exciting. I could sober up the next day or after a three day binge Miami meeting. I tried to be the reserved laid back business exec. I drank to keep calm. I tried to be that smooth fictional character I saw in the movies. It wasn't me! Now I am sober being myself. Trying to be better but not someone else.

Ralph W.

VIEWPOINT:

I heard it said the other day, "He has just enough religion to be critical of others." The harsh criticism of others and unfair appraisal of those about you may hurt them, but it hurts you more. The unjust condemnation of others has a boomerang effect. You hurl your appraisals with the hope of crippling others but you may discover that you are hurt more than they.

Many a person is lonely today because he has driven away, but his own bitterness, the very friends he needed. Many a wife has discovered that scolding and continual nagging will never win a husband, but will often cause their marriage to end in a divorce.

We, in A.A., cannot afford this type of action if we are to stay contentedly sober. We cannot have a good A.A. group if we are constantly critical of one another. The Bible says "speak evil of no man. .but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men."

A man and wife visited an orphanage where they hoped to adopt a child. In an interview with the boy they wanted, they told him in glowing terms about the many things they could give him. To their amazement the little fellow said "If you have nothing to offer except a good home, toys, clothes and other things most kids have, I would just as soon stay here."

"What on earth could you want besides those things?" the woman asked. "I just want someone to love me," replied the little boy. I guess that pretty well sums up what we need most in A.A. — someone who cares. We want it, we need it, we get it in our fellowship.

Let's try to be a little more tolerant of our fellow members in A.A. and also of our families, because they are our total A.A. program.

Our fellowship is made up of people who have had a problem. Let's not be too quick to start tossing stones at them or even at others outside of our group no matter where they might be.

The bride was complaining to her friend about her new husband. "Harry and I fight all the time — I've lost 20 pounds since our marriage."

"Why don't you leave him?"

"I will — as soon as he gets me down to 100 pounds."

TOTHINKORDRINK

IFYOUWANTADRINK
 JUST START TO THINK.
 WHYDOIWANTTHATDRINK?
 WILLITDOWHATITHINK?
 LAST TIME I HAD A DRINK
 WHAT HAPPENED?-**THINK!**

EVERY GOAL MUST HAVE A BEGINNING,
 TO, IN THE END, HAVE A WINNING.

SO LETS RESOLVE
 NOT TO INVOLVE!
 WHEN YOU DRINK, YOU DON'T THINK,
 AND WHEN YOU THINK, YOU DON'T DRINK.

BE WISE,
 TAKE ADVICE.

IT IS BETTER TO THINK, WITHOUT DRINKING,
 THAN TO DRINK, WITHOUT THINKING.

COMPOSED BY A DETROIT MEMBER
 OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

AA THOUGH FOR THE DAY...

If we're going to stay sober, we've got to **learn to want** something else more than we want to drink. When we first came into AA, we couldn't imagine wanting anything else so much or more than drinking. So we had to stop **drinking** on faith, on faith that some day we really would want something else more than drinking. But after we've been in AA for a while, we learn that a sober life can really be enjoyed. We **learn** how nice it is to get along well with our family at home, how nice it is to do our work well at the office, how nice it is to try to help others. Have I found that when I keep sober, everything goes well for me?

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BIG BOOK

You probably have heard it said at meetings, all the answers are in the Big Book. Are they? When you have a problem, can you go to the index to look up the answer? For me, all my answers are in the Big Book, and not in an index. If I want to read about a problem I have, I use the book "AS BILL SEES IT." For me the Big Book has my answers, which I read on a daily basis. At one time I read two pages daily, as I was told to do. I kept hearing at meetings the importance of the first 164 pages. I like to read the stories also, so I started reading two pages in the front and two pages in the back every day. This is one of the tools of AA I use to get well.

I don't think we stress the reading of the Big Book enough. We all buy and give away Big Books, but so many are read one time and sometimes not at all and placed on a book shelf, never to be read again!

If AA's are reading the Big Book, why aren't they telling it in their leads? As I understand, after the first addition in 1939 some people had only the Big Book, literature and letters from New York to stay sober and they did it! Today we have so much more to help us, but for sobriety and beyond, read at least two pages of the Big Book daily.

The time is only 5 minutes a day or 1825 minutes a year. A year has 5 million, 25 thousand, 600 minutes in it. Is 5 minutes really to much to pay for 24 hours of sobriety?

Sincerely:
 Richard W.

A FACE IN THE WINDOW

One day, while waiting in an office ten floors up, a face appeared in the window. He was washing the windows. Needless to say I was nervous watching him swing back and forth. When he opened the window I remarked, "That's pretty risky business, isn't it?" 'Yeah,' he answered, "You can only make one mistake."

ONE MISTAKE!! How frightening, we all think, yet isn't life itself only one chance. One big chance to find everything, and especially everlasting happiness in sobriety and AA if we are an alcoholic. As we look back over our life we can see where we might have done better or thought we could.. but the chance was gone forever. How we regret those days of decision and think of how we wasted our years.

Those mistakes no doubt were financial, but an alcoholic is dealing with his life when he deals with alcohol. We are like the window washer...we can't afford to make a mistake. When God gives us the call to come into AA and we refuse it...it may be the last. ONE MISTAKE!!! How frightening!!! It may be the first drink that is that one mistake, and may be the deciding point of how you are going to spend the rest of your life here upon earth, and, who knows, maybe the rest of eternity. It's up to you to decide where you will go. NOT to your family or friends.

"Our time is as the passing of a shadow, and there is no going back on our end; for it is fast sealed, and no man returneth."

Leo R.

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

I do not consider myself an expert on alcoholism and I do not now, have many of the answers to all the problems of the alcoholics, but I am directing this message to the man or woman that is just starting on the adventure-road of sobriety*.

In attending your **first** A.A. meeting, you will hear a lot of talk about staying sober one day at a time, and of course this is the way that we stay sober. You will also hear someone say that if you do not take a drink today, you won't need one tomorrow. This should not be hard for you to understand. If you do not drink today, you will not suffer tomorrow. This sounds simple, and it is, but are you ready to stop punishing yourself?

Perhaps you have wasted many years in pursuit of the bottle, **now** you should start to pursue something that will bring your **life** into some kind of productive balance. You can live a productive life if you follow the suggestions that are offered you at A.A. meetings, and you will become aware of a better understanding of God and his grace. It is up to you to follow instructions and to try to build a new life out of the wreckage of the past. This is your responsibility, so start now, no one else can do it for you.

The lessons you may have learned when you were drinking are not as important as the lessons you should be **learning**. Your sobriety and your way of living will depend on how long you maintain your capacity to learn. No one graduates from A.A., but there are many men and women who are sober, ten, twenty and thirty years and they are still learning. If you will look around you at any A.A. meeting, you can pick them out of the crowd. They stand out above those mediocre who have stopped learning.

At this time you are sure that you will do everything to maintain your sobriety and you are reasonably sure that you will never take another drink as long as you live. "I will never take another drink as long as I live" is a familiar statement, perhaps you have made it yourself, but it never worked for us until we admitted that we were powerless over alcohol.

The novelty of your sobriety will wear off and temptation will cross your path, so start now to improve upon your character defects and reinforce yourself with moral courage. That courage will be revealed in time of temptation but only if you build it up before you need it. One cannot call upon moral strength if it is not there.

The A.A. way of **life** is the road to spiritual and moral progress. The Twelve Steps will show us where to go and how to get there. If you follow them to the best of your ability you will never stray away from the adventure-road of sobriety.

Eventually you will be asked to carry the A.A. message to another alcoholic. This will require some sacrifice and you may encounter some disappointment, but do not let that discourage you. Should you have but one success, it will be worth all the efforts. Our fellowship was hammered out on the anvil of trial and error by men and women like yourself. And my sincere wish is that God bless you in all your worthy endeavors.

Ed. B. Akron, Ohio

A.A. CAN'T HELP YOU— UNTIL YOU GIVE UP

It is a strange paradox but the **only** way to win the battle against the bottle is to give up. Surrender means victory -and brings peace of mind and interior rest.

Alcoholics who continue to fight against a drink rarely **remain** sober and never have the tranquility that is the hallmark of the AA member who has turned it all over and is working the program.

Call it acceptance, **call** it surrender, call it what you will, it is **STEP ONE**. "I can't drink and live my life that way I would try to live it. Life has become unmanageable, not necessarily everywhere or totally, but as unmanageable as I care to have it."

When I feel this, not just think it, I am on my way back up. It's not in the head, it's in the heart. It's acknowledging reality. Psychiatrists call it "ego deflation." Old timers **call** it "hitting bottom." Whatever, it is the key that opens the door and ushers us into **STEP TWO**.

Drowning people do not call for help until they realize that they are drowning. **AND**, they don't debate with the lifeguard who offers to save them, suggesting to him that they really haven't swallowed all that much water **YET** and would he please use the, breast stroke instead of the back stroke.

When you know you are desperate, you do not question, you reach out, you begin to trust, you begin to **BELIEVE IN A POWER GREATER THAN SELF**.

How do I make it happen, how do I get it, how do I surrender? I doubt if anyone quite knows that answer, but self-honesty is certainly a large part of it • eyeball to eyeball honesty about one's drinking and the trouble it (not something else or somebody else) is causing. That means **seeing** myself, my drinking, and the trouble my drinking is causing. It means seeing finally what everybody in my life has been seeing for probably a long, long time.

from "Looking Up", Dublin, N.H.

This we owe to **A.A.'s** future:

To place our common welfare first;
To keep our Fellowship united.
For on A.A. unity depend our lives,
And the lives of those to come.

ARE YOU PLANNING TO MOVE?

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IT WILL HELP YOU AND IT WILL HELP US.