



Vol. XLIV — Nos. 3 & 4

DEFINITIONS OF LOVE, AA STYLE

Love is not what I say, but what I do. We all know starry-eyed idealists and bleeding hearts who talk interminably about loving others — and many of us have watched their movement fall apart because they were not even able to get along lovingly with one another. Until we can like our next door neighbor, we had better stop talking about our love for the starving masses in India.

Love is honesty and the courage to risk rejection in service. When you ask my advice, telling you what you want to hear, (instead of the truth) is not love; it is seeking tribute for myself rather than helping you.

Love is responsibility. It is the answered letter, the returned phone call, the promptly kept appointment — because they spare you needless annoyance. Your feelings matter. A kept promise, an honored commitment, are aspects of love.

Love is respect for your rights. I owe you the right to be yourself as I expect the right to be myself. Voltaire said, "I disapprove of what you say, But I will defend to the death your right to say it." To treat another's opinions or life-style with "That's absurd!" or "That's wrong!" is to deprive him unjustly of his right to be what he is. At the least, it is rude — and courtesy is a child of love.

Love is imagination. It is imagination that enables me to give love's greatest gifts; compassion and understanding. If you weep your desperation out to me, what do I do? Unfortunately, most of us reply with a lecture. This is just dandy for us; it makes us feel superior, wise, helpful, noble and strong. It is also likely to make our friend with the problem feel inferior, stupid, helpless and weak.

Love is the arc that shelters. The voice that says — "How can I help?" It is the turning of I-and You into We so that the other person no longer feels alone. It is always loneliness and isolation that causes the real pain. The cry "No one understands" is the deepest grief. The empathy to answer "Ah but you're wrong, I understand" . is **Love**.

Extracts from an article in
The AA Grapevine, Sept.1972



SUBSCRIBERS: This issue is dated December 1985/January 1986. From now on the issue you receive at the end of each month will contain items pertinent to the following month. Also, please note that your subscription has been extended for one month to cover this double issue.

... EDITOR

THE HOLIDAYS

The holidays are a time of good cheer. It is the time of the year to care and share. It is the time to remember and visit loved ones. It is a time to remember the past and when we were very young. It is a time of fantasy and make believe.

Then how can it be a TIME OF DEPRESSION? Because, we fantasize the christmases of our childhood as being so wonderful. And our loved ones who have passed on as being so great. We alcoholics who have lost our children in divorce courts know how it is to be alone during the holidays or without relatives. Again we remember how wonderful it was when it wasn't wonderful at all. It was super tension caused by presents that we couldn't afford. It was the wife worrying about the turkey. It was me being drunk and angry cause the kids didn't buy me a Christmas present. All those sentimental Xmas TV shows . . . that is not real life that is fantasy make believe.

Turn the TV off and go to an AA meeting and get some good cheer. That is reality. Don't stay home and go on a pity pot trip.

There are AA meetings even on holidays.

Ralph W.

Euclid Wednesday Group



IN OUR 44th YEAR OF PUBLICATION



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Harry D., Founder and Editor 1892-1968

Vol. 44 December 1985/January 1986 Nos. 2 & 3

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

TUESDAY, JANUARY 7, 1986 • 8:00 p.m.

OLD STONE CHURCH-PUBLIC SQUARE
CLEVELAND, OHIO

ALL GROUP REPRESENTATIVES WELCOME
BE INFORMED

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

THURSDAY, JANUARY 23, 1986 • 8:00 p.m.

OLD STONE CHURCH-PUBLIC SQUARE
CLEVELAND, OHIO

Raffle for Saturday, May 3, 1986

Intergroup Dinner Tickets

Speaker: Rev. Clarence E.R.,

Columbus, Ohio

LIMIT: 1000-1200

GROUP ANNIVERSARY

GARFIELD WEDNESDAY — 39th.

January 29, 1986

IN MEMORIAM

Our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of these deceased members of our fellowship:

MARY ANN FAUST, Member of Strongsville Friday Women's Step Discussion, Passed away November 28, 1985

C. RICHARD ANDREWS, Member of Shaker Group, Passed away December 10, 1985.

DORIS MONDA, Member of Aurora Group, Passed away December 10, 1986.

DISTRICT OFFICE CORNER

HAPPY HOLIDAYS! ! The season to be jolly is with us again it is our sincere wish that you spend your holidays with a contented sobriety • • AA is a special gift we have been given, we have reason to rejoice.

We, here at the office, are looking forward, starting in the month of January with the busiest time of the year

behind the scenes, that is. We will be busy doing the background work on our Fund Drive Campaign and our Intergroup Dinner. . . but let the calls for help keep coming in, that is our priority.

In this month of December you will receive your final reminders from us on your pledge for 1985 and we know a lot of members pay at the end of the year for tax purposes or whatever; but remember when you send it in on the last day of the year we will not receive it until the beginning of the year and even though you are credited for 1985, it cannot go on our books as the deposit will go into the New Year and our records will show 1985 paid in 1986.

We are still going to ask for your support in getting more local articles into our Central Bulletin -we think it bears repeating because we think the AA here in our area is just about the best anywhere and we want our fellow members to know it-we say this humbly, of course, because you hear many members referring to their groups as the best and **THAT IS GRATITUDE!**

For our members who no longer live in this region, the weather report is pretty much the same as last month. We certainly have seen our share of rain and have experienced some very high winds and we have not had any but minimal snow • but soon our temperatures will be down around that point that helped you make the decision to move to a warmer climate. We are glad that it has only been rain so far but our little pun last month about the ark still doesn't seem too far fetched.

We will not take up so much space this month • but during this joyous and sometimes sad time of year for many • we want to remind you that it is much better to **STAY** sober than to **GET** sober. **THINK ABOUT IT!**

ON RESOLUTIONS

New Year, the first day of the new year. The day of hangovers and remorse; the day to forget the troubles of the year gone by; the day to start afresh, wiping the slate clean.

How much nicer it is for those of us in AA to greet the newest new year with clear heads, happiness, and courage in our hearts. How nice it is to have no thoughts of new year resolutions as such.

For all we in AA are concerned with this day, January 1. We need not plan the year ahead, to promise what we'll do. We know from experience that these resolutions seldom work, no matter how good our intentions. But we have learned that by taking one day at a time it is a great deal simpler to stay sober, to be kindly, to be generous, to be honest.

Most resolutions made New Year's day are quickly broken or forgotten. Not so with us. Our faith is still intact. Let tomorrow bring what it will. Today we are sober and happy and know from our growing experience that life is good and that AA is a lot of fun

Reprinted from 1950 Here's How

★★★★★

in certain parts of the world, people still pray in the streets. In this country, they are called pedestrians

ALWAYS • CAREFUL • TO • INVESTIGATE • OTHERS • NEEDS

ACCEPT THYSELF

It seems many of us in AA are prone to forget a portion of our Serenity Prayer — "accept the things I cannot change."

After we have our drinking under control, we often fail to accept the fact that we are still the same person we were before alcohol took control of our lives, and seemed surprised that we have not accomplished any outstanding deeds along the way.

When we do not achieve self-acceptance and the strain between the actual and the dreamed of self becomes great, the result is an unhappy and sometimes crushing sense of inferiority.

The importance of the problem is made evident by the unhealthy ways in which it is commonly handled.

Some of us deal with it by the smoke screen method. Feeling miserably inferior and not wanting others to know it, the shy among us become aggressive, the embarrassed effusive, and the timid bluster and brag.

Others like the fox in the fable, call the grapes they cannot reach — "sour."

Others find excuses, based on exaggerated acknowledgment of their inferiority, failing at some endeavor, we say, "Well, I'm an alcoholic, everyone knows that." Far from being said with despair, this is announced with relief; it is a perfect excuse; it lets us out of all responsibility, yet factually it is absurd, and emotionally it is abnormal.

In accepting ourselves for what we are, we may well begin by reducing to a minimum, the things that mortify us, and resolve that we may never set the world on fire, we will do the best we can with what we have, and never for a moment forget that AA gave us a new way of life, and it is up to us to stop complaining and do something about it.

As a lovable character in a play I once saw said, "I ain't much, but I've all I got." That is the place to start. Such self acceptance is realistic, humble, self respect.

Gert B. Albuquerque, N.M.

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WHAT IS A SPONSOR

Sponsors are people who God has favored in some special way. He personally gave me a beautiful abiding faith. He also gave me the ability to read and put into words my feelings about the AA Program and God as I understand Him

We are drawn to our sponsors by their ability to relate their experiences, feelings and emotions.

Sponsors sometimes hurt a lot. They possess a quality I choose to call "Tough Love". They will chew you out to set you straight, when all their instincts and emotions tell them to comfort you.

Baby sitting alkie does not work. Over dependence on other people brought us here in the first place.

Sponsors have tremendous love for those they endeavor to help. We who are being sponsored sometimes forget our sponsors are alkie too, subject to the same human frailties. Only their sponsors know how they can hurt us.

We as sponsors may have to let you go occasionally, but we never give up on you.

Caring and sharing are more than mere words to those of us fortunate enough to be asked to be sponsors for our fellow sufferers. We love every minute of it, because it helps us to grow in our own programs. To me caring and sharing is loving and giving.

It is well for all of us to remember "Growth in AA is life. When we stop growing, we start to die."

Reprint from "Here's How",1976

NEWCOMER CORNER

There comes a time in the life of each of us when we must make that great decision: am I or am I not an alcoholic.

Until this decision is reached, there will be no progress made toward a continuous and contented sobriety.

There is a great deal of confusion about the matter and it is unfortunate that many of us have to listen to the wrong words or read the wrong material concerning this decision.

In the interest of simplicity or clarity we might consider the choices we have in the matter, there are three:

1. We are tee-totalers
2. We are social drinkers
3. We are alcoholics

The idea of any of us being a tee-totaller is sufficiently laughable to require no comment. There, we must decide if we are social drinkers or alcoholics.

This is the area of confusion and we can only add to it by any sort of lengthy discourse. It is our aim to keep it simple and we do it thus: If we were social drinkers, we would not have to make such a decision. No social drinker in the world has ever had such a problem. When we must decide whether or not we are alcoholic, we have already crossed the line. Sorry about that, it seems like such a dirty shame. But the moving finger writes, kids, and all thy tears will not bring it back to cancel nary a line. Look that baby in the eye a spell.

Rosalie Newspaper

MY PROBLEM WAS "IMPURITIES" IN BOOZE

I drank Alcoholicly for 30 years, until I was a basket case and until the prayers of my loved ones caused me to call an AA friend for help.

That was 14 GREAT years ago.

When I tell my story at meetings, around the discussion tables and even in casual conversations I try to emphasize my years of denial and my "quick forgetter". It helps me to remember where I came from and perhaps helps others.

The denial involved my total unwillingness, perhaps even inability, to admit to myself or others that I had a drinking problem or had become an alcoholic. That denial persisted through many sodden years, despite a DWI arrest, despite the shakes so bad that I couldn't sign my paycheck or tee up a golf ball without a couple of stiff doubles.

On those days when I'd been unable to have a couple before meeting Buddies at the golf course, I would declare on the first tee that I'd been having trouble with my woods - - so I just tossed a ball on the ground and hit a 3-iron without a tee. (I still have trouble with woods today, but not with tees.)

I reinforced my denial with some amazing, irrational theorizing. At one point I decided that the shakes were caused by "oversmoking" - - too mdny cigarettes along with booze at night. I switched to pipe smoking and cut down on smoking frequency - - but kept right on shaking.

Another time I figured that the shakes, and hangovers were caused by "impurities" in the medium-priced Scotch I was consuming at the rate of a half gallon every two days, with beer chasers. So I switched to the highest-priced Scotch obtainable, and imported beer, shrewdly calculating that the longer-aged whiskey and expensive beer would be free of "impurities. Imagine my surprise to find that the astronomically-priced brands were full of impurities too and produce the same shakes and hangovers.

At other times I made a great "medical discovery", I rationalized that the alcohol in my bloodstream was fighting off c-old germs and other harmful viruses; immobilizing them. I became immobilized myself on many occasions.

I was totally unable to properly determine cause and effect. I was very much like a little boy who was in the hospital about to undergo a tonsilectomy. The boy's father told the surgeon to please remove a callus from the boy's foot at the same time the lad was under the anaesthetic for removal of his tonsils.

The doctor performed as requested and when the lad came out from under the anaesthetic he asked his nurse if she'd ever had her tonsils out.

"Yes," she said, "when I was about your age."

"Gosh," said the boy, "It sure mdkes your foot hurt, doesn't it?"

I'm also, besides my denials, a dramatic example of the fact that alcoholics have "quick forgetters" - - that "pain has no memory" as they say. Sonic 25 years before calling for help, when vestiges of control remained, I managed after a disgraceful episode to stop drinking for about

four years. I was tough and shaky at first and led a narrow work and sleep and read life, but I did manage to stop. Then, without AA or meetings or asking of my Higher Power for help, I completely forgot my troubles with alcohol - - shakes, that DWI, hangovers, quitting a good job before being thrown out.

So I started to drink again, just a couple on weekends at the start, then daily, then round-the-clock. It wasn't long before I was in sad shape again - - physically and mentally. incidentally, my alcoholic clock had kept ticking during those dry years. It was as if I never stopped. When I started up again, I was further down on the "Down" elevator - - not yet in the basement, but getting there.

I sincerely believe that without AA Steps, meetings, and prayer I'd quickly forget again and my denial mechanism would begin to function once more.

But why would I want to abandon this delightful iellowship and AA way of life?

A.M. Lakewood

PHILOSOPHY

Two phrases in the English language are identified with iailure and defeat. They have been the stumbling blocks for hundreds of thousands of human beings. "What's the Use?" "Why should I?" Those phrases have been fatal to success.

The quitter always asks, "What's the use?" The battle no more than starts when he throws in the sponge. He accepts no challenge, has no goals, no visions. Any old thing is good enough. "If, at first you don't succeed, no use at all to try again." The world is against him, he feels. But it's only himself, if he would only stop to think.

The work dodger sneers, "Why should I? Let the other fellows be the suckers. I'm doing enough to get by." This poor sap is too lazy to think, too selfish to put his shoulder to the wheel in a common cause. By watching the clock he will not do a lick more than he is paid for -probably less.

The folks who pass him by, who push him aside in fact, are the ones who say, "Come on, let's go;we'll try again; it's got to be done." This is earnestness. This is friendliness. These achievers pass right through the 0 in Obstacle. They do not stumble.

ARE YOU PLANNING TO MOVE?

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IT WILL HELP YOU AND IT WILL HELP US.



Published by
Cleveland Central Committee of AA

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Cleveland, Ohio 44113

Vol. XLV — No. 5

AA'S SINGLENESS OF PURPOSE

As many young people come into the program with chemical dependencies in addition to alcohol, the pros and cons concerning "dual addiction" and "cross-addiction" and their relationship to the AA way of life are frequently debated by both members and those in the professional community.

AA's posture remains clear. We do not diagnose anyone's alcoholism; we leave that to the individual and to the professionals. Most AA members eventually chose to call themselves alcoholics, but this is not a condition for belonging to the fellowship.

At the 35th General Service Conference, it was recommended that the following be inserted in the pamphlets "If You Are a Professional" and "How AA Members Cooperate": "The only requirement for membership in AA is a desire to stop drinking. If the person is not sure about this point, then he or she is most welcome to attend an open AA meeting. If the person is sure that drinking is not his or her problem, then he or she may wish to seek help elsewhere."

In view of the thorny issues surrounding the definition of alcoholism and the proliferation of self help groups patterned on AA, the following words by AA co-founder Bill W. ("AA Comes of Age") some 30 years ago seem prophetic today:

"There are those who predict that Alcoholics Anonymous may well become a new spearhead for a spiritual awakening throughout the world. When our friends say these things, they are both generous and sincere. But we of AA must reflect that such tribute and such prophecy could well prove to be a heady drink for most of us — that is, if we really came to believe this to be the real purpose of AA, and if we commenced to behave accordingly. Our society, therefore, will prudently cleave to its single purpose: the carrying of the message to the alcoholic who still suffers. Let us resist the proud assumption that since God has enabled us to do well in one area, we are destined to be a channel of saving grace for everybody.

On the other hand, let us never be a closed corporation; let us never deny our experience for whatever it may be worth to the world around us. Let our individual members heed the call to every field of human endeavor. Let them carry the experience and spirit of AA into all these affairs, for whatever good they may accomplish."

Winter 1986 "About AA"
Newsletter for Professional
Men & Women NYGSD

FEAR OF FAILURE

I did every thing very well. The only problem was, I didn't do much. I did not play unless I could win, unless I could be better than most. I only chose the subjects and courses in which I could excel. I didn't participate in many sports as I couldn't be the star. I was not built or coordinated that well.

I was afraid to fail ! ! !

Fear of failure is a natural thing. We all want to do well and look favorable among our equals. But if you don't, you can't succeed. I learned that I had to learn to fail, to accept failure before I could succeed at tasks like talking before an audience. One step at a time: first one tries commenting at an AA meeting, then one becomes a chairperson, and finally one "leads". tells his or her story at an AA meeting.

Fear is an inherited trait of our animal nature. It goes back to early times when we had to fight or run from the sabre tooth tiger. Fear warned us and protected early man from danger. Toddler fear is not needed that often to get our body alert with adrenalin. In fact it can work against us. I as an alcoholic have known unfounded fears and the sense of impending doom. But simple fears I now can handle and I am no longer afraid of failure.

Ralph W.
Euclid Wednesday Group

ONLY ONE TO A CUSTOMER

This bright, new day. Complete with 24 hours of opportunities, choices, and attitudes. A perfectly matched set of 1449 minutes. This unique gift, this one day, cannot be exchanged, replaced, or refunded. Handle with care. Make the most of it. There is only ONE to a customer.

Dr. BOB SAID

"It is possible for us to grow or not to grow, as we elect. If we fight shy of entangling alliances, if we avoid getting messed up with controversial issues (religious or political or wet-dry), if we maintain unity through our central offices, if we preserve the simplicity of our program, if we remember that our job is to get sober and stay sober and to help our less fortunate brother do the same thing, then we shall continue to grow and thrive and prosper."

Dr. Bob S. AA co-founder
(Last major talk) Detroit 1948
"Here's How"

CENTRAL BULLETIN



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Harry D., Founder and Editor 1692.1966

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District Office (216) 241-7387

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 1986 - 8:00 p.m.

OLD STONE CHURCH-PUBLIC SQUARE
CLEVELAND, OHIO

ALL GROUP REPRESENTATIVES WELCOME
BE INFORMED

N. E. OHIO GENERAL SERVICE MINI-CONFERENCE

March 14, 15, 16 1986

Ramada Inn • Akron, Ohio

Watch your mail for further details

REMEMBER:

MARCH is Fund Drive Campaign Month

GROUP ANNIVERSARY

AURORA FRIENDLY • 12th

February 15, 1986 • 7:00 p.m.

IN MEMORIAM

Our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of these deceased members of our fellowship:

CLARA STROUSE, 41 years of sobriety and a member of the Elyria St. Agnes Group passed away Jan. 6, 1986. Secretary of the group for 30 years.

★★★★★

DISTRICT OFFICE CORNER

AA FRIENDS ARE EVERYWHERE - Now that the year is in its second month and most of our New Year's Resolutions have been broken or badly bent - can we remind you there is no need to despair . . . it happens all the time, not only to us but to all those "other people".

Last issue we reported what we would be doing in the early days of the year and we meant what we said - we are busy -the calls for help and the calls for 'just conversation' were - and are still coming in. We have learned with these calls that the Holidays proved to be too much for many people and they, in trying to make their **very important** decision, find it necessary to talk to us. We are sure that some of them did benefit from their call.

We want to thank those who sent in articles for the Central Bulletin but please, if you have more to say, do not make it a one time happening. you don't know how many people you help through sharing! We are going to continue to make our request for articles and remember you don't need a special degree to be a contributor-the Language of the Heart is the language spoken here and we can all benefit from what you send in - if your article doesn't appear right away, please be patient, get yourself a subscription and keep watching for it's printing.

The Central Bulletin will also be happy to announce any group anniversaries provided they reach the District Office before time to go to press - so, if you know in the beginning of each month, send them in . the 15th is the deadline.

You know how the new year's coming is? We begin thinking of all those we have met in the program and don't see any more, we miss you and would like to shake your hand at a meeting. we think of all those we grew to know and love who are no longer with us in this world and we say an extra prayer. we might know that someone has had some trouble and has left us for awhile and we pray that they make it back to us -even though it seems the hardest thing you will ever do - try it and see it could have been any of us and we will welcome you warmly.

It must be Nostalgia time - we would like to see a column in the Bulletin merely signed "By George!" - get the hint? Dick F. has just had a "moving" experience (pardon the pun, Dick) but why not let us know what you are doing? Dick P. from sunny California, some day-when you get time? All of you everywhere. We have members here in our area who are looking forward to their Florida vacation just so they can get to "that meeting on the beach" where they find some members who formerly lived here and they can remember AA in Cleveland together.

One thing about the months between the Holidays and Spring when you're in AA - we never have time to experience those "stress blahs" that we are reading about and, if we do have time, we **know** that we can do something about it. **THINK ABOUT IT!**

In Retrospect

The longest journey I chose to make
was thru the 'Land of Beginning Again'.
It's hard, I was told, to grow and to change,
and the journey never ends.

Each day I am given all that I need
to carry me thru to the next; strength out
of weakness, joy out of pain,
Lord, help me to make amends.
And should I forget for one moment, that's all,
the torment I put myself thru,
May God in his wisdom show me today
and the life I've been given anew.

Kathy

★★★★★

In certain parts of the world, people still pray in the streets. In this country, they are called pedestrians

SLIPS-OTHER THAN WITH ALCOHOL

It has taken me several years in the program to realize that I can slip in other ways besides taking a drink. I can slip spiritually and/or morally if I let my guard down and allow the old thinking to enter. A dear friend of mine has a saying, "Sober up a drunken horse thief and what you have is a sober horse thief".

The penalty for these types of slips is mentally I am sure the same as a wet slip, guilt, shame, regret, remorse and anger.

I believe that the more spiritual knowledge that one possesses the more severe is the punishment which he brings upon himself by any infraction of the moral law.

I must avoid the three "Rs" because they contribute greatly to slips, Resentment, Revenge, and Remorse. First the resentment starts the sick thinking into motion, then the revenge thinking comes into play and after partaking of revenge the regret and remorse finish the entire sick episode.

I forget at times what the second part of the first step tells us, that our lives **HAD** become unmanageable, this means that they still are in many areas.

I thank God that he allows me to see these things about myself today, because there was a time before AA that I was not able to be honest with myself.

Lou s.
"Here's How" 1976

WILLINGNESS

Under the lash of alcoholism we are driven to AA, and there we discover the fatal nature of our situation. Then, and only then, do we become as open minded to conviction and as willing to listen as the dying can be. We stand ready to do anything which will lift the merciless obsession from us.

"Steps and Traditions"

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A GOOD IDEA

"Starting today, the lead will receive a years subscription to the Central Bulletin." An excellent idea. It would be a gesture of gratitude if more groups would do that.

In the 1960's I recall that many groups gave a bulletin subscription as part of the door prize. I don't hear of that so much anymore. In fact, I don't hear much mention of the Central Bulletin anymore.

In it I find items of what's going on where; What happened recently that was news to me; who recently passed on to Eternal Sobriety that I hadn't heard about; short articles with eye-catching words such as acceptance, gratitude, the only requirement and many others each month.

Articles are brief and easy to read. There may be an improper word or an error in grammer, here and there, but like leads, some of the best murdered the "Kings English"! the message is still there.

Our Central Bulletin is the oldest continuous AA publication in existence. It merits our support. The group secretary who announced that the lead would receive the subscription had a good idea. **Why don't more of us try it?**

Dick D.

SATISFACTION

The greatest satisfaction in life is not in getting ahead of others, but in getting ahead of ourselves. It comes from breaking records, from doing something better today than we were able to do yesterday. Trying to get ahead of others is a mistake which often leads to envy from failure to conceit from success. In trying to outdo ourselves we have nothing to lose and a world of satisfaction to gain.

MIRACLE

When you settle down to analyzing it, There just isn't any other word that will fit AA fellowship but "miracle." Here is an outfit founded by two of the world's most unloved creatures . . drunks. And these two drunks had the key to a sane and sober living, not only for themselves, but for thousands of alcoholics yet to come. This simple program for daily living discovered by these two drunks was a solution to their drinking problem. We should be eternally grateful that we were able to have a small part in this wonderful "miracle" of our AA.

Central Bulletin Nov. 1970

★★★★★

A prominent businesswomen, we'll call Mrs. B., was taken to her first AA meeting after much reassurance that her anonymity would be protected. When the leader asked the newcomers to stand and give their first names, several people began rising from their seats. Just then, there was a power failure and the room was plunged into darkness.

"My God", said Mrs. B., "they don't have to go this far!"

THE GENERATION GAP

I don't quite know why I'm writing this article other than it's something I need to work on. But there tends to be a problem not just in me but in our fellowship as a whole. One of a generation gap.

I am a very active member of Young Peoples in AA. I sit on the steering committee of my home group which is the largest of these young peoples groups.

I'm as guilty of helping proliferate this problem as the next person. My attitudes and fears have kept me in a self imposed jail. One where the walls are strictly young peoples meetings taken over by young people.

I grew up during a period of time where as a teenager I was constantly yelling that the older generation didn't understand me. They were closed minded. How closed minded can I be? I was more interested in pointing out the splinter in my friends' eyes rather than worrying about the board in my own. Young Peoples is a special interest group. I had forgotten that. It's sole purpose is to help the young alcoholic- realize that you don't have to drink for 30 years to become an alcoholic, to acquaint us with the principles in the big book of Alcoholics Anonymous, and to help us feel a part of rather than apart from. Yet, how can we be a part of something we don't participate in? We get angry over pamphlets and waste much valuable meeting time and energy trying to convince each other that we are right. I was taught sometimes it's better to be happy than to be right.

Maybe it's time to set aside our pride and resentments and participate, participate in AA as a whole, use our energies in positive, constructive ways and to help fellow alcoholics recover and brighten and better the lives of those we come in contact with each and every day.

Anonymous

Reprinted from "Footsteps"



"The spiritual substance of anonymity is sacrifice. Because AA's Twelve Traditions repeatedly ask us to give up personal desires for the common good, we realize that the sacrificial spirit-well symbolized by anonymity-is the foundation of them all. It is AA's proved willingness to make these sacrifices that gives people their high confidence in our future.

" Anonymity is real humility at work. It is an all-pervading spiritual quality which today keynotes AA life everywhere. Moved by the spirit of anonymity, we try to give up our natural desires for personal distinction as AA members both among fellow alcoholics and before the general public. As we lay aside these human aspirations, we believe that each of us takes part in the weaving of a protective mantle which covers our whole Society and under which we may grow and work in unity.

We are sure that humility, expressed by anonymity, is the greatest safeguard that Alcoholics Anonymous can ever have."

From "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions", with permission of AA World Services, Inc.

AN ASSESSMENT AFTER 90 DAYS

I came to Alcoholics Anonymous because I was too sick and too weary to function any longer, I was dead to the idea of any future for me, and in a perverse way, content.

At the treatment center, I got caught up in the pretense of wanting to get well. But, God knows, the thought of continuing that struggle took more energy than I had. If I wanted any semblance of peace and quiet there, I had to play their game.

Somewhere along the line though, I began to play in earnest. One morning, something inside me said "MAYBE," and with that "MAYBE" I was doomed, already crawling around the corner and starting up, quite against my will at first. Now, it seems there might be a way out; a positive responsible way, if I want it. And I am beginning to shudder and quake inside.

I opened the door just a crack for HOPE and in slithered EXPECTATIONS.It's SCAREY.

And that's what I want to say. I'm scared. I'm scared that I won't make it. I'm scared that I will. I'm scared that I will and no one will care. I'm scared that I'll turn out to be an insufficient person sober,no one will love me. I'm scared that I will be thrown into some vast empty space alone, my life entirely changed. I'm afraid that everyone will think it's wonderful and expect great things of me and rally around with love and support, and nothing will have changed in me.

Yet, I can't go back. There is no way to unlearn what I have learned, to erase those particular tapes, to lapse back into innocent ignorance of the nature of my problem and it's unignorable solution.

So, I'm forging ahead timidly. But, I am also terrified and a little angry. I never meant to buy a ticket on this train. It was another trip I intended never taking.

I am excited, though. I've never been through this territory before, and when I'm not cringing under the seat expecting imminent derailment, I'm hanging out the window enjoying the scenery.

I am 90 days into the program of AA and these are my feelings. I did this for myself.

Pam N. Oregon AA
"Here's How"

ARE YOU PLANNING TO MOVE?

If so, clip this coupon and mail to 940 Rockefeller Bldg., 614 Superior Ave., N.W., 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.



Published by
Cleveland Central Committee of A.A.

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

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; and 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!

The opportunity is here again during this month of March. AA groups and individual members will be asked to contribute to the support of the District Office . . . bear in mind that even though some areas are changing and are trying to establish their own Intergroups - you are still relying on the Greater Cleveland District to supply your literature, etc. The money you contribute pays the salaries of the full time Secretary and her assistants, office rent, telephone, electricity, night-time telephone answering service, literature, printing, postage and other costs.

Last year 385 groups and 2990 individual AA members pledged money to support the work of your office. We have many more members than that. We also have 600+ AA groups listed for our services. This year it is hoped that even more groups can see their way clear to making a group pledge and that we reach more individuals. 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 the District Office may be able to continue the invaluable service for which it was organized over 40 years ago. . we have had a District Office in the Cleveland area that was incorporated in 1945! 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.

★★★★★
THEN LAUGH

Go build your worries a strong box and have every part strengthened with care. When it is as strong as your efforts can make it, enclose all your troubles right there. Store in it all thoughts of failure, and each bitter cup that you quaff. Lock all your headaches within it, then sit on the lid and **LAUGH!**

Bristol Fashion

AA MEMBERSHIP

"The only requirement for membership (in AA) is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for AA membership, we are self-supporting through our own contributions".

Those words contain hope for the people who suspect they may have a drinking problem, but are not quite ready to admit they are alcoholic, or they may in fact start working on their problem before it becomes full-fledged. They also offer hope to those of us who must have a **desire** in order to live. We can pounce on this hope knowing that we will not be denied because we have wrecked our financial position by our past actions. We need no money, yet our program will remain self-supporting through our contributions, thereby keeping out the many elements whose desire would be to tell us how Alcoholics Anonymous should be operated-turning it into an organization no longer recognizable as the one to which we owe our existence. Where do the contributions come from if there are no dues or fees?

There are dues and fees. We owe a great debt to AA. But it need not be money. After beginning a new life, most of us can again become productive people, which may mean we will have a wage or salary coming in. We can then begin sharing in monetary ways to help cover those who have not yet gained that advantage. The dues and fees every member can contribute are themselves and what they can do to help the program.

Some of us may be able to lead meetings, while others may never be able to. It will work out because the coffee pot is an integral part of an AA meeting and requires no standing before a group of people to make the coffee in it. Right now my health does not permit me to manipulate chairs, but I will clean tables and ashtrays while you put those chairs away. (Each person will have disposed of his/her own cup and pastry crumbs.) If being secretary of a group is too much for you, perhaps you would like to try being chairman. If you have no transportation to make twelve-step calls, how are you on the telephone to give the **reach out and touch someone** effort? You can certainly extend you hand to the new person at a meeting-perhaps yours is the hand they need to touch. You may be the only person who has just what that new person needs; what a shame if you withhold. Inspiring comments are made by persons who walk by a new person without acknowledging him/her on their way out the door at the end of a meeting and the comment loses some of its effect.

Please God, help me to pay my dues and fees although I have no money! !

Ruby S.
Acceptance Group



Published monthly by the Cleveland Central Committee of A. A., a non-profit fellowship dedicated to service. Address all letters to Central Bulletin, 940 Rockefeller Bldg 614 Superior Ave NW Cleveland, Ohio 44113. Subscription price - \$3.50 per Year.

Harry D., Founder and Editor 1892.1968

Vol. 44 March 1986 No. 6

District Office (216) 241 - 7387

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, March 4, 1986 - 8:00 p.m.

OLD STONE CHURCH -PUBLIC SQUARE
CLEVELAND, OHIO

All Group Representatives Welcome
Be Informed

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Friday, March 21, 1986 - 8:00p.m.

OLD STONE CHURCH -PUBLIC SQUARE
Election meeting for 2 new members to the
Operating Committee

11th ANNUAL NORTHEAST OHIO MINI — CONFERENCE

March 14, 15, 16, 1986

RAMADA INN -AKRON, OHIO

Advance registration no later than March 4th. District Office will have further information on registration after the 4th of March.

GROUP ANNIVERSARY

WEST SIDE ONE DAY AT A TIME
THIRD ANNIVERSARY

Tuesday, March 11, 1986

IN MEMORIAM

Our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of these deceased members of our fellowship:

KENNETH MURTON, 45 year member passed away
January 25, 1986

REV. JOHN WALSH, MEMBER OF Westlake Discussion
Group

CLARK KEYES, January 15, 1986 in Naples FL., formerly
of Westlake, Ohio

20th ANNIVERSARY OF SISTER MARY ICNATIA'S DEATH

Services - St. John's Cathedral

Friday, April 4, 1986 - 2:00p.m.

Further information, call John F., 946 - 1458

DISTRICT OFFICE CORNER

Your folks at District Office are trying to "hang in there" with the flu bug trying to nibble on the ears of all of us. . . so we know that we are in "that" season again and soon we'll be on our way out into spring. Time goes so fast when we are occupied with things outside ourselves.

Elsewhere in this issue you will read an article stressing the importance of our Fund Drive Campaign. As always, we have two dedicated members of the Operating Committee as Chairman and Co-Chairman of the Fund Drive Campaign and they are trying (on their own time) to line up Captains to oversee the collections in the groups in their home areas. You would be surprised at some of the excuses! It is not shameful to stand up in front of a group of AA members and ask them to recall the Seventh Tradition of self-support so that we can keep the doors of AA open. Weren't they open when **YOU** called? If you did not call for help but came in some other way, isn't it nice that you are provided with information on locations of groups so you can maintain your sobriety?

Other things have come to the attention of the District Office besides the usual and that is the fact that there are certain members, other organizations, sales people, etc. that are sending mail to AA groups in our area. We know that this is in violation of Traditions and most of those who direct mail to the groups also know this is a **breach-but** they do it anyway under the guise of 'helping others to learn' or whatever the issue. We have heard that out there in our ranks there are some people who think we furnish the mailing list to such persons. If this were true, if we had such disregard of our Purpose in life, we would not be here. As was discussed at the February Central Committee meeting-names of groups are being taken from the World Directory.

Hopefully, with the printing of the next Directories, this will no longer be possible because they will not be listing addresses and, unfortunately, until this comes to pass we probably will receive more of the same.

The last of these dealt with a group who are wanting to conduct studies to teach "the predisposition toward alcoholism" of a member of a family who has some alcoholism in their families. . . some folks just have to keep busy.

We suppose that the message meant to be carried in this **CORNER** for the month is: Be grateful that we have found the way out of our particular dilemma; work on our Traditions; show our gratitude; spread roses and sunshine some days instead of thorns and gloom; **Let go-and get with it-there is much to be done.**

For most of us who might still be engrossed in our lost dreams-or our 'if only I. .' complex we would like to repeat the words of George Elliot who said: "It is **never** too late to be what you think you might have been."
THINK ABOUT IT! !

O.K. WHERE ARE YOU

Good members of AA-WHERE ARE YOUR ARTICLES?
We want to print your story.

A DUSTY OLD DIRECTORY

My first AA group met in a clubroom upstairs in an old building. The paint was peeling, the windows were dirty; the chairs and tables were Early Depression. There was an old broken-down desk in the corner, its drawers filled with ancient AA literature, scraps of paper, dirty and used paper cups, and every other imaginable relic of the past. The walls displayed the usual Steps and Traditions, Serenity Prayer and Slogans. On the top of the desk was the usual supply of Big Books, "Twelve and Twelve," and pamphlets in various stages of disarray. I stayed around that club attending the meetings and reading everything I could find, and it was there that I had my first demonstration of how AA works.

Some two months after my first AA meeting, on a December afternoon during a heavy snowfall, a call for help came in. I answered the phone. It was a fellow I had met at the meetings there, and it was obvious he had been drinking. He told me he was at a city jail in a town some sixty miles away, and asked me to get The AA directory in the clubroom, call a member in the town where he now was, and ask that person to come help him.

The only other person in the room at that time was the caretaker, and neither of us knew what an AA directory was; but we began to search. I went to the old desk, started to empty the drawers, and found an outdated (one-volume) AA directory, published by AA World Services more than seven years before. It was all we could find. I turned to our state and the name of the town from which the call had come. There was one group listed, with one contact's name and phone number.

I called the number, and when a man answered, I asked for the person listed in the old directory. This man informed me that he was that person. Immediately, I identified myself as an AA member and told him of the plight of the man at the jail. There was a very long pause, and he finally asked, "Where did you get my name?" When I told him, he said, "I did belong to the AA group in town, but I haven't attended an AA meeting in more than five years, even though I'm still sober."

----- *Be a Bulletin Booster* -----

AA CENTRAL BULLETIN ORDER BLANK	
Please write distinctly. . . or print . to avoid errors	
D a t e	
N a m e
Address Street
City	Zip
<input type="checkbox"/> One Year at \$3.50	Amount enclosed \$
Mail to Central Bulletin	940 Rockefeller Bldg 614 Superior Ave. N.W. Cleveland, Ohio 44113

We talked a bit longer; I told him about the AA member in trouble; he told me that it was snowing hard and he lived thirteen miles away from town. It ended with his saying he would put chains on his pickup truck, go into town, and call me after he had talked to the fellow in trouble. Some two hours later, he called back, saying he had secured the release of the alcoholic and brought him home. The man in trouble soon returned to our group, and he is now sober.

About three years later, I went to that town to talk at an AA meeting. After the meeting, a man came up to me and asked if I remembered making that call three years before. Of course I remembered it, because it was my first one. He said, "That got me back into AA, and I've never left again." I see him at AA meetings of all kinds and have for many years now.

So that old, out-of-date AA directory helped three alcoholics. and maybe many more. Who Knows?

AA Grapevine, October 1985

★★★★★



AA members employed by outside agencies "wear two hats": but Tradition Six cautions any such members against wearing both at once! On the job, they are NOT 'AA counselors.' At meetings, they're just AA's, NOT alcoholism experts.

★★★★★

HAVE A GOOD DAY

Here are three simple steps toward a good day that have facilitated my own steady process of living "one day at a time," with lengthening sobriety and increasing serenity and inner security.

1. **Choose** to have a good day upon waking each morning. A brief moment of prayer at that time can influence our decision to have a good day. We are free to choose to be grateful or vengeful, cheerful or melancholy.

2. **Plan** for a good day. Choosing should be followed by planning. We need to develop an appropriately balanced daily program of physical, mental and spiritual activities. Planning should include nutrition, exercise, reading, viewing and listening, meditation and prayer. Such planned activities can, through time, become addictive in a positive way.

3. **Work** at having a good day. It has been said that we should "plan our work and then work our plan." The successful AA member is the one who works the program on a daily basis. We should not permit ourselves to make convenient excuses . . . "I don't feel well enough to exercise today." A noted college football coach of yesteryear attributed the successes of his numerous championship teams to their unflinching ability to stay at it despite adversity. We should also make someone else's day better in some way, thereby making our own day better.

I have found that these three simple steps, if followed faithfully, can lead to improved sobriety, serenity and security . . . one day at a time.

Adapted from AA Grapevine, February 1983

DON'T BLAME THE BANANA

I stated firmly to M., "Emotional chameleon! That's what I am." We were in his pickup on our way home from our regular Monday night meeting.

He drove a block in silence, then asked, "Emotional chameleon? Whaddya mean?"

"I change to whatever mood the people around me are in. If I'm around negative people, I get negative. If I'm around angry people, I get angry. My mood lightens if I'm around people who are up. This morning, I was feeling good until I walked into the cafeteria and said good morning to someone I knew, and he said 'like hell it is!'"

M. swerved into the other lane to miss a puddle, and I went on, "I was in a lousy mood until noon. The worst of it is, this person is in a bad mood eighty percent of the time. I don't know why I hang around him."

"Bananas," M. said "Or orange juice."

I waited while two blocks hissed by under the tires. "Bananas?" I finally asked. "Or orange juice?"

He nodded. "Every time I eat a banana, I get heartburn, but I keep eating them. I always think that it's my imagination, or that I'm better now, so I can handle an innocent little banana. Every once in a while, I have to try, and the damned thing always gives me indigestion. Orange juice is even worse. People are like bananas; if they give you indigestion, you should stay away from 'em."

M. swung the pickup around in a U-turn, and parked by the apartment house. As he locked the truck, I said, "I have a feeling there's more."

"Yup. When I get indigestion from eating a banana, I don't blame the banana."

J.P., Walker, Minn.

AA Grapevine-October 1985

WISDOM TO KNOW THE DIFFERENCE

I am willing to trust the Spirit of God for others.

I will not worry, fret, or be unhappy over you.

I will not be anxious concerning you.

I will not be afraid for you.

I will not blame you, criticize you, or condemn you, and I will not give up on you.

I will remember first, last, and always, that you are God's child.

That you have His Spirit in you, and I will trust this Spirit to take care of you. To provide for your needs.

I will think of you always, as being surrounded by God's loving presence, as being enfolded in His protecting arms. As being kept safe and secure in Him.

I will be patient with you. I will have confidence in you.

And I will stand in Faith and bless you in my prayers.

Knowing that you are growing, knowing that you are finding the help you need.

I have only good feelings in my heart about you.

For I am willing to let you live your life, as you see fit.

Your way may not be my way, but I will trust the Spirit of God in you, to show you the way to your highest good.

I will always bless you.

IMPORTANCE OF A SPONSOR

One of the first things I was told when I began to attend meetings on a permanent basis was the importance of finding a sponsor. And to myself I said, "I knew it, another angle, now comes the pitch for money." You see, in my mind's eye, the significance I put on what was suggested was entirely different than what was meant.

I realize now that what may be important to one person won't be to another, but when it comes to the AA philosophy of life all we need do is read the first line of "How it works" and the answer to any doubts we may have is right there. "Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed the path." Was I going to follow their path or would I reject the gift I was being offered.

Anything considered important is vital, so therefore, it was necessary for me to have someone to talk to on a one to one basis in order to share my most intimate thoughts. No doubt someone could say we can do this at a meeting but the personal contact is what counts. So therefore, the basic importance of a sponsor is their knowledge and experience in the program. To be a guide not a judge, a friend not a crutch and to share in both the joy and sorrow we all feel at one time or another.

Combining all the aids that are suggested by the "Founding Fathers" of the program, each one of us can fulfill the wish we all had when we first came to AA, the daily relieve from our affliction.

Pat N.

"Here's How" 1980

★★★★★

A grim-faced fellow took a seat in a bar and growled, "Gimme a double-header."

The guy next to him said, "Why are you so upset?"

"Because I just had words with my wife and she moved out."

The second man brightened and said, "Do you remember exactly what the words were?"

★★★★★

Our kind of bumper sticker: AA members make souse calls.

ARE YOU PLANNING TO MOVE?

If so, clip this coupon and mail to 940 Rockefeller Bldg., 614 Superior Ave., N.W., 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.



THE BIG BOOK

"STUDY TO GROW ON"

"Don't drink. Go to meetings, Read the Big Book." Anyone who has been to AA is sure to hear that advice as a newcomer. If you, dear reader, are like me-then you started your AA program backwards. Reading the Big Book first, then going to meetings, and finally, not drinking.

The Big Book came to me as AA's calling card, so to speak, when my wife's father passed away. He had changed his life around by coming to AA; and though he had a slip on occasion, he got better. I was attempting to recuperate from a post-funeral debauch when I spied the blue binding glaring down at me from the bookshelf. So I took it home as an heirloom of sorts.

Others had suspected my drinking since high school, but I went through four years of military service and four years of college in vehement denial. During my last two years at the University, the suspicion was confirmed by the sole arbiter of self suspecting sentiment - myself. After graduating I had managed to secure a prestigious position on the staff of one of the most powerful influential men in the nation. Still, I drank daily and was ineffective at my job, abusive toward my spouse and entertaining another geographic cure. At this point my wife was well aware of my problem, but not its full impact. I lived only to drink and was a dead man at twenty-eight years of age.

It was under such circumstances that I first cast a skeptical eye at the tales in that mighty tome. I don't remember who's story I read first or who's life resembled mine the most because I was struck by the similarities. Bill W. had grandiose schemes and Doctor Bob drank like I drank in college. I could relate to and identify with, to some extent, everyone - the retired publicist, the playwright, the Vietnam veteran, and even the teen-aged girl! I reread the stories. I called AA and began attending meetings.

So I had read the Big Book and went to meetings but I hadn't completed the equation yet, for I still drank. Life got worse those last few months when I was fired from my job. I saw my physical health deteriorate and I plunged into alcoholic insanity. The book gathered dust and my home group carried on quite well without me for five months -that is until I came back and learned about the other chapter, especially How It Works! Now I know what the old timers mean when they say: "It's simple-Don't Drink. Go to meetings. Read the Big Book.

George B.
Russell Street
"Footsteps", March, 1986

THERE ARE "MUSTS"

Are you forming the habit of missing meetings? If so, could I pass on something to think about? Do you remember when you came to AA? Do you remember what you came with? Did you come with self-respect and the respect of your family and your business associates? Or did you come with what most of us came with - absolutely nothing; not even a respect for ourselves, which is the most important thing in the world because if we do not have that, how can we expect anyone else to have any respect for us. Weren't you accepted with open arms by the people who had the same problem as you, and weren't you treated kindly and didn't a lot of people go out of their way to help you and counsel with you to show you that there was a way out? Have you forgotten all about those things? A few minutes reflection on what you had and were, compared to what you now have and are, through the help of AA, and you'll see that you still need AA and that AA needs you. Get back to the meetings and renew your old acquaintances and make new ones and see how much more happiness you will have come your way. It works, just try it!

"Cedar Rapids Newsletter"



Years ago a business friend told me: "It is better to be a big fish in a little pond than a little fish in a big pond". what he was telling me was that I'd be more successful in a smaller company where there were fewer people and not so much competition for the jobs. My ego was so great that I thought I could survive and succeed thru the big business mergers of the seventies. I did not survive. I was forced out as were hundreds of others. So I got drunk for four years and was on the pity pot. Like I was the only one in the USA to lose his company and his business career.

In 1978 I was brought into AA in a Detroit hospital.

In AA I was told: lower the ego. Those that are self centered and materialistic are the least happy. We must give of ourselves to stay sober. Sharing and caring. Yes, have realistic goals but don't set those goals so high that you can't achieve them. Example: try for a two year degree. And after you get that accomplishment, you can go on maybe for a four year degree. I was told that when you can't live up to your standards, you will land up getting drunk.

Don't drink and go to AA meetings! !

Ralph W.
Humble Group



Published monthly by the Cleveland Central Committee of 4 A, a non-profit fellowship dedicated to service Address all letters to Central Bulletin, 940 Rocketeller Bldg 614 Superior Ave., NW, Cleveland Ohio 44113 Subscription price \$3 50 per Year

Harry D., Founder and Editor 1892.1968

Vol. 44 April 1986 No. 7

District Office (216) 241 - 7387

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, April 1, 1986 • 8:00 p.m.

OLD STONE CHURCH • PUBLIC SQUARE
CLEVELAND, OHIO

All Group Representatives Welcome
Be Informed

GROUP ANNIVERSARIES

★★★★★

BEREA WEDNESDAY WOMEN GROUP

Wednesday, April 2, 1986 • 8:00 p.m.

FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

BRECKSVILLE WEDNESDAY GROUP

Saturday, April 5, 1986 • 8:00 p.m.

SIXTEENTH ANNIVERSARY

HOME AWAY FROM HOME GROUP

Tuesday, April 15, 1986 • 8:00 p.m.

SECOND ANNIVERSARY

BROOKPARK MONDAY GROUP

Monday, April 21, 1986 • 8:00 p.m.

TWENTY-FOURTH ANNIVERSARY

N.A.S.A. GROUP

Wednesday, April 23, 1986 • 8:00 p.m.

FOURTEENTH ANNIVERSARY

35th ANNUAL INTERGROUP DINNER

Saturday, May 3, 1986

We are sorry that there are no tickets available for the Dinner at this time. Returns on all unsold consignment tickets are to be in the office by April 15th. There is a waiting list and if anyone would care to get tickets, they can call the office to be placed on the list. If any tickets are returned, they will be sold in the order of the requests on the list.

IN MEMORIAM

Our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of these deceased members of our fellowship:

RAYMOND F. CRAYSON, LONG TIME MEMBER OF
Charity Group, passed away February 19, 1986

DISTRICT OFFICE CORNER

Hello again from your Trusted Servants. We are just a few days away from the beginning of spring and the buzzards have returned to Hinckley. We are having dreams of not having to wear our boots and heavy clothing to work any more-and all other things that spring brings to mind! Oh, oh, one more thing-**APRIL FOOL'S DAY** when we get all kinds of calls from bosses whose secretaries give fictitious names and our number to call when they return from lunch-such as Mr. Seagram, Johnny Walker. etc.-of course, sometimes they just hang up when we answer "Alcoholics Anonymous, may we help you?"

The Fund Drive is under way again so we are very busy here-nothing here ever happens all by itself-at the same time this is going on, we have a few other projects in mind-so keep listening.

We feel very good about the response we are having to the Central Bulletin and some of you are getting a few articles in. We received one beautiful poem describing a member's feeling of sobriety in his life; unfortunately, it was a little too long to publish. . .SO try to make your articles short enough that we can print them. The March issue had a verse, "WISDOM TO KNOW THE DIFFERENCE", that was sent in by a member. Somehow or other, the letter that accompanied the verse was omitted but it had a purpose also. The verse was something that she had found that permitted her to handle a 'difficult-to-accept' situation in her life. How many of us have needed "the tools" to carry us over a rough spot-and how often? That is one of the beautiful things about our program-if we but look, we can find consolation from any number of helpful items found in and around our fellowship.

With the Fund Drive, we are getting to see and meet some friends we had never met before-as they are coming in with returns, more slips, etc. The Chairmen this year have tried to make it a point to put the message out to the groups that we are not necessarily asking our members to give **more** (Those that **always** give) but, rather, to have more members contribute so a few are not carrying the load for many as has been happening in past years. With our membership growing the way it is-we should have many more than the nearly 3,000 individuals who pledged last year. . .which, incidentally, was the highest number who have given up to now. From what we are seeing, it **is** making some people aware of the situation.

Well, fellow members, until next month. . .and we hope to be earlier.

★★★★★

As a lot of us know, in the Catholic religion, from time to time we would decide to do something about our drinking and would "take the pledge". For the real alcoholic, though, this was just a postponement of a drink for a given period of time and when the time was up, there would be a drink to celebrate. Reminds me of a fellow who went to his priest and wanted to sign a pledge. The priest fumbled around and then had to tell him that he didn't have any pledges, or at least he didn't know where they were.

"That's all right, father," he said. "I know it by **heart**," so the priest had him raise his hand, recite the pledge aloud, and then sign a blank piece of paper.

NON-SMOKING GROUPS

NON-SMOKING GROUPS ON THE WEST AND SOUTHWEST SIDE PROVIDE WELCOME ATMOSPHERE!

There are those who deplore "specialty" groups in our fellowship. However, it must be recognized that today, there are more and more people who have quit smoking, prefer to breathe smoke free air or for some medical reason must avoid breathing tobacco smoke.

Now, on the west side of Cleveland there are three non-smoking groups in Lakewood and two in Berea, plus several which do not permit smoking during the meeting itself.

It is estimated that these smoke free meetings accommodate several hundred AA members for whom tobacco smoke is a problem.

The newest of these groups is the "SMOKE FREE GROUP" in Berea. "Smoke Free" had its first meeting on Monday, March 17th. The group will meet at the St Paul Lutheran Church at Bagley and Eastland Rds., Berea. (across from the high school)

Other non-smoking groups are the Berea, "Fresh Air Friday" group. The Wednesday Non-smoking group in Lakewood. Also in Lakewood are the Tuesday, "Hand of Hope" meeting and the Friday morning, 'Alcoholic Squad # 2". All of the latter groups are listed in the AA Meeting Schedule.

Anon, Local

★★★★★

The best cure for worry, depression, melancholy, brooding, is to go deliberately forth and try to lift with one's sympathy the gloom of somebody else.

Arnold Bennett

★★★★★

Yelled one drunk to his buddy across the street, "Hey! Come on over!" "Come over there?" said the other, weaving quietly. "I can hardly stay where I'm at."

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AN OPEN LETTER FROM YOUR SPONSOR

Since you are very important to me, I hope you will keep this letter to refer to at times when there may be uncertainties, especially at times when you cannot reach me for a personal explanation or reminder.

When I agreed to sponsor you, it was to help us both maintain what has to be first in our **lives-sobriety**. I would learn from you and would hope that I had something to offer you toward that goal. I have learned from you and I thank you. You have grown in the AA program and that you also can take the thanks for; you accepted and took advantage of what we had to offer. I may have helped carry it to you, but I did not give it. Neither will I take the blame if you choose to forget what you have learned.

At the first, I was very ready to verbalize my opinions on many topics because an alcoholic in the early stages of sobriety is much like a child who needs guidance. Maybe I offered suggestions on areas other than "do not drink and go to meetings." Now there are times when you ask for an opinion on another issue and I do not give it. That is because I feel you are now ready to think for yourself and in order to grow, you must do this. However, on any questions about sobriety I will still be ready to give you what I consider to be my best answer.

Do not ask or expect me to solve your day-to-day problems. I am only human, but you and God have an arrangement that will best fit here. He has promised He will not give you more than He gave you brains and resources to handle. I cannot cheat you out of your right to grow by interfering with this. If, being human I should try, please don't let me. I might make the mistake because I care about you, but remind me that all we agreed upon was that I would do anything I could to help you stay sober. The exception is if I think you may be doing something that will endanger your sobriety - I then will become very much a sponsor. And **vocal**.

You will always be a special person because of what we have shared. If you feel at any time that someone else could help you more toward quality sobriety and would like to change sponsors, I not only approve - **I insist upon it**. To stay sober is our priority and whatever we have to do to attain this goal is what must be done. You will still be special and I will look forward to seeing you at meetings. If you feel you need to avoid me because of guilt, then I have not been a good example for you anyway; I did not pass on that people, places and things cannot take precedence over sobriety. Whether or not I remain your sponsor has no bearing on the fact that I want us always to be sober, friends, and in AA. God bless you.

"Central Bulletin" Local contributor
May be used by any sponsor
who shares the viewpoints

★★★★★

HEARD AT A COCKTAIL PARTY DEPARTMENT:
"His mother and father were cousins that's why he looks so much alike."

FUNNY THINGS HAPPEN And when they do, it's great to be able to laugh-again

Among the many things I'd lost by the time I got around to AA was my sense of humor. Now-with fourteen months of dryness and maybe a month or so of sobriety under my belt-some of those things are trickling back.

For example, I'm occasionally caught with a smile on my face. I find it possible to laugh at myself. And-I've even found grounds for laughing at AA.

Not that I think AA is any laughing matter, Far from it! I take my AA seriously. But once in a while. . .

About a month ago, I was attending a business convention and I was in a hospitality suite in a swank hotel and the booze was flowing freely and memories of days gone by were somewhat overwhelming and an AA meeting sure wouldn't have done any harm.

"A plain ginger ale," I said in a stage whisper to the bartender.

I noticed a guy at the other end of the bar watching. He held his glass up in a toast toward me and said, "Easy does it."

I tried to focus on his glass, to analyze the color for alcoholic content from afar. It was impossible to tell. "A day at a time," I said as I returned the sweeping motion of the toast.

"But for the grace of God,"I replied, and we both started to laugh as though one of us had just come up with the punch line of the evening.

We studied the name tags on each other's lapels. Naturally, they spelled out our names and company affiliations in full. Not much anonymity there.

"I'm Ed F.," I said, playing out the charade to the last.

"Bob M.," he replied.

We shook hands. We took our ginger ales to a quiet corner. And we had ourselves a real fine little AA meeting.

Ed F., Woodcliff Lake, N.J.

★★★★★

Men do not care how nobly they live but only how long, although it is within reach of every man to live nobly and within no man's power to live long.

Seneca

★★★★★

TOO MANY NEWCOMERS?

AA's in the 1980's who see a lack of long-time sobriety in meetings should be cheered by this letter from the September 1944 *Grapevine*, pleading for more closed meetings for "older members."

"I'm not suggesting that it doesn't help us to do Twelfth Step work in these meetings with newer members. It certainly does! But week after week of closed meetings where we devote the entire time to discussing the problems of first-timers, or second-timers or third-timers doesn't give older members (say, for the sake of argument, members who have been dry one or two months, or more) much chance to discuss their own problems; and believe me, older members' problems can be mighty important, too!"

TREATMENT CENTERS AND AA TRADITION

In recent years, many treatment centers have begun to describe themselves as "incorporating the principles of AA." 'AA oriented:' "based on the AA program." While most AA's are delighted that professionals place so much value on the effectiveness of AA and that many persons who now enter the centers are emerging as AA members, and therefore have a much better chance of survival and recovery, some have expressed doubts. They fear that treatment centers that call themselves AA-oriented are implying affiliation, thereby violating our traditions.

In 'AA Tomorrow," published in the AA Grapevine in 1960, Bill W., AA's co-founder, addressed this issue:

"Enterprises . . . governmental, state, and private-have been springing up everywhere in recognition of the fact that alcoholism is a top-priority problem of health."

"Nevertheless, I gather the impression that many of us are so intent on their few errors, especially the errors of those AA's (two-hatters)associated with them, that we often fail to give these dedicated people the encouragement they most need. Now that we AA's have so amazingly unified around our single purpose and the Twelve Traditions, the risk that we could be much hurt by anything done in these outside ventures is virtually non-existent."

"Could not still more friendly and widespread cooperation with outside agencies finally lead us to countless alcoholics who will otherwise be lost? Maybe we are beginning to stand in our own light. Perhaps we are blocking a communication that has a tremendous potential. Shouldn't we therefore have a fresh look at this?"

"P.I.-C.P.C. Bulletin"

Winter 1981

★★★★★

A bore is a fellow who wants to talk about himself when you want to talk about yourself.

★★★★★

On her 40th birthday, a women received an expensive wrinkle-removing cream from her teen age daughter 'And what did she give you last year?' the friend asked her. Without any hesitation the woman replied, "The wrinkles"

ARE YOU PLANNING TO MOVE?

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IT WILL HELP YOU AND IT WILL HELP US.



MILL ENDS AND REMNANTS

While it is a recurring thought, there seem to have been more occasions in the recent past and today to reflect upon those who have left their mark upon our life by reason of their paths having crossed our own.

As we pick our way through today's dizzy, giddy whirl of modern change and development, it is proper that we give thought to leaving our marks on the walls we build so that someone, many years from now, perhaps, may see what we have done. If the works of our life are to last, we need to build in accordance with the precepts of truth and teachings we have been taught.

Thirty-six years ago this month Bill W. and Dr. Bob began the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous and the marks of that historic meeting have been inscribed upon the walls of thousands of our lives for embracing A.A. and living happily sober lives, We, in, turn pass on the influence by touching other lives and carrying the message.

If this influence is to continue to be felt (AND FOR THAT: I AM RESPONSIBLE) long after we have passed through the corridors of this life, we must take the truths and teachings we have been taught to heart to believe in them and to practice them, and to make them an integral part of our lives. These fundamental truths and teachings must be a living, vital part of our existence.

It is well to reflect from time to time upon the wonderful contributions that some individual has made to our lives. This writer has found that these reflections open greater horizons, for not infrequently he reaches back into early youth to recall that he can be a better person by using the influence for good that had been made available through a good life having crossed his path.

To some of us it may have been a clergyman; or a teacher; or a friend with whom we have long lost contact; or a boss and co-worker; or significantly, any number of A.A.s-Bill, Dr. Bob, our sponsors, and the numerous others who have left their mark. The sources of influence are innumerable, if we will but recall them to mind, and then use that influence in practice, in living by sharing.

Let's leave our mark, too, by George!

Central Bulletin, June 1971



A prominent businesswoman, we'll call Mrs. B., was taken to her first A.A. meeting after much reassurance that her anonymity would be protected. When the leader asked the newcomers to stand and give their first names, several people began rising from their seats. Just then, there was a power failure and the room was plunged into darkness.

"My God": said Mrs. B., "they don't have to go this far!"

"A"

IS THE MOST IMPORTANT LETTER IN THE ALPHABET FOR THE ALCOHOLIC

We have an Ailment, or an Affection that Adversely Affects us-physically, mentally, spiritually and morally. This Ailment is the illness called Alcoholism. We are Addicted to Alcohol.

Now what can we do about this? We are very fortunate because we can Arrest this Addiction. We can't Cure it, we can only Arrest it.

How do we do this? It's simple! We try to the best of our Ability to live the 12 suggested steps of the Alcoholics Anonymous program.

In Step No. 1, we Admit that we are powerless over Alcohol and that our lives are unmanageable. We must Accept this fact, which also means that we can never again touch Alcohol in any form, of course, Accepting this, one day at a time.

We Acknowledge in Step No. 2 that a power greater than ourselves can restore us to sanity and in Step No.3, we Assume that we must make the decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, as we understood him.

Steps No. 4 through 10 are steps of Appraise1 (self) and Altering our lives. We Admit to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs. We Ask God to remove our shortcomings. We make Amends and continue to Appraise ourselves and promptly Admit it when wrong (Step No. 10).

In Step No. 11, we Ask, or seek through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, etc. . . .and somewhere along the line we have a Spiritual Awakening (Step No. 12). We Assist others in finding this beautiful way of life that we have found and we try in All our Affairs to practice the principles of A.A. that are given to us in the 12 suggested Steps.

so. . .if we keep Active in A.A., we can and will continue to lead happy, worthwhile, productive lives. If we don't want this good life, we have the Alternative. We can return to drinking, which will eventually lead to insanity or death. . . .and maybe we won't have another chance to return to A.A.

We have the power of choice!

Guy T.,Excelsior, Mn.
Silver Dollar, Fargo, ND



Let the other fellow find out who you are, He'll remember it longer.



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Harry D., Founder and Editor 1892-1966

Vol. 44 May 1986 No. 8

District Office (216) 241 • 7387

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, May 6, 1986 • 8:00 p.m.

OLD STONE CHURCH • PUBLIC SQUARE
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All Group Representatives Welcome
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GROUP ANNIVERSARIES

★★★★★

J & L GROUP

Thursday, May 15, 1986 • 8:00 p.m.

FOURTEENTH ANNIVERSARY

LORAIN AVENUE MONDAY

Monday, May 12, 1986 • 8:30 p.m.

THURSDAY NOON BIG BOOK DISCUSSION

Thursday, May 8, 1986 • Noon

(9th Floor . . . OLD ARCADE

FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

WEST SIDE WOMEN

Monday, May 19, 1986 • 8:00 p.m.

"The oldest women's group in the world"

FORTY FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

SATURDAY, MAY 3rd, 1986

35th ANNUAL INTERGROUP DINNER

SWINGO'S AT THE STATLER-ZOO P.M.

OUR ONE BIG SOCIAL EVENT OF THE YEAR

IN MEMORIAM

Our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of these deceased members of our fellowship:

NELSON (DOC) DACHTLER, Long time member of A.A., passed away March 27, 1986

FRANK MOLNAR, Long time member of the West Side Morning Group, passed away March 31, 1986

JOSEPH P. KAMINSKI, 35 year member of A.A., member of the Brooklyn Group

DANIEL MYERS, MEMBER OF THE Leroy Brakeman Group

THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE

DISTRICT OFFICE CORNER

This time comes around sooner than one would think- we just keep busy here and then suddenly we realize it is time to speak to all of you again through the Central Bulletin.

Since you usually get a little weather report from this column, we want to tell you that even though spring has "sprung" it is sure having a hard time making up its mind- we are given a few days of beautiful spring weather then we are zapped with more snow. . . to look outside the window now, we would see the lovely sunshine • but • there is a warning of rain showers and possibly snow. Oh well, you know what they say about the Cleveland weather!

Monday night we had our **VICTORY DINNER** marking the end of our Fund Drive Campaign and the numbers presented that night and the amount of work that has come into the office permits us to announce that, once again, it went over with great success - thanks to the many who gave and the many who were willing to carry the message to your group meetings every week. All those working on the Fund Drive did a great job. As you know, one of the goals this year was to get more members involved in the giving and, from what we have seen in the office so far, we do believe that **we did** have more who contributed this year. . . we didn't ask that they give a lot • only that more would give and we think this happened. As you know, now that the drive is over • the office has the great task ahead of getting everything posted before we can come up with a **real and exact** figure • this should be completed early in June, just about in time for the first reminders to be sent out.

We are always very pleased to see how well the Central Bulletin is moving and also how important it is to some readers. . . for instance, just this month we received a renewal from a gentlemen who had marked "**My 28th renewal**" • we thank him from the bottom of our hearts for his loyalty to his A.A. program and to his Central Bulletin! **Many happy days ahead, Gib.**

Once again, we are asking that some of you grateful members out there put together a little something on paper about your A.A. thoughts and experiences as you find it now living in and with sobriety. Might as well do it because we will keep asking until you get a little tired of hearing it • but, just think • how nice it would be to have articles from our local members rather than having to borrow. We realize sometimes that it is very difficult to collect our thoughts much less put them down on paper. . . we are all the same there **UNTIL WE START**. It's just like sitting down and talking with another A.A. member • once we go with the flow, it's not an easy habit to break because when can we ever say enough about what we have been given? We enjoy our visit with you every month but have to say so • long for now.

★★★★★

A LITTLE TRIVIA: How many of our members here in Cleveland, remember, have read or have heard when our District Office became incorporated?

ALWAYS • CAREFUL • To • INVESTIGATE • OTHERS • NEEDS

ANOTHER MILESTONE

Another capacity attendance marked the 20th Annual Inter-Group Dinner and Dance on Saturday, May 8 in the Grand Ballroom of the Hotel Statler Hilton, Cleveland. The principal speaker, **Jeanette S.**, New York and others, who gave short talks, made it another memorable evening. While this was the first annual affair that dancing became a part of the program, from all reports, it **won't** be the last.

Some research prior to this year's annual get together uncovered that the 1st Inter-Group Dinner was held on May 12, 1952, at which time the attendance in the Rainbow Room of the Hotel Carter numbered 600. The speaker at the first annual dinner was the Rev. Walter F. **Tunks** of St Paul's Episcopal Church in Akron. It was he who, sixteen years earlier, had received the telephone call from Bill W. from the Mayflower Hotel in Akron, which led to the start of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Interestingly, the annual gathering had its inception the year before when in May 1951 a selected group of staunch District Office friends met at dinner and generously contributed \$1,040 toward continuation of the office.

★★★★★

Storming into the frontier saloon, the fervid temperance evangelist boomed: "Repent you vile sinners! Drinking that obnoxious fluid will send you all to hell. Join with me. . . **all** of you who want to go to heaven - stand on this side. Don't you want to go to heaven?" "No, I don't," replied the drunk. "You mean to tell me you **don't want to go to heaven** when you die?": asked the evangelist. "Oh," the drunk replied, "when I die, I thought you were taking up a load right now."

★★★★★

SIGN IN A STORE WINDOW:

Hats for all heads • Small Medium and Fat

★★★★★

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FROM YOUR EDITOR

Some of you who possibly have been around a long time and have enjoyed getting the Central Bulletin every **month** over a period of years as our friend, Gib H. has done for the past 28 - you will probably recognize some of the articles published in this month's issue.

We have gone back in time somewhat and taken most of our material, this month, from long ago issues of the Central Bulletin - including one "**Mill Ends & Remnants**" which was always a part of the Bulletin when our friend and past Editor, George M., was responsible for getting the paper out to you. We hope you don't mind George, but I've been missing your "By George" endings for some time.

Founder and Editor of this paper was Henry D. and, upon his death - George took over this tremendous task - truly a labor of love - using the basement of his home for the job and I can remember when I came around that George was always asking for volunteers to help in this endeavor. At times, he had some who offered their help but most of the time he did not! In order to get the mailing out, it was not unusual for George to carry the work to a meeting and have some willing A.A. members apply the labels so his work could reach us in a reasonable time frame. Eventually, it was no longer possible to ask for an assist and get it - so along with the beginning of health problems -there were months it just couldn't get done. At that time, George enlisted the help of Dick F. (in the year 1977, I believe) who agreed to take over the editing and printing with the District Office's cooperation in handling the subscriptions and mailing. . . **NOW**, Dick F. retired and yours truly has had the task of getting the news out to you. . . and, now I understand what a task it is - trying to sandwich it in along with my other duties at the District Office. Most of this is done on my free time, at home or other breaks at the office and I now, for the first time, realize just how much of a task you three men had - as it also had to come in **your** free time.

In order to continue carrying on the A.A. message and a little humor - I have been relentlessly asking for article contributions from our own area and, of course, there is always the quest for new subscribers. The response to the subscription request has been very heartening but I still think that we have plenty of our members who could share their experiences with us through even a short article. We thank all of you who have contributed and ask that it not be the last time we hear from **you - keep them coming!** !

We have also found that many of our members, who have left this area, are faithful in renewing their subscriptions and like to know about how things are going back home. Of course, we let them know that the ground work the "**old timers**" in our area laid for us is still working very well. As we say in A.A. when asked how it works, we answer, **JUST FINE.. .**

O.K. WHERE ARE YOU

Good members of AA **WHERE ARE YOUR ARTICLES?**
 We want to print your story.

WE ALL COUNT FOR SOMETHING

In August 1985, my husband, R.C., lost his life to the disease of alcoholism.

R.C. crossed the line into active alcoholism approximately thirty years ago, during the last twenty-seven of which he had been a regular attendant at A.A. meetings. For some reason, his recovery was never permanent. He would be sober for six months, ten months, a year, and this last time two years, but then he would have a relapse. Each time he would recover from a relapse, he would pick up the pieces of his life and return to A.A. with fresh determination and hope.

On August 15, he took that first drink for the last time. Six days later I returned home from work and found his body. He had lost the last battle. One of his A.A. friends pointed out to me that may have lost the last battle, but that he won a lot of them in between. This friend said that if R.C. had not made the effort to help him some twenty years ago, he would most likely be dead himself. He was just one of the many R.C. had held out his hand to. He also said that R.C. had done a lot more Twelfth Step work and helped more alcoholics become sober and maintain their sobriety than a lot of members who had been sober from their first day in A.A.

I knew that R.C. was a good husband and a good father. Together we raised some wonderful children. We were married twenty-six years. His life really accounted for something; in his home, his community, his church, A.A., his work, wherever he happened to be.

Now, I would like to make his death count for something. If there is anyone out there reading this who may be thinking of drinking, I would like to remind them that alcoholism kills. If my husband had not taken that first drink on August 15, we would probably be together tonight and I wouldn't be writing to Grapevine. I wouldn't be hurting the way I am hurting right now. Like most spouses, I judged his relapses while he was alive, but I no longer have that urge to judge. I think he did the best he could. I never walked in his shoes.

If anyone is thinking of drinking, please get help **now**. Make no mistake about it, alcoholism is a fatal illness. It may take years and years to kill you, but it will win in the end **unless you reach for recovery instead of the bottle.**

J.C., Wauwatosa, Wis.
A.A. Grapevine, March 1986

★★★★★

TO MY FRIENDS WHO INSIST

If you knew what a drink would do. . . You'd take "No Thanks" for an answer. . . One drink to me, means **ninety-three**. . . And the pain is worse than cancer. . . If I were to tell of all my hell. . . **Caused** by the grim romancer. . . **Can't** stop at one, two, or three. . . **Can't** handle the stuff-it handles me. . . **So** thanks for taking "No Thanks" for my answer.

L.C.
Central Bulletin, June 1945

PERFECTIONISM

In A.A. we say: we don't try to be perfect. We just try to be better. Why is this? I was taught to win. I was taught to get 100%. I was told to **excell** and the world's riches would come to me. Well, the world's riches didn't come to me. Maybe perfectionism was part of my disease of alcoholism. I could not live up to my expectations. And I expected too much from my wife and children. I told them what to do, how to dress, and what to say.

The philosophy of A.A. is often opposite of what I was taught in college and business. Why? (I am the original WHY? kid.) Because I am an alcoholic and I must adjust my way of life just as a diabetic must adjust his/ her lifestyle. **Enjoy living sober**. Don't keep pushing yourself for more material things. Throw away one credit card after you tear it up. Lower your stress level by accepting things you cannot change. Let the other guy have the ulcer producing stress promotion.

Perfectionism can cause panic attacks. In A.A. we learn it is OK to fail; It is OK to shake and stutter. Yes, next time it will be easier and better. Try commenting. You have nothing to fear but fear itself.

Perfectionism can also cause underachievers. The father shows no failings. So the son says: why try? I cannot be perfect like him. My father never told me his fears until he became chronically ill. He never told me his feelings or failures. Until his life was almost over.

Communicate. . . **Love** one another.
Don't drink and go to A.A. meetings.

Ralph W.
Nite & Day

★★★★★

A drunk staggered into a bar shouting, "Happy New Year, everybody!"

The fellow closest to him said, 'You turkey, it's the middle of March.'

The bewildered drunk looked at him and cried, "Oh, my gosh, my wife is going to kill me. **I've** never been **this** late before.

ARE YOU PLANNING TO MOVE?

If so, clip this coupon and mail to 940 Rockefeller Bldg., 614 Superior Ave., N.W., Cleveland, Ohio 44113. Immediately. It is urgently needed before the next issue of the **Central Bulletin**.

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MILL ENDS AND REMNANTS

How we treated this subject before we do not recall and we are too lazy and short of time to check on what has been said. Nevertheless, we have been "hung" up with the thoughts for several weeks now, stimulated no doubt by an October re-visit and tour of some thoroughbred farms in Kentucky. A well known fact is that thoroughbred racing horses have a common birthday—the January 1st, following their entrance into the world, whether the foal date may have been in February, April, June or even December preceding the common birthday.

It has been our thought that perhaps this wouldn't be such a bad idea for we AA members to observe a common birthdate as far as our attaining sobriety is concerned, regardless of the month in which we had our AA beginnings prior to the following January 1st.

It is conceivable that observance of a common AA birthday would make for greater emphasis of our **First Tradition—"Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon AA unity."**

As practicing alcoholics most of us emphasized the wrong things and we aren't too sure but what that trait carries over into our performance in many things after we become sober.

Just think what could be accomplished if every AA—worldwide, nationally, area-wide or group wise, observed his or her anniversary in commom with each other member. The result would be 364 twenty-four hours of unified effort in sharing our hope, strength and experience.

By the same token, each group could well observe a common January 1st. anniversary notwithstanding the month prior in which it was formed. Were this to transpire, what a tremendous force for good would come out of it. For, were the same energies which go into preparing for annual anniversaries to be diverted into one area-wide celebration and the other fifty-one weeks of the year devoted to helping those who still suffer, our common welfare would be enhanced a hundredfold.

We need but look at our "dates to remember" section each month to realize the energies, the talents and the expenses directed to anniversary observances to realize what the marshalling of these same energies, etc., into one common effort would bring forth.

Don't misunderstand, we enjoy anniversaries and the like as well as the next fellow, but we just wonder that having reached sober maturity if we shouldn't be less celebrity and less celebration conscious?

There is power in oneness-unity, by George!
Central Bulletin, January 1972.

★★★★★

Teenager to friend: "I'll say this for my dad • he tells it like it used to be.

OVER-VIEW from a LOCALITE

My name is Bill Z. and I've been a very grateful recovering alcoholic for three and a half years. In keeping it simple, **It ain't been easy!** but then, **I'm not unique!** The non-drinking part has not been a problem-I **give it to God, everyday.** The problem stems from living and coping, everyday. **Responsibility** has always been my nemesis—now it's a way of life. Sobriety and Responsibility to me, go hand in hand.

I came out of detox, for the fourteenth and final time, by the Grace of God, the day after Thanksgiving, 1982, with the shirt on my back and a bus ticket to Lakewood, Ohio. In the three and a half years which have ensued, I bounced around a lot with living facilities, hardly worked at all, and I attended an awful lot of AA meetings. Needless to say, I still do. God and AA are my survival kit-quite literally.

I've gone from sleeping in dumpsters and hustling for a "living" to working at a half-way house for other recovering alcoholics and living in a modest apartment in Mayfield Heights. **WHAT A DIFFERENCE!**

I concern myself with today because that's all I really have. I've learned that even bad days are good-I'm **sober-and by God, I'm grateful.**

May Cod Bless You All

Bill Z., Chesterland-Non Smoking

★★★★★

A GUIDE TO MAKING 12th STEP CALLS

"Put yourself in the other person's shoes" is a good rule to follow whenever you receive a 12th Step Call.

Remember that only complete and utter despair and desperation drives a "candidate" to that final act of surrender—a call to the AA Central Office. It's a cry for help from a sick, frightened human being who has run out of hiding places. How quickly anyone of us responds to this cry could be a matter of life or death!

If this sounds over dramatized it's only to impress on each and every one of us the urgency of fulfilling our obligation and responsibility in carrying the message of sobriety and hope to the alcoholic who still suffers.

Remember that we are not doctors. No matter how well meaning we should never give any medication without authorization of a qualified physician. If a newcomer's general appearance and actions seem to indicate that all is not well physically, we should make every attempt to get qualified medical help.

If you want to prescribe something, we suggest that it be liberal doses of the **BIG BOOK, meetings and AA fellowship.**

Here's How, Chicago, May-June 1974



Published monthly by the Cleveland Central Committee of A.A., a non-profit fellowship dedicated to service. Address all letters to Central Bulletin, 940 Rockefeller Bldg., 614 Superior Ave., N.W., Cleveland, Ohio 44113. Subscription price - \$3.50 per Year.

Harry D., Founder and Editor 1892-1968

Vol. 44 June 1986 No. 9

District Office (216) 241 - 7387

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, June 3, 1986 - 8:00 p.m.

OLD STONE CHURCH • PUBLIC SQUARE
CLEVELAND, OHIO

All Group Representatives Welcome
Be Informed

GROUP ANNIVERSARIES

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

TOBIN GROUP

Tuesday, June 3, 1986 - 8:30 p.m.

FORTY FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

FOUNDERS DAY -AKRON, OHIO
FIFTY FIRST ANNUAL
WEEKEND June 13, 14 and 15

IN MEMORIAM

Our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of these deceased members of our fellowship:

WOODY McGOWAN, Long time member of Parma Saturday Group.

JEANNE LUOMA, Member of the Pearl Road Group.

ELVIN J. BEHNEY, 45 year member of A.A.

JOHN R. SPANCLER, Active member of A.A. for 39 years.

WILFORD M. KRAMER, Very active member of A.A.

THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE

DISTRICT OFFICE CORNER

Time flies, here we are with the June issue, roasting some days, freezing others and, at other times, just getting soaked from the rain . . . needless to say, we are all looking forward to the summer season-maybe not the parents but their children!

Members everywhere-we are so pleased that you all seem to be doing a great job in getting out more subscriptions to everyone which makes our list grow. We do not always have such great luck with the ones whose subscrip-

tion has expired. If you wish to continue getting your Central Bulletin-we suggest that you pay attention to the date on the address label . . . this gives you your expiration date-even though we send out reminders with the last issue, some renew early and save us this added expense.

We discussed our Fund Drive Campaign with you last month so you know what your district office has been doing . . . then, too since we sent out the new Secretaries list, changes have been pouring in and the third supplement will soon be on the way to all groups in the area.

Our Intergroup Dinner was a tremendous success. Our AA speaker, the Reverend Clarence R. from Columbus, Ohio was excellent and an outstanding job was done by the AL-ANON Greeter this year-Glenda B. Though music can't always please everyone, because of the wide age and area range-we have heard good things and it seems like a good time was had by all. As some of you know, tickets were limited this year and a little hard to come by-so **get your Secretaries on the ball and get them to announce the Ticket Raffle which is held in January every year.** Groups all receive mail announcing the meeting but, unfortunately, some groups do not hear about it until it is too late-especially this year where we were working on a waiting list very soon after the Raffle.

Your District Secretary has to take time this month in this space to commend her associates at the District Office. I had learned one day before the Intergroup that I had pneumonia but I was able to come down long enough to attend the dinner then my husband, Art, and I headed home. . . and anyone who knows us know how much we **love to dance!** The following week Ed was on a much needed vacation, I was not in but the work went on with Isabel, Elvira and Ann, who usually scheduled to work only three days a week. We know this has called for a shift in some priorities being aware that the **call for help is the most important Job of all.** Ed returned to work the next week and again there was the same high performance. At this writing, from my home, I will most likely be out for at least one more week-more tests are scheduled which need to be done before the doctor can sanction my return . . . I'm hoping . . . I'm feeling better but rest has been very necessary for me **so loud and clear to all my co-workers-thanks from the bottom of my heart!** I know there are a lot of very tired people going home each night and that it was not so easy but-to me this proves again that a lot of "alkies" can work together under the same roof and manage to get along-not such a bad feat considering personality differences in all of us.

The Nostalgia trip that your Bulletin took last month was quite a successful one . . . I heard from someone that I wanted to and, at another time, will share excerpts from that letter.

Kind members, remember what I mentioned about not being able to stop when we get started-now I'm doing it more than ever because my voice doesn't sound like the "real me" (whatever that is).

We are closing now wishing all of you a very pleasant summer season-safe, sound and sober, Until we meet again!

ALWAYS • CAREFUL • TO • INVESTIGATE • OTHERS • NEEDS

FUNDAMENTALS

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

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

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

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

Here's How, Chicago, IL

★★★★★

LIFE IS TOO SHORT

Often we allow ourselves to be upset by small things we should forget. Perhaps some man we helped has proved ungrateful, some woman we believe to be a friend has spoken ill of us, some regard we thought we deserved has been denied us. We feel such disappointments so strongly that we can no longer work or sleep. But isn't that absurd?

Here we are on earth with only a few decades to live, and we lose many irreplaceable hours brooding over grievances that in a year's time will be forgotten by us and by everybody. Now, let us devote life to worthwhile actions and feelings, to great thoughts, real affections and enduring undertakings. For life is too short to be little.

Andre Maurois

-- Be a Bulletin Booster --

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SETTING YOURSELF UP

There are certain common sense things I must do if I am to remain sober. Sober people in sober places! I don't go into bars, lounges, or nightclubs, and I **loved** my bars and nightclubs. There are times when with a group I must dine in restaurants where liquor is served and my guests can have a drink. But I avoid drinkers, heavy drinkers. They will feel uncomfortable not drinking. They might even set me up with a line . . . **"Have just one"** . . . **"Be one of the gang"** . . . **"Can't take it anymore, huh?"**

The closer you get to alcohol, the closer you get to drinking. And I will not have guests bringing in a bottle. I don't need those kind of friends anymore. Alcohol is cunning, powerful and baffling. Or, rather the mind is . . . We all know of the planned slip where the AA slips away from AA meetings, then drifts into negative thinking and finally drinking. But many slips are impulsive. You open the fridge, and there is a bottle of wine or a six pack of beer. **AND POW!** If you have to drive or walk two blocks to the bar to get your drink, that is two blocks in which you could change your mind and stay sober.

Recently I heard a young girl lead. She was in charge of her office party. She brought a cake to the bar. Thankfully she did not drink. But unconsciously, she might have been setting herself up for a drunken party.

Plan to stay sober. Stand up for what you are: **A SOBER PERSON** !! Don't let people make you dependent. There are those who would like to see you one of the gang again. Maybe even your parents want you as a child again so they can rescue you from drink trouble. **DON'T GET SETUP.**

Ralph W., Nite & Day; Thurs. Morn AA

★★★★★

THOUGHTS

Loss or separation, of any sorts, can be an extremely painful experience. In sobriety, without the comfort of hiding within the abuse of mind altering substances, means searching for any familiarity amidst a whirling world of disorientation. What was once familiar and secure and comforting, appears severely odd that you cherish something so.

During my times of extreme loss, I found myself never questioning a dependence on the AA program. I know life today in bitterest form; yet, my continuing presence through attendance at AA meetings remains a continual reminder of my most precious possession called sobriety.

Through this action AA is the tool by which lives are rebuilt. Living life in its most purest form. Forming friendships. Sharing confidences with one another. Restoration of life in the simple form of human personalities.

To live in God's light. To live to the best of our ability, as He sees fit. How close to "perfection", is **any** attempt at AA's suggested way of life, and in following the fashion of HIS will for us.

Thank you for this wonderful opportunity.

Chris Z., CAH Group, Nite-n-Day

★★★★★

Answer to last months TRIVIA question.
January 27, 1945

THE NINTH TRADITION

A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

The word's "let's keep it simple" were the last Bill W. heard from his fellow founder of AA, shortly before Dr. Bob's death in 1950.

Aware that "it" meant our recovery program, Bill later wrote, "We need to distinguish sharply between spiritual simplicity and functional simplicity. When we get into questions of action by groups, by areas, and by AA as a whole, we find that we must to some extent organize to carry the message-or else face chaos. And chaos is not simplicity."

When Tradition Nine speaks of "AA as such," it goes to the heart of the AA experience, to the "spiritual simplicity" of one alcoholic's saying, silently perhaps, "Help!" and another alcoholic's answering, I know how you feel. We're here to help you." Such a relationship couldn't be organized. Or could it?

WAIA Reporter

★★★★★

If you don't matter to you,
it's hard to matter to others.

Malcolm Forbes

★★★★★

A man doesn't become a failure until he is satisfied being one.

★★★★★

YESTERDAY-TODAY & TOMORROW

There are two days in every week about which we should not worry, two days which should be kept free from fear and apprehension.

One of these days is **Yesterday** with its mistakes and cares, its faults and blunders, its aches and pains. **Yesterday** has passed forever beyond our control.

All the money in the world cannot bring back **Yesterday**. We cannot undo a single act we performed; we cannot erase a single word we said. **Yesterday** is gone.

The other day we should not worry about is **Tomorrow** with its possible adversities, its burdens, its large promise and poor performance. **Tomorrow** is also beyond our immediate control.

Tomorrow's sun will rise, either in splendor or behind a mask of clouds-but, it will rise. Until it does, we have no stake in **Tomorrow**, for it is as yet unborn.

This leaves only one day-Today. Any man can fight the battles of just one day. It is only when you and I add the burdens of those two awful eternities-Yesterday & **Tomorrow** that we break down.

It is not the experience of **Today** that drives men mad-it is remorse or bitterness for something which happened **Yesterday** and the dread of what **Tomorrow** may bring.

Let us, therefore,
live but one day at a time.

THE JOY OF BEING COMFORTABLE

I used to ask the familiar question "Why me?"—but no longer. Much to my surprise, I experienced around the tables of AA an understanding of my own thoughts and feelings. I found people could finish my sentences, though they didn't even know me. It was because they, too, had been there. They had felt different, not quite fitting in, being lonely in a crowd, and having to try harder and search longer for happiness.

God allowed me to hit bottom so I might finally realize that I needed him, that I didn't have to live life all alone. He wanted me to know that he was willing to "take the other handle of the basket." Out of desperation, I began daily asking for his help. Now, with God as my constant and always available friend, I feel comfortable, no longer searching frantically for happiness. "Comfortable" is good enough! When I stopped fantasizing about happiness and settled for comfort, happiness came to me-not always, but often. I realized my happiness does not depend on others; it comes from within.

Now that, through AA, I have been reintroduced to **HP** (as I lovingly call my Higher Power), I have changed. I am grateful. I appreciate-rather than expect-good things. Those discoveries came after I began to grow up and mature, a process that took more than fifty years and a lot of pain.

Life is different now. I still have many of the same living problems; but with **HP and AA**, I am making progress, and it feels good. I am not always happy but usually comfortable. What a relief to know that I only have to live a day at a time, doing the best I can this day, and that **HP** will take the other handle of the basket, **if only I let him**.

Yes, "comfortable" is good enough!

D.M., Grapevine, August 1985

★★★★★

There was a young fellow named Joe,
Who lost a delectable glow;
He used to be sunny
And have lots of money,
But that was four binges ago.

ARE YOU PLANNING TO MOVE?

If so, clip this coupon and mail to 940 Rockefeller Bldg., 614 Superior Ave., N.W., 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.



MILL ENDS AND REMNANTS

Rarely do we hear a speaker who fails to emphasize the importance of frequent and regular attendance at meetings. Seldom, if he is well qualified in fundamentals, does a sponsor fail to impart the need for the meeting often and continually at groups.

And as we meditate upon the wisdom of this phase of our theory in AA, we realize the transition that has taken place in our lives, from the loneliness of the friendless drunk to the fulfilling experience of sobriety.

In this same vein, having participated in numerous other meetings outside of AA, I have come to know that the same basic reason for most of these people meeting together is to sidestep the engulfing backwaters of loneliness.

None of these people, as far as I know, has a drinking problem. Yet in their togetherness and their sharing, they overcome other problems that beset them, thus avoiding the peril of withdrawal from life.

So meeting together, all are enabled to enlarge their horizons far beyond that which would otherwise be possible. And the expansion of these horizons reminds us of the admonition of a longtime AA, since deceased, that a member can 12th Step outside as well as within the fellowship.

This has been your writer's experience, and, while no activity has been more compensating than those in AA, from the earliest months of sobriety to the present, those things to which we have been able to contribute have repaid us many fold for the effort expended.

All of which leads us to suggest that if we are to get the most from what we can give away we ought to do it in the spirit of the universal. Let our countenances bespeak love, our smiles portray friendliness and our eyes shine with kindness to all men.

In doing so, it is that we ease the burden of some nameless one, or hearten the aspect of some lonely one, being mindful that in helping others unknown to us is more rewarding than otherwise.

If you would have outreach, **R—E—A—C—H**, by George!

★★★★★

'And acceptance is the answer to **ALL** my problems today. When I am disturbed it is because I find some person, place, thing or situation—some fact of **life**—unacceptable to me, and I can find no serenity until I **accept** that person, place, thing, or situation as being exactly the way it is supposed to be at this moment. **NOTHING, ABSOLUTELY NOTHING, HAPPENS IN GOD'S WORLD BY MISTAKE.**

Anonymous, Big Book, page 449

ONE THING AT A TIME

Sometimes our fulfillment in the AA Program seems to come slowly--too slowly. This is not the time for discouragement; the question is, what can I do where I am? Just to meet the demands of sobriety twenty-four hours a day is sufficient.

Sobriety is progressive. When we feel we are not making progress, let us stop and think if we are **"going to AA or growing in AA."**

The founders and early workers did not have the great resources that now exist in the AA program—they had no one upon whom to depend but themselves; they used what they had. You know the results.

Those of us who are waiting for the **BIG EXPERIENCE** should work with what we have moment by moment. If we practice steadfastly what we have learned of the AA Steps and Principles, we will know the great experience.

Everything has a starting point. Honesty is one of the best for sobriety. Honesty has a solid foundation. Honesty is the ability to question oneself, and the basis for humility in the truest sense.

Unconcerned about getting credit for accomplishments, let us keep before us the challenge of being good members of AA and remember to carry the message to alcoholics and to practice the Steps and Principles in all our affairs.

AA Grapevine

★★★★★

SHOW WARMTH AND AFFECTION AT MEETINGS

Going to meetings shouldn't be just attending an event, but also being a part of a family. Old timers who've been less active, as well as newcomers, don't always feel like family.

If each of us would just be on the alert to spot unfamiliar faces, it would help a great deal. If we have any sensitivity at all, we can pick out our brothers or sisters who haven't been here for some time, or those who are here for the first time.

Once we notice them, let's go to them after the meeting and chat a bit and get to know them better, Invite them to join us in a cup of coffee. Offer our phone numbers. Maybe give them a call during the week. Show them that we are interested in them.

We simply must not underestimate the importance of human warmth and affection in God's plan. We are the helping hands welcoming our brothers and sisters home.

Let us realize the only important thing--that **they are here, now, tonight, and whether they come back or not is up to us.**

Effie M., WAIA Reporter



Published monthly by the Cleveland Central Committee of A. A., a non-profit fellowship dedicated to service. Address all letters to Central Bulletin, 940 Rockefeller Bldg, 614 Superior Ave. NW, Cleveland, Ohio 44113. Subscription price \$3.50 per Year.

Harry D., Founder and Editor 1892-1968

Vol. 44 July 1986 No. 10

District Office (216) 241 - 7387

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, July 1, 1986 • 8:00 p.m.

OLD STONE CHURCH • PUBLIC SQUARE
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All Group Representatives Welcome
Be Informed

8 TH OYPAAC

(Ohio Young People)

THEME: Miracles In Progress

July 18, 19 and 20, 1986

Capital University, Columbus, Ohio

GROUP ANNIVERSARIES

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

NORTH ROYALTON-HINCKLEY

Thursday, July 10, 1986 • 8:00 p.m.

SEVENTH ANNIVERSARY

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

PARMA SATURDAY

Saturday, July 19, 1986 • 8:30 p.m.

THIRTY-NINTH ANNIVERSARY

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

EARLY FRIDAY

Friday, July 25, 1986 • 10:30 a.m.

TENTH ANNIVERSARY

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

METRO GENERAL HOSPITAL

Friday, July 25, 1986 • 7:30 p.m.

FOURTEENTH ANNIVERSARY

IN MEMORIAM

Our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of these deceased members of our fellowship:

PAUL KINCHEN, 20 year member of Temple Group.

EVELYN PATTERSON, 38 year member of Bedford Wednesday Group.

THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE

DISTRICT OFFICE CORNER

Fireworks month again! We wish to express our wish to you at this time that the Fourth of July celebration is safe and sober-just enjoying the day as it is without thinking of the **FIFTH!** A small joke, but, considering all that can get lost, why not take time to think?

All is well at your District Office once again, everybody is back doing the best job they can do and, as usual, it is busy, busy, busy.

You know, fellow members, that not necessarily all the calls we receive in our office are a "call for *help*" (as we think of it) but a call for help of some kind; perhaps concerned family members, employers, etc. We also get calls for some of the other programs who base their recovery on our 12 Steps of Alcoholic Anonymous. Permission has been granted to all of these various organizations who use our twelve steps **but**, mistakenly, we do not have information, such as phone numbers, meeting places, etc. for these programs and we get calls of inquiry on all of them and then when we cannot furnish information, some are miffed about it.

One other thing that crops up from time to time is the issue of the death of a member. Usually, when a member of our home group passes, the group would, most likely, want to remember the deceased in some manner, but, to extend this beyond the home group can prove to be a very costly thing. . . then, it is left to the individual member who might want to contribute something to the bereaved family.

Another question we have had this past month was to ask if it is permissible to announce an AA meeting in the newspaper. Not so much in our area (and maybe this is what brought the question) but, in **many** areas, AA meetings **are** announced. We think that the one exception would be groups that are designated as **CLOSED** groups or meetings that are held in treatment centers where patients are allowed to attend the meetings. Anonymity is so important to us that it is 50% of our name-this is the statement made by the General Service Office in all of their news releases as we just cannot express anonymity too much. In treatment centers, patients who would attend the meeting might be recognized so we think it would be good **not** to announce those meetings. This has happened in our area and members have called us about it. . . the PR person at the hospital is the party responsible for such announcements as they do not recognize the danger not only to their own patients but to those who might be thinking of asking for help. That word "**Anonymity**" is often the *word* that helps someone feel safe and free to call us.

At the June Central Committee meeting there was a suggestion made regarding attendance at the meetings of the many handicapped members we already have and those that are calling in-we will be asking groups who hold their meetings where there is easy access to their meetings to let us know so that we can mark the meetings with a handicapped insignia in the meeting schedules. A letter will be sent out to all groups sometime in the not too distant future.

(Continued)

ALWAYS . CAREFUL . TO . INVESTIGATE . OTHERS . NEEDS

(Continued from previous page)

We also have a number of members who either by age or illness are not able to attend the meetings anymore. If you know of anyone who cannot get out of their homes, do plan to drop in with a friend or two for a visit. . . at least, then, our members won't feel that they have been forgotten.

A subscription renewal from out of town, mentioned how good it was to see another "Mill Ends and Remants" in again. We think so too- so this month in your Bulletin you will see another column which ran in July, 1966. The bits of wisdom and downright good thinking that you find in these columns are really something that we enjoy passing along to you.

Till we meet again fellow members!

★★★★★

GETTING IT TOGETHER

A dear friend of mine in AA told me a while ago—"EVERYTIME I THINK I HAVE IT ALL TOGETHER, I FORGOT WHERE I PUT IT !!" I have two comments to make on this: (1) **God! ain't it the truth!**, and (2) this is **NOT** a unique syndrome. You will notice I use the term *syndrome* because of the **SIMPLE** fact that this happening, for some, is **NOT JUST** a passing thing. It is **REAL** but it's nothing to worry about.

My own personal way of handling this situation is as follows: I simply tell myself, lovingly, "**Bill, KEEP COMING BACK . . .**" It works.

We **all** experience high and low days but as my sponsor put it to me—"NEVER allow yourself to get too high or too low. That is a luxury none of us can afford".

Everyday as I get better, I come a little closer to the *middle* of the *road*. For me the middle of the road is spelled **S-E-R-E-N-I-T-Y**.

Thanks and God Bless

Bill Z., Chesterland, non-smoking

Be a Bulletin Booster

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DEALING WITH THE GREEN-EYED MONSTER

There may be times when each of us is touched by the infamous "green-eyed monster"—**JEALOUSY**. To help us deal with this destructive emotion, here are a few things to keep in mind about it.

JEALOUSY may stem partly from our own feelings of inadequacy. We secretly doubt ourselves, and resent anything which calls our attention to our lack of achievement.

JEALOUSY indicates a lack of trust in God; an unwillingness to accept the role God has assigned us for reasons known only to himself.

JEALOUSY is the wreckage of thwarted ambition. Too much ambition, in the AA member, often means a loss of contact with the Principles of the Program. Such a person loses even if he wins-and loses more painfully when he loses.

JEALOUSY has a lot of self-centeredness and lovelessness in it. After all, we must admit that we don't really love the people whom we envy. In fact, we are at that point dangerously close to wishing them *bad luck!* We are thinking then only of our own twisted desires.

One last thing to remember about **JEALOUSY** is that it is a universal human affliction. Even the Saints suffered from it-Peter and Paul suffered from **JEALOUSY** despite their marvelous spiritual experiences.

So it is not a question of whether one is bothered by **JEALOUSY**, it is simply a matter of degree! And, **don't** forget there can also be **JEALOUSY** between AA members trying to do good work!

Adapted from "Is There Life After Sobriety"

★★★★★

WHAT KIND OF MEMBER ARE YOU?

1. Some members are like wheelbarrows-no good unless pushed.
2. Some are like canoes--they need to be paddled.
3. Some are like kites-if you don't keep a string on them, they will blow away.
4. Some are like footballs-you can't tell which way they are going to bounce next.
5. Some are like balloons-full of wind and likely to blow up unless handled carefully.
6. Some are like trailers-no good unless pulled.
7. Some are 100% members in regular attendance and are very cooperative. **WHICH ONE ARE YOU?**

No Booze News, Mesa Arizona

BE A FRIEND

If we would increase your happiness and prolong your life, forget your neighbors faults. Forget all the slander and unkind remarks you hear each day. Forget the temptations, forget the fault-finding, and give a thought to the cause which provokes it.

Forget the peculiarities of your friends, and only remember the good which makes you fond of them. Forget all of the personal quarrels you may have heard by accident, and which, if repeated, would sound a thousand times worse. Blot out as far as possible all disagreeables of life. They will come, but will only grow larger when you remember them. And, the constant thought of acts of meanness or malice will tend only to make you more familiar with them.

Obliterate everything that was disagreeable yesterday. Start today with a clean sheet, write upon it for memory's sake only those things which are loveable. Remember that some day we must give an account of our words and deeds, and thoughts. Therefore, let's try to make life more beautiful for ourselves and for others.

Bill S., Akron, Ohio

★★★★★

DISEASE ? ?

I easily accepted the fact that I was an alcoholic and my life was unagreeable due to the abuse of alcohol. But I could not accept the fact that alcoholism was a disease, **a chronic disease from which I could die.** All my early training said drunkenness was sin, was wrong, and therefore I had a great sobering up in the rehab hospital.

Then in AA I listened to many leads. I related to the fact that most AA's had a family history of alcoholism. My own family of alcoholics went back three generations. I accepted the fact that alcoholism runs in some families, That it is a disease, a disease of depression that can lead me back to drinking. So how to stay sober? Fight the disease of depression by attending AA meetings and working the twelve steps of AA.

Ralph W., Nite & Day AA Group

★★★★★

SEE WORRY FOR WHAT IT IS

According to Dr. Thomas S. Kepler, only 8% of a person's worries are legitimate: 40% will never happen; 30% are over other peoples criticisms of us; 12% are over old decisions; 10% are about our health.

That accounts for 92% of our concerns, about which we can do little or nothing.

It is unrealistic to think that a long term habit of anxiety can be disposed of with a wave of the hand. But we can try, little by little, to:

Deepen our belief that God loves us personally and individually;

Accept ourselves as we are;

Master our fears and reach out to others in love.

"There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear."

(1 John 4:18)

TO FIND THE MAGIC

There definitely is magic in AA. It's all around us in these rooms-the fellowship, the sharing of our experiences, the Twelve and Twelve, love, understanding, caring, the giving away of our sobriety, and most of all, our Higher Power. So many more are here that I could go on forever.

The magic is within each of us, but to harvest this magic, one has to reap the whole AA program. Putting the magic together will not come easily or quickly. After all, it took us years to become alcoholics. One must "give time time."

It may take years to put the magic in proper perspective and retain it, but it will be worth it. **Alcoholics Anonymous does work-if you let it.**

B.W., Grapevine, 1982

★★★★★

NO JOSH BY GOSH

A fellow named Joshua Jakes was in court on suspicion of making illegal whisky. "Joshua. . ." mused the Bible-reader judge, with a hint of a smile. "Are you the Joshua who made the sun stand still?"

"No sir," was the frank reply. "I'm the Joshua who made the moon shine."

★★★★★

DON7 WAIT

A fine old gentleman used to stop at times at an antique shop in New Hampshire to sell furniture. One day after he left, the antique dealer's wife said she wished she had told him how much she enjoyed his visits. The husband said, "Next time let's tell him so."

The following summer a young woman came in and introduced herself as the daughter of the old gentleman. Her father, she said, had died. Then the wife told her about the conversation she and her husband had had after the father's last visit. The young woman's eyes filled with tears. "Oh, how much good that would have done my father!" she cried. "He was a man who needed to be assured that he was liked."

"Since that day," the shopkeeper said later, "whenever I think something particularly nice about a person, I tell them." I might never get another chance.

The Hummer, Akron Intergroup News

ARE YOU PLANNING TO MOVE?

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IT WILL HELP YOU AND IT WILL HELP US.



GOD'S DESIGN IS ORIGINAL

If someone told you that you were "one in a million" you would probably feel pleased! Yet, you might wonder if it was really meant, because of your own ideas about yourself. But the truth is it would be a gross understatement, because you are one in very many billions—not just one in a million.

No two people who ever lived on the face of the earth are the same. They don't have the same gifts, think the same thoughts, feel the same pain, dream the same dreams, live in the exact same circumstances. Many relatives and friends, and those of the same nationality may share a lot in common, but the important things are specifically yours. By God's design you are original, unique and very special.

The fact that there is no substitute for you raises many questions and indicates responsibility. Because we are talking about knowledge of self unfolding over a lifetime, it would be unwise and unfair to try to condense all the issues into a few neat questions. Questions like: What are my beliefs? What are my abilities? What are my interests? Who am I? Why am I here? And many, many more. Nevertheless, an occasional reflection on one's uniqueness, beliefs, and abilities could give new direction and purpose to life, particularly at a time of disbelief, rapid change, recession or unemployment.

Guidelines for the right direction come from many sources to us, but they are not always written down. Here is something from a teacher: "You do not belong to you. You belong to the whole world. Your exact role or calling will never be fully clear to you, but you are on the right track if you are converting your experience and energy for the best advantage of others.

So, if you take a little time now and again to look at who you are, what you do, what you have to offer, it will help you to understand your particular world a little better. You will see your family, your school, the place you work, the environment and the country in a new light. You will experience the friendship of some, the sufferings of others. You will see the patterns and shapes of life, the great needs; and you will come to realize why you have these God given talents. and why it is an understatement to say you are "one in a million."

Bristol-Fashion



CONSOLATION

Consolation indiscreetly pressed upon us, when we are suffering undue affliction, only serves to increase our pain, and to render our grief more poignant.

Rousseau

THE CAMEL-A Symbol

In school I was taught that the camel was a beast of burden. I have also heard them referred to as: dirty, stinking animals that spit at you; dumb animals that bite; and a few other unflattering definitions that would certainly not give any indication of why they have been chosen as the AA symbol. When talking with many AA members I have been told they are recognized because they are able to go a very long time without a drink. I do not contest the length of time because I do not know, but they eventually need a drink; therefore, I would like to pass on the version I have heard, liked, and makes me feel inferior to the camel.

"Each morning the camel kneels trustingly before its master, knowing it will not be given a burden greater than it can handle for that day. At night, the camel again kneels before its master and the burden is removed from its back for the night." When the number 24 is shown on a "camel": it emphasizes the one day at a time that a camel lives by.

I would not like to look like a camel but I would like to be as accepting. Beauty is as beauty does.

Ruby S.
Acceptance Group

TWISTED TRUTHS

The slogans and sayings we hear around AA are catchy reminders of some important truths. But like all true statements, they can be interpreted in ways quite contrary to the original spirit. I have been guilty of a few misinterpretations myself and have heard of others. Here are some of the ways we can twist them around.

"First Things First": Don't bug me about getting a job—after all, I've stayed *sober* for five years, haven't I?

"Live and Let Live": Let me alone—I'll do it my way.

"But for the Grace of God": Maybe my luck will hold out one more time.

"Easy Does It": The Steps will take care of themselves if I don't bother with them

"One Day at a Time": Planning for the future is a waste of energy.

"Let go and let God": It's hardly worth making any effort.

"Spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection": I'll grow up when I darn well please.

"God grant me the serenity to accept things I cannot change": I'll always be a little squirrely, so why worry?

"This is a selfish program": Twelfth-stepping is fine for other people, but my sobriety comes first.

"Keep it simple": I never have to read the Big Book —I don't want to get confused.

B. J.
Salt Lake City, Utah

CENTRAL BULLETIN



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Harry D., Founder and Editor 1892-1968

Vol. 44 August 1986 No. 11

District Office (216) 241 - 7387

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, Aug 5, 1986 • 8:00 p.m.

OLD STONE CHURCH - PUBLIC SQUARE
CLEVELAND, OHIO

All Group Representatives Welcome
Be Informed

IN MEMORIAM

Our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of these deceased members of our fellowship:

TOM DOYLE, 21 year member of AA, passed away in Florida.

NORMAN H. MENTALL, Sobriety of 36 - 37 years, member of Night & Day Groups.

MARK LYNETT, 13 year member of Alcoholics Anonymous.

FRED SIECK, MEMBER OF AA known in many groups.

BETTY FINNEY, 6 year member of AA, active in west side area.

THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE

SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

One day I awoke, my life filled with sorrow;
Unhappy of yesterday, afraid of tomorrow;
The pains of my actions kept on growing stronger;
My reasons for living, weren't reasons any longer;
Cry Out! Cry Out! from inside me I heard;
My lips hadn't moved; who spoke those words?
Again in the silence, the voice came out stronger;
Don't be afraid, your not alone any longer;
No reason to question; the answers I was seeking;
For somehow I knew the voice that was speaking;
He said not to worry, about my lifes misdirection;
for nothing on earth has been made to perfection;
He said he has always been by my side;
But its time to let go and let Him be my guide;
Now back to the silence; no voice from above;
Yet deep down inside me, I still feel His love;
So with this I offer my life up to thee;
For you've taken my fears, of what was or will be;

Bob M.
Euclid Wednesday Group

DISTRICT OFFICE CORNER

HELLO ALL! It is really hard to believe that this is being written for the August issue-time goes so fast, seems to do that, doesn't it when we get a little up in years? For those of you who have not reached that stage in **life— Believe me!**

We are taking so much consolation when we receive the renewals to the Bulletin from our out of town people, telling us how much they look forward to each issue. . . to do something good and have somebody tell you about it carries so much reward. . . we humbly appreciate it. There are so many times that we have "the other" types that call attention to our shortcomings and, even after we are doing (or making the effort) the correct thing-these same people never have time to tell us about it. When we pray for tolerance, patience and the right to live One Day at a Time-I'm sure everyone would like to know that the "long-timers" are setting an example for us who cannot yet claim the longevity of their sobriety.

In putting together the Bulletin in July-we overlooked mentioning the 39th Annual Ohio State Conference hosted by Ohio General Service. We apologize. This year the Conference is being held at Bowling Green State University on August 1, 2 and 3. We hope that enough announcements were made at meetings and no one who cared to go missed the opportunity.

We **did** send out a letter to all groups asking for call backs from groups who can accomodate the handicapped so those groups can be noted in the Meeting Schedule Book and we have had a few positive replies-now, of course, the thing to do is that those of us who might know someone that this would benefit would be to try to see if we can take the time and get some of those people out to the meetings. That is 12 Step Work in its truest form. . . always going that step beyond-it helps us sometimes more than the other person.

Fellow members, I'm about to end our little visit this month still encouraging "talking up" the Central Bulletin in your areas and still asking for more articles from our members. Calling attention to our first paragraph: "They can say all they want about being over the hill, it still beats being under it'...' **THINK ABOUT IT.**

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

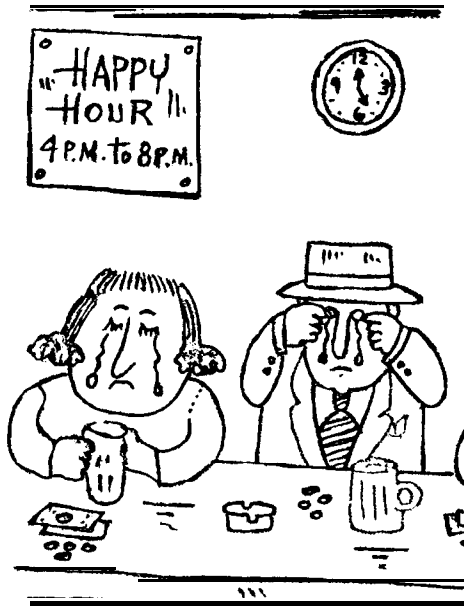
FEAR

There are many situations in life which naturally throw the pall of dread over a man's soul. Life is seldom easy. It is often overwhelmingly difficult, and if a man has worry in his temperament, circumstances supply plenty of occasions of which to exercise it!

The difference between men lies here; those in whom the fear attitude is master, hold the oppressive trouble so close to the eye that it hides everything else; those whom the faith-attitude dominates, hold trouble off and see it in wide perspective. A copper cent can hide the sun if we hold it close enough to the eye, and a transient difficulty can shut out from a fearful soul all lives large blessings and all horizons of devine goodwill.

Harry Emerson Fosdick

ALWAYS • CAREFUL • TO • INVESTIGATE • OTHERS • NEEDS



BOREDOM

"If you were brought up in a conflict relationship, you would seek same." Fancy words. More simpy if you were brought up in a drinking family with its arguments, its ups and downs, its drama (where's Daddy?), then you will seek the same. I know I did. I ended up with the same violent arguments my parents had. I stormed out to the motel. Did my kids feel abandoned?

It was exciting and I sought excitment all my life. Sit home and watch TV? Play with the kids, NO! I ran from bar to bar to beat my boredom. And what did I find? Poverty of spirit and pocketbook. Relationships empty of meaning.

I have given up the bottle and its empty fantasies. I joined AA. I now have real friends and events to look forward to enjoy. Life now has meaning. **And I have a purpose: to help the suffering alcoholic.**

Ralph W.
Nite & Day AA Group

 Be a Bulletin Booster

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My first six months in the program, I heard the same things, over and over: "Easy Does It," "First Things First," "Let Go and Let God." The saying "Don't drink, and go to meetings, and things will get better" nearly drove me berserk. But I did, **and things did get better.**

What was life like before A.A.? Nothing but **repetition**—drink, get drunk, pass out, and come to-over and over again. That repetition nearly killed me.

Today, in order to feel comfortable and maintain sobriety, I must repeatedly hear and read the things I don't want to hear and read. I must consciously share with that other alcoholic who is still suffering. I need more meetings now than I did when I first came into A.A.

Now, I love the repetitious sayings and readings. I know that as long as I keep the God of my understanding at the steering wheel of my life, and I don't drink and I go to meetings, everything is going to be all right. **And for that, I am grateful.**

H.O., Fayetteville, NC.
 A.A. Grapevine, February 1985

★★★★★

Doctor to patient: "Stay away from wine and women. It's O. K. for you to sing a little, though."

★★★★★

"I just can't find a cause for your illness," the internist said. "Frankly, I think it's due to drinking."

"In that case," replied the patient, "I'll come back when your sober."

★★★★★

A priest at his first mass, was very nervous. After the service, he asked the bishop, who was present, what he thought of the sermon.

"The mass went off fairly well," said the bishop. "But to overcome your nervousness, next time put a little Vodka in your water-it'll ease the tension.

The young priest listened to this advice, but decided to fill his glass with straight Vodka. Immediately he felt a vast difference-words just rolled off his tongue. Again, after the mass, he asked the bishop for his comments.

The bishop frowned and then explained:
 "First, there are ten commandments not twelve.
 Second there are twelve disciples not ten.

Third, we do not refer to Jesus Christ as the late J.C.
 Fourth, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost are not referred to as Big Daddy, junior and the Spook.

And last, David slew Goliath; he did not kick the s-t out of him."

★★★★★

ADVERSITY

Remember that there is nothing stable in human affairs; therefore, avoid undue elation in prosperity, or undue depression in adversity.

Socrates

OLD POP PERKINS

Pop and I were just about finished mowing the front lawn, when he said to me, "Son, I'll run in and mix a cold pitcher of lemonade, it ought to taste mighty good after gittin' all sweated up." "I'll be in Pop, just as soon as I finish trimming around the edges," I answered.

Having put away the mower, I entered the house and Pop handed me a frosty glassful that really hit the spot. "Sit down a minute, son, an listen to this dude," Pop said a little irritated, having turned on the radio. A commentator had a special guest on his talk show and this man did not mince words about the deeds and accomplishments he had performed. He was certainly not a backward sort.

"Ya know, son," Pop said turning of the set. "It's a good thing the world ain't full a the likes of him, though there is plenty of 'em around. I don't think he's gonna impress sensible people an they'll more than likely do what I did, an turn him off."

"Lemme tell you somethin' 'bout his kind, an in no way do I wanna come across like he did. Ego, son, can cripple an harm a person as much as a disease or affliction. Fer a braggart, a know-it-all, he defeats an hinders himself more than he knows, fer often he isn't aware a this, livin' in his own little world. He puts himself in situations due to his attitude an stubbornness an finds himself at wits end when he can't fulfill the boasts an bluffs he's run."

"He's somewhat of a character, like an actor, but unpolished an when he fails to impress folks, he finds this hard to stomach an unwillin' to change, his ego pushes him on. I've come across a few in my time son, an found most has little ability or none at all 'bout most things. Ya heard th old adage, I'm sure, an I believe "Honest Abe" is given credit for it if I'm not mistaken, 'bout foolin' people some of the time."

Pop," I chimed in recalling my past. "I believe many in AA including myself, when we were drinking, tried to bluff our way through life when our ego was in control. We wouldn't listen to anyone, we had all the answers and wouldn't even listen to those who had our best interests at heart. We wandered from place to place, playing out our miserable roles, seeking what we could never find, until finally there was no place to go. Those of us that finally sought or were pushed into AA are here to talk about it and able to help others by being honest and upright in our approach to life. The unfortunate one's that didn't admit their weaknesses or defeat, only God knows where they may be. Ego was one of the problems as were many others but today we are aware of them. I believe, Pop, that becoming honest with ourselves and others and willing to accept life as it really is, is the answer.

Pop seemed to hold back on his reply for a moment but finally said, "Some like the egotists, son, know the cost of everything and the value of nothing. It would be well for them to remember that self-conceit always fetters and confines those caught up in it.

WORTHY NOTATIONS

Of't said, oft repeated, but too often disregarded.
One of the best ways to get back on your feet is to get down on your knees.

Don't tell me what to do, tell me what you did.

Some try so hard to get serenity, they become a nervous wreck.

If you think, you won't drink; if you drink, you can't think.

Some get up with the lark, others want a swallow in the morning.

Fellowship means give and take, but here I draw the line. When it comes to inventories, you take yours and I'll take mine.

Alcohol is no longer a solution to my problems.

When my ego gets in the way, it's usually a way of Easing God Out.

The truth will set you free. but first it will make you miserable.

Today is the tomorrow that you worried about yesterday.

Step One a day keeps the bottle away.

He who drinks before he drives, puts the quart before the hearse.

"Trolley Square"

★★★★★

BEAUTY

A handsome women is a jewel, a good women is a treasure.

Saad i

★★★★★

CAN WE LEARN FROM SLIPS?

When I hear members of the Fellowship discussing what they've learned from slips, my reaction is mixed.

I firmly believe that a person who has had a slip can ("must" is a dirty word!) use it in only one way: to learn. Six years of slipping taught me a great deal: the danger signs, how to avoid the slip (I never did), and, of course, the consequences of that first drink.

On the other hand, wouldn't I have learned much more in six years of living the program-sober?

W.R., The Grapevine, Inc.

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IT WILL HELP YOU AND IT WILL HELP US.



MY FRIEND JOE

Recently I asked an AA friend if I could pass along some of his day-to-day living experiences which I found to be very inspirational. I was given permission when I reminded him that what had helped me could possibly help others. His story will now have a different ending, but I feel it still needs to be told. His name was Joe.

Joe was a firm believer that on Tuesday nights he must be at his home group, no matter what, because they had done so much to help him. Beyond that, he could be found at AA meetings at any place, at any time, or in any weather. His job was that of a musician. The balance of his time was spent living life to the fullest at such recreations as: skiing, practice at pistol ranges, "cruising" downtown Cleveland, riding the breath-taking rides at Cedar Point, riding and being thrown from horses he was introduced to as challenging and in August he was scheduled to go sky diving. One day at a time, he was living his life and enjoying his sobriety to the fullest. He would then re-live each experience when he described it to some one else, and his laughter was the infectious type that was caught by everyone in his presence. And what a presence he created! Each person he came in contact with was made to feel as though they had been his friend for years and since his love was **extended** to everyone that love was returned.

I realize Joe does not sound too different from other AA members who are working their program to stay sober and enjoy their sobriety one day at a time. But Joe was blind, and had been since his birth 28 years ago.

I knew and loved Joe as an AA member who was able to show me that a handicap was not an excuse for missing meetings or attempting to help a fellow alcoholic. He showed me the pleasures that are there to be enjoyed with just a little effort. He taught me to observe things that demonstrate the power and presence of God. Joe will continue on as an example for me, but now his story becomes an epilogue.

Three days ago, Joe took a drink. Then Joe took his life. He did not call to say goodbye and I will never know what he was feeling at his end. If he had made a phone call to someone before taking the drink, perhaps it would not have needed to end as a goodbye. **Please! If just one person will benefit from Joe's story. . . he will not have died in vain.**

Ruby S.
Acceptance Group



Now there's a new kind of wine called "Post Office Red". You mail five pounds of grapes in a container and mark it **FRAGILE**.

THE BAR

The Saloon is sometimes called a bar,
A bar to heaven, a door to hell,
Whoever named it named it well.

A bar to manliness and wealth,
A door to want and broken health;
A bar to honor, pride and fame,
A door to grief and sin and shame.

A bar to hope, a bar to prayer,
A door to darkness and despair;
A bar to honored useful life,
A door to brawling senseless strife.

A bar to all that's true and brave,
A door to every drunkard's grave;
A bar to joys that home imparts,
A door to tears and aching hearts.

A bar to heaven, a door to hell,
Whoever named it, named it well.

WOULD YOU REPEAT THAT, PLEASE?

As a typical AA perfectionist (that can be defined as "a person given to correcting the grammar in the graffiti on rest room walls"), I have attempted a definition of an alcoholic that precisely fits me.

After a number of tries and several stays in hospitals and cirrhosis-by-the-sea spas, I finally devised a definition I think many would identify with. It was inspired by a pompous intern, who seemed to enjoy ten-dollar words with the usual medical jargon.

This is how I imagine he would have described my condition: "*The patient is a mellifluous, sciolistic hyperdenophilist with cronic struthionine don-topedological distress and antiorthokeratological atitudinal enigma.*"

Which means: "The patient is a laid-back, know-it-all wino with chronic head-in-the-sand, foot-in-the-mouth disease and a bad attitude about anything that's perfectly clear."

E.U. Oxnard, Calif.
The Grapevine, Inc.



"it says here that, alcohol shrinks the brain,' so I wouldn't blow my nose so hard if I were you."



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Harry D., Founder and Editor 1892-1968

Vol. 44

September 1986

No. 12

DISTRICT OFFICE CORNER

Greetings from your District Office—we are in the dog days of summer and, believe me, we really don't need to be told around here. . . it even seems that we are having full moons more often. . . this is just our way of letting you know that things around here are moving right along with no reprieve and for us, that's good news, meaning that more and more people are deciding to come to grips with their drinking problem.

At this point, we would like to thank all of the groups who responded to our request for information on meeting places that can accomodate those who are handicapped. . . we will not have another meeting schedule out to list these groups until October or November but we really appreciate your interest.

We were also happy that we could announce a literature discount, once again, for all the AA groups in this area. We had lifted the discount some time back because of increased costs to us - we are very happy now that we can offer it again.

This time of year also brings us a lot of visitors from out of town who are vacationing and we have had many compliments on our District Office. This is our intent - to have it nice, bright and cheerful for anyone coming into the office, not only for a visit but coming in here first to talk to one of us before making up their mind whether or not they have a drinking problem and find out we aren't such bad folks after all.

It seems that lately we are having more and more names appear in our **IN MEMORIAM** column. . . names of some of our members that have been of great help to us and many others in our quest for a sane sobriety. . . I just said good-bye this week to my friend, Helen, from my home group. Years ago it was this lady who, because she visited the office often, spoke to Dick P. and Lillian about me and the fact that I would soon have to go out looking for a job and was feeling quite unsure of myself. They were just busy enough at that time that they would have listened to anything that would mean help. . . the other two girls in the office at that time also had their hands full I will be forever grateful because that was the beginning of my job here. Since that time, you have all had to put up with me!

Speaking of gratitude, the first reminders were sent out to all groups and members re: their pledges to the District Office during our Fund Drive and the response we received from that makes it even more worthwhile as a demonstration of *responsibility* that some of us who are recovering do mature as more proof that **THIS PROGRAM WORKS.**

ALWAYS . CAREFUL . TO . INVESTIGATE . OTHERS . NEEDS

District Office (216) 241 - 7387

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, Sept 2, 1986 - 8:00 p.m.

OLD STONE CHURCH -PUBLIC SQUARE
CLEVELAND, OHIO

All Group Representatives Welcome
Be Informed

GROUP ANNIVERSARIES

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

MONDAY MORNING 12 STEP GROUP

Monday, September 1, 1986 • 10:30 a.m.

NINETEENTH ANNIVERSARY

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

WEDNESDAY SOBRIETY GROUP

Wednesday, September 3, 1986

DOORS OPEN AT 6:00 p.m.

Anniversary to be held at St. James Lutheran
Church Hall, 4771 Broadview Rd., Cleveland, OH.

FOURTH ANNIVERSARY

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

NEW APPROACH TO LIFE GROUP

Sunday September 7, 1986

Doors Open at 3:00 p.m. — Lead at 6:00 p.m.

ELEVENTH ANNIVERSARY

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

FRIENDSHIP GROUP

Monday, September 8, 1986 7:00 p.m.

'A DIFFERENT KIND OF ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION'
Symposium, Refreshments and Lead

TWENTY SIXTH ANNIVERSARY

IN MEMORIAM

Our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of these deceased members of our fellowship:

HELEN JUNKE, 26 year member of AA - Laurel Group.

MARTHA WILLIAMS, Member of V.A. Saturday, 6 years of sobriety.

WILLIAM J. DOWLING, Member of Fairmount Group, 5 years of sobriety.

DICK SMITH, Vermillion, active member of AA in the Sandusky & Vermillion area, 6 years of sobriety.

BIG "0", Well known member of AA from Columbus, Ohio, very active.

CRAIG SMITH, Young member of AA, Attended Shaker and Riverside Groups

THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

FROM TYLER, TEXAS

Dear Friends,

I loved the poem by Bob M. (Euclid Wednesday Group) and *Worthy* Notations in the Bulletin.

Best wishes
Dorothy DeG—8/1/86

OLD POP PERKINS

Pop and I had gone to church early this Sunday morning and we had dinner earlier than usual because Pop wanted to go see an old friend who was laid up, as he put it. I had promised him before that I would drive him over there.

On our way back Pop said somewhat disheartened, "Old Jim didn't look too God and he 'peared to lack fight to carry on. Did it look that way to you, son?"

"Somewhat, Pop, not knowing the man," I replied. "From his talk, he didn't seem to have any faith or trust in anyone or anything."

"Faith, son, is a broad, powerful and meaningful word an it **branches** out into a lot of different directions," Pop said quietly. "Some folks an I'm **includin'** agnostics, claim they don't need or have faith in anyone or anything, but they ain't quite on the mark, **sayin'** that. We all have faith in one way or **nuther**. Most important fer man is a faith in God. Then faith in friends an others too. One has to have faith in crossing the street, **trustin'** traffic will stop at the red light. Pilot's got faith in their planes an passengers got faith in the pilot to get safely to their destination. People has faith in doctors to git 'em well. Folks trust the mechanic that repair their cars. Folks trust the banks to protect their savin's. Without faith and trust, son, we'd all be stymied an in an awful fix."

"I have never really looked at it in that light, Pop." I said, "but thinking it over surely proves we have to have faith and trust in one another. And in the same sense, people have to have faith and trust in us. This takes me back to my drinking days, Pop, and I can plainly see why folks couldn't trust or depend on me."

"Son,!" Pop said in summing it up well. "Once ya turn the corner back to respectability an become trustworthy, the curves an obstacles in life's road are reduced considerable. Faith in God, faith in ourselves an others, an the faith that others have in us, makes life what it's meant to be."

Frank J.D.

BAD COMPANY

An old parrot flew out of a farm house and joined some crows in a watermelon field. The farmer, not knowing this and wanting to protect the fruit of his labors, blasted them with his shotgun. The results were three dead crows and one ruffled parrot with a missing toe.

The farmer tenderly took him home where the excited children gathered around and asked, "what did it?"

"Bad company! Bad company!" answered the parrot. He spoke wiser than he knew. His foolish choice of associates had endangered him.

COMMENT-They tell us when we come to AA that we need to change our playmates, playgrounds, and playthings. The Big Book also warns about going into places where we have no valid reason being. Because, those who have come before us have learned that we may not only have a missing toe, like the parrot, but we could end up drunk, and end up dead because none of us know if we have another sobering up left in us.

Leroy B.

Comment by Dee D. via the Hummer

ABOUT A.A.

GROUP CONSCIENCE OF A.A.-Bob P., senior advisor to the General Service Office and recently retired after a decade as General Manager of the AA General Service Office, "If this fellowship falters or fails," he told the Conference, "it will not be because of any outside cause. No, it will not be because of treatment centers or professionals in the field, or non-conference-approved literature, or young people, or the dually-addicted, or even the **drug-**gies trying to come to our closed meetings. If we stick close to our Traditions and our Concepts and Warranties-and if we keep an open mind and an open hear-t-we can deal with these and any other problems that we have-or ever will have. If we falter and fail, it will be simply because of us."

Throughout AA, Bob concluded, "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. just as in any AA group, a bunch of sick people are transformed into a healing force that has electrified the world, and a bunch of society's losers becomes transformed into winners-so all of us here are more than just the sum of ourselves. We are transformed into the group conscience of AA as a whole. We also are the torchbearers for those who have gone before. Just as they passed the torch to us, "so shall we pass it on to those yet to come."

Taken from address given at the World Service Conference in April

★★★★★

A harried wife had hauled her alcoholic husband to the marriage counselor's office. They sat there exchanging contemptuous glances, each waiting for the other to explain the problem.

"Why don't you begin?" the counselor said, turning to the husband. "What seems to be the trouble?"

"I don't have any complaints," the man responded. "But old whats-her-name here seems to think I haven't been paying her enough attention lately."

Be a Bulletin Booster

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RISING, SHINING

As I sit in my living room this beautiful Sunday morning, I can hear birds saluting the new day and the fragrance of spring fills the air. Reaching to my left, I can touch my beautiful and loving wife, and my faithful and trusting dog can be seen asleep a few feet away. The taste of coffee is fresh on my tongue.

Seven years ago it wasn't my living room, and I was being evicted for non-payment of rent. I couldn't hear the birds because the windows were closed and the curtains drawn. I couldn't smell anything other than my unwashed body and the garbage piled up in the kitchen. There was no one left to touch and I had given my dog away because it was too much bother to care for her. I could taste only last night's bourbon, beer, and wine-the defeat.

The difference is dramatic and undeniable. I have been delivered from my dulled senses and utter isolation, and find life worth living today. I attribute this difference to a **sixth sense** which has been proved beyond doubt for me by the experiences I have lived.

I knew when I was drinking that alcohol affected my ability to hear, see, touch, taste and smell. I didn't know I had a **sixth sense** so I certainly didn't know that alcohol affected it too.

My experiences of sobriety and involvement with other alcoholics in AA have taught me that this **sixth sense** does indeed exist. Without alcohol affecting them, all six of my senses have become more useful and clear.

What is this **sixth sense**? For me it is sensing the presence of a Higher Power or a spiritual force for good, or **quite simply-GOD**. Unless I use my **sixth sense** I cannot see God in your eyes, I cannot hear God through the words you speak, I cannot touch God through the hugs we share, I cannot taste God through a well-balanced diet that is free of alcohol, and I cannot smell God through the fresh spring air in my living room.

Bob R.
Bank Group
Reprint from FOOTSTEPS

INVOLVEMENT

From the beginning, AA has been a movement of involvement. It began not as an institution, not as a club, not as any kind of organization. It began on a one to one basis. One person had found a path to sobriety and communicated this to another person.

This involvement is the truest meaning, the willingness to give of what we have found to someone else: The desire to see someone else freed from the compulsion to drink as we have been freed. This is the capacity for love that shows itself in the wording of the twelve steps. They always read **"WE"** and never **"I"**! This is AA's involvement. This should be the involvement of every individual in our fellowship.

It is common today to say a great many things, "I don't want to get involved": We cannot afford to say that about AA. There are too many still-suffering alcoholics to reach out to. There are too many jobs to be done. And then there is the most telling reason of all for our involvement:

Our sobriety depends on it.

"Involvement"
East Texas Central Office Newsletter

HOW THE SLOGANS HELPED ME.. .

When I first heard that "we get sober on the **SLOGANS** and stay sober on the **TWELVE STEPS**," I hardly knew what the slogans were. After I learned about them, I wondered if **"my way"** wasn't just the opposite. Although I try to live the twelve steps each day, the slogans have been a very important part of my recovery. The slogans gave me hope and courage one time when I was frightened and worried.

I was in the hospital with a back problem after shoveling snow. Obviously, my bad back was the result of my activity, and yet, I did wonder. The reason for my questioning was because a friend, who had been hospitalized with a bad back, had recently been diagnosed as having cancer.

Although I was praying, reading my books and talking to AA friends and family, I couldn't seem to **"LET GO."** Finally, the slogans came to my **rescue** as I was able to combine them in a kind of prayer. It was **"THIS TOO WILL PASS"** IF I **"LET GO AND LET GOD"** **"ONE DAY AT A TIME"** and **"ACCEPT THE THINGS I CANNOT CHANGE!"** that still helps me when I get in a tight spot.

M.A. Mpls., MN
MI-RUS

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Even your saddest day is only 24 hours long.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

SOME ARE SICKER THAN OTHERS

Some drink every day and get very ill. Some die. I was a fortunate drunk as I could stop on awakening the next day. I could stop all week for many years. I thought I was sober but now I know I was obsessed and craving and planning my next drunk which was always Friday night. Then Friday and Saturday. Then all weekend. I took pride in my good business judgement but over the years alcohol took precedence. I started missing appointments and canceling business trips. Until all I could do was think **DRINK**. I am now in my seventh year of recovery. I am active in AA. I am convinced that by helping others you help yourself.

Ralph W.
Night & Day Groups

ARE YOU PLANNING TO MOVE?

If so Clip this coupon and mail to 940 Rockefeller Bldg., 614 Superior Ave., N.W., Cleveland, Ohio 44911. 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.



SERVICE KEEPS IT WORKING

One day the radio antenna on my car refused to work. It was pointed out that I had neglected to service it, a small matter of wiping it clean occasionally.

My car antenna does not work unless I service it. My A.A. program does not work unless I service it. The whole A.A. program of meetings, fellowship, and sponsorship depends upon the service of individual members.

At first we serve because we are told. As the days pass we begin to offer service, each in our own way, out of genuine caring for people and the program.

The rewards? For us self-centered alcoholics, the unflinching by-product is forgetting for the moment that which causes us most, if not all of our troubles. . . ourselves.

Many a troubled day is smoothed by an act, if only a prayer of service.

Unity, Dayton, Ohio A.A.

★★★★★

HUMILITY

We are animals. The dictionary says we are human beings: a primate mammal of upright posture on two feet with a highly developed brain and the capacity for speech. Humbling, isn't it? And I thought I was a GOD, a superior creature, one of many who ruled the world, controlled nature, and about to conquer outer space. And the truth was I couldn't control myself. In the bar I was an authority, or thought I was on just about everything of value in our society. I rejected every thing and just about everybody but my bar people as I didn't want to face the reality of facing me and what I had become.

I rejected the reality that history and religion tell the story of man, his successes and failures over the centuries. Many of these stories or parables of wisdom were passed by word of mouth from one generation to another and then finally written down. The Bible, the Old Testament is the story, the history of the Jewish race. . . it was written so I could learn and benefit from their failures and achievements. The New Testament or new law is the hope and instructions for me to improve my relations with my fellow man. . . **"Love one another.. .Cast thy bread upon the waters and it will return tenfold!"** I rejected these simple sayings. Maybe if I had done a market research and put same on a computer printout. .but, no, it was too simple for me to accept.

A.A. writings say we must stay humble if we are to stay sober. I think we all were humbled by alcohol. But the ego grows with time. To stay sober I would say we must respect the teachings of the past. And we must work our A.A. program and attend A.A. meetings regularly.

Ralph W.
Night & Day Groups

THE PROBABLE ORIGIN OF THE SERENITY PRAYER

I have often asked myself the question, who wrote the **Serenity Prayer**? I had first heard it used as a Sermon Prayer in our church and had neglected to ask the minister its source before he retired and left the community. I had grown to love it and had memorized it and had used it in many instances of trouble and turmoil, before I came into A.A.. A very cheerful helper at the Cincinnati Public Library was a great help to me. She cited a source which was a surprise to me, for I had thought that it had been extant for a longer period of time than it really had. As written in 1934 by Reinhold Niebuhr, 1892 - 1971, eminent interdenominational theologian and professor at the Union Theological Seminary in New York, it read thusly: **"God give us grace to accept with serenity the things that cannot be changed, courage to change the things that should be changed, and the wisdom to distinguish the one from the other"!**

Niebuhr composed this prayer in 1934 for the small Congregational church near his summer home in Heath, Mass. where he preached occasionally. **Howard Chandler Robbins**, a summer neighbor and friend, is said to have asked for a copy and is reported to have been given the original with words to the following effect: *'Here is the prayer I have no further use for it.'* Since then the prayer has been in the public domain and has been used by various groups, such as the U.S.O. during World War II. The National Council of Churches has reprinted it, and it has been used commercially on Christmas Cards.

It first came to the attention of A.A. in 1942 at the time of Ruth Hock, the first executive secretary of A.A., who was about to retire because of her impending marriage. The prayer arrived in the mail attached to an obituary notice of a prominent New Yorker which attracted the attention of Miss Hock, who, in turn, called the prayer to the attention of the A.A. Board which decided to adopt the **Serenity Prayer**, as it had been altered on the obituary notice, as its own special prayer for acceptance, replacing the beautiful prayer of St. Francis.

Since 1942, the **Serenity Prayer** has been known as the **A.A. Prayer**.

Footsteps

★★★★★

Friends just don't happen. You have to make them. And the only way to make a friend is to be one. Make friends by being helpful. What little help we can give others is a debt we owe each other. Friendliness and helpfulness are always found together.

Arnold Glasgow



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Harry D., Founder and Editor 1692.1966

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District Office (216) 241 - 7387

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, October 7, 1986 - 8:00 p.m.

OLD STONE CHURCH - PUBLIC SQUARE
CLEVELAND, OHIO

All Group Representatives Welcome
Be Informed

GROUP ANNIVERSARIES

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**THREE ANNIVERSARIES-all Rock Creek Groups:
ROCK CREEK WEDNESDAY GROUP--WEDNESDAY
YOU ARE NOT ALONE-FRIDAY
SUNDAY NITE BIG BOOK STUDY GROUP**

All to be held on Friday, Oct.17th at
Mt. Carmel Church in Ashtabula
6:00 p.m. Dinner
8:00 p.m. Speaker
Donation: \$3.00

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

WESTLAKE THURSDAY DISCUSSION GROUP

Thursday, October 18, 1986-10:00 a.m.
EIGHTEENTH ANNIVERSARY

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

CAME TO BELIEVE

Saturday, **November 15, 1986 2:00 p.m.**
Orca House, 1950 E. 89th St.
SECOND ANNIVERSARY

IN MEMORIAM

Our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of these deceased members of our fellowship:

TONY KUCHAR, 42½ year member of AA - Smith-Wilson Group.

ANDREW (BIG SMITTY) SMITH, 40 year member of A.A. • active in Night & Day Groups.

D. W. (BILL) STOCK, 36 year member of A.A.-also a very active member.

THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE

Ask all groups to watch their mail for the announcement of **GRATITUDE SUNDAY WHICH WILL BE HELD IN NOVEMBER**. An area volunteers their time, etc. in presenting this annual affair for our N.E. General Service Panel.

DISTRICT OFFICE CORNER

IT'S OUR BIRTHDAY.. .LIGHT THE CANDLES.. .

This is the beginning of the 45th year of Publication of the **CENTRAL BULLETIN**-the first and oldest paper of it's kind in the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous that has been nurtured and has grown through the Love and Gratitude of One Alcoholic to Another over all these years. Today, there are many, many, newsletters, etc. published all over the country and, as usual, sharing has often been the very thing that has allowed us to carry on.

To continue-through sharing of articles from one newsletter, paper or whatever-we have been able to bring you the BULLETIN over these many years. We borrow from others those things that strike the cord with us and it is a compliment to us that others are using our material.

Since we have been working on the Bulletin, it has been a dream of sorts that if only **just one time, we** could have **one** entire Bulletin published with all local articles from members of our Fellowship. . .there are some great stories out there, why not try to help us by putting some of your stories down and sending them to us so that we can share with others. You **do not** have to be a specialist nor a perfectionist to contribute-some of the most inspiring articles come from those who might just have a few lines to share but do it using the language we know best-The Language of the *Heart!* Just like some speakers we hear at meetings-you know how many times, in listening to someone sharing their experience, strength and hope-we often get more from things that **are not said** (in other words, hearing the words between the lines) that convey the pain behind the words that are being used and the smiles that come to the faces of the speaker, again, maybe a smile that has for the very first time emerged from the inside out.

Come on-give us a hand-help us to make that dream come true. At no other time than publication time does the gratitude of those who came before us here: Harry, George and Dick and all who helped them-come through so clearly as this is no mean task (speaking for myself, mainly) when we know there are other things waiting to be done.

We hope that we have been able to put our message out to you this time and I am sorry that there can be no more-but I have a very severe case of Laryngitis and can say no more at this time. . .TILL NEXT MONTH!

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**IF YOU TURN IT OVER AND DON'T LET GO OF IT,
YOU WILL BE UPSIDE DOWN.**

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

HOW TO GET ACTIVE

- A. If it's empty, fill it up.
- B. If it's full, empty it.
- C. If it needs doing, do it.

HOW TO GET HONEST

- A. If it's not yours, don't pick it up.
- B. If it's not true, don't say it.
- C. If it's not right, don't do it.

August 23, 1986

Dear Friends,

I am enclosing a small amount of money for you to help another alcoholic in any way possible. For me this represents the first installment on my debt of gratitude to A.A. where I learned to live-really live-without the bottle.

The friends I've made since coming into the program a few years ago are real, true dyed in the wool **FRIENDS**. To them and of course my closest friend, my sponsor, I will be ever grateful for the love, support, and guidance I have been blessed with. Of course when I express my gratitude to any of them they tell me, "Pass it on. . .it **cannot be repaid any other way.**"

Last winter my old car needed repaired and I did not have the money to have it done. I used my car to go to meetings and for my pleasure. I knew I could get rides to meetings-most AA's would not mind at all. But I also needed to travel about 200 miles frequently to visit my Dad who lives alone and seems to get more feeble each time I see him.

A fellow alcoholic came to my aid and saw that my car was repaired and in good running condition, and safe to be on the highway. Some months later I got a part time job and with my first paycheck attempted to make a payment on the "loan". My friend would not accept the money but told me to help another person in the program to *pass* it on. I have since concluded paying monetarily is much simpler, less painful, but **FAR** less meaningful than carrying the message to others.

I realize we cannot put a price on gratitude-that helping others cannot be at any price. Giving of **ourselves** keeps A.A. alive and spreading. Reality also tells us funds are necessary to publish books, pamphlets and other literature. For the past week, I've had a gut feeling to reach out to others by contributing to the Central Bulletin monetarily and of myself by writing to say **A.A. IS A GREAT PROGRAM--LET'S PASS IT ON!**

Thanks to all who work on the Central Bulletin-I look forward to each copy. **KEEP IT GOING!**

A Grateful Recovering Alcoholic

— *Be a Bulletin Booster* —

CONSCIENCE

Conscience warns us as a friend before it punishes us as a judge.

Stanislaus

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

CONTENTMENT

Contentment is not happiness. An oyster may be contented. Happiness is compounded of richer elements.

Bovee

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

CRITTERS

One day, a goodly number of twenty-four hours ago, someone let the **CAT** out of the bag. One of our city's finest determined that I was loaded to the **GILLS** just because I drank like a **FISH**. It wasn't until I totally took in the A.A. program **HOOK, LINE and SINKER** THAT I was able to accept this wonderful way of life.

Prior to my contact to the legal system, I was happy drinking like a **PIG** until I became both **SNAKEY** and drunk as a **HOOT OWL**. Other people became aware of my condition when I started acting **SQUIRRELLY** and the bartender accused me of being drunk as a **SKUNK**.

I on the other hand was sitting on my bar stool starting to throw the **BULL** to anyone who would listen, trying to say that I was sober as a **JUDGE**.

The morning after the night before I was usually burdened with a terrible hangover. I felt lower than a **SNAKE'S BELLY** and would only be able to get "cured" with some **HAIR of the DOG**. Once the day began I had to make my apologies by **EATING CROW**.

Today I do not have to make a **JACKASS** of myself and I also don't have to be a **TURKEY** anymore.

R.M., Columbia Saturday Group

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

ALSO A REMINDER: To watch your mail for the announcement by General Service that they will be holding their election for Delegate and others on the panel. The Delegate is voted in for a period of two years and serves as the liason between our N.E. General Service Area and New York General Service. This will be in December.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

The poorest man is not one without money but one without hope.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Keep in mind that the road to success is always under construction

HANG IN THERE

HOW WAS I? Confused, angry afraid and, except for one small spark of hope, ready to end it all with a 12 gauge shotgun; I was 32 years o/d!!

WHAT HAPPENED? In the midst of total despair, and totally alone, I uttered this prayer: "If there is a God, I need help!" A week or ten days later, I was being 12th stepped and taken to beginner's classes at Oak Street.

HOW AM I TODAY? Happy, joyous, free, mature, employed, useful, open-minded, tolerant, responsible and humble. . . .*most* of the time.

I have found happiness and freedom from fear, and I have become willing to live this way. **IT HAS NOT BEEN EASY!** !! My disease, even without alcohol and drugs, has been cunning, baffling and powerful. I was not "fearless and thorough from the very start," and did not believe I could be. I was looking for an event, a quantum leap into the good life.

The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous did not have a real meaning in my life for a long time, and I felt detached and not "a part of" for a long time.

Looking back from today ("we will not regret the past, nor wish to shut the door on it.") I see the progress I have made ("we claim spiritual progress, not spiritual perfection.") I went to meetings even when I didn't want to; I spoke to people even though I lied, I tried to help others, even though I was calculating what it would mean for me.

It's been hard work and it's been extremely painful at times, but I wouldn't trade my life for anything or with anyone else in the world today. I've made a lot of mistakes, drunk and sober, and I accept that about me.

The biggest difference sober is that I don't make mistakes over and over again, and I accept the lessons born out of my mistakes.

For me, the price of happiness has been what I will call "self-responsibility." That's what the steps have done for me. I've learned that I'm responsible for my past; not God, not my parents, not my teachers, not my government; **JUST ME.** I'm also responsible for my attitudes today. I now own my behavior and if I'm unhappy, something in my behavior must be amended. I can't do it alone. I need a Higher Power, I need the fellowship of A.A. and I need the "rules" for successful living provided by our 12 Steps.

**SO HANG IN THERE! DON'T DRINK!
GO TO MEETINGS! READ THE BIG BOOK!
LIVE LIFE! MAKE MISTAKES! MAKE AMENDS!
MAKE PROGRESS! MAKE FRIENDS!**

Bob R., Bank Group

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Joe, who finally decided to do something about his drinking, lived in a small town and was afraid of losing his anonymity if he went to an A.A. meeting there. So he went to a nearby city for a meeting. When he walked in, there was his home town bartender, who had been serving him that very afternoon.

"Ed!" Joe said. "What are you doing here?" Ed smiled and replied quietly, "just waiting for you, Joe."

DO I NEED MEETINGS

YES! ! !

Trying to describe what meetings mean to me is difficult. Sometimes they're everything, sometimes they're not. Attendance at meetings, coupled with a varying degree of **curiosity** has seemed to have brought out more information about me than I really ever expected to or wanted to know. My reasons for going, and expectations of what I would get out of the meetings changed as time continued on.

When I first came into the program, they were "Beginners" meetings to me. I was there, soaking up lots of info about A.A. and alcoholism because I didn't know about recovery (or whatever it was that they had that I felt compelled to go back and check out.) I had a lot of questions to ask, and, as they replied, I listened and waited for someone to slip-up and show their true colors; there had to be a catch somewhere, nobody does something for nothing.

My life was based on a very self-centered, closed-minded and negative point of view. Difficult as it may seem, I was unaware of this until I saw and felt the opposite, in a group of people, that were just plain different from anyone else I had ever met before. There was a degree of honesty, understanding and drive in them that was unmatched by anyone I had ever run into before. Even more strange, they stuck together as a group, for the benefit of each other. I guess, I just felt safe and protected, like being held in someone's arms as a baby.

The meetings have been special, because, there is a **FORCE** at work (as Yoda sees it); an element of **FAITH** or **HIGHER POWER** as people in our 12 Step Program see it. I've tried to explain, in words, what the meetings are to me. There seems to be no verbal way that I can do this and be satisfied. Come to think of it, I have the same difficulty trying to explain my belief in God. All I know is that there is something there. Something going on that I can't see, and something giving me just what I need when I need it.

If I could figure out everything there is in this earth, I guess I wouldn't need to have a H.P.. So, until then, I'll have to rely on outside help for all those dilemmas that come up, for strength, courage and wisdom.

K.I.S.S.

Darryl D., Bank Group

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**IF YOU TURN IT OVER AND DON'T LET GO OF IT,
YOU WILL BE UPSIDE DOWN.**

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

HOW TO GET ACTIVE

- If it's empty, fill it up.
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GRATITUDE

November is gratitude month in our fellowship. No doubt it is so designated because it is the month in which our national Thanksgiving holiday falls. In a sober view many of us will incline to the belief that the significance of Thanksgiving has been largely lost.

On the first Thanksgiving, a hardy group of dedicated pilgrims paused to give thanks to God as they devoutly believed in Him, for having brought them safely through a dangerous journey to new shores. In the new country they faced hardship, privation and mortal hazards of insufferable magnitude, but they were free of the spiritual and physical tyranny from which they had fled so bravely. Their prayer and meditation to seek greater conscious contact with God represented the main object of that day. The repast of the best they had in rations was purely secondary. Today a festive meal and a little more TV than usual is the main result of most celebrations.

For us in this fellowship, a Thanksgiving holiday, or a gratitude month, can be naught but symbols, or perhaps a time when we pause to reflect the important part gratitude plays in our sober life. For us, if we live this life wholly with our full body, mind and spirit, each day is Thanksgiving. Each moment is one of gratitude. We hear endless testimony from our fellows about the countless blessings for which we are grateful. Do we ever stop to reflect on the blessing which is ours because of our gratitude?

Many of us find that a boundless gratitude is the golden thread on which the priceless pearls of our sober life are held together. It's a sort of lifeline in itself. It protects us against the grimmest hazards of our weaknesses. For example, gratitude defeats pride. If we are grateful for the precious gift of sobriety, we shall not be proud of it as an accomplishment of our own. Gratitude is an evidence of humility. The humble person is the grateful person. If we have difficulty in understanding God, gratitude leads us to Him, simply because we have no other place to go.

Gratitude leads us to all of the true beauty of life. We see that which we want to see. The grateful person sees the good and the fine in others and in nature. But perhaps the greatest blessing of all which comes to us through gratitude is the effect it has on our action in life. Ours is a gratitude which knows no adequate expression but through our deeds. The most eloquent among us have no words to express our gratitude through lip-service alone. No, we must act. It is what we are, and what we think, and what we do which shows our gratitude.

There is really only one way to express ourselves on this subject. It lies in helping others. If we strive, with God's help and all of the ability that we have, to reach the highest quality of which we are capable in helping others, then **and only then** will we have given true expression to the gratitude we ought to feel. Then we will be saying to our Higher Power, truly, humbly and simply, **"THANKS!"**

THE STATION

Tucked away in our subconscious is an idyllic vision. We see ourselves on a long trip that spans the continent. We are traveling by train. Out the windows we drink in the passing scene of cars on nearby highways, of children waving at a crossroad, of cattle grazing on a distant hillside, of smoke pouring from a power plant, of row upon row of corn and wheat, of flatlands and valleys, of mountains and rolling hillsides of city skylines and village halls.

But uppermost in our minds is the final destination. On a certain day at a certain hour, we will pull into a station. Bands will be playing and flags waving. Once we get there so many wonderful dreams will come true and the pieces of our lives will fit together like a complicated jigsaw puzzle. How restlessly we pace the aisles, damning the minutes for loitering - waiting, waiting, waiting for the station.

"When we reach the station, that will be it!" we cry. "When I am 18:" "When I buy a new 450 SL. Mercedes Benz!" "When I put the last kid through college." "When I have paid off the mortgage!" "When I get a promotion." "When I reach the age of retirement, I shall live happily ever after!"

Sooner or later we must realize there is no station, no one place to arrive at once and for all. The true joy of life is the trip. The station is only a dream. It constantly out-distances us.

"Relish the moment" is a good motto, especially when coupled with psalm **118:24**: 'This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.' It isn't the burdens of today that drive men mad. It is the regrets over yesterday and the fear of tomorrow. Regret and fear are twin thieves who rob us of today.

So, stop pacing the aisles and counting the miles. Instead, climb more mountains, eat more ice cream, go barefoot more often, swim more rivers, watch more sunsets, laugh more, cry less. Life must be lived as we go along. The station will come soon enough.

Robert J. Hastings
Akron Inter - Group.

GRATITUDE SUNDAY

Hosted this year by General Service District 36.

Will be held on the third Sunday in November

November 16, 1986 at 2:00 p.m.

St Augustine Church

2486 W 14th Street, Cleveland, Ohio

Speaker John

All are invited to attend



Published monthly by the Cleveland Central Committee of A.A., a non-profit fellowship dedicated to service. Address all letters to Central Bulletin, 940 Rockefeller Bldg., 614 Superior Ave., N.W., Cleveland, Ohio 44113. Subscription price - \$3.50 per Year.

Harry D., Founder and Editor 1892-1968

Vol. 45 November 1986 No. 2

District Office (216) 241-7387

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, November 4, 1986 - 8:00 p.m.

OLD STONE CHURCH - PUBLIC SQUARE
CLEVELAND, OHIO

All Group Representatives Welcome
Be Informed

GROUP ANNIVERSARIES

★★★★★

PERPETUAL HELP GROUP

Monday, November 10, 1986 - 8:00 p.m.
FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

★★★★★

NORTH OLMSTED GROUP

Wednesday, December 10, 1986
TWENTY SECOND ANNIVERSARY

CORRECTIONAL FACILITY MEETING

Cleveland Central Committee

Third Tuesday of each month - 8:00 p.m.

St Malachi Center

2416 Superior Ave., Dry Dock

1st Meeting November 18, 1986

IN MEMORIAM

Our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of these deceased members of our fellowship:

JOSEPH SMILEY, Member of Garfield Tuesday Group.

ROBERT B. (SCOTTY) REID, A.A. MEMBER, Bedford area.

BILL CREADON, 33 year member of A.A. North Olmsted Group.

JOHN W. (JACK) KRAH, 6 year member of A.A. Trinity Group.

JOHN NEMETH, A.A. member from the Bedford area.

MIKE KEANE, 39 year member of West Park Tuesday Group.

HELEN PEREZ, wife of our past District Office Secretary, DICK PEREZ - suffered a heart attack that took her life on September 26, 1986. They have been living in Laguna Beach, California for several years since Dick's retirement.

THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE

DISTRICT OFFICE CORNER

Thanksgiving time again-the time of year that all turkeys, if they can, run for cover.

Seriously, the month of November is Gratitude Month for the Fellowship Of Alcoholics Anonymous and most of us show our gratitude in one way or another every day we stay sober. I hope you have noted the date and time of Gratitude Sunday this year so that some of you can get out and attend.

Fellow members, if your group has taken the time to read the Minutes of our October Central Committee Meeting that were sent to you, you will notice that "Violation of A.A. Traditions" was a topic of conversation **again**. This does happen quite a lot even when people know better but it's very discouraging to see someone take advantage of our Traditions in this manner.

Also, at the last Central Committee meeting, it was decided, by group conscience, to reinstate the Institutions Committee renaming it CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES COMMITTEE-this is a sub-committee of members who attend the A.A. Central Committee meetings and this committee will answer to the Central Committee, with the understanding that the Central Committee can and will step in and offer suggestions from time to time.

As you can see, it was a busy meeting and your Central Bulletin representative was corrected concerning the election of officers for the Northeast Ohio General Service Panel. . . we stated that the elections would be held in December when, in fact, their election was held on Sunday, October 19th. We hope you paid attention to the notice sent to you rather than the information we erroneously furnished.

Central Bulletin received a birthday card from Tyler, Texas on our 45th Birthday, **wasn't that nice?** Others are writing how they look forward to their copy each month. . . we hope we can continue to please you as we would like you to regard your copy of the Bulletin every month as an extra "A.A. Meeting" where sharing is the name of the game. For the "ex-Cleveland" A.A.'s who are keeping in touch-we are happy to hear from you. There are times when we get a little bit green when we are heading into a long, cold Cleveland winter and think of all of you who have taken yourselves (and our A.A.) into a warmer climate.

Your District Office is a very busy place-we have been looking forward to a little break but it is long in coming. . . of course, we are grateful to be busy when we know that this means furnishing help when called upon. In closing this month-we wish you all a Very Happy Thanksgiving and pray that you can keep this spirit all other days of the year,

★★★★★

A fellow who is known to drink quite a lot was told by a bartender: "No more for you, pal. You've had enough!" Asked the drunk: "What thinks you make so?"

★★★★★

My doctor has a great stress test. He calls it "the bill"!

ALWAYS • CAREFUL • TO • INVESTIGATE • OTHERS • NEEDS

THE TWELVE TRADITIONS

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.
6. An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every A.A. group ought to be self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. A.A. as such, ought never be organized; but we may create special boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundations of our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

★★★★★

If you want to improve someone's hearing, praise him.

Be a Bulletin Booster

HUGS

It's wonderous what a hug can do,
 A hug can cheer you when you're blue.
 A hug can say I love you,
 or gee I hate to see you go.
 A hug is welcome back again,
 and great to see ya wherever ya been.
 A hug can soothe a small child's pain,
 and bring a rainbow after it rains.
 A hug, there's just no doubt about it,
 we scarcely could survive without it.
 A hug delights and warms and charms,
 it must be why God gave us arms.
 Hugs are great for fathers and mothers,
 sweet for sisters, swell for brothers.
 And chances are, your favorite aunts,
 love them more than potted plants.
 Kittens crave them, puppies love them,
 heads of state are not above them.
 A hug can break the language barrier,
 and make your travels so much merrier.
 No need to fret about your store of 'em,
 so stretch those arms without delay,
AND GIVE SOMEONE A HUG TODAY!
 Anonymous, Thanks to Footsteps

★★★★★

The alcoholic's desire to be the center of attention reminds us of the person who wants to be the bride at every wedding and the corpse at every funeral.

★★★★★

ARE YOU UNAPPRECIATED?

If you are an especially hardworking member of A.A., and you are going along, day after day, unhonored, unrecognized and unsung, may I congratulate you?

No higher mark of appreciation could be paid to you than to be taken for granted. That means you are accounted an inner member, your service naturally expected, no problem about you suspected which might require solicitude or special attention.

Of course, such a regard is not very thrilling. The person does not live who doesn't like to be appreciated. But, this is the way it usually is in A.A. The most genuine, the most sincerest of appreciation is to be taken for granted.

Beware of lavish attention, constant expression of your value, and an overflow of thank-you's. If these are your lot, it may be that you are an exception to the above rule and are just lucky. But it is more probable, either people are not quite sure about your staying in line, or that your reputation for sensitiveness is well known and its demand simply being met.

There are few places where just being ignored is such an honest tribute as in Alcoholics Anonymous.

Les. Wisc. A.A. Grapevine 1950
via New Reporter

MILL ENDS AND REMNANTS

In keeping with the month of November, having for years been observed as Traditions Month, elsewhere in this issue we have reproduced The Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous.

It is our considered judgement that greater understanding need be promulgated as concerns The Twelve Traditions, for contained in them is the strength and lifeline of our fellowship.

All of us have been well indoctrinated with respect to the First Legacy of A.A. and our recovery within The Twelve Steps and our application to them. And under no conditions can their importance be de-emphasized, if we are to grow in our new way of life.

Yet, as our recovery progresses, it is vital that our knowledge and understanding of the Second Legacy-The Twelve Traditions, be as broad and considered as only study and application can make possible.

It has been our experience that newcomers, after they have attained a measure of solidified sobriety thirst for activity, as well as for a knowledge of the workings of A.A. and its various levels of service and activity.

In activity and service, the newcomer creates new horizons of strength and experience beyond all comprehension of the early hope of being able merely to gain freedom from alcohol.

Newcomer, middletimer or oldtimer needs to be knowledgeable of The Twelve Traditions, so in any given situation of service at every level he can make decisions or take action, recalling that his action or decision should meet the test of three areas of consideration. Is it good for A.A. as a whole? Is it good for the group or service level concerned? And is it good for the continued sobriety of the member or members?

Again reflecting upon experience, we have seen the foregoing test provide the guidelines by which decisions and actions of proper scope have ensued-not just a few, but many times.

Is it no wonder then that we are strong advocates for all members becoming completely knowledgeable and indoctrinated as concerns all of The Three Legacies of Alcoholics Anonymous, with due emphasis being given to the Second-The Twelve Traditions.

Many groups set up meeting programs to provide for full discussion of the Traditions, and particularly during the month of November, which traditionally has also been observed as Gratitude Month.

Let's open our eyes to new horizons, to new potentials of fruitful sobriety and then perform, by George.

Central Bulletin, November 1972

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

This very beautiful woman had four marriages. The first was a rich man. The second was a movie star. The third was an A.A., and the fourth was an undertaker.

In other words: one for the money, two for the show, three to get ready and four to go.

LIFE IS TOO SHORT

Often we allow ourselves to be upset by small things we should forget. Perhaps some man we helped has proved ungrateful, some woman we believe to be a friend has spoken ill of us, some regard we thought we deserved has been denied us. We feel such disappointments so strongly that we can no longer work or sleep. But isn't that absurd?

Here we are on earth with only a few decades to live, and we lose many irreplaceable hours brooding over grievances that in a year's time will be forgotten by us and by everybody. Now, let us devote life to worthwhile actions and feelings, to great thoughts, real affections and enduring undertakings. For life is too short to be little.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

September 23, 1986

We all look forward to the Central Bulletin. It affirms our belief that Cleveland is truly the cradle of sobriety for people all over the world. Keep up the good work, and **THANKS.**

Kathryn D, Florida

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

TOUGH LOVE

I recently heard an Oldtimer. He was telling about Tough Love. He had a year sober so he went bragging to Sister Ignatia. She said: "Son, I still have pajamas to fit you, DUMMY."

My reaction was why put down a man who is already down? Dummy! I figured it out. A.A. literature says we are humbled by alcohol but as time progresses the EGO gets strong again. We think we can do it our way again. We must be humble. We must lower the EGO if we are to stay sober.

HOW? By accepting a HP, a Power greater than ourselves, a God as we understand him or her. We lower our EGO when we visit hospitals and nursing homes. We lower our EGO when we share and care about the suffering alcoholic. When we give of ourselves, we find ourselves.

We keep our EGO down when we attend A.A. meetings reminding ourselves-what we are and what was our lives.

Ralph W., Night & Day Groups



THE FESTIVE SEASON

The approach of another festive season should remind us of the difference between true and false values.

By the festive season we mean that time of the year from Thanksgiving to New Years that once was a period giving us license to do a little more drinking than usual. We floated through it on a tide of brown October ale to Tom & Jerries to champagne with the turn of the calendar.

It was our notion in those days...how many ages away they seem...that we were sticks-in-the-mud at best or killjoys at worst if we did not over drink everyone we knew. We thought we were real clever. But in fact we just made abominable nuisances of ourselves. We had become the bane of every host and hostess and if we got invited at all, after a few years of demonstrating our alcoholic inabilities, it was because of our wife or husband.

But during this season we made public pests of ourselves too. Work was neglected a little bit more than usual. We justified this in our own soggy minds with the conclusion that it was the holiday season and the boss, who was a Mother Grundy to begin with, had no appreciation of the spirit of the times. If he fired us - as he often did - what of it? Occasionally that sobered us up enough to get another job.

This routine is pretty familiar and pretty dismal to all of us. **We** recall it only to paint a picture of sharp contrast.

What we thought was festive was tragic. In a world of our own illusions we could not, and did not want to see reality. When we thought of sobering up, when we considered those who abstained, we had the shudders, and the only way we could sustain this false vision was to have another drink. Those other people, the sober ones, were not enjoying life. We were, we thought.

This whole realm of false virtues is put in its proper perspective now that we have attained sobriety. We know today that a world built on alcohol is unreal. It is deceitful. It breeds wrong impressions and lures its denizens into a whirlpool of fantasy from which the escape is too often degradation and death.

Those of us who have escaped with the help of a Higher Power now know a joy that before was beyond our imaginations. We no longer need alcohol to implant a false sense of gaiety. What we thought was joy, really was courting tragedy. What we thought was dullness beyond bearing turned out to be a recognition of the facts of life. In facing those facts and making our adjustments to them we have come up with a festive spirit that is based on the solid foundations of life, not the shifting sands.

There is another aspect to sobriety we should not forget. We now can enjoy the holidays for what they were meant to be occasions of thanksgiving and rejoicing. But, more than that, we can enjoy life the whole year through. We need no false props, no artificial stimulants and none of that companionship which was not worth the hours it consumed. The world takes on its true shape. We can face its problems without the thought of running away from them by a method we knew down in our hearts held no answer. We found the right answers when we turned our problems over to a Higher Power. **Today we are truly in a festive mood.**

Central Bulletin, 1954



PLATFORM MANNER

The EVOLUTION of the AA speaker is an interesting phenomenon **to watch, and** perhaps it offers a warning that has to do with one of the most dangerous bogs encountered along the road to recovery,

Most alcoholics have an aversion to platform speaking-that is, when sober-though they may do plenty of talking at the bar, with or without introduction, when drinking. By the time they are ready for A.A., they have little confidence, they're skittish and nervous, and they prefer the background to the spotlight. So it probably is true that in the beginning most AAs dislike giving talks at meetings and **do so only because they** know it may help a newcomer keep going.

Aversion to giving talks remains with some members, probably forever. **But** not so with others. Some gradually recover from their fright and actually get so they enjoy standing up in front and telling others how it is done. These are the ones who become perennial speakers. Theirs is the evolution that is fascinating, but disturbing, to watch. These are the speakers who begin to appear more frequently on the platform, at this meeting and that, here and there, several times a month. Soon they're on the circuit.

Usually, these people are good speakers, do a good job, and consequently are in demand. No doubt, they help many with their talks-for a time. But for how long? And what does it do to them.

The danger, of course, is that any human being is likely to become spellbound by the sound of his own voice, and to begin to rate himself, subconsciously at least, as something of an oracle. Up sprouts the big "I" again, inwardly, even though outwardly the individual may appear to be oh, so modest. What goes on inside is more important to him, and it may not be good.

If anyone finds himself developing a platform manner, stretching his story to make a point, and waiting for the applause, he'd better get off the stage fast, both for his own good and for the good of his listeners, who soon will detect the inevitable affectations.

N.M., New Orleans, La.
Grapevine, May 1948



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Harry D., Founder and Editor 1692.1968

Vol. 45 December 1986 No. 3

District Office (216) 241 - 7387

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, December 2, 1986 - 8:00 p.m.

OLD STONE CHURCH -PUBLIC SQUARE
CLEVELAND, OHIO

All Group Representatives Welcome
Be Informed --

GROUP ANNIVERSARIES

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

NORTH OLMSTED GROUP

Wednesday, December 10, 1986 - 8:30 p.m.

TWENTY SECOND ANNIVERSARY

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

COVE SUNDAY

Sunday, December 7, 1986 - 8:30 p.m.

FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

NEW WAY OF LIFE

Sunday, December 7, 1986

Dinner 3:00 p.m. - Speaker 4:00 p.m.

THIRTEENTH ANNIVERSARY

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

HELPFUL GROUP

Tuesday, December 2, 1986

Special time: Dinner 7:00 p.m. - Lead 8:30 p.m.

SEVENTEENTH ANNIVERSARY

IN MEMORIAM

Our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of these deceased members of our fellowship:

MARY LOU COELLNER, member of Ridgewood Women.

IRENE WILSON, LONG TIME MEMBER OF Parma Heights Group.

THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE

DISTRICT OFFICE CORNER

December already!!! Frankly, fellow members, I was caught sleeping at the switch and you very nearly were going to miss this inspirational (?) part of the Central Bulletin. Fortunately, our printer brought me out of my own dreams of my upcoming vacation and directed me to this typewriter.

At this, the most joyous time of the year, we would like to take this moment to thank you for your support of your

Central Bulletin and also your continuing eagerness in your A.A. program and way of life.

It is amazing how many people influence us in our lives and though we may never meet - are always feeding us bits and pieces of the most beautiful A.A. thinking one could imagine to help us overcome whatever stresses or temptations which might come into our lives. This often comes from the newly sober and their fresh interpretation of A.A. as well as those who have accumulated many, many years of sobriety and continue to keep their thinking young.

It is really hard to believe that this is the last month of the year - time goes by so quickly. Your DISTRICT OFFICE has been most busy - sometimes, it's hard to meet someone out at a meeting who will say something that we haven't heard and they think it rather unusual that another one of us knew and didn't tell us...if you believe it or not - that would be the truth. There are many days here (most of them) that we do not have time for casual conversation. We all have a chance to say good-morning and good-night but the time in between is all communication concerning the work we do here. We do have a great number of members who pop in to say hello once in a while and they understand that we are all busy...these phones really believe in ringing - not only a call for help but calls from family members of a person who could use help. They cannot quite understand when we explain to them that until their "problem drinker" is ready, there is nothing that we can do anymore than there is a thing for them to do no matter how great their love for the suffering one. There are also calls for general information about any other "12 Step Programs" that exist - some we have never heard of; there are calls from schools, churches, clubs and others in our community asking us to supply speakers for a program they are planning. We **do** take care of these public information talks whenever asked because this is another way of doing 'Twelfth Step Work' and, with all the information out today dealing with alcoholism - it is nice to know there are many who have heard of A.A. and want us to share with them. We **do not** advertise, neither do we promote but we **do exist!** We do not want to appear as any type of 'secret society' but rather, we do hold very dearly the concept of 'Anonymity';...this, to assure those who would think of calling us only because they know the "word" would not get out...and don't we all identify with this??? How sick we were and how much better we can get! We try never to fail in our effort to "carry the message" wherever it might be.

We feel we need to do our work here as a 'business' so that there will always be an accounting of what we do inasmuch as we are supported through our own contributions. We cannot carry our load as we can our sobriety as in a "loose robe" because then, too many "loose robes" would be encountered and we want to assure you that your money is working for the purpose intended... to carry the message to the still suffering alcoholic and, in spite of the fact that we do carry on as a business, our priority is really the "**Call for Help**" as it should be.

In closing, all of us here would like to extend to you our personal wish for a sober and happy Holiday Season and may you carry the spirit of Christmas over the year.

Happy Holidays: Isabel • Elvira • Ed • Ann • Imogene
YOUR TRUSTED SERVANTS

ALWAYS . CAREFUL . To . INVESTIGATE . OTHERS . NEEDS

The views expressed by the articles in this Bulletin are those of the Writer-not Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole and should not be considered an endorsement by A.A.

AUTHORSHIP AND THE CAMEL

Footsteps' article "The Probable Origin of the Serenity Prayer" in October's Central Bulletin might be taken as gospel.

Based on findings of "a cheerful helper in the Cincinnati Public Library," the article concludes that Reinhold Niebuhr wrote the Serenity Prayer. The same opinion is given in Barrett's venerable work and on gift shop renderings of the prayer.

Albiet, according to the popular pamphlet "Acceptance" by Vincent Collins, the Serenity Prayer was written by Pastor Friedrich Christoph. If Collins is right, Footsteps is wrong. Verily both may be in error. I like the view offered in "Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age"—"No one can tell for sure who first wrote the Serenity Prayer."

In a similar spirit of humility the camel comes to mind. I was told recently at a meeting that this animal should be made our official mascot; first because it can go for a long time without a drink; and second because it kneels down so its master can get up on its back. All Good AA's abstain from drinking and pray this way, I was instructed.

If kneeling to pray is part of our manner of living, why was the clause "on our knees," dropped from Bill Wilson's draft of our Step Seven? Again, "Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age" replies: Such were the final concessions to those of little or no faith; this was the great contribution of our atheists and agnostics. They had widened our gateway so that all who suffer might pass through, regardless of their belief or lack of belief.

J. W. H.

Be a Bulletin Booster

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A BLUE XMAS ?

Christmas is a joyous time of the year. But for those of us who are divorced and may not see our children this Holiday Season, let me give you some advice: Christmas is the SEASON to look back on those wonderful times of yesteryear. **Don't do it!** Those olden days weren't that good. Stay in the NOW, the PRESENT. Do something! Go to an AA meeting. Get with people. One day at a time. Don't allow yourself to become melancholy and moody. Don't watch those sentimental TV Christmas shows that will only make you sad. **And don't pick up the First Drink.** May you have sane and sober Holidays and may Serenity be yours in 1987.



IF YOU'VE HAD A SLIP

And you're back, you don't have to be consumed with shame. The important things are:

- 1. **You ARE** back.
- 2. You realize you made some mistakes in the program.
- 3. Those mistakes won't be repeated. If you have had two slips and you're back, the same things apply and you should be aware that you may be establishing a negative pattern. If you keep on having slips and you're back, face up to it; you are doing something very wrong and you are headed for disaster.

A recovering alcoholic is not supposed to have slips. When you are listening to a speaker talk about a slip, listen for the cause; skipping meetings, not joining a group, not speaking yourself, not getting into the Steps or whatever.

Those who made it back tell how it gets worse...and then, there are those who don't make it back...

Washington Reporter



SINGLENESS OF PURPOSE

There are those who predict that A.A. may well become a new spearhead for a spiritual awakening throughout the world. When our friends say these things, they are both generous and sincere. But we of A.A. must reflect that such a tribute and such a prophecy could well prove to be a heady drink for most of us—that is, if we really came to believe this to be the real purpose of A.A., and if we commenced to behave accordingly.

Our Society, therefore, will prudently cleave to its single purpose: **the carrying of the message to the alcoholic who still suffers.** Let us resist the proud assumption that since God has enabled us to do well in one area we are destined to be a channel of saving grace for everybody.

"A.A. Comes of Age", p. 232

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One of the regulars was sitting in the bar when a friend ran in from the street and shouted, "Somebody's stealing your car." The lush jumped up and while running out the door, asked his drinking buddy, "Did you stop him?"

"NO, he was too iast" was the reply. "But I did get the license number.

THE HIGHEST HURDLE

I doubt if I ever experienced a more difficult area of my life than that between admitting I was an alcoholic (to myself) and accepting the A.A. program. My frame of mind at the time made it essential to grasp onto something in order to retain what little sanity I had left. All I could relate to was my own past life, and although there was certainly very little there worth salvaging, it was still all I had.

At the time words such as honesty, consideration and empathy I had seldom thought of, and rarely practiced. Without being fully aware of it my morals were being chipped away from all sides until reasoning was unheard of. I was relying on instincts I didn't even possess and material gain was the only avenue I dealt in.

Through the years time paid its toll. I had shifted myself into reverse gear somewhere without breaking a step. What I considered to be my best friend was indeed **"Cunning, baffling and powerful."** A wise man once said, 'Alcohol is a cunning wrestler, it first seizes the feet.' He didn't say its prime target was the mind! Of course being thick headed and thin skinned, I had to learn this for myself through years of self imposed grief. Right to the very depths of despair in all categories I kept insisting I was OK-everyone else was all wrong. Why? Was it because I had no one and nothing else to believe in except what was left of myself? If I admitted that I was wrong, why was I still alive?

I found myself suspended in mid-air over what I envisioned as certain death, with the end of the rope in each hand. One held the promise of a new life I couldn't believe or trust, the other was the rat race from whence I came and was familiar with. I knew it was no longer a gambling matter-no more flipping of the coin on which way to go. I must develop trust in something. This is where "Step Two" came into being for me. Deep down I knew I still had feelings for things that were moral and right. Another quotation from my school days comes to mind, "So great a force is justice that not even those who live by ill doing and crime can manage to exist without some small share of it." I was no exception and I grit my teeth and let go of that line that was tempting me back to my past. I put my trust there and then in a power greater than myself and the A.A. program.

As was promised, my grasp on the other line swung me forward with new found confidence and trust, which assured me I would never need to look back again. I found myself set down lightly on the doorstep of Step Three and I was ready and willing. Finally, I was able to make a decision.

Jim Q., Must Change Group
via Twelve Step Times & Akron Inter-Group



I have just a minute
60 seconds in it
did not seek it
did not choose it
but it's up to me to use it
I have only just a minute
but eternity is in it

Author Unknown

AM I THANKFUL ENOUGH

As I look back over my first year of living sober, I have many things to say thanks for. I wake up now instead of coming to. My truck or car are in my driveway. The wife says Good Morning instead of guess what you said last night. My kids now call me Daddy and run to me instead of away from me. Now I have friends and can be a friend in return. My sponsor is a Grandfather to me like the one I lost at 5 years old. Joys of life are to be spread to make others happy. If I hurt I can get help. I owe my life to God and the fellowship of A.A. Am I thankful enough? I may never find that out, but a day at a time I'm willing to try.

God Bless
Dan



Chief Editor

October 13, 1986

At this time I would like to thank all members and A.A. groups of this area for their beautiful cards and telephone calls expressing their sympathy because of the death of my wife, who had been my life's inspiration for the last 56 years. I sincerely appreciate the courtesies given to me by your Central Bulletin.

Sincerely yours,
Dick P.



THE TWELVE REWARDS OF THE TWELVE STEPS

1. HOPE instead of desperation.
2. FAITH instead of despair.
3. COURAGE instead of fear.
4. PEACE OF MIND instead of confusion.
5. SELF—CONFIDENCE instead of helplessness.
6. SELF-RESPECT instead of self-contempt.
7. THE RESPECT OF OTHERS instead of their pity or contempt.
8. A CLEAN CONSCIENCE instead of a sense of guilt.
9. REAL FRIENDSHIPS instead of loneliness,
10. A CLEAN PATTERN OF LIFE instead of a purposeless existence.
11. THE LOVE AND UNDERSWINDING OF OUR FAMILIES instead of their doubts and fears.
12. THE FREEDOM OF HAPPY LIFE instead of the bondage of an alcoholic obsession.

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