



LOST AND FOUND

New Years Eve was spent with A.A. friends in the home of two members of my group. B. and J., husband and wife who had been particularly close to me during the preceding two months. It was an evening of relaxed conversation, genuine affection, and happy sharing. It was my first New Years Eve in the program. I was a two-and-a-half-month-old baby, nurtured, cradled, loved, and carefully guided by both men and women in A.A.

That evening I was welcomed warmly into my friends' home, and when I left, it was with reluctance. Driving away, I felt contented and unusually peaceful. I was not alone. The thought came to me that this was really A.A.—the friends, the companionship, the love, and the mutual caring, I had never experienced anything like it before.

"So this is what it means to live the program," I thought. I realize now, however, that it was not until two days later that I was given a **never-to-be-forgotten example** of what living program really means. This example was an enormous gift to me.

J., who has rarely missed a day without touching base with me — calling to see how I'm doing or to "just chat" — did not talk to me on New Years Day. This didn't bother me; I had been out most of the day and decided I had probably missed her call. Perhaps, because I had been with her in her home late the previous night, a call really wasn't necessary. Only a passing thought, quickly dismissed, was given to the fact that no one in my group had called that day.

"Oh, well, it's New Years Day, and people are busy." Besides, several A.A. friends who were not in my group had kept in touch. The day was beautiful, and I have only bright memories of it. Everything was good, and I actually slept like a real baby that night.

The following morning, I received a call from a close A.A. friend asking if I had heard the sad news.

"No. I haven't heard anything. What happened?"

In a quiet voice, she said "B. is dead. He died yesterday."

"That can't be!"

The man with whom I had spent New Years Eve was dead. He had died in his sleep New Years' morning. His death was totally without warning, and the loss was a tragic shock to all who knew and loved him. Hanging up the receiver, I could only stare into space for a few minutes until the impact of the news began to sink in. As I began to come to myself, my first thought was to go to his wife, to see if I could be of any help, to provide some small comfort. I immediately drove to her home.

When I arrived, I was met by a woman who was composed, who was deeply concerned about the feelings of those around her, and who, at this time of severe pain, showed little concern for herself.

"Do you know?" she asked.

"Yes."

"I hadn't wanted you to be told yet,"

She hugged me and immediately made a place for me in her home. I was treated like a cherished member of the family.

I later learned that on the day her husband died, J. had given instructions that members of the group were not to tell me of the loss. These instructions were given, I believe, because she felt I wasn't sober long enough to deal with such a loss. During a time of devastating sorrow, she stepped outside of herself in compassionate concern for me. The importance of shielding a "baby" from anything that might threaten new sobriety was of concern to her on the day her husband died. Those she loved (and she loves and is loved by many) were to be protected from unnecessary hurt. She made sure of this. This lady found time to talk to me, to give me little jobs, to ease my way. I now laugh to myself when I think that I came to her home to help her. She thought about, reached out to, and cared for others at a time when the pain she carried was beyond imagining.

I was given a great gift and blessing at the beginning of that year. I was given the great honor of witnessing a brilliant example of living the program. I have seen a person whose behavior and attitudes during a time of severe testing reflected her deep faith, love and acceptance. My prayer today is that **I may never forget that example.**

SM., St. Petersburg, Fla.
A.A. Grapevine, January 1985

CENTRAL BULLETIN



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

Harry D., Founder and Editor 1692.1966

Vol. 45 January 1987 No. 4

District Office (216) 241 - 7387

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, January 6, 1987 - 8:00 p.m.

OLD STONE CHURCH -PUBLIC SQUARE
CLEVELAND, OHIO

All Group Representatives Welcome
Be Informed

GROUP ANNIVERSARIES

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

We have no Group Anniversaries
to announce at this time

CORRECTIONAL FACILITY MEETING

Cleveland Central Committee

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

St Malachi Center
2416 Superior Ave., Dry Dock
January 20, 1987

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Old Stone Church-downstairs

Monday, January 26, 1987

7

IN MEMORIAM

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

TED SLADE, member of Parma Heights Group.

BARBARA CUTUJAIN, passed away in California-former member of Our Group.

MAE DUFFY, Glenville Group-43 years of sobriety. Memorial Service, St Ann's Church, Cleveland Heights on January 3, 1987 at 11: a.m.

THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

ATTENTION Alice G.

Please call Imogene at the District Office, I have a message for you.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Innegrup Dinner Ticket Raffle. There will also be other important business to discuss at this meeting. **Please try to attend.**

DISTRICT OFFICE CORNER

HAPPY NEW YEAR, ONE AND ALL!

A new year is beginning, where did the old one go? For some, 1986 was a time of beginning again and for others, even our beginning again contained a lot of heartache and economic pressure - but - we made it and can now open a new chapter by welcoming in the year 1987 with new-found hope for your fellowman and ourselves.

No matter what length our sobriety, I don't think any New year has been ushered in without amazement - considering it has been a long time between drinks (as we used to say). By amazement we mean -do you still remember the holiday times when all liquor supplies had to be replenished in our household so that we could have it for our guests. . .and wasn't it amazing that, though we didn't have many guests, the supply dwindled - all in the spirit of Fellowship of man? Isn't it just super today that we don't really need all that stuff and know that a warm handshake is all we need to feel at home with our new-found friends in A.A. and our understanding friends not in the program.

As you will see in your bulletin, January is the month that your Trusted Servants knuckle down as we have a number of things coming up - among them, getting ready for the Intergroup Dinner Raffle. In the event that some of you might not understand this practice so early in the year for something that we hold in May (One Day at a Time), it is to assure all members and groups that there are no favors granted to any one part of our area but that all start out equal. There will be information regarding the procedure when your home group gets its letter in the mail announcing date and time so make it one of your New Year's 'things to change' by opening all of the mail we send to you. Many are not aware of the date, mostly because a lot of mail sent out to groups is never opened and read. Anything we take the time and trouble to send out is of some importance - so please try to read your mail and take a more active part in what your District Office is doing by getting representatives to attend our announced meetings and reporting back to you and, remember, you always have a voice in anything that we do.

THINK ABOUT IT!

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

PAST-NOM/-FUTURE

We alcoholics are told to live in the **NOW**. Enjoy a sober life now. Put the **PAST** aside. Forgive yourself for God forgives you. And don't live in the **FUTURE**, it may never come the way you plan it.

I was a mid level executive for a small national company. I was transferred and got my promotions. I had the biggest sales volume territory. I planned to be a national sales executive with the perks of bonuses, stock options, tax write off, etc. I was told this would happen. Then a bigger corporation bought my smaller one. I was demoted. I drank myself into a halfway house. I realize now I was crying in my beer over something I never had. Living in the **FUTURE**.

ALWAYS • CAREFUL • TO • INVOLVING • OTHERS • NEEDS

HE COULDN'T BELIEVE IT!

A minister had a habit of placing his sermon notes on the pulpit about an hour before church services. One young rascal discovered this habit, and one day, before the congregation convened, neatly detached the last page from them.

The minister delivered his sermon in ringing tones, and read the last line of what was now the final page. "So, Adam said to Eve. ." Searching in vain for the following page, the minister made a mental note to give his secretary, cleared his throat nervously, then concluded his sermon weakly, "So, Adam said to Eve - there seems to be a leaf missing!"

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

The famous comedian W. C. Fields once remarked that it was a woman who drove him to drink, and he didn't even remember to thank her.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

THE VALUE OF A SMILE

During a lifetime, one meets a soul,
That smiles and displays self-control.
That has made me wonder, why can't I?
Grant a friendly smile to a passerby?
And it matters not what time of day,
One meets this soul along the way.
That friendly smile is ever their's,
A moments lift to those with cares.
I envy not such a cheerful soul,
But rather wish it were my role.
Where I would too, at all men smile,
And help to make their day worthwhile.
Perhaps someday I shall be blessed,
To smile although somewhat depressed.
And show that ease and self control,
That I had seen in that friendly soul.

Frank J.D.

Be a Bulletin Booster

GROWTH: COMPANION PROGRAMS

I would be pleased to be able to continue to learn new facts and be willing to accept new challenges for as long as I am still alive and growing in the A.A. program.

Even though I was only twenty-seven when I began the past seventeen years of continuous, uninterrupted sobriety, I had acquired some character defects which I had been fairly reluctant to relinquish. I have taken my sobriety around the country with me. I began in Detroit, Michigan, transferred to Las Vegas, Nevada, moved to Fremont, California, and finally arrived in Fair-view Park, Ohio where I have lived since 1977. Each stop along the way I chose a minimum of one Home Group and one Sponsor. My activity level has varied, some times were more active than others. Each time my involvement increased, I found that I could be more receptive to change.

Several months ago I went on a long- deferred (and much needed) retreat. I had been too busy to fit this spiritual event into my life. With the usual 20/20 hindsight, I can see that the delay turned out to be proper timing. Today, at forty-five (mid life) has me questioning my environments. At the retreat I was advised that 'change just for the sake of change' may not necessarily be an answer to a situation. The reasoning being, that if it works, then why try to fix it. Therefore, the solution was not a 'change' but an 'exchange' of some negative thoughts with positive ones.

Another area of my A.A. life which I wanted to improve upon was the enthusiasm I carry with me. I have often marveled at how happy our newcomers looked and felt soon after arriving. Over the years the joy of fellowship may tend to be overshadowed by life's problems, and thereby producing a gradual complacency and I wanted to alter this situation.

The answer which my Higher Power provided was a complete surprise. After the retreat was over I inquired about the Alateen Group which met at the same time and location as my A.A. Home Group. The Alanon Group, which also meets there said that it would be alright for me to co-sponsor the Alateen Group. I have now read their literature and attended their meetings. I have subsequently co-sponsored a second Alateen Group at a different location and on another night which did not conflict with my regular A.A. meetings. Since Alateen's are future Alanon members it was necessary for my own growth and understanding to attend some Alanon meetings.

Despite knowing that Alanon existed, I had no first knowledge of how the Programs of Alanon and Alateen were worked until this period of time. My attendance at meetings of the three Companion Programs has not interfered with my A.A. Program; but rather has enhanced my appreciation of Alcoholics Anonymous

I am quite certain that my Higher Power has responded to my request for growth.

Ron M.

Columbia Saturday Group

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

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

SHARING A PROBLEM, AND THE SOLUTION

A woman I know recently decided to take her drinking problem to a recovery source other than Alcoholics Anonymous because she concluded that A.A. members are concerned primarily with **how** they used to drink and rarely **why** they drank.

This is, course, far from true, although many new comers, eager to know the sources of their drinking patterns in order to avoid repetitions leading to slips, often get flash impressions that **how** is ail-important because of hearing so many drunkalogues.

Answering the **whys of drinking** occupies most of the Big Book and practically all of the "12 & 12" and other A.A. literature.

Members who insist that searching for **whys** in alcoholism is a waste of time are confusing the target. It is useless, naturally, to look for answers to **why we became alcoholics**. Science still cannot pinpoint reasons.

Many long-sober members find a simple answer to "Why did I keep getting drunk?" "It's because you continued to take mouthfuls of booze and then you swallowed every drop." Realistically, any alcoholic happens to be among the one out of every ten drinkers whose abuse of alcohol carried him or her across an invisible line into addiction and dependency coupled with a compulsion and an obsession.

Wise A.A. members ignore **whys** about their disease. Yet all of us, whether or not we recognize the fact, seek knowledge of why we used a killer drug so excessively. Members frequently point out that the Big Book tells us there are sub-surface reasons. Too often, we erroneously state that the Book says that "alcoholism is but a symptom of a deeper seated cause."

Alcoholism, of course, is never a symptom. It is a full blown, primary, progressive, incurable and fatal illness all on its own. What the Book tells us is that "our liquor is but a symptom." That means our reasons for guzzling were symptoms. Incidentally, the Book follows that sentence with, "So we had to get down to causes and conditions." This could mean we ought to find out some **whys**.

That impatient woman alcoholic who thought that A.A. members have no interest in **why** might have taken time to understand that drinking horror stories serve an important purpose of identification for us and constantly remind us how it used to be and could easily be again.

One quick survey of the Fourth, Fifth, Sixth and Seventh Steps would have reminded the lady that the sole reason for uncovering and confessing, and then understanding our character defects, is to learn what made us start to drink and continue to drink our way to alcoholism; and then to free ourselves, with the help of others and a Higher Power, from a susceptibility to those same dangerous shortcomings when they emerge during our sobriety.

The Big Book assures us that members of A.A. share not only a problem but also the solution to it. That solution can come to us in no other way than finding out why disaster followed our brand of stinking thinking and behavior.

It surely is true that those who never learn from their errors are doomed to go on repeating both the mistakes and the painful lessons, all their lives. We do grow from pain, but there is enough pain in simply living, without making more pain through carelessness.

Teet C.

Hello Central, Los Angeles, Ca.

★★★★★

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.

★★★★★

A TEST YOU SHOULD PASS

Most of us have hopelessly failed the **20 Questions** on alcoholism, so here is a test with a different twist.

1. Do you get a craving for a cup of coffee at 8:30 p.m.?
2. Do you find yourself saying the *Serenity Prayer* in grocery lines?
3. Are you afraid of saying *My name is _____ and I'm an alcoholic* when introducing yourself?
4. When people tell you their problems, do you offer advice like "Easy does it" and "Let go and let God?"
5. Do you have difficulty breathing if you are not in a smoke filled room?
6. Has your car quit turning automatically into liquor stores?
7. Do you call at least three friends in the Fellowship every day to say **Hi?**
8. Do you carry A.A. chips in your pockets instead of beer change?
9. Have you forgotten what's on TV at 8:30 p.m.?
10. If you miss too many meetings are you a grouch and a bore?

If you answered two or more with yes, you might as well face it. . .you are addicted to A.A. **Enjoy it, One Day At A Time!**



Cleveland Central Committee of A.A.

940 Rockefeller Bldg.
614 Superior Ave NW
Cleveland, Ohio 44113

CONTINUING SOBRIETY

My progress in A.A. has been continuous and now I am reaching a turning point in my sobriety. For 15 years I lived in fear of success. Periodically, I took rests in hospitals. Eventually I sought solace in the bottle. Now with the heartfelt help of the A.A. Program I am starting to plan for success. Not just material success but, more importantly, success as a human being.

Today this means holding onto the jobs I have as secretary and piano teacher and patiently nudging myself to create paintings and music again. I explore alternatives but I'm cautious about changing anything that is working for me.

In the past I was a perfectionist I used to quit when I thought I was behind - as well as when I was ahead! Today I am less intimidated by life-because I am realizing I am not alone. I have meetings to go to and A.A. friends to talk to when I get uneasy.

I am learning to accept people, places and things I cannot change and exhibiting courage to change what is possible. I am learning to know the difference. I have held onto the good things in my past while searching for new channels.

I love this Program and all you who are in it for you give me the courage to grow when I find myself caught under a rain cloud. For me A.A. is the healing sunlight that causes my spiritual attitude to bloom.

Today if I encounter a roadblock, I pray and wait for an answer (instead of jumping into a ditch). I am making it now, a day at a time. There's no looking back - I don't want to turn into a pillar of salt (or a bottle of booze)!

My face is turned upward and outward to accept both rain and sun, for I am realizing that through the Grace of God and the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous, life is an exquisite pleasure that I never believed possible.

Thank you all for my continuing sobriety.

Caroline F.
Washington, D.C. Reporter.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

★ SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT ★

YOUR CENTRAL BULLETIN SUBSCRIPTION WILL BE INCREASED TO \$4.00 PER YEAR (FORMERLY \$3.50), EFFECTIVE WITH THE MARCH ISSUE. With permission of the A.A. Central Committee 1/6/87.

"MY FRIEND JOE"—STILL TEACHING

In the September 1986, Central Bulletin, I wrote about "My Friend Joe", and of the inspiration this blind, 28 year old A.A. member had been for me and, I now learn, countless others. In retrospect (the immediate emotions involved in his death have subsided) but not in judgement, I find myself trying to look still further into Joe's life and I am still benefiting from having known him.

Joe was physically active in both A.A. and his daily living, but was this a way to cover a personal loneliness that he would not share? Were his acts of daring camouflaging secret fears? By always being ready to help another person, was he hiding from himself the fact that he too needed help he could not bring himself to ask for? Being selfless, did he refuse himself the right to be selfish and take from the A.A. program all it could offer before he began giving away more than he had? Did his physical handicap cause him to lose sight of the fact that alcohol is the disabling demon we all must deal with first, last and always, and irrespective of any other handicap.

Again, this is not judgmental of Joe. His death caused me to take a look deep within myself and forced me to see that I have at times harbored the same thoughts and feelings that I wonder if Joe might have had. Often, it is easier to say "everything is fine" than it is to tell someone what is bothering you. Often it is difficult to find a listener who really cares what is troubling you, although this is not the spirit of the A.A. program; but our alcoholic minds have taught us to take the easy way out. Who of us alive can say it is easier to take a drink, pull the trigger and end our lives as Joe did, or exert the effort to live the program of A.A. I choose to **live-if God will grant me the courage! and the willingness! and the wisdom!**

Ruby S.
Acceptance Group

★ ★ ★ ★ ★



"Beats me."



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Harry D., Founder and Editor 1892-1968

Vol. 45 February 1987 No. 5

District Office (216) 241 • 7387

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, February 3, 1987 - 8:00 p.m.

OLD STONE CHURCH -PUBLIC SQUARE
CLEVELAND, OHIO

All Group Representatives Welcome
Be Informed

GROUP ANNIVERSARIES

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

KAISER EAST

Sunday, February 8, 1987 - 2:00 p.m.
Lead at 3:00 p.m.

Holy Family Church, 3845 E. 131 St.
ELEVENTH ANNIVERSARY

CORRECTIONAL FACILITY MEETING

Cleveland Central Committee

Third Tuesday of each month - 8:00 p.m.
St Malachi Center — W.25th & Detroit area
near St Malachi Church

IN MEMORIAM

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

GILBERT (GIB) HECIBOTHAM, 28 years of sobriety-member Elyria Nite Stag.

TALLMADE BURWELL, 23 years of sobriety, member of Esquire Group.

SAM TALARICO, 8 year member of Parmatown Men's Group.

ANDREW BELKO, long time, active member of Parma Saturday Group.

JOE FOLEY, 25 year member of North Olmsted and Strongsville Tuesday a.m. Discussion Groups.

WILBUR (WEBB) MANDEIBAUM, long time member and secretary of C.A.H. Group.

MARIAM CALBREATH, 40 year member of Home Group: West Side Morning.

JACK DEAN, Columbus, Ohio - member with 30 years of sobriety.

THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE

DISTRICT OFFICE CORNER

February greetings to all. Looking out my window today I can see actual snow falling to what our weathermen are telling us will be the first measurable snowfall of the winter-ho-hum-most of us haven't minded a bit but there are some who enjoy winter sports so it will be enjoyed.

It is a pleasure to report to you that, right after the holidays, we had quite a number of calls for help. . .we took care of it on this end and if any of them changed their mind before contact - at least the seed has been planted and they know we will be there when **really** needed. You know, it is our belief that the call for help is the most important function of your District Office and it was very good to know that so many, because of a lot of public information about alcoholism - are beginning to take a look at their lives sooner than most of us did (or admitted we did). We might never know if any of them decided to accept "our new way of life" and then again - someday we might meet or get a call on some member's first anniversary thanking us. We had one man call who wanted to thank all of us - he didn't know who he talked to-that wasn't important **BUT** the fact that this was his first sober Christmas in many years **was** important and he wanted to let us know. To us, that is a special spiritual bouquet and we enjoy the fragrance.

About our work here - we are beginning to get ready for the Intergroup Dinner ticket raffle (January 26th) and then laying all the ground work for our 1987 Fund Drive Campaign which will be held in March. .and a lot of information needs to be compiled for our collectors.

As you see in this Bulletin - we are not getting too many Anniversary announcements and, once again, we would like to inform all groups who are having an anniversary and want it announced in the Bulletin - to let us know even before you send your regular announcements for the month to the groups because that timing is not right for our publication.

As part of our regular Central Committee activities, there has been a new Correctional Facilities Committee formed and their reports indicate that there is a lot of enthusiasm being generated to help those who are incarcerated so they will have some background when they return to society. There has always been an interested group of members who have, without fanfare, been making trips to various institutions and 'carrying the message' - we do not mean to forget these devoted members but still think it is nice that a committee has been set up now so that those who were not aware of the work done in the past **can** know about it now and offer their time.

Another thing you will notice in this issue are the number of members who are leaving us to join that "great meeting in the sky", . . .we will miss them all as each and every one of them has played a big part in being actively involved with a group and doing their share to see that new members entering the meeting rooms for the first time were shown the way so that A.A. can remain alive and well through their teachings.

The growth process is entering another phase here at your District Office and we will be very happy to announce what we hope to accomplish in some future issue - since we are still 'one day at a time' we are not anxious to fill

ALWAYS • CAREFUL • TO • INVESTIGATE • OTHERS • NEEDS

you in too soon. Since I can't always be original, I have borrowed something from Agnes DeMille: "No trumpets sound when the important decisions of our life are made. Destiny is made known silently". **THINK ABOUT IT!!**

★★★★★

FREEDOM THROUGH ACCEPTANCE

We admitted we couldn't lick alcohol with our remaining resources, and so we accepted the further fact that dependence upon a Higher Power (if only our A.A. group) could do this hitherto impossible job. The moment we were able to accept these facts fully, our release from the alcohol compulsion had begun.

For most of us, this pair of acceptances had required a lot of exertion to achieve. Our whole treasured philosophy of self-sufficiency had to be cast aside. This had not been done with sheer will power; it came instead as a result of developing the willingness to accept these new facts of living.

We neither ran nor fought. But accept it we did. And then we began to be free.

Grapevine, March 1962

★★★★★

Our 36th Annual Intergroup Dinner will be held on Saturday, May 2, 1987 at Swingo's at the Statler. Speaker will be Pat R., London, Ontario, Canada. Doors open 6:30 p.m. Dinner **promptly** at 7:00 p.m. Dancing will follow dinner. Attendance limited to **1200**.

★★★★★

A boozier who had a record of wife-beating, non-support, and jail terms died during a binge. A boyhood friend went to pay his respects. Touching the cheek of the departed, he exclaimed to the widow, "Why, he's still warm!" The long suffering spouse closed the lid of the coffin. "Warm or cold," she stated flatly, "tomorrow he goes!"

A.A. Grapevine Dec. 1979

Be a Bulletin Booster

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1987 INTERGROUP DINNER CORRECTION

First information sent out to all groups listed the ticket price as \$13.50 and \$135.00 for a table of ten. With our apologies, we wish to correct this to: ticket price of \$15.00 and \$150.00 for a table of ten.

WHAT MAKES AN A.A. LEADER

"Somewhere in our literature there is a statement to this effect: 'Our leaders do not drive by mandate, they lead by example. In effect we are saying to them, act for us, but don't boss us.' Therefore, a leader in A.A. service is a man or woman who can personally put principles, plans and policies into such dedicated and effective action that the rest want to back him up and help him do his job. When a leader power drives us badly, we rebel; but when he too meekly becomes an order taker and he exercises no judgement of his own free will, he really isn't a leader at all.

Good leadership originates plans, policies and ideas for the improvement of our Fellowship and its service. But in new and important matters, it will nevertheless consult widely before taking decisions and actions. Good leadership will also remember that a fine plan or idea can come from anybody, anywhere. Consequently, good leadership will often discard its own cherished plans for others that are better and it will give credit to the source".

Bill W.

Grapevine, 1959

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★★★★★

IT'S A FUNNY THING

Back a few "twenty four's", when I was trying to get the program, I had to laugh. There was nothing funny about the situation, but I had to laugh. At my first few meetings, I saw the smiling faces (I was miserable) and heard the idle banter (I couldn't stop shaking long enough to 'banter') and I then found out how funny it was, really. Oh no! I don't think alcoholism is funny!! I think it is so serious, critical, potentially fatal. . .that I have to laugh - at myself, so I can accept and face my disease and at off beat expressions I run across which tickle some fancy or other. (Example: Reality is for people who can't handle booze.)

I may offend some persons who don't know me when I walk into a meeting saying, "I'm looking for a gathering of drunks"! I cannot take the thing somberly or with morbidity; I must have humorous relief or I shall perish. I don't think the program is whimsical, giddy or lighthearted. . .far from it. The program is my life. Meetings are my sustenance, the membership is my family (Remember Uncle Clyde with the big red nose and Cousin Jenny with the. . .oops!)

Perhaps much of my "laugh-at-it" approach to whipping the "still" voice within me is just euphemistic, just as the Alano Clubs call their coffee/soft drink area "the BAR"! Sugar coat the pill, but be damned sure you take it!!

Jim D., Sanford FL

The Intergrouper of Central Florida

I'VE GOT HUMILITY-AND HOW

It took me quite a while to figure out this humility deal. but, brother, I've got it now! When the chips are down, I can be a Casper Milquetoast and Uriah Heep Rolled into one. My humility is so thick, you can cut it with a butter knife.

it's a well known fact that I've got more humility than any other member of our group-and. what's more important, they realize it. Whenever this subject comes up in a closed meeting, everybody looks to me to explain what humility is-and how to get that way. The rest of them sit like dumb clucks and don't have anything to say.

"If I can do it, you can do it," I always tell them. Then I explain how humility is just the art of acting like you don't know it all, and not being an egotistical s.o.b. like some of the other members I could name. (Yes I have named them, too. I believe in calling a spade a spade, which is the honesty part of the program.)

Some of the older members of our group have started calling me "Mr. Humility," which goes to show how they recognize my superiority in this respect. Naturally, a couple of them are a little jealous because I have so much more humility than they have, and I explain it so much better.

Now and then, a newcomer sticks his head in the noose by sounding off with some dumb question about humility, at our closed meetings.

"How long you been around A.A.?" I ask. That flattens them. They don't realize that, after so many years of alcoholic thinking, you don't get real **quality** humility right off the bat. However, I always believe in holding out some hope to the newcomer.

"Just act like me, bub," I tell him, 'and it won't take you long to catch on."

I've been around A.A. a couple of years now, and I've seen 'em come and go. Slips? Well, sure, I've had a few, mostly in recent months. . . but you can hardly call them slips. You see, I've been trying to prove something. I know the mill-run of alcoholics can't touch that first drink-the **hoi polloi**,so to **speak-but I'm different.**

I'll admit I'm trying to taper off a bender right now. I admit I have a drinking problem. I don't know all there is to know about the twelve steps and all that other malarkey.

But don't you see? That's the very basis of my humility-I admit these things! I may not have as much continuous sobriety as some of the stuffed shirts I know.

But I've got more damn humility than the whole pack of them put together!

Anonymous, Nonviolet Ward

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

THE DIFFERENCE

I got up early one morning
and rushed right into the day;
I had so much to accomplish
that I didn't have time to pray.
Problems just tumbled about me
and heavier came each task;
"Why doesn't God help me?" I wondered
He said, "But you didn't ask."

I wanted to see joy and beauty
but the day toiled on, gray and bleak;
I wondered why God didn't show me,
He said, "But you didn't seek."

I tried to come into God's presence;
I used all my keys at the lock.
God gently and lovingly chided
"My Child you didn't knock."

I woke up early this morning
and paused before entering the day.
I had so much to accomplish
that I had to take time to pray.

Author Unknown

Thank you for the reminder, NCOAI Newsletter

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

28th ANNUAL ALANON DANCE

Sponsored by Cleveland Alanon
Saturday, March 7, 1987

Doors open 7:00 p.m. Dinner served **PROMPTLY**
at 7:30 p.m. • Donation \$17.50

HE COULDN'T BELIEVE IT!

A minister had a habit of placing his sermon notes on the pulpit about an hour before church services. One young rascal discovered this habit, and one day, before the congregation convened, neatly detached the last page from them.

The minister delivered his sermon in ringing tones, and read the last line of what was now the final page. "So, Adam said to Eve. . ." Searching in vain for the following page, the minister made a mental note to give his secretary, cleared his throat nervously, then concluded his sermon weakly, "So, Adam said to Eve - there seems to be a leaf missing!"

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

People are like tea bags; they don't know their own strength until they get into hot water.

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.



1987 FUND DRIVE CAMPAIGN

THE MONTH OF MARCH every year is Fund Drive Campaign Time • that time of year that a representative will be calling on your group and asking for contributions from your group and individual members so that we might keep our office doors open whenever someone, somewhere reaches out for help.

As you might guess, expenses are going up in your District Office for such things as office supplies, purchasing literature that is for sale, keeping enough help on hand that can take care of the calls along with other assignments such as book-keeping, keeping secretaries lists and meeting schedules up to date, public information and many more things that most members do not realize that needs to be done in order to keep the operation of the office in motion . . . add to that the rent, electricity, telephone, responsibilities to Uncle Sam our State of Ohio and our city-reports are made to some on a monthly basis and to others, quarterly statements need to be submitted • all of this to be done by qualified personnel.

The office handles, some months, as high as 2000 calls . . . not all of these are calls for help. Some are inquiring family members of the still suffering alcoholic, some are questions regarding alcoholism and especially A.A. itself. Sometimes groups need a little encouragement to know how to handle a matter that their group conscience is struggling with and, even though, there can be no definite decisions regarding these matters, there is someone to listen and maybe offer a solution, knowing that other groups have faced similar situations and just how they have dealt with them.

By no means, will you ever enter the office and find an employee sitting around waiting for the phone to ring. Due to the nature of our illness, some of the calls received are nasty, insulting and demeaning but if the end result is getting help because the caller asked for it • it is turned over to a group for more individual attention. (Otherwise known as a 12 Step Call).

All of the above has been pointed out so that members will show their gratitude by their own contributions. Just what is your sobriety worth to you and your loved ones?

Printed here is a suggested plan for Group Contributions toward A.A. services put together by your General Service Office in New York so you might better understand exactly what your obligations are.

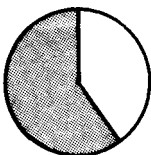
HOW...

To support A.A.'s essential services, the General Service Conference suggests individuals follow the 60-30-10 Plan where applicable and practicable.

It works like this:

First take care of basic group expenses (rent, refreshments, A.A. literature, and a prudent reserve "emergency" fund). Divide the remaining funds as follows, or whatever division suits your local needs.

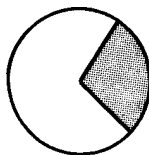
60%



60% to your intergroup or central office

To support phone service for Twelfth Step calls and other inquiries; coordination of group activities; and A.A. literature sales.

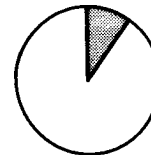
30%



30% to your General Service Office

To support group services throughout the U.S./Canada and the General Service Conference; help Lone Members and groups in institutions; and carry the A.A. message worldwide. The Regular Contribution Plan (contributing on a monthly, bimonthly, or quarterly basis) is convenient for both your group and the G.S.O.

10%



10% to your area committee

To support area assemblies, delegates' expenses, and area public information and institution work.



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.

Harry D., Founder and Editor 1892-1968

Vol. 45 March 1987 No. 6

District Office (216) 241 - 7387

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, March 3, 1987 - 8:00 p.m.

OLD STONE CHURCH - PUBLIC SQUARE
CLEVELAND, OHIO

All Group Representatives Welcome
Be Informed

GROUP ANNIVERSARIES

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

ST CHARLES GROUP

Saturday, March 7, 1987 - 8:30 p.m.
SEVENTH ANNIVERSARY

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

SOLIDARITY GROUP

Sunday, April 12, 1987 - 3:00 p.m.
THIRTY FIRST ANNIVERSARY

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

WEST SIDE DAY AT A TIME

Tuesday, March 10, 1987 - 8:00 p.m.
FOURTH ANNIVERSARY

CORRECTIONAL FACILITY MEETING

Cleveland Central Committee

Third Tuesday of each month - 8:00 p.m.
St Malachi Center - W.25th & Detroit area
near St Malachi Church

IN MEMORIAM

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

JAMES FAUCETT, Long time member of A.A. Attended groups in Lakewood, Fairview Park and Westlake area.

BERNARD BROUCEK, Long time member of A.A. formerly a member of the Brooklyn Group.

HARRY JAY, Long time member of A.A. who had been out of the Cleveland area for some time although still remembered.

MARY DELLO (WAGNER), 21 year member of A.A. Well known at the Southeast side meetings-moved to Parma 4 years ago.

THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE

DISTRICT OFFICE CORNER

Huffing and puffing to get this column ready again this month - doing everything "One Day at a Time" gets to be quite squeezed especially when we are so busy.

We held the Raffle for the drawing of Tickets for the 1987 Intergroup Dinner on Monday, January 26th at the Old Stone Church but, as this is a part of our Advisory Committee Meeting, we had other business.

Part of the business at that meeting, with 79 members in attendance representing 76 groups was a review of changes that were being proposed to the Constitution. Each group had received a copy of all the changes and we were hoping there would be enough interest to bring more down to take an active part in the decisions. Changes presented were mostly to bring the number of members leaving the committee more in tune with the terms listed in the original Constitution and for the purpose of holding only one election a year as indicated rather than two as we sometimes had to do. Every few years, we found we had six members leaving the committee at one time - this came about as some of our members had to leave before they had served their full term and had made the number leaving a majority of the eleven members of the Operating Committee. This was outlined and, with arranging some shorter terms and some one year longer, this will be corrected by 1990. There was no opposition to the changes.

Also at this meeting a new "year end" financial report was presented for approval. This report will answer a lot of questions that are usually of some concern to members and will give a full account of all monies held by your District Office. A few questions were asked and then all members present accepted the changes as given.

NOW-back to the Intergroup Dinner Tickets. We are sorry to report that, at the present time, no tickets are available but the office has a waiting list that will be filled according to returned tickets so there is still a chance there will be some. We are not sure that all of the tickets that are out will be sold so please do not be afraid to ask that your name be placed on the list. This affair will be held on Saturday, May 2, 1987 at Swingo's at the Statler. As a matter of fact, the tickets were all gone from this office before we had a chance to get the flyers out to the groups. It will arrive with the mail that contains your revised Constitution.

We are really looking forward to this year as the year that more members will realize that there are many facets of Alcoholics Anonymous - committees that can be active in bringing this new interest about. General Service is not as well known in our area as it is in some of the other States. There are some States where General Service is the more active force but, since the District Office here preceded General Service - we do a lot of things that are General Service's responsibility. As a result of this, the Cleveland area has been more District Office oriented but many are now taking a greater interest in our General Service Northeast Ohio area. Of course, that covers more territory than our office so naturally it brings in bigger crowds than do our Central Operating and Advisory Committee meetings that we have from our District Office. We realize that a

lot of members prefer just to attend meetings of their choice but it can be a real education if all of groups could have a group representative for **our** meetings. There are always a lot of questions that people have and the correct place to ask those questions or to air any discomforts concerning the District Office are at these meetings. . .so please, when you get your next announcement of our Advisory Committee meeting • come down and see what they are like. . .**we need input from the members.** Our Central Committee attendance has grown some and we are happy to see the members there but remember, fellow members, we have a **lot** of groups now. As some come, some go but we can say that we are very near servicing 650 groups through this office. **THINK ABOUT IT!!**

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

“A LITTLE ODE TO THE BRECKSVILLE WED. - A.A. GROUP”

My home groups the Brecksville Bunch.
 A lot of folks think we're out to lunch.
 But if you stick around this group awhile,
 You'll not only stay sober, but you'll learn to smile.
 I was very nervous when I first appeared,
 And sat in the back with my robe of fear.
 But I followed the winners around these halls,
 And you know it worked, I'm having a ball.
 Now there's the Rocky's, don't knock it.
 Don't knock the Rock, or the Richies, the Johnnies,
 The Eddies & Freddie's, the Jimmies & Franks,
 The Harry's & Larry's, the Georges & Dons,
 The dear Jacks & Bobs & anonymous Bills,
 And lets not forget Will.
 Am I going too fast? It's ending at last.
 Who me! I'm Earl The Pearl. I don't know nothin.
 I just keep coming back.

Earl P.
 Brecksville Group

----- Re a *Bulletin* Rooster -----

PLAYING WITH IDA

There is a sort of game that newcomers to AA often play. The game is called "IDA." Everyone who has done any 12-Step work will know exactly what I mean, You've heard the new man say, "If IDA just had money, I wouldn't have become a drunk" OR "If IDA had a better job. . ." OR "If IDA had a better education. . ." If IDA this or IDA that!

We recognize this playing with IDA as a sign that the new man (or woman) is still looking for an excuse. He's admitting the problem but he'd still like to blame it on something else or someone else. **(And we understand that, don't we?)**

It's a dangerous phase, though. Dangerous because it means the individual hasn't yet accepted. Admitted, maybe; but not accepted. In other words, he hasn't taken the first step because to completely admit something we have to accept it as the truth.

So how do you answer a statement like that? What do you say to a new man or woman who is playing with IDA? Well, lets take a good look at ol' IDA.

"If IDA just had money." About a year ago I called on a man who lives in one of the fanciest homes I've ever seen. This humble domicile probably was worth \$250,000 before the first stick of furniture went in; looked like a movie set!

But the master of the house had called AA (even as you and I). His attire consisted of a tee-shirt, slacks and socks. One toe of his sock had a large hole. He had been sick on this fashionable get-up; had tried to mop it off without too much success. So he didn't smell too good. And he had a large tear slowly running down one cheek.

He needed help! His money, of which he obviously has plenty, didn't prevent him from becoming an alcoholic. And look around in AA. We have a number of well heeled members who will tell you that their bank accounts couldn't keep them out of trouble. So apparently money isn't the problem, after all.

"If IDA had a better job." Again look around. You'll see the answers to that one in the many, many AA's who had excellent jobs when they came into AA: teachers, bankers, lawyers, engineers, doctors, salesmen and you name it. They'll all tell you their jobs didn't keep them out of trouble. No, one's job isn't the problem either.

"If IDA had a better education." Look around, AA is full of people with education that just doesn't quit! AA is full of ABs, Masters' Degrees, LLD's, MDs, PHDs, DDs • but none of these kept us from getting the DTs! Education isn't the problem.

No the problem is us. Me and you. We wanted to drink. We drank too much, too often and too long and wound up with unmanageable lives.

So, if you have a baby who is "playing with IDA" perhaps you can point some of the facts out to him. Tell him to be glad that all that is the matter with him is alcoholism. (That's not nearly so bad as some of the things he has privately suspected were wrong with him!)

All that is the matter is alcoholism. And we in AA have the answer to that. That's easy to prove. Again, look around • you can point out 100 successfully recovering alcoholics for every one of the other kind who are still "playing with IDA."

Bob L., S. W. Sunday
 Central Bulletin, January 1971.

FROM YOUR EDITOR

Please don't think that because we have not asked for some time that we are no longer interested in articles for the Bulletin from our local members. It is still a dream to see **just one** issue during my stay as Editor without having to borrow from other Newsletters. You do not need a degree to put your thoughts down on paper, we speak the "language of the heart"; why not write it? Comments I hear at a lot of meetings would look **great in print**

We are very pleased with the interest in the Bulletin that is being shown and our mailing list is growing but - funny thing - when I was looking for material for this issue, I ran across a January 1971 Central Bulletin which had **one** article from a member and the "Mill Ends and Remnants" by, George! Both of these items done by members I admire very much in the program and, since January 1971 is my sobriety date, I elected to run those articles. . . could it possibly be good luck?

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

MILL ENDS AND REMNANTS

As another calendar year passes into the millenium, it is again "off with the old and on with the new." To those of us in AA there are other New Year's days, when we observe anniversaries of our own releases from the shackles of alcohol.

Nevertheless, the universally observed New Year's Day is a good time for inventory, not that we haven't taken 365 of them in the year being completed. but let us consider that as we start another, perhaps we haven't been as thorough and searching in our daily inventories as we might have been.

Admittedly, we do not dwell on the past, nor for that matter we do not project the future, but as long as we review the past constructively, noting our diversions and derelictions that may be recorded as experiences for correction, our action has a healthy overtone.

It is to this end that re-inventory taking may prove of invaluable measure as we go about future 24-hour periods allotted to each and everyone of us. And in doing so the chances are great that we improve our "to the best of my ability."

Thoughtful, meditative review of the Twelve Steps will be a good starting place, and we dare say most of us will find out how little we know, regardless of the length of the road we have traveled.

Another source of study to abet our re-inventory could well be that little gray covered pamphlet - "The Four Absolutes." It is surprising what new horizons and knowledge can come from their rereading.

And as we embark on this restudy course, let's not fail to include the Twelve Traditions, for therein lies the strength of the fellowship as a whole its strength for the past and its promise for future generations of suffering alcoholics.

Let us rededicate ourselves, by George.

Central Bulletin, January 1971

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Success is not permanent, the same is for failure.

I FEEL I HAVE A DEBT TO PAY

I find that I cannot look back on the past two years without deep emotional feelings. I have been graced with this time vs. the two hours the medical profession was willing to promise me. There is no doubt in my mind that God still had something He felt I could do, **He intervened**, and I did not die just because some highly educated doctors said I should. It has been a great learning experience in that it has brought me closer to God, more appreciative of what the AA program has given me, and awareness that I am important or I would not have been given extended time.

Each day, I not only thank God for another day of sobriety, I must thank him for giving me the day. I also try to think of at least one good thing that I might have done in partial payment for the day. If I feel comfortable with my day, I have done my best and God does not ask for more. Above all, I know God did not keep me alive to be a drunk and I cannot take the first drink.

AA has taught me how to avoid taking the first drink. Also, when I was unable to talk to God myself, I know people in meeting rooms and throughout the program were praying for me. **Thank you!**

My debt is huge but the repayment asked is so small.

Ruby

Acceptance Group

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

AMAZING GRACE

*"Amazing Grace how sweet the sound
that saved a wretch like me!*

Hymn, John Newton, 1779

I was the drunken wretch and Amazing Grace was my ex mother-in-law. She was a Texas Teetotaler. Amazing Grace also didn't like me as I took away her daughter, a yellow rose of Texas. Cause Molly liked to party and we did for twenty years. Then the booze caught up with us and I bottomed out. I came into AA and said to Amazing Grace; "I'm with you now, Grace." She didn't say I told you so but, "That's good, Ralph."

Ralph W.

Friendship Group





IT'S NOT IN THE BOTTLE

It has always seemed clear to me that we should try to avoid feelings of vulnerability and guilt. We should be able to feel good about ourselves and those around us, to attain a certain calm and sense of well-being. We appear to have been designed for it, and I made it a goal in life to have it.

The first time I felt anything like what I describe, I was sixteen years old and had just finished a tumbler of half beer and half wine. It was wonderful. Fifteen minutes later, over the sink, I made my first payments. I believed then that any price was worth paying. In a real sense, I still do, because the problem wasn't with the goal; it was with the means of reaching it.

For twenty-six years, I went on trying to get this genie out of the bottle on command. He came for an hour, for fifteen minutes, and as time went on, not at all. I paid and I paid for less and less, until I came to feel that life had no meaning and was not worth living. The flame of my humanity flickered lower and lower.

I was physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually devastated. But the flame refused to go out, and I found myself in A.A., believing that life might be worth living even if it was meaningless. I felt fearful, vulnerable, guilty, and apprehensive. To this day, the only benefit I can see in staying sober through fear is that it gives us time to begin living by the principles of the A.A. program.

I have reaffirmed my belief that we were designed to be happy, but now I know that the designer gave us a way to get happiness — not all the time, to be sure, but growing gradually, not diminishing.

I don't stay sober with willpower, not only because I couldn't, but because I don't have to. You see, I've found in the A.A. life what I couldn't find in the bottle.

P. C., Louisville, Ky.

A.A. Grapevine, September, 1982



★ ★ ★ ★ ★

THE DARK HORSE

There lived in Tennessee an old chap named Sam Flynn, who was a horse trader. He generally contrived to own a speedy nag or two, which he used for racing whenever he could pick up a "soft match" during his travels.

The best of his horses was a coal black stallion named Dusty Pete. Flynn usually saddled Pete when approaching a town and would ride him in, to give the impression that the animal was merely a "likely horse" and not a "flyer."

One day, on coming to a new town, he learned a country race meeting was being held. He entered Pete in the race. As expected, the people of the town backed the local favorites, giving no heed to Pete. Flynn moved among the crowd taking all the bets he could get against his nag.

just as the horses were being saddled, old Judge McMinamee arrived at the scene. Having been appointed judge he took his place in the stand and was informed on how the betting was going. He was told of one owner placing foolishly heavy bets on his own plug. Looking about, the judge instantly recognized Pete by his color and remarked. "Gentlemen, there's a dark horse in this race that will make some of you sick before supper."

The judge was right. Pete, the dark horse, lay back until the three quarter pole was reached, then rushed to the front and won the purse — and Flynn's bets.

Few people remember Flynn, Judge McMinamee, or Dusky Pete. But the "dark horse" expression is with us still.

Borrowed from an office supply monthly.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

"Why is your ear bandaged, Lenny?"

"Too much Lucy, I guess. I picked up a hot iron to answer the phone."

"O.K. but why is the other ear bandaged?"

"The drunk called back!"



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Harry D., Founder and Editor 1892-1968

Vol. 45 April 1987 No. 7

District Office (216) 241 - 7387

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, April 7, 1987 • 8:00 p.m.

OLD STONE CHURCH • PUBLIC SQUARE
CLEVELAND, OHIO

All Group Representatives Welcome
Be Informed

GROUP ANNIVERSARIES

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

BROOKSIDE GROUP

Sunday, April 26, 1987 • 8:00 p.m.

THIRTY THIRD ANNIVERSARY

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

LAUREL GROUP

Thursday, April 30, 1987

Special time: Sit down dinner • 7:00 p.m.

Lead • 8:00 p.m.

TWENTY FOURTH ANNIVERSARY

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

SOBER SUNDAY

Sunday, April 5, 1987 • 2:00 p.m.

SIXTH ANNIVERSARY

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

SOLIDARITY GROUP

Sunday, April 12, 1987

Doors open 2:00 p.m. - Lead at 3:00 p.m.

THIRTY FIRST ANNIVERSARY

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

WEST SIDE MIDNIGHT GROUP

Saturday, April 11, 1987 • Midnight

FIFTEENTH ANNIVERSARY

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

BROOKPARK MONDAY

Monday, April 20, 1987 • 8:30 p.m.

TWENTY FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

DISTRICT OFFICE CORNER

Welcome to March! The time is really going this year • hope everybody made it through without drinking.

This is the busiest time of the year for your District Office typically, we never do things in ones here • everything happens at once as it has always been. Elvira and Ed will be kept quite busy with the Fund Drive Campaign returns for a good couple of months, our phone will continue to ring constantly and Isabel will be in the back at her literature department always trying to please the customers with one day service. We are going to ask members to order their literature early enough so that **you** can give her time to fill your orders. She has been most kind in trying to provide "next day" day service but we have a few months out of the year when our orders **do** pile up and it is nearly impossible to even keep up. We do have customers who come in to make their purchases who need her attention. I'm mentioning this because the literature department has been so busy that, filling the orders, according to their day of receipt has created a backlog of work for her and any of us who can give her a helping hand. We are very gratified that we do such literature business and everything possible is being done to bring the orders up to date.

NOW TO OUR DEAR FRIENDS IN THE CLEVELAND AREA:

In response to the members who think that we are borrowing too many articles from the Grapevine, etc. for our Central Bulletin -we would like to remind you that we have been making a plea for articles so that there would be no need to borrow at all. For nearly two years, we have been trying to get out the word that we prefer to have local items **so take pen in hand and cooperate!** If there are some who think that various other things should be included in our Bulletin, why not let us hear from you? The purpose of our Bulletin is to provide some help and assurance to someone who might need to hear exactly what our Bulletin contains when it arrives every month in their mail. . .Sort of a meeting that might just help someone get through the day. A couple of years ago, a member who was "grinding" a bit wrote to let us know that 'stinking thinking' had started to move in on her, the mail carrier arrived at their door with their copy of the Bulletin and things changed immediately for her. This is our intention with the Bulletin. We are open for suggestions and you know where we are. Let's try to make it **good** for all of us. Our list of out-of-state subscriptions is always growing • sometimes just to get a little of the "back home" A.A. feeling.

For this month, we will say so-long with this little passing thought (borrowed) "Don't talk about your good intentions • do them and others will do the talking."

THINK ABOUT IT !!!

INCURABLE

Cancer is a disease. Alcoholism is a disease. My name is Bill. I am recovering from alcoholism, **one day at a time.** I was about to say "I'm **lucky**", but I **must** change this to • **BUT FOR THE GRACE OF GOD, I AM RECOVERING.** Just as the cancer victim, I could die too. God chose to save me. **Thank God.**

Cancer is an insidious disease; **so is alcoholism.** Cancer is a very painful disease; **so is alcoholism.** Cancer is a family disease; **so is alcoholism.** Cancer affects the cells; **so does alcoholism.** Cancer knows no age barrier; **neither does alcoholism.** Cancer will strike any social class; **so will alcoholism.**

BUT FOR THE GRACE OF GOD, man is discovering some deterrents for some forms of cancer.

BUT FOR THE GRACE OF GOD-WE HAVE A.A.

ALWAYS • CAREFUL • TO • INVESTIGATE . OTHERS • NEEDS

Bill Z.

IN MEMORIAM

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

JACK WEIST, 10 years of sobriety, active in the Parma area groups.

BERNIE GALLAGHER, Member of A.A., Passed away 3-3-87.

KATHERINE NEZEBEDA (KILBANE), known more in the program as Kilbane. She and her husband had the Kilbane Nursing Home and helped hundreds of people on their path to sobriety.

MARGARET RUSSELL, 21 year member of A.A. Very active.

GEORGE WASHVILLE, 35 YEAR MEMBER OF A.A. Very active in the Superior Group.

JIM WILSON, VERY ACTIVE MEMBER OF A.A. and one of the original founders of the Lee-Seville Croup

GEORGE BEDA, 14 years of continued sobriety. Member of the Golden Link Group.

THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE

FREEDOM THROUGH ACCEPTANCE

We admitted we couldn't lick alcohol with our remaining resources, and so we accepted the further fact that dependence upon a Higher Power (if only our A.A. group) could do this hitherto impossible job. The moment we were able to accept these facts fully, our release from the alcohol compulsion had begun.

For most of us, this pair of acceptances had required a lot of exertion to achieve. Our whole treasured philosophy of self-sufficiency had to be cast aside. This had not been done with sheer will power, it came instead as a result of developing the willingness to accept these new facts of living.

We neither ran nor fought. But accept it we did. And then we began to be free.

Grapevine, March 1962

Be a Bulletin Booster

IF YOU WANT TO HELP

Be ready when the call comes

I was convinced from the beginning that A.A. would work for decent folks. But for the likes of me? I was really not sure. At the end of my first year, I knew that it really would work for me and for people like me. I was overjoyed.

I sought out a man I used to work for and drink with. He was in an Air Force hospital. I loved this guy like a brother and wanted to share this wonderful thing with him. He really jumped at it, and for months we were together. We attended meetings all over the Gulf Coast from New Orleans to Mobile. One time during this period, my depression was so bad I almost drank, and he helped me. We really worked the program together.

Then one day he took a drink and disappeared. It almost threw me. I was frantic for a few days, and finally, out of desperation, I went to my sponsor. What could I do for my friend Cliff? How could I locate him? How could I help him? Where was he and why didn't he call?

My sponsor, Woody, sat me down and asked me if I really wanted to help this man. Naturally, my reply was "Yes." Then Woody gave me one of the best bits of advice I have ever received. He said, "If you ever want to do something for Cliff or anyone else who may call you, then stay sober and be sober when they call you."

Fourteen years went by, and Cliff did not call.

Last week at midnight, my phone rang - a long distance call, from five states away. The caller said. "I thought I better call you and let you know I watched you get sober in A.A.. so I knew, when I started having trouble, I better call A.A."

No, Cliff still has not called. But I'm glad I talked to Woody. I'm glad and grateful that I stayed sober waiting for calls. The man who called last week is my youngest brother, and I'm glad I was sober when he called.

L.R.,Irvine, Ky.

A.A. Grapevine, October , 1973

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

If you think a seat belt is uncomfortable, you've never tried a stretcher.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

"God, I offer myself to thee, to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of life. May I do Thy will always."

"My Creator, I am now willing that you should have all of me, good and bad. I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows. Grant me strength, as I go out from here to do your bidding. Amen"

The above is a copy of our Third and Seventh Step Prayer. These little cards are available here at the office and are quite good to carry. Both prayers are on one card, front and back.

KEEP YOUR PROGRAM ALIVE

As a member of A.A. I cannot allow myself to become complacent about the program, nor do I feel I can take the chance that I might become bored. Knowing myself, it is an absolute must that I continue to enjoy sobriety and all that is required to stay that way. By keeping my program new and alive, I do not have time to become resentful that I am an alcoholic.

One of the ways I accomplish this is to each day find a first. Of course, we all go through our various holidays and other important events sober for the first time, but by looking, firsts never run out. I once attended a meeting in an area where I once boozed, and realized I had never left the area sober before. I can go to a restaurant and for the first time not order a drink - where once I left there blotto. It is not difficult to drive along the streets that were once familiar and realize you are seeing them for the first time. Flashing lights go on behind you and you know your first sober traffic offense can't be too serious - **you're sober**. Even with illness, you can experience your first cold or bout with the flu (and now they are probably not excuses to stay home - as in hangover?) and you may even find you feel it in a different way than you imagined it should be.

Each first makes a brighter day and a happier program. I do not want to test my sobriety by resenting alcoholism. **Each day a new beginning! Each first a revival.**

Ruby S.
Acceptance Group

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ POWERLESS

After many years of denial, I finally admitted I was powerless over alcohol and then sought help with the disease of alcoholism by entering the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. I was admitting I had a problem, however, it was many 24 hours later that I could accept and believe my powerlessness from heart. Like so many others it was hard to accept that my strong-willed, self-disciplined control was beaten by a bottle of alcohol.

The latest idea that I worked through was that I am not only powerless over alcohol but over people, places, and things in my life, especially in my family. When I try to control my husband and his job I meet a lot of resistance, which leads to resentments. In the same way, when I try to impose my will on our 26 year old daughter, who chooses to live with a guy who can't hold a job and provide the necessities of living, our relationship suffers and I get the "poor me's". The self pity takes over and I am on the downward spiral. Then my life becomes **UN-MANAGEABLE** all over again. I am back to playing God, self-will run riot, and I harbor resentments because they won't listen to **ME!** Very quickly I fall into old behavior patterns like denial, rationalizations and superior attitude. My life once again becomes a blooming mess until I admit to being powerless and turning it over to my Higher Power. That's when I see just how quickly I could be in the grips of "old man booze" - the choice is up to me. The A.A. program truly works for those who work at it - Thank God for the beautiful new way to live **Let GO - Let God.**

Jackie W.
North Royalton/Hinckley Group

WHAT MAKES AN A.A. LEADER

"Somewhere in our literature there is a statement to this effect: 'Our leaders do not drive by mandate, they lead by example. In effect we are saying to them, act for us, but don't boss us.' Therefore, a leader in A.A. service is a man or woman who can personally put principles, plans and policies into such dedicated and effective action that the rest want to back him up and help him do his job. When a leader power drives us badly, we rebel; but when he too meekly becomes an order taker and he exercises no judgment of his own free will, he really isn't a leader at all.

Good leadership originates plans, policies and ideas for the improvement of our Fellowship and its service. But in new and important matters, it will nevertheless consult widely before taking decisions and actions. Good leadership will also remember that a fine plan or idea can come from anybody, anywhere. Consequently, good leadership will often discard its own cherished plans for others that are better and it will give credit to the source".

Bill W.

Grapevine, 1959

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★ ★ ★ ★ ★

TROUBLEMAKERS CAN BE TEACHERS

Few of us are any longer afraid of what any newcomer can do to our A.A. reputation or effectiveness.

Those who slip, those who panhandle, those who scandalize, those who rebel at the Program, those who trade on the A.A. reputation-all such persons seldom harm an A.A. group for long.

Some of these have become our most respected and best loved. Some have remained to try our patience, sober nevertheless. Others have drifted away.

We have begun to regard the troublesome ones not as menaces, but rather as our teachers. They oblige us to cultivate patience, tolerance and humility.

We finally see that they are only people sicker than the rest of us, that we who condemn them are the Pharisees whose false righteousness does our group the deeper spiritual damage.

AS BILL SEES IT
A.A. World Services, Inc.



A LETTER ANYONE OF US COULD HAVE WRITTEN

1/11/87

ATTENTION: MR. AL COHOL

Dear Al,

I want you to know I once considered you a good friend of mine. People warned me about you. I was always the type that said, "Until someone does something to me, I can't dislike them".

Well, I came to realize you are a real two faced, cunning back stabbing, lying, sneaky, trouble making, rotten, expensive, cheating son of a low down brother of the devil himself and that's a compliment!!

How many times I walked into your dwelling place and there you sat waiting for me to spend money on you, saying "Here comes my buddy, Bill - watch me fix him." "Bill looks pretty depressed today, By the time he staggers out of here, I'll have him laughing and making him feel so good he won't have a trouble in the world."

While all the time you have a knife stuck in my back stabbing and killing every organ in my body. You've killed millions of people down through the centuries including my father. You made a division in my house as a young child as well as my mother, brother and sister and now you are doing the same thing to my family. You kill everything around you. Even bacteria that tries to sneak into people's bodies and kill them, just like you.

You know Al, I've never even seen you physically I can just see the effects of what you do. I've seen you manifest yourself at bars and restaurants when they light you up, you set up a beautiful blue flame. They do not show how potent you are.

You are like a beautiful harlot, infested with all kinds of non-curable diseases.

I hate you and everything you represent. If I never see or hear from you again, it will be too soon.

Your old pal, Bill

P.S. I do respect one thing about you, that's what you are able to do to me!

TRUBLEMAKERS CAN BE TEACHERS

Few of us are any longer afraid of what any newcomer can do to our A.A. reputation or effectiveness.

Those who slip, those who panhandle, those who scandalize, those who rebel at the Program, those who trade on the A.A. reputation-all such persons seldom harm an A.A. group for long.

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AS BILL SEES IT
A.A. World Services, Inc.
Reprinted w/permission.

HUMBLE AND ASSERTIVE

A.A. says we must try to be HUMBLE if we are to stay sober. And A.A. says we are to become assertive with ACTION according to the 12 STEPS. Are these two statements compatible?

HOW CAN WE BE BOTH? ?

We can become ASSERTIVE by becoming an A.A. meeting secretary. We can become HUMBLE by stepping down at the end of the year and letting a new A.A. get the experience.

As an assertive action, we can volunteer to be an A.A. chairperson. That doesn't mean taking the show on the road to every A.A. group in the area.

We can care and share with the suffering alcoholics without advertising our efforts.

We can set up and clean up after A.A. meetings without telling everybody.

We can kneel down in the privacy of our homes to thank God for our sobriety without promoting our spirituality to the world.



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

Harry D., Founder and Editor 1892-1968

Vol. 45 May 1987 No. 8

District Office (216) 241 • 7387

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, May 5, 1987 - 8:00 p.m.

OLD STONE CHURCH • PUBLIC SQUARE
CLEVELAND, OHIO

All Croup Representatives Welcome
Be Informed

GROUP ANNIVERSARIES

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

SORRY!!!

NO GROUPS HAVE REPORTED ANY
MAY ANNIVERSARIES
WE KNOW THERE MUST BE SOME SO LISTEN
CAREFULLY AT YOUR MEETINGS FOR ANY
ANNOUNCEMENTS.

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES MEETING

Cleveland Central Committee

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

St Malachi Center-W. 25th & Detroit Area
near St Malachi Church

1987 INTERGROUP DINNER

Saturday, May 2, 1987

Swingo's at the Statler

E. 12th & Euclid Ave.

THE THIRTY • SIXTH YEAR FOR THIS EVENT.

GSR THIRD LEGACY MEETING

Sunday, May 17, 1987 • 2:00 p.m.

St Joseph's Church • Mantua, Ohio

IN MEMORIAM

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

GRACE NUNN, Long time member of A.A., was a member of Strongsville Group but most recently a member of N.A.S.A.

TED OLESKI, Three years of beautiful sobriety, member of the Laurel Group.

THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE

DISTRICT OFFICE CORNER

WHAT CAN WE SAY ??? Once again, our members took the 1987 Fund Drive Campaign to **VICTORY!** Grateful members, you never let us down. . .our goal to keep the office doors open for the year 1987 was **\$115,000.00** and on April 13th at our dinner the reporting groups showed that we had in excess of **\$120,000.00**. Once all of the pledges are recorded, we will be able to come back to you and let you know just exactly what the reading is - please don't get impatient, it's quite a task to get this all entered! Not all of the areas had a reporting figure on the night of the dinner which means we will still be receiving returns. You know, there is not enough that can be said for those members who take on the responsibility of being Captain of an area and then all of the group members who served as collectors. . .**WE** know it isn't always the easiest thing to go anywhere and 'give a pitch' for money; **BUT**, we also know that we have the proof of many miracles that make us reach in our pockets and give what we can. We know that a lot of areas have a few meetings that meet on the same night, but somehow they get them covered, we know that they might not feel like going out some of these nights. . .but they do. We have heard from many that it is a new chance to meet some people who are all in here for the same thing and some even look forward to this time - if nothing else, to go out and renew friendships that have been made from previous years' visits to groups outside of their particular area of meetings.

As most of us know-the month of March came in like a rather meek little lamb but most definitely went out the Roaring Lion. Even our friends who have moved down south to get away from our cold winters felt the brunt of the winter storms this year. Now, sort of back to regular season, we are experiencing the traditional April Showers. Pretty soon, summer will be in full bloom and summer recreation will begin. **SCHOOL WILL EVEN BE OUT!** I know a lot of us will appreciate this last statement. . .sometimes the student's vacation can be the parents busiest time.

A reminder to those who have received the Central Bulletin subscription as a raffle prize at a meeting - your expiration date is shown on your label, under your Zip code. . .if you like the Bulletin, please try to renew and not wait until another time when you might win one at a meeting. . .or perhaps you have moved and have not notified us of your change of address. Using our permit we get no return mail - so we have no way of knowing until we send out your expiration notice which goes first class mail. We have been asking for articles and some do not respond and others respond sometime at a rate of three or four a month, even oftener. **If** you have written a number of articles and they have not been printed yet. . .they will be but we do not like to put more than one article per person in any issue. . .**WE** believe you would all agree that this is only right. We appreciate all that we get - we do want to see articles that can reach most of our readers in one way or another - a variety of views and thoughts make for anything but a dull paper. Just as an A.A. meeting, we ask that you do not compare but, rather, try to identify

ALWAYS • CAREFUL • TO • INVESTIGATE • OTHERS • NEEDS

March 20, 1987

and much worthwhile sobriety can be passed around in this manner. We like to hear from the long-timers and we like to hear from the short-timers in the program and just what difference A.A. has made in their lives. We have all gained our individual awards - sometimes it is the ability to think, other times, the ability to reason and the list could go on and on. We would like you all to be a part of this. As stated in the last issue, we never know what effect the arrival of the Bulletin might have on some member who might be facing a day of struggle (and we all have them) and, of course then, we do want something that we think can fill the void.

Fellow members it's now that time for the period to be placed. We leave you with this: "Knowledge is an accumulation of facts; true education is learning which ones are worth accumulating". **THINK ABOUT IT! ! !**

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

KEEP THEIR WORDS ALIVE

The only sure thing in life is death. It's inevitable. So a time comes when the old timers must leave us. They were so wise and taught us so much. They will be missed. Many of us fear A.A. will not be the same. We forget our Traditions and that each one of us has an obligation to pass along what was taught to us, as the old timers passed along what they learned. How many times have we heard a speaker say, "Nothing I say is original. I'm only passing on what I have learned in these rooms."

Yet there are those who feel they have nothing new to add, so they say nothing - forgetting the new person in the room who wasn't around to hear the wisdom of the long-timers who are now gone. What a disservice to those much-loved departed ones. If we heard only one thing that helped us, it's our duty to repeat it over and over so the message is carried on. We can keep our beloved teachers alive by not letting their knowledge die, by keeping their words alive.

D.M., Hinkley, Oh.

Be a Bulletin Booster

The enclosed check is a donation to Central Office of Alcoholics Anonymous from the people who attended the 4th "Mini - Punderson" Conference. Please use the money to help carry the message.

Four years ago a group of us (25 AA's) got together to have a "Mini - Punderson" Conference cause it was too long between the regular conferences and I **needed** it. We rented some cabins and spent the weekend sharing, laughing, crying, and growing in love of ourselves and each other. We learned to share.

A very quiet man named George D. (he was less than a year sober) joined us late Friday night; closed in, angry and unhappy. Over the weekend, we had the privilege of watching him get in touch with his Higher Power and by Sunday morning his whole attitude had changed. He was smiling and relaxed.

George died that Sunday night. He had a heart attack. He was 42 years old.

We were shocked but not sad as we all knew George had gotten close to his Higher Power over the weekend. He serves as an example to all of us to live one day at a time to the fullest! We miss him but if you have to go - that's the way I want to go; in my Higher Powers' arms and surrounded with the love of my A.A. friends.

Because of what we saw happen to George and our own personal experiences, we continue to have this conference. Next year will be our fifth. It was and continues to be a turning point in my sobriety.

Marcia S.
Eastlake, Ohio

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

THIRD TEAM HERO

When Lou Little was coaching football at Georgetown University, he had a player who was definitely third rate but had so much spirit he was an inspiration to the team. He rarely saw action except in the last few minutes of a game that was already decided.

One day news came that the boy's father, who had faithfully attended every home game, had died. The youngster came to Little and said "Coach, I want to ask something of you that means an awfully lot to me. I want to start the game against Fordham. I think that's what my father would have liked most."

Coach Little hesitated a moment. He knew the boy and his father had been especially close, and couldn't ignore the earnest expression on the boy's face. Finally he said, "Okay, son, you'll start, but you'll only be in there for a play or two. You aren't quite good enough and you know it."

The boy started the game and played so well Little never took him out. His play inspired the team to victory.

Back in the locker room Coach Little embraced the young man and said: "Son, you were terrific. You never played that way before. What got into you?"

The boy answered, "Remember how my father and I used to walk around arm-in-arm? There was something about him that very few people knew: he was totally blind. This afternoon was the first time he ever saw me play.

THANK YOU

One morning recently I opened my eyes still thinking of the events of the last 48 hours. Through working the steps of this program, I had found the strength and courage of my God to face a tragedy from my past. Thank God I had not "shut the door"! I would have eventually picked up a drink.

On the surface this day looked normal, and my living problems were still with me. Nothing appeared changed. I was again unemployed and nearly broke. The rent was soon due. I still didn't have a car or a good pair of shoes. Things seemed about the same as they had been when I crawled into this program a beaten woman. But I knew in my heart I wasn't **that** beaten woman any more, so I began my day in the usual way with daily readings and sincere prayer. I **laid** my problems in my "Fathers" lap, then began my day. Fifteen hours later, as I knelt to thank God for my day, I felt so alive and "high" that I needed to put it in words. The enclosed is what came, and I would like to share it, though words could never accurately describe my feelings at that moment.

Thank you, Central Office, for being there 16 months ago. Thank you, Perpetual Help, for remaining 1 block from my house till I got there. Thank you, Fellow A.A.'s, for sharing and caring. But most of all, **Thank you God for loving me.**

Rita D.

Perpetual Help Group

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Is it **gossip** or is it **news**?

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

KNOWLEDGE

I think **KNOWLEDGE** has great value. I get to **UNDERSTAND** me.

When I understand me, I learn how to handle me.

Where do I get a lot of knowledge about me? I am an alcoholic. I go to a lot of A.A. meetings where I listen to A.A. stories. I relate and identify to the past lives of other alcoholics, their feelings and experiences.

I also gain **KNOWLEDGE** by reading A.A. approved literature; the Big Book and the Twelve and Twelve. The Big Book tells us about alcoholism with its explanation and many stories. The Twelve and Twelve Book is our policy book. We must have **UNITY** of effort and approach such as "We suggest. ." rather than we teach or preach. The Twelve and Twelve Book tells us who is an A.A. member, how to form an A.A. group, how to elect A.A. group officers through group conscience, etc.

I was not aware when I was a drunk. I knew I had a problem but I did not understand. I did not understand simple things like: it was the first drink that got you drunk, not the last drink.

This is my knowledge and knowing this and other A.A. things, I think I can handle me.

Ralph W.

Friendship A.A. Group

OPTIMISTS' CREED

PROMISE YOURSELF

To be strong that nothing can disturb your peace of mind.

To talk **health, happiness** and prosperity to every person you meet.

To make all your friends feel that there is something in them.

To look at the sunnyside of everything and make your optimism come true.

To think only of the best, to work only for the best and expect only the best.

To be just as enthusiastic about the success of others as you are about your own.

To forget the mistakes of the past and press on to the greater achievements of the future.

To wear a cheerful countenance at all times and give every living creature you meet a smile.

To give so much time to the improvement of yourself that you have no time to criticize others.

To be too large for worry, too noble for anger, too strong for fear, and too happy to permit the presence of trouble.

Anonymous

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

FREEDOM THROUGH ACCEPTANCE

We admitted we couldn't lick alcohol with our remaining resources, and so we accepted the further fact that dependence upon a Higher Power (if only our A.A. group) could do this hitherto impossible job. The moment we were able to accept these facts fully, our release from the alcohol compulsion had begun.

For most of us, this pair of acceptances had required a lot of exertion to achieve. Our whole treasured philosophy of self-sufficiency had to be cast aside. This had not been done with sheer will power; it came instead as a result of developing the willingness to accept these new facts of living.

We neither ran nor fought. But accept it we did. And then we began to be free.

Grapevine, March 1962





Published by
Cleveland Central Committee of A.A.

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

THE TATE FAMILY

Do you know many members of the TATE family belong to A.A.?

There is old man DICTATE, who wants to run everything, while uncle RO TATE loves change, he's been around the program a good while. Then there is AGI TATE who stirs up plenty of trouble, with the help of her husband, IRRITATE.

Of course, if a new project is suggested, good ole MESITATE and his wife, VEGITATE, want to wait until next year. Usually, IMITATE has a hard time going to different groups, "because they don't do things like my group" sez she. The heart breaking member of the family is AMPUTATE. He has cut himself off from A.A.

FACILITATE is quite helpful in getting things done. And cousins COGITATE AND MEDITATE also give things a lot of thought and lend a steady hand. Probably the most delightfully happy member of the family is niece FELICITATE.

Well, that's some of the TATE family. Maybe you know some more of them, or maybe a family like the TATES. If you do, drop a line to the editor, who is your trusted servant and not, as someone suggests, Ms POTENTATE!

Our thanks to NO BOOZE NEWS
Mesa, Arizona and Sandusky.

★★★★★

I CAN LIVE TODAY - I'VE FOUND A.A.

I awoke today and was not sick,
Gave God this day and asked His guidance.
I called a friend and shared some cheer;
We didn't even need a beer
I can live today - I've found A.A.

Another friend and I spent time,
Heard a meeting and shared conversation.
The wind caressed with a gentle tug;
Birds sang out and I shared a hug.
I can live today - I've found A.A.

I am not afraid to feel today,
The hate is gone, and my world's all right.
There are Steps and meetings and the power of prayer,
God and friends and love to share
I can live today - I've found A.A.

R.D.
Perpetual Help Group

GUILT: Is It Necessary

After having talked to A.A. members who have specified that guilt is one of their problems, I decided guilt is something I will not permit myself to be burdened with; it is to be remembered that the weight of the guilt we carry is only what we have permitted ourselves to be loaded with.

For the many, many bad things I did while I was still drinking, I blame the person who is still inside me, making me remember every last detail of what was done but also making me realize I am no longer the person who did the damages. That person was under the spell and complete control of an evil called alcohol. The me of today has worked hard to push that person as far into the past as I possibly can, without losing sight of the prior existence. It may not be obvious to others but I know I am not the person I used to be and therefore am entitled to a new life without bearing the guilt for things done by the other person. A.A. has taught me that inner-self will remain dormant unless given to drink. That is my responsibility and if I should fail, then I will have reason to carry deep guilt.

A.A. has taught me that making amends when possible will take away from past reasons for guilt. The biggest and hardest-to-learn subject was that for daily things I might do I am capable of saying "I'm sorry"! It took A.A. to put those words into my vocabulary.

My past is remembered constructively-today is not cluttered with guilt.

Ruby S.
Acceptance Group

★★★★★

HAVE A M&M DAY

It wasn't long ago on a hot day like this, a cold beer was the cure all. Little did I know what a fire it was fanning inside of me. It took all of me - my respect, my money, the love of my wife and children. I have since found a new and happy life in A.A. It is amazing how iced tea, water, or pop will cure a thirst and have no bad after effects. Now when times are bad or even when they are good, a meeting and a milkshake are something I look forward to. As a child I can remember the good feeling inside an ice cream cone would give. God, A.A., and my friends in A.A. have given me back that feeling. So when it is hot as summer can be, try a meeting and a milkshake.

IT WORKS FOR ME! ! !

God Bless
Dan



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Harry D., Founder and Editor 1892-1968

Vol. 45

June 1987

No. 9

District Office (216) 241 - 7387

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, June 2, 1987 - 8:00 pm.

OLD STONE CHURCH - PUBLIC SQUARE
CLEVELAND, OHIO

All Group Representatives Welcome
Be Informed

GROUP ANNIVERSARIES

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

TOBIN GROUP

Tuesday, June 16, 1987 - 8:30 p.m.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

FRIDAY AFTER MIDNIGHT (CLOSED MEN)

Friday, June 19, 1987 - 12:30 a.m.
All men welcome

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES MEETING

Cleveland Central Committee

Third Tuesday of each month - 8:00 p.m.
St Malachi Center-W. 25th & Detroit Area
near St Malachi Church

IN MEMORIAM

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

EDDIE CIOLEK, SR., Long time member of A.A., member of Wednesday Night Men's Discussion Group

ART ECGERS, Very active member of A.A. for a number of years.

RENO PLEITVINO, Long time member of A.A., member of Superior Group and well known in all meetings in the area.

BOB WALTERS, 43 year member of A.A. - one of the original founders of the Lakewood Crossroads Group and, most recently, was attending N.A.S.A.

JOHN MICLEA, Long time member of A.A. - active in the start of DWI classes with Cleveland State and later volunteered his time with the Samaritan Ministry.

PHYLLIS TIEDT, Member of Westlake Disc. Group. Very active A.A. member.

JACK F. ENSLEY, Long time member of AA. Member of West Shore Group.

THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE

ALWAYS . CAREFUL . TO . INVESTIGATE . OTHERS . NEEDS

DISTRICT OFFICE CORNER

Why is it when we were young, time passed so slowly and when we get a little (or a lot) older, time just seems to be running away from us? It seems that this Corner was just written about two weeks ago and now it's time to drop in and have our monthly chat again. Could it be that I'm out of things to talk about? Many of my friends would instantly say, "impossible"! Being the alcoholic that I am, I'll think of something.

First of all, we feel it is only proper to thank all the members who have taken time to send in articles for your Bulletin...we appreciate it so much. Have you noticed that, lately, most of our articles have not been "borrowed" from another newsletter? This is not nagging - but, please try not to make this a one time deal.

The purpose of this column is to let you know what your District Office is up to - and our answer today is the same as one month ago...we are very busy - the Fund Drive contributions are still being posted and acknowledged - as we told you before, this is ONE BIG JOB and it takes time and we will not have the final actual figures until all of this is posted. We are looking towards ways of getting this done in less time and, if all goes well, by the time the payments come in from the first reminders we sent - it might be possible. You must remember too, that this task is always being interrupted with phone calls...so those of you who have not received your acknowledgements, please be patient - they will get in the mail as soon as possible.

Speaking of calls, you know we get all kinds - not just the call for help from the suffering alcoholic but many times, calls from the family of such a troubled one and it is necessary to take time to explain to them exactly what it is we can do and what we cannot do. Other phone calls are literature orders, new groups being registered, secretary changes in groups so that we can get that 12 Step Call out to the correct secretary of the group...We believe that the groups are becoming more responsible in getting their changes to us and that's as it should be...it helps make our job easier. Of course, much time is taken up on the phone with members who seem to think that we are the answer to many of their questions concerning group matters, differences, whatever. We cannot change others' character defects...we have enough to do to try to correct our own! We must always remember that we do not have all the answers and we want to ask at this time, who does? We are not counsellors, we are alcoholics who can identify with what others like us are going through -we are Trusted Servants only. If we have had the opportunity to know what another group or person did in a similar situation, we can share that and it might help the caller with their problem. Group conscience is stressed at all levels - we cannot make people do as we wish but we would hope that anyone who is a member of A.A. and making themselves available to a treatment center, either in the making, or already established - the importance of not allying that center entity or whatever with A.A. - only that we will work with them in the terms of cooperation. Remember our Traditions that have kept us alive and well and have guided us in all of our dealings with 'outside organizations! Also, in dealing with the above, we would hope that no one A.A. member ever set themselves up as

the LEADER and having the FINAL WORD but, rather, try to seek out the help of others who might help them who have had some experience in doing that kind of work...then you can be assured that the proper tools have been offered.

Fellow members, we have now reached the point where one would say, "I'd rather see a sermon..." and now it's time to say **THINK ABOUT IT ! !**

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**THE NEW PERSON
WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY**

Alcoholics are lonely people. They are denounced, ridiculed, damned, coddled and cajoled by their friends and families. They are tolerated, shunned and ignored by the public. They are questioned, observed and examined by psychiatrists. Their loved ones plead with them, lie about them and threaten them. They are preached to, and prayed over by the clergy. Yet ail this tumult has no effect on the alcoholic's drinking. His only source of solace and ease is in the bottle. There he finds companionship and release from his loneliness, there he finds courage to retaliate against those infringing on what he thinks are his rights. In the bottle he finds, at least temporary release from his worries and fears.

For this temporary release the bottle demands a heavy toll. It demands his time, his money, his self-respect, his job, his home, his friends and his family and when the alcoholic cannot meet the demands, the bottle leaves him to the mercy of his craving, his poverty and his self pity.

Defeated and stripped of all his material possessions and his spiritual possessions, the alcoholic comes to his first A.A. meeting. There he stands at the crossroads of his life, alone with his loneliness, alone with his nakedness, alone with his remorse, his debts, his discouragements, burdened by his worries and suspicions; a stranger in a strange land, searching for companionship, for something to ally his loneliness, his suspicions, worries and fears.

East Texas Central Office Newsletter

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Be a Bulletin Booster

**TO: A.A. MEMBERS AND SPONSORS
WHO PLAY DOCTOR**

I have been a member of A.A. for more than eight years, and around A.A. more than seventeen years,

I know many people in the program on medication and some of them will be on medication the rest of their life. Others need medication from time to time. For some members of A.A. medication is a life or death matter. I also was put on medication for a short time because of problems in my life.

I work as an afternoon counsellor. Many of my afternoon clients come to aftercare complaining about the verbal abuse from other A.A. members. I hear members telling others they don't need any kind of medication and they are not sober if they are on medication.

I know people who have stopped taking their medication and have ended up in the hospital.

I think members should stop trying to play doctor and let the doctors treat people for medical problems.

When sponsors and other A.A. members are working with someone, they should find out what medical problems a person does have and medication someone is taking before telling them not to take it. If the sponsor does not think a person should be on medication or need it then, they should talk to a doctor not another A.A. member playing doctor. Other A.A. members should keep their mouths shut.

For over seventeen years I have been hearing at A.A. MEETINGS SOME A.A. members saying, "I love you and I will do anything to help you stay sober!" I do not believe this is true with most A.A. members.

Sponsors will take on sponsorship but in name only. "I will be your sponsor, but don't call me between 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. because I need my sleep and I don't want you to wake my family. You are to call me, I will not call you. You do as I say, not as I do. It is OK for me to screw around with women or men in the program (even though I am married but you can't; if you do you will get drunk."

I believe A.A. members need to walk the way they talk, especially sponsors, then I can believe their talk.

Anonymous,
Cleveland, Ohio

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

DOUBTING THOMAS

Many years before I came into A.A., I got discouraged at my lack of spirituality. After the war, I sought out a religious college - seeking answers, seeking my God.

I studied theology for four years but I was still a **Doubting Thomas**. I was still questioning. I sought counseling. A Priest told me that FAITH was a gift from God. That some had more than others. He told me faith is a talent like any other. Some are naturally gifted but others must work at it. The Magic of Believing: If you really believe, it is true. It is real. He said work at it: Pray.

A.A. SAYS: Turn your will over to the care of God. I don't question anymore. I accept.

Ralph W.
Friendship A.A. Group

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GOD HAS TOUCHED ME

The winds whirled inside my soul
 My spirit was thrashed about
 like heaving waves upon a stormy sea
 Heaving, sighing, moaning
 My mind races
 My hands tremble
 then
 Like Magic —
 in an instant - the roaring sound
 of deafening silence
 Silence - overpowering
 I feel my heart pounding in my chest
 the thunderous beats in my mind
 A wave of warmth
 A ray of light - crystal clear
 like a lazer beam thru the mists of hell
 My spirit rises
 Stronger & stronger - brighter - clearer
 it soars
 My heart slows
 My hands are still
 My mind is calm - like the sea
 my will has left
 God has touched me

Barb C.
 Sheffield Wednesday

**52nd ANNUAL
 A.A. FOUNDERS DAY WEEKEND**
 June 12, 13, & 14, 1987 at Akron University.
 District Office has copies of registration forms.

FREEDOM OF CHOICE

I HAVE COME to believe that I have been selling myself a false bill of goods in believing that I am a victim of life, of circumstances, and of people.

I was a victim of active alcoholism, not through my own choosing, and I was released from the obsession and the compulsion to drink by a Power greater than myself. In that release, I was given the beautiful gift of choice.

Today, free in sobriety, I can say yes and I can say no. I can walk away from people, places, and things, or walk around them with a smile, or stay and be happy because I like where I am

I have a freedom of choice that I never knew existed. When I was drinking, I thought of myself as the uninhibited rebel. I now see, with the clarity of sobriety, that I was a body locked in the prison of self, again not through my own choosing, but sentenced by the nature of my disease, alcoholism.

Today, I am released and free in sobriety to know and believe that through the living of the Twelve Steps, I am no longer sentenced to a life of woe - me - ism and gloom and doom.

And for that, I thank God, I thank A.A. and I thank me.
 B.W. Queens, N.Y.

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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.

ACTIVE IN A.A.

Have you ever had this experience? You get on to a newcomer. He's what we probably too glibly call a high-bottom type-still has a car, a job, good clothes, a fair share of his former social connections.

You take him to an A.A. meeting. In our town that means to a dreary room in the back of the church basement, where a cheerful but pretty heterogenous group of about twenty meet twice a week, as it were "sub rosa": in a bustling town of about 25,000.

You see the whole thing briefly with his unconvinced eyes. What...? Can this amount to anything? Can this be the thing my life needs? Can this fix those dreadful troubles I'm in?

Then you see it again with your own eyes. It's no mere church basement. It's the doorway to a radiant life.

But there's no use trying to tell him that now. Better concentrate on the standard pitch. Want to get sober? This is it. Sobriety comes first. Everything else depends on it.

And thank God your newcomer, if he's got so far as to enter his first A.A. meeting, usually understands that, and you're both soon back in action, meeting people, getting coffee.

But from such experiences as starting points, it's hard not to wonder occasionally how we might express our full sense of what A.A. is; how we should express our gratitude.

A lot of well-mouthed words do not seem to be adequate. The answer seems to be action. A continuing devotion to A.A. activity. If we work at giving it away, we can keep this wonderful thing.

The truth, hope and love that come to us in church basements and in rooms over barbershops, that have lifted our lives from messiness to something that occasionally tingles on the edge of bliss, are pretty sure to remain ours so long as WE don't forget to be active members of the gang who stand ready to welcome the next fellow.

Grapevine, Nov. 1966 via Reporter

ARE YOU PLANNING TO MOVE?

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IT WILL HELP YOU AND IT WILL HELP US..



TIPS FOR TOUGH TIMES

Both research and experience show that when people with anger problems change their self talk, their anger de-escalates and they regain control. When you feel yourself starting to get angry take a **TIME OUT** and read these statements to yourself. Transfer them to 3x5 notecards and read them several times a day, as well as during Time Outs.

- I don't need to prove myself in this situation. I can stay calm.
- As long as I keep my cool, I'm in control of myself.
- No need to doubt myself, what other people say doesn't matter. I'm the only person who can make me mad or keep me calm.
- Time to relax and slow things down. Take a time out if you get tight.
- My anger is a signal. Time to talk to myself and to relax.
- I don't need to feel threatened here. I can relax and stay cool.
- Nothing says I have to be competent and strong all the time. It's OK to feel unsure or confused.
- It's impossible to control other people and situations. The only thing I can control is myself and how I express my feelings.
- It's OK to be uncertain or insecure sometimes. I don't need to be in control of everything and everybody.
- If people criticize me, I can survive that. Nothing says I have to be perfect.
- If this person wants to go off the wall, that's their thing. I don't need to respond to their anger or feel threatened.
- When I get into an argument, I can stay to my plan and know what to do. I can take a Time Out.
- Most things we argue about are stupid and insignificant. I can recognize that my anger is just my having old primary feelings being restimulated. It's OK to walk away from this fight.
- It's nice to have other people's love and approval, but even without it, I can still accept and like MYSELF.
- People put erasers on the ends of pencils for a reason. It's OK to make mistakes.
- People are going to act the way they want to, not the way I want.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

DID YOU KNOW?

The first Correctional Facilities Committee was formed in 1977 when the Institutions Committee of the General Service Conference was dissolved and two committees were formed—Correctional Facilities and Treatment Facilities. Local correctional facilities committees have been established throughout the years, most of them working in collaboration with local intergroups or central offices, within the organizational structure of local institutions committees.

AM I A GOOD A.A. WHEN

- I talk so long at meetings that the others do not get a chance?
- I interrupt when others are trying to talk?
- I break Traditions and will not help a person who has a double problem?
- I frighten an already frightened person with all of the dangers in the world?
- I treat anyone as though I was the only one with a brain?
- I criticize people who have already been criticized all their lives?
- I throw an A.A. saying at someone instead of being an understanding friend?
- I forget that the person I dislike may have come a lot further up than I?
- I refuse sympathy or understanding to someone who wants and needs it so much?
- I criticize people holding offices that I couldn't handle nearly as well?
- I am envious of the ones who are doing the work that I am too lazy or scared to do?
- I talk so loud that no one else can have any peace of mind?
- I start a project and expect everyone else to feel the same way I do about it?
- I unload all my troubles on others, never giving them a chance to unload too?
- I want attention when I say something but don't listen to the other fellow?
- I look down my nose at people who have a dual problem?
- I quit counting my blessings and stop being thankful?
- I leave all the calling to the other person?
- I work so hard with someone who doesn't want A.A. that I am not ready to help someone who does?
- I think being kind ends with A.A. members only?
- I think that I am the only one who has problems because I am the only one telling them?

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

HUMILITY . . .

We (the intellectual self-sufficients) found many in A.A. who once thought as we did. They helped us to get down to our right size. By their example they showed us that humility and intellect could be compatible, provided we placed humility first. When we began to do that, we received the gift of faith, a faith which works. This is a faith for you, too.

from "Steps and Traditions."



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.

Harry D., Founder and Editor 1892-1968

Vol. 45

July 1987

No. 10

District Office (216) 241 - 7387

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, July 7, 1987 • 8:00 p.m.
 OLD STONE CHURCH • PUBLIC SQUARE
 CLEVELAND, OHIO
 All Group Representatives Welcome
 Be Informed

GROUP ANNIVERSARIES

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

MEDALLION GROUP • 3rd ANNIVERSARY
 Thursday, July 2, 1987 • 7:30 p.m.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

NORTH ROYALTON-HINCKLEY • 8th ANNIVERSARY
 Thursday, July 9, 1987
 Special Time: Buffet 7:30 p.m.
 Lead 8:00 p.m.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

EARLY FRIDAY • 10th ANNIVERSARY
 Friday, July 24, 1987 • 10:30 a.m.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

SERENITY BIG BOOK • 7th ANNIVERSARY
 Monday, July 27, 1987 • 11:00 a.m.

OHIO STATE CONFERENCE

Mariott Inn, Cincinnati, Ohio
 July 10, 11, 12, 1987
 For more information call your District Office

IN MEMORIAM

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

BARBARA LEISTER, 7 year member of A.A., member of Bedford Wed. a.m. Group.

GRACE SOSKA, A.A. member passed away in Florida. Former member of Ridgewood Women's Group.

ED HIRCAK, 4 year member of A.A., Secretary of Deaconess Sunday Group

THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE

The only thing man can create is trouble. But man calls trouble progress.

DISTRICT OFFICE CORNER

Hello again! We have been talking to you every month about the enormous job we have here in the Office during and after the Fund Drive Campaign and we told you that when we got everything posted - we would let you know the good news. We are happy to report that all posting is done, the figures are in and we want to thank each and every one of you who contributed this year to keep "the office doors open" - these thanks also go out to the very dedicated members who worked on our Drive... those that gave of their time and did some chasing around and getting all their groups contacted. We call this just additional "12 Step Work" and those who worked certainly came through. Not to keep you in suspense any longer - you know we reported that during our drive this year we were asking for the sum of \$115,000.00 to keep our doors open even though our expenses are much higher for the year-WELL.. we came up with the total amount pledged of \$147,743.65! Isn't that super? Please understand that this does not mean that we have collected this amount. This represents the amount pledged. \$82,671.44 of this was paid - meaning we have a balance due of \$65,072.21 which will be paid over the year. We send reminders out in June, September and December for those who might need to be reminded.

This issue is being sent out to all the group secretaries along with some subscriptions blanks to try to generate a little more interest in the Bulletin. We are pleased that we have as many subscribers as we do although we do not have enough coming in when it's time to renew the subscriptions to keep up with our expenses. We hope that this will be the beginning of more groups talking about the Central Bulletin to generate new subscriptions. Some groups give a copy to their speaker and other groups raffle them off (if they have a ticket raffle). The Central Bulletin is the the first paper of its kind ever in A.A. We were a working paper before the Grapevine was published...not to put down the Grapevine, of course, because we take it here at the office and some of us receive it at our homes. There have been requests for members to contribute articles for the Bulletin and lately we have had quite a few but once in awhile, we do have to select something that we have read from another Newsletter. We try to be selective when we need to do this so that our readers can enjoy their Bulletin.

Our Central Committee meeting last month was quite exciting! There is a lot of material coming out of General Service in New York about Correctional Facilities Committees and there is a special directory of meetings held in Institutions... also there is encouragement to write to those incarcerated...BUT...the Cleveland area is quite reluctant about any such Committees and even though a Correctional Facilities Committee was formed here with the approval of the Central Committee...at last month's meeting those who were against any such Committee, feeling that it was not in the best interests of Alcoholics Anonymous, came down and asked for a motion to disband this Committee and the motion carried. Needless to say, this was the best attendance we have had at one of our Central Committee meetings for quite some time! There was standing room only.

ALWAYS . CAREFUL . TO . INVESTIGATE . OTHERS . NEEDS

This meeting is held on the first Tuesday of each month and notices are sent monthly to every group secretary announcing the Central Committee Meeting and they are pretty much ignored unless something like this comes along...isn't it amazing how we can all gather 'round at the time of controversy and then not be interested in any of the other meetings? All it takes is disapproval of one thing or another. We feel that these meetings should be important enough every month. Once the smoke clears on some issue -then we usually do not see the 'concerned' members again. True, there are times that there is no issue on the floor and the meeting can seem quite dull and a waste of time - with just hearing the Minutes and Treasurer's Report read and the reports on committees who do take time to come down and report on other things...BUT...there is always that chance that something else can come up. THINK ABOUT IT !!!

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

"HOW TO QUIT PLAYING GOD"

- 1. Offer no advice unless it is asked for.
- 2. Listen to other people's dreams and help them in the way they wish to be helped.
- 3. Encourage them to find their own strength.
- 4. Reserve judgement at all times.
- 5. Admit that you don't know all the answers.
- 6. Build confidence in the other person until his judgement becomes clear.
- 7. Dwell on the right instead of the wrong.
- 8. Have faith in the all over rightness of God's purpose in this world and the next.
- 9. Realize the core of divine being in each person, respect it.
- 10. Never discount the other person's good intentions.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

COURAGE

He who loses wealth loses much; he who loses a friend loses more; losing your courage, you lose all.

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**The phones are ringing off the hook !!
CENTRAL OFFICE**

Hello. Alcoholics Anonymous. You're a student doing a project on A.A. and you'd like to attend an open meeting? What area do you live in? I'll try to get you information on the meeting nearest you. The only thing we ask is that if you see somebody you know there, please keep it to yourself. Have a good day

Hello. Alcoholics Anonymous. Yes that group's still meeting in the same place at the same hour. The people will be glad to see you again

Marge? This is the central office. We just had a call from a women asking for help and A.A. information. Can you contact her, and maybe get her to a meeting tonight? That's great! Here's her phone number. Call us back and let us know how you made out.....

(Time out for lunch, and we forgot to put the calls on the answering service.)

Hello. Alcoholics Anonymous. What do you mean, you didn't think A.A. was open? Oh. You just called twice, and nobody answered. This is your third call in a half-hour. I'm sorry, but we were out to lunch. What can we do to help you? You want a meeting schedule mailed to you? Sure. Whats your address? Sorry about not being here. Nope, we're not perfect, and thank God for that.

NOTE: We borrowed this article from Footsteps for any of you who wonder what we do all day. The only thing that doesn't apply to us is turning our calls over to our answering service so that we can go to lunch...we are here from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. 5 days a week and calls are picked up every hour from our service, weekends and Holidays.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Is it gossip or is it news?

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

PRACTICE THESE PRINCIPLES.. . .

Tradition Three: The only **requirement** for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.

- 1. In my mind, do I prejudge some new A.A. members as losers?
- 2. Is there some kind of alcoholic whom I privately do not want in my A.A. group?
- 3. Do I set myself up as a judge of whether a newcomer is sincere or phony?
- 4. Do I let language, religion (or lack of it), race, education, age, or other such things interfere with my carrying the message?
- 5. Am I overimpressed by a celebrity? By a doctor, a clergyman, an ex convict? Or can I just treat this new member simply and naturally as one more sick human, like the rest of us?
- 6. When someone turns up at A.A. needing information or help (even if he can't ask for it aloud), does it really matter to me what he does for a living? Where he lives? What his domestic arrangements are? Whether he had been to A.A. before? What his other problems are?

Grapevine January 1970

ANONYMITY: THE SPIRITUAL FOUNDATION

I will never forget the smile that greeted me the night I descended the steps of what was to become my first home in A.A. After many failed attempts at sobriety, I had found a group of people who gave me hope. At the time, I looked at these members as the 'stars' of the program. They seemed to be well-liked and able to function around people. These were qualities that alcohol had long since robbed me of.

In the next few months I found myself going out on speaking engagements and serving as an officer of the group. Soon, I celebrated my first anniversary. Though I moved back to Brooklyn, I kept close contact. When I celebrated my first anniversary, I noticed that many others had moved on. Did the group fold because these 'stars' left?

No — in fact, it seems to be running-just fine every time I go back for a visit.

In the next few years I learned that 'star'dom is not what makes a group work. Through the steps I began to see the value of humility. In short, I'm learning to become a 'worker among workers! Today, I am happy to be the instrument of God's will. I hope that my smile will carry the message to an alcoholic who still suffers.

From the heart of an anonymous alcoholic.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Drunks and women have a unique way of looking at things. For instance, if the world was coming to an end on Wednesday, on Tuesday two places would be packed — the beauty parlors and the bars.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

— HP —

From the beginning of man, he has recognized his God, a being greater than himself. Every culture, every society in every part of the world have built churches and temples to honor their God. One could say the concept of God has evolved in man down through the centuries. It has been a part of man and to deny him is to deny oneself.

I always recognized my concept of God, the one I was taught in church schools. I was taught a forgiving and loving God. I did not look upon him as a Power Greater than myself until I came to A.A. A HIGHER POWER. I guess I was to busy *playing God*.

I am now a recovered alcoholic eight years free of alcohol. I now realize the world does not revolve around me. I am very vulnerable and exist just One Day At A Time.

Today I have several HP's — The Police, The Law, The Government are also HP's. I must conform or society will remove me from society. They will put me in jail or a mental hospital if I go back to drinking and driving like a madman on public streets.

It is said that an A.A. must lower his/her Ego if one is to stay sober. What better way to lower the Ego than to accept a HP, a GOD as you understand him?

R.W.

Friendship A.A. Group

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.

WHAT DOES THE WORD FRIEND MEAN TO YOU?

It's amazing what a room full of recovering alcoholics can come up with on a simple question of friendship in a discussion group to complicate it. Well, it's said in A.A. we're a simple program for complicated people, and it's proved over and over in any discussion group.

The topic for discussion was "What does the word 'friend' mean to you?" Of course, any alcoholic must start with how it was before and how it is now. One gentleman went off in all directions winding up with the enablers and confessing he was confusing himself.

A few passed, then a brave soul tried to straighten us out saying "It's the people that stayed by us regardless of the condition we were in, or how much hell we put them through, they just weathered the storm". The next one talked about the "friends" in the bar that you exchanged lies with till you ran out of money, but it wasn't until we reached the rooms of A.A. and everyone became a friend.

There was a claim that there are different levels of friendship in the fellowship. First is the superficial, handshaking with an exchange of slogans; second, the social, enjoying a sober outing; third, the one you can tell all knowing they'll understand. Of course, came the warnings of being careful who you tell all to. Relatives, spouse and children were included.

As I sat listening, an old girl scout slogan or song ran through my mind about new and old...one is silver and the other is gold and expanded upon that stating I couldn't remember the whole quote, but of course there were a few ex-girl scouts to fill me in with "make new friends but keep the old for one is the silver and the other is gold"!

We were all reminded about keeping it simple by the oldtimer or, I should say long-timer who simply stated:

"A friend is one that accepts you for yourself!"

D.M., Hinkley, Ohio

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 _____

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IT WILL HELP YOU AND IT WILL HELP US.



AN OPEN LETTER TO ALL A.A.'S

Hello, it's me again. No, you don't know me, nor do I know you. Sure you walked up to me and put out your hand. I remember, you said, "My name is John or Jane Doe": I shook your hand and you were on your way, almost before I could get my name out. Therefore, I suppose we met. You may remember me from yesterday, today or tomorrow. I'm an alcoholic like you. I'm the one who came in and got a cup of coffee; I'm the one who took his cup of coffee and wandered around aimlessly. I'm the one who read the bulletin board over and over again. I'm the one who sat by myself. I'm the one who did, does, and will need your help. My life is being a mess because of alcohol, I walked through these doors. I came of my own free will. No, I was not referred, ordered or asked. No, I didn't know anyone in your group or any other for that matter. I sat by myself during the meeting. Maybe we held hands during the Lord's Prayer but no words were exchanged. I've heard your 12 steps. I would like them to be mine too - but know nothing of them. I am, however, puzzled by number 12. I've heard it read at every meeting. I'm curious - is that all there is to it, repetition?

The meeting is over, I get my coffee and sit by myself. Oh, I see you, you seem very happy - two years sober, you are sitting over there with your friends - 1 year, 4 years or 10 years sober themselves. Yes, I've stayed away from alcohol for a few weeks myself by coming here but that's all. You say you've talked to me. I remember you said nice weather we're having, or isn't that a pretty car over there?"

I've heard over and over you have to give it away to keep it. I would love to have what everybody seems to be keeping. I've also heard "get a sponsor": Okay. I seem to have a problem, nobody said how. I know it's not all your fault - I should say something...I want to...I'm a shy person by nature and now I'm confused, nervous and scared too. Please, next time you see me, introduce yourself and sit down. Talk to me about this program and the wonderful sober life you have found through it. You may say I only have six months sobriety myself. I wish I had the luxury of saying that. How did you do it? I'm worried about tomorrow. The only thing I need is a friend and a little encouragement.

NO, this is *not* a reminder from one off your old timers, this is true, this is now, this is me!

Dave
Cleveland

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Progress is man creating a problem for man to solve that he wouldn't have to solve if he wouldn't have created it.

THIS TIME WITH HONESTY

After three relapses and numerous drunken days and nights, too many to count, my lying and dishonesty finally caught up with me one day in May twenty-one months ago and squarely looked me in the eye.

That day in May I will never forget as long as I live. The day when my lies had sought me out. I became so frightened, like never before, when that striking blow of guilt twisted in my gut-that I tottered and cried out in a shrill voice, "Never again God! I don't want to hurt anymore! Please, please help me! I have hurt so many!"

With deep love and gratitude to the A.A. members of the meetings that I attend, to the A.A. Program, to the knowledge that has put me on the straight road to recovery, honesty and sobriety. With my deep faith in God and understanding His will for me, plus the caring support and love of my loved ones, I am now living a life of honesty and sobriety. The adventure of building this kind of life is so much better than the terrifying merry-go-round that I was on that there is no comparison.

When I lied I was I was only half alive, because of the fear of being found out. I was very dishonest with myself and to adopted family and friends. I lied to them constantly about where I had been and (or) what I had been doing. I took time off from work giving some dishonest excuse. How many times did I say "Yes," when I should have said "No,!" to a drink; or I said "No,!" when I should have said "Yes," when a friend asked me if I needed help. I could never face myself as I really was or admit when I was really wrong. There was deception to myself and others that I was good as the next person, although I suspected I wasn't.

With the honesty to myself and my loved ones the shackles that had confined me are now unlocked. It is astonishing what simple truth will reap. Through the process I have learned to love care about myself and to share, and show these feelings to the ones that are special to me in my life.

What a relief. No more ducking or dodging. No more falsehoods. No more deceiving myself or my adopted family and friends. My cards are on the table for all to see. This is me. I had an unpleasant past I am sorry, yes, but yesterday is done and gone.

My life is now an open book for all to see.!

J.J., Chicago
Borrowed from; Here's How

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

The more we count the blessings we have, the less we crave the luxuries we haven't.

CENTRAL BULLETIN



Published monthly by the Cleveland Central Committee of A. A., a non-profit fellowship dedicated to service Address all letters to Central Bulletin, 940 Rockefeller Bldg. 614 Superior Ave.. NW.. Cleveland.

Harry D., Founder and Editor 1892-1968

Vol. 45 August 1987 No. 11

District Office (216) 241 • 7387

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, August 4, 1987 • 8:00 p.m.

OLD STONE CHURCH • PUBLIC SQUARE CLEVELAND, OHIO

All Group Representatives Welcome Be Informed

GROUP ANNIVERSARIES

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Sorry, we have nothing to report at this time. Any groups that would like their anniversaries announced in the Bulletin should try to get your announcement to us before the 15th of each month. The only time we have any announcements to share with you is when we have been a little late going to print and the regular meeting announcements have been received at our office.

SORRY!!!

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

NORTHEAST OHIO SERVICE PANEL

There will be a workshop on August 23rd. Meeting is held at St. Joseph's Church, Mantua, Ohio. St. Rte. 44 and Pioneer Trail - one mile south of Rt. 82.

IN MEMORIAM

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

WILLIAM C. REESE, 43 year member of A.A., co-founder of Parma Heights Group and Memphis Saturday. Passed away at his summer home on Pelee Island, Canada. Very active member.

ADOLPH JACOBSEN, very active member of A.A. for at least 12 years but had been in poor health for some time and had not been well enough to attend meetings.

Also our sympathies to JIM MAHER, whose wife, Barbara passed away suddenly while on vacation at Catawba Island.

THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE

A drinker will often wrestle with his conscience, but only an alky will make it two falls out of three!

DISTRICT OFFICE CORNER

HAPPY AUGUST EVERYBODY! That's about all I have to say at this time but bear with me I am sure that something will pop in my mind that we can talk about. Personally, on my side, I think I am a victim of the intense heat we have had...and now that we have had one or two cooler days, I can't quite get into the spirit of things. I am sure I am not the only one who is going through this because, just to test my sanity, I have been speaking to others who feel the same way • whew what a relief!).

I do have one thing that seems to be a problem and it becomes a matter of concern for many...this is, for example, "I have been sober _____ years and drank, will this mean that I have lost all of my sobriety or can I just pick myself up, get back to meetings and all will be well?" This is a discussion we have had here in the office as so many people do not want to admit that they should suffer any consequences for their behavior. We feel here that the only requirement for membership in A.A. is a desire to stay sober as stated in our purpose. It is our feeling that when a person, no matter how long they have been sober, decides to pick up that first drink • that they have made another decision, that being: "I choose to drink at this time"! In doing so- they forfeit their membership in Alcoholics Anonymous. It is a more or less unwritten rule, a rule of good common sense - that if we try to go out and get away with 'social drinking' the real alcoholic will soon find themselves back in the same rut or even worse than we were when we first asked for help and it is not easy to come back and admit a mistake...as though all those nondrinking years and the goodness of them...has been tucked far back in memory because our alcoholic thinking has returned and we are making excuses and all the old goodies that worked for us for awhile before.

A.A. is not punitive, if you have drank and return to the program, you will be made to feel welcome and the members will do all they can to keep you with us - BUT • you will be informed that you must go back to Square #1 and start your marker moving again toward continued sobriety. As in most board games, we sometimes draw a card that tells us to go back and some tell us to skip one or two moves once in awhile but, in order to win, we have to persevere and hang in there. The same principle applies for those returning to the A.A. program...which, due to self will run riot, we will have to go back to Step One and begin counting our new sobriety date at that time. If you can willingly accept this and start over again you will be well on your way to a less complicated life and be happy, once again, making your way back "ONE DAY AT A TIME"! As stated, it isn't easy...but it's worth it.

The Big Book is one of the highest published and least read of anything in print...but we can change that statement around by reading and 'practicing these principles/THINK ABOUT IT ! ! !

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

The best thing to do behind a person's back is to pat it.

If you think a seat belt is uncomfortable, you've never tried a stretcher.

ALWAYS • CAREFUL • TO • INVESTIGATE • OTHERS • NEEDS

FEAR OF CHANGE

Change is probably the most difficult thing any of us have to deal with, alcoholic or not. Even good changes present adjustment problems. There is always the secret fear, will I make it? Certainly they pointed out at least a few inadequacies which make us squirm a bit. On the other hand, changes courageously met deepen our self-acceptance and self-esteem. There was a time when we ran from every hint of change. I did anyway.

Let me tell you about my most recent struggle to change and the way our program enabled me to do it. I just graduated from college with a social work degree, which took me 30 years to obtain. Alcohol does way lay one. I was feeling very much on top of the world, surely I would whip it. Six weeks later, after vain attempts of finding suitable employment, worry then panic set in. I went to meetings "turn it over," "let go (of the worry)."; live today, came rushing at me. How I hated to hear that! But as always in my gut, I knew that I was hearing the truth. Trusting in the Higher Power is a continuing thing. Past vindication of such trust does precious little when I am in the throes of fear.

At any rate, I did get a receptionist job. I managed to be patient with myself in adjusting to the new change for two days. Unreal expectations trapped me and I was drowning in a sea of self-pity. In the first place, I had never worked a 40 hour week. Second, as a housewife I had been my own boss. Third, I wasn't doing work I was qualified for (pride rears its ugly head). Fourth and perhaps the most important, I was exhausted beyond imagination. Now mind you I got good advice, but I wouldn't listen, I had to do it my way. The advice was keep your life simple (from earth person, no less). Go to work, get plenty of sleep, don't get involved with any projects and do some nice things for yourself. In about three months you will get used to it.

For whatever reason, I tried to do everything I always did. The only smart thing I did was to continue to go to meetings. Eventually I heard the same things my friends

were saying. This time I listened and almost dumbly followed. Seems like I forever must be beaten into submission.

Another thing of importance I heard at all three lead meetings I attended over the weekend was a tremendous emphasis on a solid relationship with God. I took a long look at the quality of my own relationship with God and found it wanting. My quiet time was shorter, more distracted than it used to be. I was talking to Him about surface things, not what I was really feeling. Certainly I was not taking time to listen to what He was saying through others.

One last thing I found in order to survive, I must go back to basics. Plain and simple, I must not take the first drink, I must live one day at a time. I must say the Serenity Prayer every hour, more often if necessary, read the Big Book and the only thing I had been doing was going to meetings. I can't say everything is a puddle of serenity, but it is better than it was last week. **HALT LIVED IS INVALUABLE.** I found, too, God was waiting for me to run back into those open arms of His. I am a trifle more content to wait until I get used to it. I know in my heart that I'm exactly in the right job and when I master these changes, I will find my "Marvelous social work job for which I am so well suited:

Oh God, will I ever grow up? He's not telling me. Bet I make Him grin a lot.

Footsteps



12 STEPS TO DESTRUCTION

1. I stated that I could hold my liquor and was a master of my life.
2. Believed I was sane and rational in every respect.
3. Decided to run my own life and be successful in all my undertakings.
4. Made a thorough and searching inventory of my fellow-man and found him lacking.
- 5'. Admitting to no one, including God and myself, that there was anything wrong with me.
6. Sought through alcohol to remove my shortcomings and responsibilities and to escape the realities of life.
7. Got drunk to remove these shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons who had harmed me, whether real or imagined, and swore to get even.
9. Got even whenever possible except when to do so would further injure me.
10. Continued to find fault with the world and the people in it and when I was right promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through lying, cheating, and stealing to improve myself materially at the expense of my fellow-man, asking only the means to get drunk and stay drunk.
12. After having had a complete moral, physical, and spiritual breakdown as a result of this kind of living, I tried to drag those dear to me down to my level and practiced these reasonings in all of my affairs.

Footsteps

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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

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

A bum approached a man and asked him for a quarter.

The man told him he didn't have a quarter but he'd be glad to buy him breakfast.

"Man:) the bum said, "I've had three breakfasts now, trying to get a quarter:

WHAT'S WITH THIS FEELING GUILTY?

I've just come off a particularly untidy, uncomfortable and downright painful bout with one or another of many viruses that seem to abound

I'm not saying that to elicit any pity - although if you want to waste some on me, I'll be glad to accept it. But what occurred to me as I was lying abed groaning in agony was not so much the pain, but the guilt. I felt guilty about being sick!

It occurred to me that, ever since I came into the Program, I've felt that way. I'm a recovering alcoholic now, my emotions apparently tell me. I'm living the Program. Moreover, I have a lot to make up for dating from the years when I was tossing them back. I have no right to be sick!

Well, *bull!* Alcoholics are people, and we have the right to the same emotions and ailments that other people have. I think I know what, at least in my case, the whole guilt thing with sickness stems from the feeling that, really sick or not, someone's going to think I am drinking again.

This is not only negative thinking, but downright stupid! If someone wants to think I'm drinking, then let the poor guy think so. That's his problem, not mine. (As long, of course, as I'm not drinking.)

The unnecessary guilt applies to the areas of my life as well. I remember that, immediately after I got sober, I felt guilty about not being able to make up for, in that first Christmas, what I managed to foul up in all the preceeding Christmases.

Finally, my sponsor got me into a corner and laid this on me: You're working the Program. You're working the Steps. You haven't had a drink today. You're going to meetings. When you stop doing any of these things, then give some serious thought to feeling guilty. *But not until then!*"

FO., Merryville, IND.
Easy Does It

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

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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Vol. XLV — No. 12



WE NEVER HAVE IT MADE

I went through a sobering experience last February—after almost five years of sobriety in A.A. I had struggled for some weeks with a persistent flu and was dragged down physically and emotionally. I had a bad case of that “all gone” feeling, plus a flare-up of chronic self-pity. No fever by this time, but still-under the doctor’s orders-confined to the house, and fretting about a piled-up desk in the off ice.

Suddenly, about eleven o’clock one morning, I wanted a drink. Perhaps it wasn’t the drink itself I wanted, but the oblivion that would follow the one-drink-plus-a-lot more that I knew I would take.

This was a kind of wanting different from any I had experienced before. The other times were more like wishful thinking’ “My feet are cold-too bad I can’t have a drink to warm them up” or “I’m on edge and won’t sleep-too bad I can’t take a nightcap.”

But this was a real want, a definite and specific urge.

The stuff was in the house too-kept there for a non-alcoholic husband who needs it and non-alcoholic friends who enjoy it.

But from somewhere, I remember reading what a clergyman wrote about A.A.: “I have questioned many who slipped, and I have never found one who took a drink if he asked God that morning to keep him sober during the day.”

So what did I do? I prayed like hell, if you’ll pardon the expression-and the urge evaporated within five minutes.

Later, I did a little self-analysis. It had been some time since I had specifically asked for sobriety. I had instead prayed to the rather nebulous God of my understanding that I might live the day in a way he would want me to live (which, I told myself, included staying sober, of course). Had I been getting a bit complacent, maybe? A bit too self-assured?

At any rate, the episode taught me one thing that I knew theoretically anyway: No alcoholic ever has it made. My near brush with drinking has also helped me to understand the sliders better, to be less intolerant with slips. “There, but for the grace of God, go !!”

It was a bad five minutes, but it has paid of in heightened realization of my own helplessness and of my constant need for the support of other A.A. members and of that Higher Power.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Your success and happiness lie in you. . . Resolve to keep happy, and your joy shall form an invincible host against difficulties.

Helen Keller

ANGER

Anger flares often in the lives of many people. It is the ever-present demon who packs a knockout punch and is always ready to hang one on the alcoholic’s chin. It is possibly the most deadly of the seven deadly character defects, because it snakes onto the scene so readily: The coffee’s cold at breakfast, toast is burned, that so-and-so cut me off driving to work, mail is late, work is doubled, lunch was awful, boss sneered at me, traffic is a nightmare on the way home, everyone’s late for supper, turn off the blink-blank rock music.

Normal living is far from smooth. The wheels of progress often seem lubricated by bits of rusty metal, and this can get worse as a bad day stutters along. The experience is universal, and not only alcoholics get burned up-it’s everybody, and it’s constant. But whatever use anger may be to non-alcoholic John or Jane Doe (and its benefit to anyone is doubtful), it is deadly to the alcoholic, who at best gains serenity and stays on an even keel only by hard effort.

Often a person marches through a real crisis with head high and is then flattened by some seemingly trivial goat-getter. Anger has tiptoed in by the back door for the knockout, after failing in a frontal attack.

The plain fact is that in our sleazy modern culture there are myriad things to anger one under the best conditions, and more for special tantrums. The cleared-up alcoholic should know enough to make anger the number one enemy, and meditate in advance on ways to combat it (not to be saintly, just to stay sober). It’s dangerous to wait for problems to arise-there may be no time to compensate when a storm strikes and a drink is only an arm’s reach away.

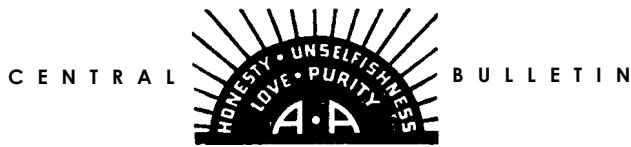
So once more we can turn to the Tenth Step and let daily inventory come in to help. I call the Tenth my Police Step—“Keep your eyes on that traffic light, or you’ll get a ticket!” The Tenth, backing up and also helped especially by the Third, Seventh, Ninth, and Twelfth, can be pure gold in building stability and emotional balance.

Anyone willing to make the effort can stay in daily training to battle anger, the sneak-punch KO foe, one of the trickiest and nastiest of the seven deadly character defects that stalk the alcoholic.

Bill C., Hull Mass.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

The inebriate boarded a bus and staggered towards the back. A little old lady smelled his breath and shouted. . . ‘You’ve been drinking and you are going straight to hell!’ The drunk replied, ‘You’re right, and I musta got on the wrong bus.’



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Harry D.. Founder and Editor 1692.1966

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District Office (216) 241 • 7387

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, September 1, 1987 • 8:00 p.m.

OLD STONE CHURCH • PUBLIC SQUARE
CLEVELAND, OHIO

All Group Representatives Welcome
Be Informed

THIRD LEGACY MEETING— GENERAL SERVICE

Sunday, September 30, 1987 - 2:00 p.m.
State Route 44 & Pioneer Trail - one mile
south of Route 82, Mantua, Ohio

GROUP ANNIVERSARIES

★★★★★

10th ANNIVERSARY of
SPANISH SPEAKING GROUPS IN THE AREA
September 2, 1987 • 7:30 p.m.
Unbar, 8301 Detroit Avenue

IN MEMORIAM

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

HARRY J. CALDWELL, 35 year member of A.A. Member of the West 25th Street Group - a very active member of A.A.

EDWARD CLIGROW, a long-time, well known member of A.A. Very active with Rosary Hall and a member of the Newburg Group.

GEORGE K. McKEOWAN, A.A. member from the Mentor area, member of Kirtland Group. Recent past member of District Office Operating Committee

THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE

Our special prayers went along with Elvira to Chicago, when she lost her mother who passed away July 20th.

“Strange that so many people who took their whiskey straight up seem to want their A.A. very diluted”
Grapevine Vol. 4, 1960

Always keep your mind open
some old ideas might fall out.

DISTRICT OFFICE CORNER

School daze, school daze! !! The kids will be returning to school and we all hope they are as anxious to return as you are to have them go. Now, we all know that everyone loves their children and the statement above does not mean that this is a sign of hatred..but..remember, we lived through those last few anxious days of last year's school term when the children are so excited about the end of the school year and we know that by this time at the beginning of each school year, the children (even though they don't want to admit it) are just that happy to get back...a certain feeling has set in with them - there isn't enough to do, what can we do next, etc.??? That is how we recognize the real sign that they are ready to get on with the next phase of their life. Can you apply this to any other time in your life??? Bet you can..BUT WON'T THAT ONE CUP OF COFFEE BE JUST PERFECT, when the last one walks out the door.

This month things are not coming very easily for me - this is one of those times that I'm finding it very difficult to get this column started but, try I must!

The Operating Committee of the District Office would like to thank all the groups that announced our request for help at the District Office and the Committee is also very pleased that the request drew so much response. We would like to announce at this time that we are no longer accepting resumes! I understand that they learned there is great talent out there in our Fellowship and they want to encourage those who applied to us and were not called in for an interview, not to let that stop them from applying for positions other than here in the office. Once we get sober, we are often so unsure of ourselves that we think we are no longer capable of reentering the job field and maybe the fact that you had the courage to answer us can give you the confidence that you need in recognizing your self worth and you can apply elsewhere and stand a good chance of getting a position in whatever line your interest takes you.

The letter also brought in a number of volunteers who were and are greatly appreciated. The literature department benefited from the volunteers and we are not going to discourage anyone from stopping in to offer some of their free time. Especially if there are times that you are feeling a little down, come down here and you will not only feel worthwhile but go home just tired enough to look forward to a little nap - then when you wake up you will notice how much better you feel.

Referring to our Central Bulletin, we noticed that we allowed one article to slip in that we had published before and will try to be more careful in the future although we have certain things we think are helpful to print more than once.

The month of July we sent out a complimentary copy of the Bulletin to all the groups in our area together with a few subscription blanks and we are most pleased that this did trigger an interest - enough so that we received a number of subscriptions. You know there are a lot of members who are not familiar at all with the Bulletin so now that they know, we hope we can keep their interest. We also have had requests from groups for more subscrip-

ALWAYS • CAREFUL • TO • INVESTIGATE • OTHERS • NEEDS

tion blanks...and we are most happy to oblige. You know this issue will be the 12th month of this volume...beginning with the October issue, our Bulletin will have a birthday - it will be entering its 46th year of publication and, as we have mentioned, this is the oldest paper of its kind in A.A. We went into publication even before the Grapevine.

Over a long period of time we were trying to interest our members enough to send in some material for publication in the Bulletin and we have had some response for a time...] had promised to badger this until we could claim at least one issue that was all local material without depending on other newsletters, etc.. The goal is still the same and you can see with this issue - we are not getting any response in regards to our requests for your articles... so...consider this a beginning again. Please do not be afraid to write something (it need not be anything profound). The language of the heart is spoken here and we are quite sure that there is a lot of material that could be sent to us if you would take a chance...remember 'we are only striving for perfection: THINK ABOUT IT!

★★★★★

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. 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 years 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
The New Reporter, Washington D.C.

Be a Bulletin Booster

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Cleveland, Ohio 44113

SPIRITUALITY

One simple way of understanding spirituality is to see that it is concerned with our ability, through our attitudes and actions, to relate to others, to ourselves, and to God as we understand Him. All of us, addicted or not, have a way of relating to our own lives, other people, and God which tends either to be positive, healthy, fulfilling and life-giving, or tends toward the negative, self-defeating and destructive. The question is not whether we will be spiritual, but whether we are moving in the direction of a negative or positive spirituality.

Spirituality is a simple way of living. It seems there are four basic movements that recovering people need to make to put their lives on a positive spiritual basis. The first of these is a movement from fear to trust; the second, from self-pity to gratitude; the third, from resentment to acceptance; the fourth, from dishonesty to honesty.

★★★★★

TRADITION FIVE

Each group has but one primary purpose. . . to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

Every newcomer learns (some of us the hard way) that the business of staying sober must have top priority. If we fail at that, we can't succeed at anything else. The Fifth Tradition tells us that groups should remember their "one primary purpose!"

Often, unthinking enthusiasm puts a group off the main track. One, for instance, offered an "expanded A.A. program" that included helping newcomers to find jobs. Tradition Five doesn't frown on the individual A.A. who tells another about a good opening. But when the group turns itself into an employment agency, the newcomer may get confused about his primary purpose. A.A.'s function is to help him get sober--then he can get himself onto a payroll.

Using discretion, a member may lend a few dollars needed for a meal or a hotel room, or he may even invite a broke alcoholic to be a temporary guest in his home. But the A.A. group as a whole is not a friendly finance company, nor a welfare department, nor a housing bureau.

Even when acting on his own, as an individual member, an A.A. layman certainly shouldn't award himself an honorary medical degree and hand out diagnoses and prescriptions and amateur analyses of other people's neuroses. Exactly because this personal failing is so common, the A.A. group in all its dealings should be extra-careful to emphasize that it is not invading the medical field. Through the personal experiences of its members, it is qualified to carry only one message: how an alcoholic can recover in A.A. That's all.

Yet one group recently felt itself equipped to set up an "alcoholism information center." The temptation is understandable; it was even stronger at the time this Tradition was written, because public ignorance about alcoholism as an illness was more wide spread than it is now. Since then, other agencies have sprung up to assume the task of educating the general public on alcoholism. That is not A.A.'s purpose, but these agencies also are trying to help the active alcoholic. They are our friends-- and Tradition Six marks the boundaries of the relationship.

“EASY DOES IT”

When I think of the slogan “Easy Does It” I am reminded of our Co-founder, Dr. Bob Smith. He often provided a calming influence to Bill’s “schemes and frantic ideas.” After reading his biography, “Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers”, I know that he often said words like “Let’s not louse this thing up. Let’s keep it simple!” Being an alcoholic with frequently outlandish and far-fetched ideas, I must often remind myself to “Keep It Simple.” Although Dr. Bob left us before I was born, whenever I remind myself of his words, it is as though he himself is speaking to me and I can almost hear his voice gently chiding me.

I have often been told by a sponsor or some other member that this is a simple program for complicated people. How true this is of me! It is my nature to complicate the simplest of things. I have complicated my way right into one mess after another when the simplest approach would have averted all kinds of problems,

I wonder why I can’t remember this basic slogan. just as Bill had Dr. Bob to slow him down, I have friends to remind me: Keep It Simple!

Rob W.
Akron Intergroup Newsletter

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

GETTING THE MOST.. . AND BEST.. . FROM OLDTIMERS

Are so-called oldtimers a blessing or a problem in your group?

One frustrated group member remarked, ‘An old timer is someone who will travel 100 miles to speak at a big anniversary, but won’t walk across the street to help a newcomer or make coffee!’

Is this true of an oldtimer you know? Be careful. If you stay sober and don’t die prematurely, you, too will become an oldtimer. Will the description then fit you?

As more and more of us stay sober, the number of oldtimers is rapidly growing. In many groups, they are a help, not a hindrance. . . A middle timer put it this way: “Newcomers may be the life blood of A.A., but if we had nothing but newcomers, what a sloppy mess we’d all be slipping around in! Oldtimers furnish the backbone and skin to hold us together. If they don’t stay around and share their experiences, where would we all be?”

Problems with older members often stem from their acting like authorities, impatiently criticizing members’ mistakes and being intolerant of any change.

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Late one evening, a boozed-up character entered a large shopping mall, headed toward an upper level. He was about to step on the escalator when he saw a sign reading “Dogs must be carried on this escalator.”

Dejectedly, he looked around and muttered, ‘Where the devil am I going to find a dog at this hour?’

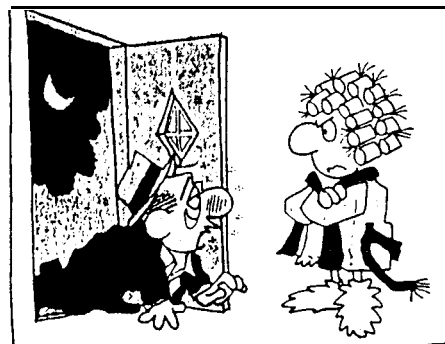
A TEST YOU SHOULD PASS!

Most of us have hopelessly failed the “20 Questions” on Alcoholism, so here is a test with a different twist;

1. Do you get a craving for a cup of coffee at 8 p.m.?
2. Do you find yourself saying the Serenity Prayer in grocery store lines?
3. Are you afraid of saying “My name is _____ and I am an alcoholic” when introducing yourself?
4. When people tell you their problems, do you offer advice like “One Day At A Time” and “Easy Does IT”?
5. Do you have difficulty breathing when you’re not in smoke filled church basements?
6. Has your car quit turning automatically into liquor stores?
7. Do you call at least three friends in the Fellowship every day just to say “HI”?
8. Have you forgotten what is on TV every night at 8 p.m.?
9. Do you carry A.A. chips in your pocket instead of beer money?
10. If you miss too many meetings, do you become a grouch and a bore?

If you answered yes to at least two of the above questions, you might as well face the fact that you are addicted to A.A., so enjoy the rest of your life-One Day At A Time

Diane M., “Mountain Doin’s Asheville, N.C.



“CAN’T I CRAWL HOME JUST ONCE WITHOUT YOUR ACCUSING ME OF BEING INTOXICATED?”

ARE YOU PLANNING TO MOVE?

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IT WILL HELP YOU AND IT WILL HELP US.

CENTRAL BULLETIN

October 1987

Published by
Cleveland Central Committee of A.A.

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Harry D., Founder and Editor 1892.1966

Vol. 46 October 1987 No. 1

District Office (216) 241 - 7387

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, October 6, 1987 - 8:00 p.m.
 OLD STONE CHURCH - PUBLIC SQUARE
 CLEVELAND, OHIO
 All Group Representatives Welcome
 Be Informed

EAST CENTRAL REGIONAL FORUM

October 2, 3, & 4, 1987
 Peoria, Illinois

IN MEMORIAM

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

FRED BISBEE, 24 year member of A.A. This month (October) he would have celebrated his 25th year. Fred had also been Secretary of the Eaton Group for 22 years.

ROBERT MULCAHY, 23 year member of A.A. Very active in his home group area.

LISA PERI, 18 year member of A.A.- active in her home group area. Lisa suffered a sudden, tragic death and will be remembered by all who knew her.

THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE

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TO ALL OF OUR SUBSCRIBERS:

We realize our third class mailing has been taking a long time to reach you and we will offer an apology but the delivery is pretty much out of our hands. We do all of the pre-sorting for the Post Office and when they receive our mail -they get it out to the various "sorted areas or sections" who are then supposed to see that the mail is delivered. We are finding this does not always happen so we are adding something new to our mailings. There will be a message stamped on each of our envelopes reading "Dated material, please rush". We hope this will alleviate some disappointments on your part as you are looking forward to the mail on a given day. Unhappily, we have found California mail sometimes is delivered before some of the nearer stations.

DISTRICT OFFICE CORNER

Greetings everybody! It is Central Bulletin's Birthday, going into its 46th year of print with this issue. Maybe a little item like this doesn't thrill everyone but I'm certainly glad to see this is something that has weathered the storm for so many years and still appears to be functional.

The request for local articles is out. . .please see what you can add from time to time to make this a real sharing item from our own area. . .as I mentioned before the blitz is on!

Ralph W., our most regular contributor, is leaving our area and returning to Michigan where he can be near his family. . .we will miss Ralph. I believe we have enough back-up material from him that could possibly fill two issues. We and Ralph know some of the articles he wrote would require too much editing to use but we still have a lot of good material from him with the promise that when he returns to Michigan, he will continue to write for us.

You will also note that, in another item, we have mentioned we have heard from our former Secretary of the office, now retired, and he has furnished us with some interesting items that we will share with you a little at a time. This will give you some of the highlights of the beginning of your District Office and the many things in which our area was involved in the early days of our program. This should be good reason for you to look forward to the issues to follow.

You know, from time to time, we know members who have been sober a number of years who do not attend as many meetings and if they do - choose to be less active saying, "Let the new members do it", . . .then sometimes when they 'do it' we begin to receive telephone calls. . .so good members with long-time sobriety, the "new" members needs you to be there to help them by sharing some of your experiences so they might learn a little more about our program. We have many members who are now among us that have had 'problems other than alcohol' and we have a hard time dealing with this newcomer. Perhaps just some sharing will be the very thing the new need. The reason I mention this at this time is because of the preceding paragraph where it shows that our former secretary has our best interests at heart even though he is not in the area and we understand that he is very active even now in California - going to meetings, speaking and doing 12 step work.

I don't want to forget our weather report which is usually included here. We are now having a "mini monsoon season" and I noticed just last night on my way home that the leaves are beginning to change, getting ready for their show of brilliance which comes just before the winter takes hold. We hear we are going to have a pretty hard winter and sure hope the forecasters are not exactly correct. As far as I'm concerned - spring just arrived -time goes so quickly. None of this should create fear because we are always going to have weather - whether we like it or not. **THINK ABOUT IT!**

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Remember, Popularity is what people say you are; Character is what you are.

ALWAYS . CAREFUL . TO . INVESTIGATE . OTHERS . NEEDS

WINNERS

In business I had the opportunity to talk to many top executives of large corporations. The thing that impressed me is they seemed like very mild men. My impression was they should be very dynamic and driven men. I decided that on the way up the corporate ladder they had eliminated their competition and now that they were in the top office, they were extending the olive branch of peace.

I now know that thinking was incorrect. "BLESSED ARE THE MEEK AS THEY WILL INHERIT THE EARTH." Yes, Crusaders/aggressors change the world. But the survivor who hangs in there, wins, and reaps the benefits!

Take It Easy. One Day At A Time.
R.W.
Friendship Group

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

NOSTALGIA

Thanks to Dick Perez. . . In following issues, from time to time, we will be giving you bits and pieces of the History of your A.A. CLEVELAND DISTRICT OFFICE. Dick was kind enough to send these notes out to us and we are sure you will enjoy learning about the beginnings of the District Office.

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As I try to grow in this A.A. program, I must occasionally "remember when" - but not in order to brood about the past. A.A. taught me how to deal with it, how to put it in it's proper place and perspective. I believe that I must learn, that I must let God teach me, that the only way to get rid of my past is to get a future out of it. God will waste nothing. . .

Came to Believe; Must Learn
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— Be a Bulletin Booster —

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ROY'S PALM: DAILY FELLOWSHIP AND FRIENDSHIP

In 1961 Roy Morris sat under a palm tree on Siesta Beach with a few A.A. friends and started a Sarasota A.A. custom that is not only still going on but has impacted on countless lives in countless ways.

It is all right to use Roy's last name because he died in December 1982. Roy, who found sobriety in 1950 in Cleveland and later moved to Sarasota, sharing his experience, strength and hope in many ways - but his lasting legacy, Roy's Palm, is unique.

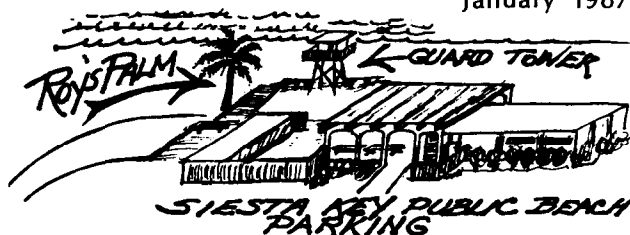
The daily beach gatherings go on and on. When it rains or freezes, the gang moves to the pavilion for the day. When the new walkways were built, the crowd shifted a few feet to the left. Faces and swimsuits change and the tree itself has grown but the fellowship is the same as it was on that day 25 years ago.

It's not a meeting - which is why you won't find Roy's Palm in the 'Where and When? Rather, it's the all important fellowship that is one of A.A.'s secret ingredients. The green chips distributed to all comers describe it best: "Daily Fellowship and Friendship". A beach regular calls it "kitchen table fellowship without the kitchen table". Another speculates that it must be like the early days when everyone in A.A. knew everyone else and they spent their days together. The crowd starts gathering at 8:30 - later in cold weather - every morning and breaks up by noon. Some stroll. Some swim. Some sun. If you want serious sharing, YOU can find it. If you are looking for fun and frivolity, it's there. The camaraderie comes naturally.

Nobody knows how many A.A.'s have found fellowship under the tree, because until November 1984, nobody counted heads. But if you are mathematically inclined these tip of the iceberg figures might give you a clue. Since 1984 when one of the regulars started a notebook, the tree has played host to A.A. visitors from 34 states (Alaska and Hawaii among them), the District of Columbia and 10 foreign countries. From November 1984 through December 1985, 316 green chips were given away and 91 returning visitors who had chips paid return visits. From January through December 1986, another 367 green chips were given away and 140 repeaters returned. The green chip - a custom-with-a-custom - began on April 13, 1981, as a special 20th anniversary salute to the beach gathering and have been continued. If you haven't been to the tree yet, there's one for you.

When Roy died, other people picked up the slack and the fellowship goes on. Regulars know who they are, but those people ask that their names not be used. Explained one of the most steadfast: "It will always be Roy's tree".

Sara Mana Intergroup Newsletter
January 1987



TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE

Recently this was our topic at a discussion meeting and since then I have given more thought to the phrase, "to thine ownself be true", I'd like to share some of those thoughts with you with the hope you will find some deeper meaning of how these words become more alive to you in your daily living of the A.A. Program.

The first time I encountered these words was when one of my favorite teachers wrote them in my autograph book - I was in the fifth grade. She wrote the whole quotation: "To thine ownself be true and it must follow as night follows day, thou canst not then be false to any man" - Shakespeare. Miss D. also wrote that this quote was a good measuring stick to evaluate our growth and our relationships with other persons in our life. What a lot of wisdom from a person who had made quite an impression on me - wonder if she was a recovering alcoholic?? - no matter she was a beautiful person who cared enough to share with her students.

Today those words are printed on the bronze A.A. medallions that so many of us wear around our neck or carry in our pockets.

As I further reflected on the meaning of those powerful words, I realized how much work I had to do with being honest and good to myself. When I give others in the program help or advice do I heed my own words and apply the advice to myself? When my thinking gets screwed up, as it often does, do I ask for help? Do I keep running from me, rather than facing my own character defects and shortcomings? When I am tired and need rest, do I listen to my body signals? Do I allow God to use me as an instrument by following my inner feelings -or do I put up resistance and insist on doing it MY way? I need to take inventory of self honesty more often, clear away all rationalizations and get to the bottom line-the issue.

To give away the program, I first must have a hold on it myself and keep it working in my life - and it seems to me that all begins and ends with being HONEST and TRUE to my own self.

Anonymous

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

USE IT OR LOSE IT

If you had a credit union account that every morning credited your account with \$86,400, carried over no balance, allowed no cash to remain in the account, and at the end of the day, cancelled what you failed to use - what would you do? Withdraw it fast, right?

Believe it or not, you do have this account, and it is called time. Every morning it gives you 86,400 seconds. Whatever is not used is lost. There are no balances to carry over to the next day, no overdrafts, and all the records are burned when the day ends. If you don't use the daily deposit, the loss is all yours.

There are no returns - no drawing against tomorrow. You live in the present on today's deposit. It is up to you to invest and use it wisely. . .or lose it altogether.

Anonymous

Reprinted from *The Scuttlebutt*

The FIRST ISSUE OF THE CENTRAL BULLETIN was printed in October, 1942 by William Dankworth whose name appears on the masthead. Following his death, the Editor became George Mills who did all the work on the Bulletin from his home basement. George did this pretty much on his own but did rely on volunteers to help with the mailing. Due to poor health, in November of 1977, the Central Bulletin Foundation turned over to the District Office all its rights for publication of The Four Absolutes, Misunderstandings and Who Me (properties of the Central Bulletin Foundation) and the Central Bulletin. This came after a devotion of 16 years by George Mills.

It was at this time that Dick Fogel was made Editor, printer, etc. of The Central Bulletin. Dick's romance with the paper ended in November 1985 when he announced his retirement. At that time Dick recommended that Imogene Zayd take over the editing and publishing of the Central Bulletin. Through motion that carried, Imogene became the Editor of the Central Bulletin - a labor of love that she still carries on today. . .and is most pleased that she is present for the opening of the 46th year of printing.

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PARABLE OF THE CROAKING FROGS

A farmer came to town and asked the owner of a restaurant if he could use a million frog legs. The proprietor asked where he could find so many frogs.

"I've got a pond just full of them," the farmer replied. "They drive me crazy night and day.

After they made an agreement for several hundred frogs, the farmer went back home. He came back a week later with two scrawny frogs and a foolish look on his face. "I guess I was wrong," he stammered. "There were just two frogs in the pond, but they sure were making a lot of noise!"

The next time you hear a lot of noise about how bad things are, just remember. It may be nothing more than a couple of cronic complainers who have little to do but grouch and croak!



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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Old Address _____ Zip _____

New Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

IT WILL HELP YOU AND IT WILL HELP US.



RUSSIA RUSSIA RUSSIA

On September 18, 1987 my wife and I left for our vacation to the Soviet Union. I had found out previous to this date that there are three AA Pamphlets which were translated into Russian and were acceptable to the Soviets. Consequently, I called the AA World Services in New York and requested ten of each of the three booklets. These plus the letter of introduction, which I requested from the District Office Secretary, went with us. I had no way of knowing whether or not I would be able to speak with anyone in the Soviet Union, but I was hopeful.

We joined our tour group in Leningrad after some concern as to who we were and where we were supposed to be. The not speaking nor understanding the Russian language was to be an everpresent complication in getting around in this foreign country. I can highly recommend, looking back in retrospect, having more than just a little knowledge of the host country's language

Immediately upon arriving at the Hotel where we were to stay, I gave our tour guide a photocopy of my letter of Introduction as well as an explanation of what I hoped he would be able to arrange. With a great deal of good fortune, his counterpart who worked for the State-run In-tourist organization knew of the Society for Sober living which had been functioning in Moscow. The importance of living in sobriety in the Soviet Union has gained popularity in recent times since Mr. Gorbachev has made it an important goal in his internal policy.

I knew in advance of talking with someone in the Soviet Union that I would be able to work Step Twelve in yet another way than I had ever previously. Some of the applications used before this were the calling upon a prospective newcomer, another is the active membership in a home group and participating in that Group's activities, yet another is the footwork required in order for a new group to come into being. Now in a very special way I have carried the message that has been given to me over time to another human being and attempted to explain how A.A. works for me.

When we arrived in Moscow on Wednesday, 9/23/87,

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A drinker will often wrestle with his conscience, but only an alky will make it two falls out of three!

I still did not know whether or not I would be able to see anyone. You cannot just open a telephone book and dial a phone number. There are no phone books as we know them and also, there is no reference to anything resembling Alcoholics Anonymous. Furthermore, even if there were, if you could not read Russian (Cyrillic alphabet), then you still would be out of luck.

As late as 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, 9/24/87 I still had not heard anything, then after lunch I found out that if I could arrive at their office in Moscow by 3 p.m. then I would have my opportunity. With a general idea of the location I managed to find the correct building. This was really not an easy task, considering all the signs are in Russian and approximately 99.99% of the people speak only Russian.

Our travel/tour guide had located a Mr. Nickolay S. Tchernykh, the gentleman appointed by Mr. Gorbachev to implement by whatever means, programs needed to achieve sobriety. Mr. Tchernykh has an interpreter on his staff and through this individual I was asked many specific questions about my personal involvement in A.A.

Basically, I gave a Lead via a question-and-answer method. Rather than being concerned with being self-conscious, I strove to present a picture of what I think a sober member of A.A. ought to look and act like. I hope that it was received in the manner in which it was intended.

After an hour's period of time and I had responded to his queries to the best of my ability, he proceeded to state to me the current policies and procedures which are in place at this time. He also mentioned that in May & July, 1987 both the US & USSR exchanged delegates advising their counterparts of progress which has been achieved towards gaining sobriety.

I think that it is entirely possible that AA may become an accepted form of sobriety in the Soviet Union; however, it probably will differ in some respects from what we know in this country.

Ron M.
Fairview Park, Ohio

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

"Strange that so many people who took their whiskey straight up seem to want their A.A. very diluted"

Grapevine Vol. 4, 1960

IN OUR 46th YEAR OF PUBLICATION



Published monthly by the Cleveland Central Committee of A.A. a non-profit fellowship dedicated to service Address all letters to Central Bulletin, 94G Rockefeller Bldg 614 Superior Ave NW, Cleveland, Ohio 44113

Ham D., Founder and Editor 1692-1966

Vol. 46 November 1987 No. 2

District Office (216) 241-7387

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, November 3, 1987 • 8:00 p.m.
 OLD STONE CHURCH • PUBLIC SQUARE
 CLEVELAND, OHIO
 All Group Representatives Welcome
 Be Informed

GRATITUDE SUNDAY

Sunday, November 15, 1987 • 2:00 p.m.
 I.B.H. (Hall or Building)
 3445 South Main St.
 Akron, Ohio
 (Route 77, exit 120, Arlington)
 Speaker: Claude M. Alaska, Past Delegate

IN MEMORIAM

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

HERB FREDRICKSEN, 37 year member of A.A. & Secretary of the Clark Group for 30 years.

JOHN TRACY (TRASCZYNSKI), 30 year member of A.A. Active in Southeast area.

WENTWORTH "BABE" BROESTL, long-time member of A.A. His home group was Serenity Sunday.

THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE

DISTRICT OFFICE CORNER

Happy Thanksgiving A.A.'s everywhere! You know there are changes going on in my life (like getting old)!!! I can remember a time when it was simply AGES from one holiday to another and now it just seems like they are circling around "up there" in a holding pattern waiting for one to leave and another to land.

You know, just this last month, we had to send an announcement to all of our groups in the Cleveland area with a warning that our 7th Tradition was blatantly violated....persons as yet unknown to us have started up a thing called AIRPLANE, a takeoff of the old PYRAMID GAME asking for contributions of \$100.00 then to bring in others, one or two at a time, with a hundred dollars each and, of course, their reward would be a sum of money....like they say....you have to work a little harder to

take the Con out of us....any easy way to make a dollar, We are ashamed to say that this had to be done in our Cleveland A.A. Their prey, naturally, was the newcomer. Unfortunately, we lost some who would have been members....but were so destroyed by this request that they decided they didn't need us. We only hope that someday they will try again so that we can extend the welcome hand of A.A. without having our palms outstretched. We do not know who profited from this venture, most likely the one who started it and all of the others who fell into the trap are just out that much money.

This is the month of Gratitude when all of us in A.A. have time to reflect and count our blessings for having been given life again and a purpose of living and growing. **So many do not get that chance.** Either through non-acceptance, denial or what have you....there are many who find it most difficult to grasp our Simple Program of Recovery. So many of us who are still sober today can remember the times we knew something was wrong and very easily rejected the thought that we might be an Alcoholic. Once beaten down....we made that 'scared-to-death call'....still hoping that we might learn that we didn't have this dreaded disease called Alcoholism but were merely going through some difficult times that would eventually get better....that it wasn't how often, how much or what we drank But merely a **virus** "going around": How grateful can we be, all of us who have been willing to accept (maybe even after getting one virus after another) and surrender that we, most definitely, are alcoholics still "One Day at a Time" • but each day still feel a rush!!! with just the possibilities of being granted this one day and all that it will hold for us....all days are **not** good days for many of us but, looking back, things could be much worse and each day has 24 hours • so this will pass.

The above thinking came to me because we received a note some time ago from one of my home group members who had been given a luncheon by the staff of a Warren, Ohio hospital who had nursed him back to reasonable good health after his **last** serious accident. One day we will share an article that was written up in the town's newspaper. At this point, Bill R., we thank you for sharing with us and pray that your gratitude continues....it has for some years now. On the day of the accident as he was being examined in the hospital, there seemed to be no hope. Bill has been a lot of help to a lot of us. Thankful for members like Russ C. also, who sent us the beautiful article published last month on "Roy's Palm"....The group that was started on the beach in Sarasota, Florida. We hear from these folks from time to time and enjoy each little note we receive from them.

Now, if that wasn't a 'plug' for articles • what could it be? Please let us hear from you. This month you will enjoy a description of Ron M's. visit to Russia and how well received he was.

Yes, this will be the beginning of all of the winter Holidays -we ask you to watch your calories, don't drink and go to meetings.... meantime do you realize just how many of us will be "Getting the bird this month'... **THINK ABOUT IT!**

ALWAYS • CAREFUL • TO • INVESTIGATE • OTHERS • NEEDS

THANKSGIVING

Thank You, dear God, for another day;
The chance to live in a decent way;
To feel again the joy of living,
And happiness that comes from giving.
Thank you for friends who can understand,
And the peace that flows from your Loving Hand.
Help me to wake to the morning sun
With the prayer: "Today, Thy Will Be Done",
For with your help I will find the way.
Thank you again, dear God, for A.A.

The above was a prayer that was recited to patients at Rosary Hall a long time ago. One of the nurses said good-night to the patients with this sometimes and the "Irish Prayer".

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RESENT SOMEBODY

The moment you begin resenting a person, you become his slave. He controls your dreams, absorbs your digestion, robs you of your peace of mind and good will, and takes away the pleasure of your work. He ruins your religion and nullifies your prayers. You cannot take a vacation without his going along!

He destroys your freedom of mind and hounds you wherever you go. There is no way to escape the person you resent. He is with you when you are awake; he invades your privacy when you sleep. He is close beside you when you eat, when you drive your car, and when you are on the job.

You can never have efficiency nor happiness. He influences even the tone of your voice. He requires you to take medicine for indigestion, headaches, and loss of energy. He even steals your last moment of consciousness before you go to sleep.

So, if you want to be a slave, harbor your resentments!
from an A.A. Newsletter, San Francisco

— Be a Bulletin Booster —

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BELOW ARE EXCERPTS FROM THE 1987 CONFERENCE ADVISORY ACTIONS OF THE 37th GENERAL SERVICE CON- FERENCE:

It was recommended that:

32. The following statement regarding A.A.'s primary purpose be available as an A.A. service piece.

THIS IS A CLOSED MEETING OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

This is a closed meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous. In support of A.A.'s singleness of purpose, attendance at closed meetings is limited to persons who have a desire to stop drinking. If you think you have a problem with alcohol, you are welcome to attend this meeting. We ask that when discussing our problems, we confine ourselves to those problems, as they relate to alcoholism.

33. The following statement regarding A.A.'s primary purpose be available as an A.A. service piece.

THIS IS AN OPEN MEETING OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

This is an open meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous. We are glad you are all here-especially newcomers. In keeping with our singleness of purpose and our Third Tradition which states that "The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking," we ask that all who participate confine their discussion to their problems with alcohol.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

ESSENCE OF GROWTH

Let us never fear needed change. Certainly, we have to discriminate between changes for worse and changes for better. But once a need becomes clearly apparent in an individual, in a group or in A.A. as a whole, it has long since been found out that we cannot stand still and look the other way.

The essence of all growth is a willingness to change for the better and then an unremitting willingness to shoulder whatever responsibility this entails.

As Bill Sees It
reprinted with permission of A.A.W.S.O.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

TRIVIA

1st issue of the Bulletin printed October 1942.

November 1942: 24 hour telephone answering service started for calls for help. Six telephone numbers were listed • three on the west side and three on the east side. These phones were listed in the phone book under A.A. Associates and as Alcoholics Anonymous. These were paid for by the Central Committee of A.A.

Next time: You will read happenings in 1944 and 1945.

MALE MID LIFE CRISIS

It is true that the day comes when a man realizes his dreams and ambitions of youth are not going to come true. He is not going to be president or director of his company. He has been working thirty years and what has he got? The same old bills he says. His wife has gone to work and is not as interested in him. His children as teenagers go out the back door when he comes home.

In A.A. we call it the pity pot. Yes, it is a time for inventory. It is a time to be grateful for what you have. Not to be resentful for what never happened. It is a time to list the good things in your life and to hang in there. Yes, the young seem to be passing you by. But there are many young A.A.'s who need your help and experience as an A.A. sponsor. Maybe your teenagers are stepping out and trying their own wings but there are many youths in their twenties with bent wings from booze that need you.

I had my mid life crisis at fifty. I told boss, wife, and sister where to go. I was drinking. We can handle crises when sober but not when drinking. I was on a downhill ride landing in a halfway house. One more step down and I would be a street person. With the help of A.A., I was able to put myself together again. Thanks.

Ralph W.
A.A. Friendship Group

★★★★★

CHRISTOPHER WHO?

Columbus is the only man on record who didn't know where he was going when he set sail. Didn't know where he was when he got there, and didn't know where he had been when he got back, but still escaped the reputation of being an alcoholic.

If A.A. paid no further dividends than to get us out of that haphazard, confused and distorted way of living, it would be enough.

Now at least you know which end is up.

Eye Opener

★★★★★

Non-Alcoholic?

DID YOU KNOW ? ? ? ? ?

There's enough alcohol in the popular new "non-alcoholic" beers and wines to kick a recovering alcoholic off the wagon, warns an expert. 'A recovered or recovering alcoholic who drinks any of these products is playing with fire,' says Dr. Nicholas Pace.

By law, these drinks can have up to 1/2 of 1% alcohol, enough to rekindle an alcoholic's thirst for booze, says Pace, the medical director of an outpatient alcoholism treatment center in New York City.

He adds that they also pose a lethal threat to alcoholics taking the drug Antabuse to make alcohol unpalatable.

WINNERS

In business I had the opportunity to talk to many top executives of large corporations. The thing that impressed me is they seemed like very mild men. My impression was they should be very dynamic and driven men. I decided that on the way up the corporate ladder they had eliminated their competition and now that they were in the top office, they were extending the olive branch of peace.

I now know that thinking was incorrect. "BLESSED ARE THE MEEK AS THEY WILL INHERIT THE EARTH." Yes, Crusaders/aggressors change the world. But the survivor who hangs in there, wins, and reaps the benefits!

Take It Easy. One Day At A Time.

R.W.

Friendship Group

★★★★★

BLESS US...EVERY ONE

There is in every group of human endeavor at least one who is against everything and everybody. God puts them there - to give all of the rest of the Group a chance to practice Tolerance, and Patience, and Kindness, and Understanding, and Love.

★★★★★



"Let me know when you take your inventory. you'll need my he/p!"
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IT WILL HELP YOU AND IT WILL HELP US.



Published by
Cleveland Central Committee of A.A.

946 Rockefeller Bldg.
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Cleveland, Ohio 44113

Vol. VI-No 3

1007 SCHOFIELD BLDG., CLEVELAND, OHIO

December, 1947

SUBSCRIPTION PRICE \$1.00 PER YEAR

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Holiday Spirit

Many AA's are subconsciously dreading the approaching holidays when **conviviality** and an exciting spirit of good will generally prevails, and the temptation to be "one of the gang" again will be great. When good friends, aware of our weakness as well as the fact that we have joined AA, ask us to join them in taking "just one" for old times' sake insist that surely ONE wouldn't hurt us. It's then that all the secret doubts assail us. **Certainly** we deserve a little relaxation after all these months, years of abstinence. We'll take just this one and then stop. We won't take another.

If your convictions are weak and your desire to be a "regular fellow" (in the old misguided interpretation) is strong, you'll be a pushover for this form of temptation. Forgotten will be the misery and trouble which was your lot when you were a fellow-traveler in that company. Forgotten will be the mental suffering which was your lot, because the circle you traveled in had relegated you to the limbo of the lost, the undependable, **unreliable**, anti-social crackpot who shouldn't be associated with because you couldn't drink like a gentleman or a lady. Forgotten will be the joy which you found in your deliverance. Forgotten will be the pleasant sensation of newly-acquired self-respect which could demand and command the respect of others.

When we let our guards down-when we relax in our vigilance and permit self-pity and envy the privileges of others to enter into our minds, we tend to minimize the seriousness of our position when we first embraced the program. We lose respect for the potency of drink. Overconfidence in our will power and neglect the complete observance of all the steps, carelessness in observance of the daily plan of turning our lives over to the care of Him and then to obey Him, **all tend** to cause us to gamble on the consequences.

We have weathered five holiday seasons and we have seen many casualties each year. The answer is always the same-they let their guards down. The regrets and the misery with the attendant loss of self-confidence makes the recovery and return to AA many times harder. Alcoholics mostly are inclined to be resentful of criticism and in their self-condemnation often times **resist** sincere efforts of members who come, not to criticize, but to help. But the erring brother or sister disturbedly reads condemning motive in every visitor's mind.

So let's face these holidays with the right spirit. What is the reason for celebrating Christmas? You may have forgotten it, but it is to observe the birthday of Christ, the deliverer of mankind. Christ, whose coming brought hope and happiness to a troubled world. Christ, whose teachings are infallible and whose example is our guide to behavior if we want to live with our neighbor in peace and harmony. We call ourselves Christians. Let's act like Christians during this holiday season, and let our Christmas truly be a joyous one.

Merry Christmas

Star of Bethlehem

The star of Bethlehem that led the wise men to the stable brought into the world the knowledge that it is more blessed to give than to receive. The truth was unfolded in the life of Him whose birth the star proclaimed. It should be unfolded in the lives of each of us. **Some** men have persisted since that day in following the old ways. They have devoted their energies, physical and mental, to the total exclusion of the spiritual, to getting as much as they could for themselves. The net result has been that they have never found the peace which the festival of Christ's nativity epitomizes.

Only those who have followed the star in their personal lives have discovered the great truth. Among them are the members of Alcoholics Anonymous who have learned that the Christmas spirit is not the narrow calendar sense of the term is a year-long and a life-long philosophy.

What this means was recently stated by famed Dillet Freeman in words upon which we could not improve:

'What is the spirit of Christmas? It is a sense of the wonder of things. It is the spirit of faith in life. It is the sense of the joy of living. It is the spirit of good will. It is the Christ spirit in man.'

Not until we obtained with God's help the gift of sobriety did we possess any sense of the wonder of things. Not until we gave serious thought to and put into action the precepts of the Twelve Steps did we give any thought to others, have any faith in life and experience the real joy of living.

But this gift cannot be coveted in private. It cannot be enjoyed alone. It is not a tinsel-wrapped trinket to be placed in a closet and taken out to be admired only on occasion. It can be possessed only if it is shared with others. Title to it is lent and leased to us on

Greetings

For all men, Christmas is a season to rejoice that, of old time, there came into the darkening world a Great light. We of Alcoholics Anonymous, with our own eyes, have seen that Light. By it we have been infused and reborn. May we ever cherish this, God's infinite gift of Grace; may we lovingly remember the words, "Peace on Earth, Good Will to Men."

Speaking for world-wide A.A., we at your Service Center wish every one of you and yours a very joyous Christmas.

Bill and Dr. Bob.

this condition.

At this Christmas season, with the new year approaching, the time is propitious to take stock of the custodianship. Have we shared this great gift as much as we should? Has the spirit of Christ in us been active, causing us to be humble, as tolerant and as thoughtful of others - their weaknesses, their problems, their happiness - as we know we should have been?

None of us has done as well as we could. Someone has said that "the loveliest part of the Christmas celebration every year is the renewal of the remembrance on the part of men that Christ still lives in them." All of us can celebrate by such a remembrance this year.

We can rededicate our title to the gift of sobriety by the firm resolution that with God's help, in the year ahead, we will help others to sobriety. We can do so by keeping alive throughout the year the real Spirit of Christmas by making over our persons' lives, by demonstrating that it is more blessed to give than to receive.

The wise man of today follows the star of Bethlehem to the manger which is the source of the happiness we enjoy. He does it every day. He finds room in the inn of his heart for Christ to enter. As he renews his daily faith by saying that "Christ is born in me this day. Hallowed be his presence within me."

Happy New Year



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Harry D., Founder and Editor 1692.1968

Vol. 46 December 1987 No. 3

District Office (216) 241 - 7387

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, December 1, 1987 • 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:

FLORENCE PIERCE, founder of Wednesday Nite Dinner Group, a member of A.A. for approximately 10 years.

MIDGE SKILTON, a very active member of A.A. with 19 years of sobriety in Alcoholics Anonymous. Her home group was the Tuesday Mentor Group.

WILLIAM E. ROLL, an active member of A.A., active in AA groups that meet at Stella Maris and attended many meetings in the Parma area.

THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE

THY WILL BE DONE

If you were to chase each particular care, and each particular fret, and each sorrow, you would have business on hand for the rest of your life; but if you can rise into a higher state of mind, these cease to be annoyances and cares. Ninety nine parts in a hundred of the cares of life are cured by a single salve, and that is "Thy will be done." The moment a man can say that, and let go, that moment more than ninety nine parts in a hundred of his troubles drop away.

Author Unknown

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

EDITOR'S DILEMMA

Getting out a journal is no picnic.

If we print jokes, people say we are silly.

If we don't, they say we are too serious.

If we clip from other magazines,

we are too lazy to write them ourselves;

if we don't we are stuck with our own stuff.

If we make a change in the other fellow's article,

we are too critical.

If we don't, we are blamed for poor editing.

Now, as like as not, someone will say

we swiped this from some other source.

WE DID!

ALWAYS . CAREFUL . To . INVESTIGATE . OTHERS . NEEDS

DISTRICT OFFICE CORNER

Since there are not many things **new** in A.A., we have taken advantage of that privilege again, using the Front Page of this Christmas issue with **exactly** the same message that was imparted forty years ago (December 1947) in our Central Bulletin.

Thanksgiving, I'm sure, manifests itself in all of us during the month of December as well as November-the month we use for Gratitude month. We all have to know that whether fortune has smiled at you at all during the time any of us have been in A.A. - we have so many other things that make for a better Holiday for all of the family - **just because** we are in A.A. All we need to do is remember that we are experiencing progress every day we are in A.A. even though it doesn't come about **immediately** as so many members think it should. Just hang around and let yourself get seasoned in this program and it will be easier, in the future, to understand all of this. This might be the reason that you read the same message in the Bulletin that you can remember reading before. There are times that they slip in on us without our being aware and, then again, they are repeated to reinforce one of the messages we had published in the past.

Now - comes the "gimmies", , , We think it is a shame that more of you do not cooperate with us and provide us with some local material. this has become somewhat of a crusade but it seems the more I ask the less I receive. What are your thoughts on this? Perhaps, you could make your reply through an article in the Bulletin thus giving us a hand.

December is the month that the last Reminders are sent out on the pledges you and your groups have made during our 1987 Fund Drive Campaign. If you have noticed - we sent them out in June, September and December. We know that there are many who request us to bill them on a given date but there is no way we can honor your request in this manner. There are too many things coming up to do each day that makes it impossible. If you wait until the very end of December to send in your payment, we would not receive the mail until the first days of January which is a beginning of a New Year for us and your payment will be shown on our reports as "Contributions received from previous year". We are quite pleased with the response we always get from our members when we have the Drive . you have all been kind enough that we can list the amounts after the Fund Drive and find that we usually have not just met our goal but have exceeded it. This does not mean that we receive all the money pledged - many times circumstances are such that pledges made cannot be paid; however, we do have a high percentage of payments - all Gratitude

Another reminder to you: If you would like your group anniversaries listed in the Bulletin, please try to get them to us before the 15th of the month.

Holiday time brings us around to wishing you, wherever you are, a special Merry Christmas. Meetings and more meetings might be necessary for the newcomer during this season of the year to maintain your Sobriety - all of us here will be praying for you. What you need to remember if anyone should ask if you would care for a drink is to remember that a "drink" means any beverage-not necessarily alcohol. **THINK ABOUT IT!**

STAYING IN TOUCH

I've noticed that something happens to some of us after the first years of sobriety. We become dissatisfied. We begin to find fault with the meetings and the people at them. We want more.

We find other things to do with our time. After all, it's been some time since we had to think about not drinking and we reason that we don't need meetings to stay sober.

Besides, after all my hard work, I deserve a break. With all this sobriety, isn't it time to be normal?

This line of reasoning should flash **DANGER**, but we have a disease that tells us we're not that sick.

It is surely right and good that we should get to the point that we want to do more with sobriety than just go to meetings. I believe that our Higher Power has allowed us sobriety so we can become useful, active members of society. But left to myself and my disease-thinking I will soon believe that my answers are "out there"!

No matter how many 24 hours I've been sober, I need to come back to hear the message that my answers come through working the Twelve Steps.

An important point I think we sometimes forget is that we owe our lives to AA. The grace of God through the Fellowship of AA has blessed me with the option to live and join the human race. I can begin to give back a little of what was given to me by doing my share to make sure the meetings are there for the next suffering alcoholic. By passing on what was given to me, others can have the option to live.

If I'm not at the meeting **that** progress can't occur and then, I believe, we are all at risk. Let's not cheat ourselves and the Fellowship in pursuit of some delusion we call "normal" life. We have a disease that progresses even as we recover, so I doubt we can ever be truly "normal",

If we're having trouble accepting that, then it's back to Step One and more meetings.

Isn't that what we'd tell the newcomer?

Courtesy of SILVER STREAK
Las Vegas, Nevada

Be a Bulletin Booster

WAKING UP SOBER

I asked, "Why am I still sober when three of my young friends died, tragically, drunk?"

One of my dear Irish AA's answered, We must be willing to listen, as only the dying can hear."

Thank God that when I arrived at the doors of AA in Ireland, I was so sick that I took every word as gospel. desperation made me do what the members told me to do; they weren't in the business of suggesting. They said, "Stay away from the first drink, and pray if you can." When I said I couldn't get a job in "my field": they answered that "my field" had been not to work at all • "Get a job": they said, "and later the career will come." I wanted to talk about all my other problems, but I was told that the only problem I had was alcoholism and that everything else was a situation. And these kinds of answers gave me a strong foundation in sobriety.

After I had lost everything through drinking • including husband, home, mind - they told me that being sober was the full reward and everything else was "icing on the cake." After one year's sobriety, I was still living on my own and had experienced very little material gain. But I was contented. When I hear new members complain about the things they don't have to, I thank God for the people who gave it to me straight. One said, "When you wake up sober in the morning, you better believe that's the best you're going to do all day." Rough stuff, but so true.

I'm three years sober now, very much in the grace of God, the Fellowship of AA, and my own efforts. When things get tough, I remember being told that my standards of toughness are behind me-drinking all day, crying all night, suicide attempts-and that whatever I'm feeling now is a marked improvement.

I was so frightened when those three AA friends picked up the first drink and died that I wondered, "Is it only a matter of time before this happens to me?" But by going to many, many meetings, I have learned that if I continue to do as the program tells me, I will be sober all the days of my life. There's a catch to dying sober: First we have to live sober.

P.M., Toronto, Ont., Oct. 1980 GRAPEVINE
Reprinted with permission of AA GRAPEVINE, INC.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

PRIVILEGED PEOPLE

I saw that I had been living too much alone, too much aloof from my fellows, and too deaf to that voice within. Instead of seeing myself as a simple agent bearing the message of experience, I had thought of myself as a founder of A.A.

How much better it would have been had I felt gratitude rather than self-satisfaction • gratitude that I had once suffered the pains of alcoholism, gratitude that a miracle of recovery had been worked on me from above, gratitude for the privilege of serving my fellow alcoholics, and gratitude for those fraternal ties which bound me ever closer to them in comradeship such as few societies of men have ever known.

Truly did a clergyman say to me, "Your misfortune has become your good fortune. You A.A.'s are a privileged people.

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TOLERANCE OF BELIEF

Dear Friend . . .

As you can well imagine the eternal Destiny of my soul is of grave concern to me.

In my travels and studies I have learned there's 30,000 different beliefs, each firmly believing theirs is the right and only way. Now common sense alone tells me that they can't all be right.

So please don't ask me to embrace your belief as the odds are 30,000 to 1 that I will choose wrongly. I cannot take that chance. I ask God each morning in my meditation to guide me and I **choose to live by the Golden Rule**. At the end of life's journey, I'm sure the heavenly Father will understand why I didn't choose your way with those great odds facing me. Being a loving, all forgiving Father, he will surely believe me.

I have earnestly asked my creator to show me the way and now that I've found it, grant me tolerance enough not to try and shove it down your throat as I wouldn't want you to shove your belief down my throat.

Thanks for you tolerance.
Your Friend . . .



TRIVIA

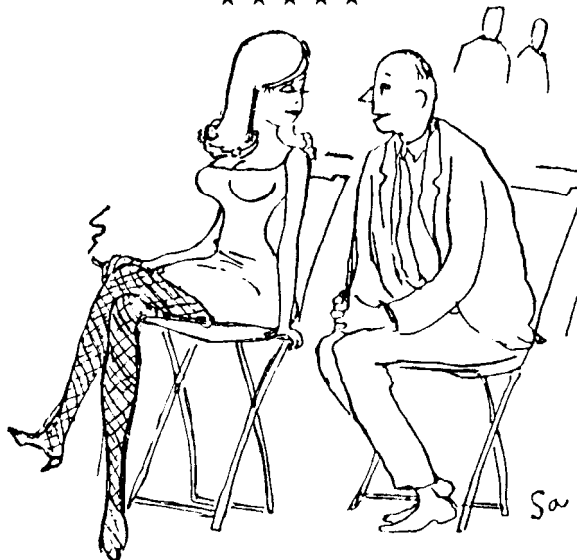
December, 1944: Talk of opening office with a paid Secretary.

January 1945: First Committee for Office; Jack D., Paul J., Charles D., Dr. F. F., and Cliff B.

200 members contributed \$3,600.00 with assurances of more to come when office opened.

February 7, 1945: Office opened in Williamson Bldg., Phone Cherry 1 - 7387. Secretary was Mrs. Laverne Hawkins, non A.A.

March, 1945: Laverne Hawkins resigned and John Hilliard, A.A. member, took over.



"I'd be happy to listen to the exact nature of your wrongs"

SECRET FORMULA FOR SUCCESS

I didn't stop being compulsive when I stopped drinking. I early became obsessed with the idea of devouring every word the General Service Office, AA World Services, Inc. and Works Publishing ever printed.

Thus I came to know our co-founder Bill W. posthumously.

He told me many times in his writings, his "hidden" formula for success in this Fellowship. In, *As Bill Sees It*, the wording goes: "Honesty with ourselves and others gets us sober, but it is tolerance that keeps us that way."

Years later, I was to learn from a man who spent countless hours in our AA archives at GSO that Bill arrived at this formula in a moment of high stress and low tolerance. After Bill had addressed at length a session of the first Yale School of Alcoholism Studies, a wise guy in the back of the crowd spoke up. "This is all very good, Mr. W," he said. "But could you condense your program into a single sentence for us?"

Gripping the lectern, Bill responded through clenched teeth, "Honesty gets us sober, and tolerance keeps us sober."

The effect on me of repeated readings of this formula was riveting. At once, I set out with a will to make myself tolerant. I sought tolerance with the passion of a desperate quest. The obvious fields for my impassioned search were philosophy, theology, and humanistic psychology. It seems now as if I read more than a hundred books in the six months I spent on this fruitless quest.

Oh, it worked - up to a point. But intolerance in others, especially AA's continued to trip my trigger. Then at a meeting, I was given a gift of inestimable value: a surefire, cognitive method to achieve tolerance.

A man who had spent fourteen years sleeping on benches and under bridges - a real low-bottom drunk whose IQ **was** perhaps half mine - was the instrument through which this gift was delivered. He said simply, "I learned early on in this program that I can't be grateful and intolerant at the same time."

Gratitude is the attitude I can **choose**.

My friend taught me a lesson in tolerance that I pray I will never forget. He also taught me something about humility. When the student is ready, as Bill used to say, the teacher will appear.

W.D., New Hampton, Iowa

ARE YOU PLANNING TO MOVE?

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