



THE TWELVE STEPS

1. We have admitted we were powerless over alcohol . . . that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him*.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we have harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

THE TWELVE TRADITIONS

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

BROKEN CIRCLE

Drinking is the hardest job in the world; I didn't die drunk and go to hell like some drunks, but I ended up with an enlarged ego and it was like an egg, of no use until busted. My love for the bottle had drawn me into myself. My world was a narrowing circle. My interests shut off my friends. I received sympathy from no one. My soul was squeezed dry. I was a miserable creature, living in a strange and miserable world. Self-conscious, self-centered, thinking only of myself. "That was spiritual death."

After I got into A.A. the circle was broken and I was free to make my own choice and bring my soul out into the sunlight where I can now bathe in the sweet waters of serenity.

H.T.B.-Central Bulletin July 1966



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

Harry D., Founder and Editor 1692-1966

Vol 46 January 1988 No. 4

District Office (216) 241 - 7387

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, January 5, 1988 - 8:00 p.m.

OLD STONE CHURCH - PUBLIC SQUARE
CLEVELAND, OHIO

All Group Representatives Welcome
Be Informed

LOVE

Like many others when I was out in the drinking world, I was always the misfit and reject. I wanted to love people but I was afraid of being rejected again; and the more I was rejected, the more angry and belligerent I got. It wasn't until I came into A.A. that I found love.

At first I hated everyone and I was afraid that maybe you would reject me too. One man who sat in the back of the room, would make comments and I would wonder what he was all about. I didn't like much but curiosity had the best of me, so I started talking to him. He told me how he had been rejected all of his life and how he had hated everyone too. He shared with me the many things that transpired in his life and how a group of misfits and rejects, like himself, taught him a way of life that he wouldn't trade for anything on this God-given earth.

I've been sober for a little over a year now and I love this man more than anyone or anybody. I love him because he never rejected me and he loved me when I couldn't love myself. I found true A.A. love.

J. K., jr.
Berea Saturday

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

BARRICADES GO DOWN

I have had some marvelous moments in the past two years and ten months. Last May, I took my A.A. bride to Northern Ireland (what a place for a honeymoon!), where we arranged to attend a meeting in Dungannon, County Tyrone. We didn't know what to expect, being aware that practically all organizations in the North were split because of the present political-religious strife.

Imagine our pride when we discovered that with A.A. it was business as usual. There they were, Protestants and Catholics alike. No rupture in the group. Just alcoholics banded together to combat their common disease. **What a fellowship we have!**

T. McG.
Grapevine-June, 1974

From the Editor:

Happy New Year

The Bulletin for this first month of the new year will not have a District Office Corner or the Trivia Topic.

The Editor is not on the job for this issue as a snowy day accident on the way to work December 2nd landed her in the hospital with a broken left hip and wrist. This resulted in a total hip replacement keeping her out of the office.

On December 11th Imogene's husband Art had a lung removed so rather than being at the helm, she is at home convalescing with her husband.

Quite an uncomfortable beginning for the New Year but you certainly have the love of a very happy couple who had a lot of prayers offered on their behalf.

The January issue of the Bulletin has been put together by the office staff and a great team of printers who wanted to make sure the "Bulletin went to Press."

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

PUBLIC FORUM

TO THOSE THAT MAY HAVE FORGOTTEN

**THE NEWCOMERS
THE REGULARS
THE OLD TIMERS**

We have all been through the ordeal of our first meeting. But do we remember what it was like? If you do, I am glad, because that is what a FIRST TIMER NEEDS. Someone who remembers and knows what it takes to help a FIRST TIMER return and become A NEWCOMER/A REGULAR.

And for those of us who may have forgotten: Lean back, relax, close your eyes (if need be) and as I continue reading, let's remember together.

Walking into our first meeting may have made us feel frightened, angry, embarrassed, shamed and yes, maybe even alone.

Now what was it that made those feelings start changing:

1. A welcome handshake.
2. My name is . . . what's yours?
3. Would you like a cup of coffee?
4. Welcome to the group.
5. We're glad you're here.
6. Idle conversation, even about the weather.
7. A hug.
8. it's nice to have new people in the group.

These may have been some of the things you heard when you came through the door for the first time. Let's not forget how much it meant to us. Because . . . we need the FIRST TIMERS as much as they need us! ! !

**THE NEWCOMERS
THE REGULARS
THE OLD TIMERS**

Phyllis C.
Friday Night Hillside A.A.

OUR GREATEST DANGER: RIGIDITY

This is my 18th General Service Conference - the first two as a director of the Grapevine and A.A.W.S., followed by four as a general service trustee. In 1972, I rotated out completely, only to be called back two years later as General Manager of G.S.O., the service job I held until late 1984. Since the 1985 International Convention, of course, I have been senior advisor. This is also my last Conference, so this is an emotionally charged experience.

I wish I had time to express my thanks to everyone to whom I am indebted for my sobriety and for the joyous life with which I have been blessed for the past nearly 25 years. But since this is obviously impossible, I will fall back on the Arab saying that Bill quoted in his last message, "I thank you for your lives." For without your lives, I most certainly would have no life at all, much less the incredibly rich life I have enjoyed.

Let me offer my thoughts about A.A.'s future. I have no truck with those bleeding deacons who decry every change and view the state of the Fellowship with pessimism and alarm. On the contrary, from my nearly quarter-century's perspective, I see A.A. as larger, healthier, more dynamic, faster growing, more global, more service-minded, more back-to-basics, more spiritual-by far - than when I came through the doors of my first meeting in Greenwich, Connecticut, just one year after the famous Long Beach Convention. A.A. has flourished beyond the wildest dreams of founding members, though perhaps not of Bill himself, for he was truly visionary.

I echo those who feel that if this Fellowship ever falters or fails, it will not be because of an outside cause. No, it will not be because of treatment centers or professionals in the field, or non-Conference approved literature, of young people, or the dually-addicted, or even the "drug-gies" trying to come to our closed meetings. If we stick close to our Traditions, Concepts, and Warranties, and if we keep an open mind and an open heart, we can deal with these and *any other* problems that we have or ever will have. If we ever falter or fail, it will be simply because

of us. It will be because we can't control our own egos or get along well enough with each other. It will be because we have too much fear and rigidity and not enough trust and common sense.

If you were to ask me what is the greatest danger facing A.A. today, I would have to answer: the growing *rigidity* - the increasing demand for absolute answers to nit-picking questions; pressure for G.S.O. to "enforce" our Traditions; screening alcoholics at closed meetings; prohibiting non-Conference-approved literature, i.e., "banning books"; laying more and more rules on groups and members. And in this trend toward rigidity, we are drifting farther and farther away from our co-founders. Bill, in particular, must be spinning in his grave, for he was perhaps the most permissive person I ever met. One of his favorite sayings was "Every group has the right to be wrong." He was maddeningly tolerant of his critics, and he had absolute faith that faults in A.A. were self correcting.

And I believe this, too, so in the final analysis we're not going to fall apart. We won't falter or fail. At the 1970 International Convention in Miami, I was in the audience on that Sunday morning when Bill made his last brief public appearance. He was too ill to take his scheduled part in any other convention event, but now, unannounced, on Sunday morning, he was wheeled up from the back of the stage in a wheelchair, attached with tubes to an oxygen tank. Wearing a ridiculous bright-orange, host committee blazer, he heaved his angular body to his feet and grasped the podium - and all pandemonium broke loose. I thought the thunderous applause and the cheering would never stop, tears streaming down every cheek. Finally, in a firm voice, like his old self, Bill spoke a few gracious sentences about the huge crowd, the outpouring of love, and the many overseas members there, ending (as I remember) with these words: "As I look over this crowd, I know that Alcoholics Anonymous will live a thousand years - if it is God's will."

Bob R-reprinted with permission
1986 General Service Conference Report

— Be a Bulletin Booster —



SOBER UP WITH A PILL?

Yes Virginia, you can sober up quickly with a pill! Hoffman-LaRoche, the Swiss drug firm responsible for bringing Valium and Librium to market, has successfully tested a drug known as Ro 15-4513 on laboratory rats. When the drug is injected into rats who are so drunk they are flat on their backs, the little guys can pop up two minutes later completely sober. Sounds too good to be true, doesn't it?

The company has decided to cease and desist all work on Ro 154513. Why? The company concluded that it might do more harm than good by encouraging alcohol consumption. **Our hats are of to Hoffman-LaRoche for its decision.** God only knows drinkers and alcoholics alike would buy the stuff if it were available.

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PRACTICING A.A. PRINCIPLES

Around the tables, after a while, you realize that you must get on with the business of practicing A.A. principles. You have been exposed to the ways others have done it; now you must do it. To me, the only musts in A.A. are those immediately following "I": I must not take the first drink, I must serve. All the A.A. expertise about recovery is worthless to the alcoholic unless he applies himself, through action.

Recently, I was impelled to reread "Doctor Bobs Nightmare" in the Big Book. These two sentences appear on page 181: "But if you really and truly want to quit drinking liquor for good and all, and sincerely feel that you must have some help, we know that we have an answer for you. It never fails if you go about it with one-half the zeal you have been in the habit of showing when you were getting another drink."

Driving home up my street in the early evening, I spy a figure stumbling along, trying to determine house numbers without his glasses. I know how far he has to go to reach my house. I stop, roll down the car window, and hail him. He slithers over, wiping his mouth and mumbling, "I'm so sick and I need wine. Please help me." I give him some money and direct him to a nearby grocery store that has the cheapest wine around.

Two weeks ago he sat marveling at his seven months without a drink, his longest span of continuous sobriety in the last forty years and the longest in the seven years that he had been coming to A.A. But then he needed sleep and got a free-clinic doctor to give him sleeping pills. When and why he lost the zeal for sobriety, I don't know. Why did it happen to him and not to you or me.

Indeed, why any of us should be enjoying the beautiful A.A. life is a mystery. I don't know about the rest of you, but I didn't do anything to deserve it. One thing I do know: As long as I don't take the first drink, and as long as I try Dr. Bobs way - devoting a little more zeal to my A.A. - life keeps getting better.

Grapevine-June 1974

★ ★ ★ ★ ★



"Please let me know when I've exceeded the minimum daily adult requirement." Reprinted from GRAPEVINE

HOW IT WORKS

Utter confusion, misery and pain
Humiliation, remorseful, ashamed;
Dreading to face the light of each day;
Not wanting to hear what people would say.

Like where is your will power, where is your pride;
They don't understand that deep down inside
I wish I knew the answer to give,
And how to find the courage to live.

I had taken the pills they told me I should;
I tried all the cures but they did me no good.
I made many promises and meant them too,
But the compulsion to drink is stronger than you.

One day a friend happened to say:
"I know the answer I can show you the way;
All it takes is an open mind;
Believe what you hear from your own kind!"

I went to a meeting. They read Chapter Five.
The steps made more sense. Hope was revived.
I saw living proof of what faith can do.
It worked for them; why not you?

One day at a time they told me to live;
They said, "easy does it and learn to forgive;
Be humble, be honest and help when you can;
Pass on what you learn to some other man."

I heard them repeat the serenity prayer,
And soon learned all my answers were there.
Now, when someone asks. "Can miracles be?"
May I always reply, "Take a look at me."

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

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

ARE YOU PLANNING TO MOVE?

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

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IT WILL HELP YOU AND IT WILL HELP US.



DR. SHOEMAKER IS REMEMBERED

Memories of early A.A. shared

To have a full appreciation of the outstanding individuals who devoted their lives to shaping the foundation of A.A., one should read Mrs. Shoemaker's book, (I Stand By The Door.) Her recollections are priceless.

She was a loyal supporter of her husband, Dr. Samuel Shoemaker, and often actively participated in his work. Indeed, we are fortunate to have an opportunity to share her experiences through an interview which took place in her home in October, 1986.

This is the first of three articles extracted from the interview, and deals with what is probably the first meeting of Bill W. and Dr. Shoemaker.

In the early '30s, Dr. Shoemaker was operating a rescue mission on East 23rd Street in New York City. Prior to that time no one did very much for the alcoholic. With the organization of the rescue mission, if an alcoholic reached the "bum state" perhaps he might at least have some hope of being rescued.

So it happened with Bill W., known on Wall Street as a brilliant trader and an affable man but with the proclivity for alcohol.

One night in the early days of Dr. Shoemaker's mission, Bill W. was out on the town going from one saloon to another on Third Avenue. Soon he was joined by his buddy, Erich The Finn. They ended up in a terrible state in the gaslight district on East 23rd Street.

Suddenly they spotted a brightly lit sign that read, "To Mend Men's Broken Souls." For some reason, in their intoxicated condition, this sounded interesting and they paused for a moment in the doorway to savor the artful music being pounded out on a tin pan piano.

Finally they decided to endure the smell of stale sweat and cheap varnish and entered this foul smelling place to see what was going on.

Strange as it may seem, there was good work going on inside. Bill W. and Erich The Finn liked what they heard. Various men talked about being saved from sin and drink as they went forward to weep at the mourners' bench. Bill W. thought, "This seems pretty good. Maybe I ought to do it too."

He went up to the mourners bench, knelt down and had what appeared to be a perfectly genuine experience. By this time he had lost Erich The Finn. No one ever knew what happened to him. Bill continued to preach about his experience until a friend gave him a cup of coffee and put him to bed.

Bill was awakened the next morning and told he should leave and go to work; that he had been converted the night before - converted to Christ; and had promised to never take another drink. Bill W. reaffirmed his promise not to take any more drinks!

Out the door and up the street he went - high, wide and handsome due to his previous night's religious conversion - and proceeded to celebrate his experience by visiting several bars.

In his exuberance, he called his long-suffering wife, Lois, and told her about his conversion. Lois was a little dubious. How many times had she forgiven him and bailed he out of trouble. How easily she recognized that Bill again was higher than a kite!

It was during a number of visits by Bill W. to the Calvary Mission that Dr. Shoemaker's acquaintance was made. The Doctor's advice was sought and he made significant contributions to the written formation of the Twelve Steps of A.A.

Hugh C., Chairman Archives Committee
WAIA Reporter

ACCEPTANCE

And acceptance is the answer to all my problems today. When I am disturbed, it is because I find some person, place, thing, or situation - some fact of my life unacceptable to me, and I can find no serenity until I accept that person, place, thing, or situation as being exactly the way it is supposed to be at this moment. Nothing, absolutely nothing happens in God's world by mistake. Until I could accept my alcoholism, I could not stay sober; unless I accept life completely on life's terms, I cannot be happy. I need to concentrate not so much on what needs to be changed in the world as on what needs to be changed in me and in my attitudes.

From Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book
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 PHONE: (216) 241-7387

Harry D. Founder and Editor 1892-1968

Vol. 46 February 1987 No. 5

District Office (216) 241 - 7387

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, February 2, 1988 - 8:00 p.m.

OLD STONE CHURCH-PUBLIC SQUARE
 CLEVELAND, OHIO

All Group Representatives Welcome
 Be Informed

THE ANNIVERSARY SPACE HAS BEEN EMPTY FOR QUITE SOME TIME. IF YOU WOULD LIKE YOUR GROUP'S ANNIVERSARY ANNOUNCED IN THE BULLETIN, PLEASE LET US KNOW BY THE 15th OF THE MONTH

THIRD LEGACY MEETING OF N. E. OHIO GENERAL SERVICE

Sunday, February 28, 1988 2:00 p.m.
 St. Joseph's Church, State Rt. 44 & Pioneer Trail
 Mantua, Ohio (1 mile South of Rt. 82)

13th ANNUAL: NORTHEAST OHIO MINI-CONFERENCE

March 18 - 19 - 20

Harley Hotel, I-71 & Bagley Rd.
 Middleburg Heights, Ohio

For further information contact N.E. Ohio General Service

IN MEMORIAM

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

Sister M. Victorine, Not a member of A.A. but a long time supervisor of Rosary Hall. Sister Victorine worked closely with Sister Ignatia in the care and understanding treatment of the alcoholic who still suffered. She will be missed.

THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE

TRIVIA

June 9th and 10th, 1945 the 10th Anniversary of Alcoholics Anonymous was celebrated here in Cleveland, Ohio. At this time several articles requesting support of the District Office had been in the Central Bulletin.

In August, 1945, it was agreed **absolutely** that no roster of A.A. be used for mailing purposes **-only** to communicate with Group Secretaries.

DISTRICT OFFICE CORNER

Happy February 1988! Very glad to be able to sit in front of a typewriter again to have my visits with you.

Number One on the Agenda this month, rightfully is The January issue of the Bulletin. My thanks again for our office staff **and** our printers. . . I thought the first page was quite a meaningful way to open the year - not only was it the first issue of the New Year but there **was no** way we could escape the 12 Steps and Traditions. Then on page 3, the article "Our Greatest Danger: Rigidity" which was a report given at the 1986 General Service Conference. If you who receive the Bulletin read your Bulletin, you will know how very much this has to do with our program of A.A. today. This is also why I wish our readers who had received their copy of the Bulletin for one year through a group raffle or a gift for leading a meeting would renew their Bulletin when they receive their expiration notice. We would have more meaningful questions asked at our Committee meetings. People who have been members of A.A. for as number of years or who are so well versed that they can stand up and recite chapter and verse from the Big Book - do not necessarily have a total hold on what A.A. is all about. Meetings, meetings and more meetings - we encourage-we know this is how a lot of us stayed sober but when asked a question about our Fellowship, they cannot answer it. It totally baffles some long-time members that the District Office cannot come out to a group and oversee an election, kick the present secretary out of office in a group that doesn't seem to be doing things as other members would like to see them done, this list could go on and on and our name has been kicked around a lot because these members, whatever their length of sobriety in the program, are not too well acquainted with our 12 Traditions. Please bear in mind, we are only Trusted Servants and can only make suggestions. If a group is having internal problems, then the members of the group can take the matter in hand through a group conscience meeting. If it is a personal matter between individuals - they should be dealt with by the individuals, keeping their A.A. group out of it. There are a number of examples that could be cited but the freshest one in my memory is a party who has a number of years in A.A. and is looked upon as a good A.A. member who made a pledge to the District Office during the last Fund Drive and when his reminder was sent out - returned it saying we had not been able to help them when three of them came to the office and asked us to intervene for them as a group. Then they added "What good is the District Office anyway?" This is just one - but there are many, many more similar to this one. I was so appalled, I just had to mention it. Really, there are times, that I lower my head in shame as I listen to some of the remarks that are made. We are O.K., You are O.K. - I think we could all learn a lesson from time to time through just listening to ourselves.

As reported in the January Bulletin, my husband, Art, and I did not usher in the New Year under the best conditions, but we are both recovering now and we both know that the prayers that were offered for us by our fellow members, whether they knew us personally or not had a lot to do with the way things turned out for us - not discounting our doctor's expertise. The cards from groups,

the many messages and flowers we received were enough to lift our spirits and be thankful for what we have. I am presently at my desk at home doing this as we are both still dragging ourselves about the only way we know how "One Day at a Time". In my particular case, all those who were taking care of me at Luthern Medical Center, knew of the concern on my mind about my husband who was in Cleveland Clinic. I had kept pretty much up-to-date on his condition but because he had all of his preliminary tests before entering the Clinic, he was at the hospital every evening visiting with me. Actually on the day of his surgery, we were mentioned at each report time as shifts changed and I had as many questions asked by the staff as I did from friends and, of course, I knew that if the surgery were longer, he had a much better chance. There are days that we are a little down -that is human and natural but we have had to learn such things as patience and tolerance. With two recovering alcoholics under the same roof who struggle with the simplest things when this is not our pattern, you can imagine.

On to the business at hand. this is the time of year that the office is getting things ready for the Intergroup Dinner and the annual Fund Drive that is held during the month of March - so there is no time for mischief or very much small talk between employees. It is 'nose to the grindstone' time along with the phone calls . . .the end of the day is most welcome.

It's time to close for this month - Happy Valentine's Day to all. I have no special words of wisdom that I can think of right now -just shows you that even 'mouthy' can be quiet sometimes. **THINK ABOUT IT ! ! !**

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Though she tried to please her alcoholic husband, the poor women failed regularly. Most often it was at breakfast. If the eggs were scrambled, he wanted them poached. If they were poached, he wanted them scrambled. One morning, she cleverly poached one and scrambled the other, put the plate in front of him and waited for his approval.

Glancing with bleary eyes, at the plate, the hung over husband snorted, "You scrambled the wrong one."

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

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HAPPY NEW YEAR

As we enter this new year, I personally enter my sixth year of uninterrupted sobriety. I say this not braggingly but carefully and quietly.

I am **SIMPLY** going to keep on keeping on. I've seen bumper stickers stating, **'THINGS HAPPEN:** and **'I CAN COPE!** It's funny but the older I become and the more time I acquire in the Program I realize these are more than words on paper. We're telling **LIFE** here.

An old-timer in A.A. once told me that **LIFE** is merely a series of twenty-four hour coping periods. Some good, some not so good. Some of us live life hoping for something better the next moment. They are missing the point - they are missing **LIFE!**

I don't live life **EXPECTING** the next moment to be **DIFFERENT** - I simply try to make this moment **DIFFERENT.** If it weren't for my **SOBRIETY** I wouldn't even care! I live different, therefore I am different. And you wanna know something? **IT'S GREAT.**

God bless you, one and all. . .and. . .

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Bill Z.
Fresh Air Friday

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

REMINDER: At the Advisory Committee Meeting which will be held at the Old Stone Church on Monday, January 25, 1988 - the ticket raffle for the Intergroup Dinner will be held. If any group or members do not announce this important meeting at your group - the District Office will have tickets you can take on consignment or purchase - ticket price \$15.00 per person.

On Monday, February 29th, the Captains will have their kick-off meeting for the 1988 Fund Drive Campaign. **REMEMBER,** the Month of March is Fund Drive Campaign month.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

GRATITUDE

Everyone must agree that we AA's are unbelievably fortunate people; fortunate that we have suffered so much; fortunate that we can know, understand and love each other so supremely well.

These attributes and virtues are scarcely of the earned variety. Indeed, most of us are well aware that these are rare **gifts** which have their true origin in our kinship born of a common suffering and a common deliverance by the Grace of God.

LET US BE TRULY THANKFUL

FROM "As Bill Sees It"

reprinted with permission of A.A. World Services

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

The local lush had been sent to a rehabilitation unit for treatment. Upon his return, a friend asked him how it had been there.

"Terrible!" he replied, "For weeks I lived on nothing but food!"

THANKFUL FOR ANOTHER CHANCE

Victim tells hospital staff near-fatal accident changed his life

Bill doesn't remember much about the night of June 18, 1970. But he does vaguely recall nodding off at the wheel and waking up just in time to see a large truck bearing down on his car. He remembers saying "Uh oh."

Other things - a state trooper performing an emergency tracheotomy, a priest giving last rites, the smell of wet plaster - float through his memory.

Bill, 60, recalled the event while in Warren Friday for a reunion with Trumbull Memorial Hospital staff members who took care of him following his near fatal accident. On that warm June night 17 years ago, Bill, an industrial salesman from Cleveland, was on his way from Detroit to a steel mill in Sharon, Pa., via Warren. He said he had had a few drinks and was tired from partying the night before.

"I was taking a shortcut across North River Road when a state patrolman stopped me for not dimming my lights. I passed the balance and coordination tests and he sent me on my way."

"I must have dozed off somewhere down the road, and when I opened my eyes, I was on the wrong side of the road, and a semi was headed straight at me. Ironically, the same patrolman who had stopped me a few minutes earlier was the one who arrived in time to do a tracheotomy to keep me from drowning in my own blood."

After being extracted from the wreckage, Bill was rushed to the emergency room at Trumbull Memorial Hospital. X-rays and examinations there revealed his injuries: crushed ribs, a broken shoulder, three fractured vertebrae, a crushed pelvis and right leg, a punctured lung, a broken jaw, missing teeth, an almost severed right arm and a compound skull fracture. In addition, the right side of his face and nose had been ripped away, tearing the right eye from its socket, and he had been scalped.

A priest was called. So were doctors. During the rest of the night and into the morning, the doctors labored to repair what the emergency room labeled **a total body smash.**

His eye was removed and his face and scalp sutured. Smashed and broken bones were wired, pinned and set. His arm was saved. Teeth were replanted and his jaw wired shut. Finally he was put in traction.

"About all I remember is hearing someone say 'Better hurry Father, he doesn't have much time.' and later the smell of the wet plaster cast," Bill said.

Long, painful days in Trumbull Memorial's Intensive Care Unit followed the surgery - days he contemplated suicide. His wife was permitted to see him only 10 minutes out of each hour.

"It was hard. After three months of tender loving care at Trumbull, we were finally able to move him to St. Vincent Hospital in Cleveland. He was there for a year and later had 23 reconstructive operations of his face," said Mrs. R.

On the first anniversary of the accident, Bill sent a "thank you" card to the hospital and reported his progress, a practice he has maintained throughout the intervening years.

After his latest letter arrived, the Director of Nursing invited him to have a reunion with six women still on the

staff who had cared for him in 1970. During the reunion with nurses, stories of his recuperation, many of them humorous, were told.

Bill recalled falling out of bed while trying to reach for a bed pan and colliding with a food cart while gliding through the halls on a gurney. "I remember pulling out my trach tube and putting my finger over the hole so I could yell obscenities in the middle of the night and saying 'Why not?' when an orderly dropped a traction weight on my good foot and chipped a bone in my ankle. I remember thinking I would never get into bed again, if I ever got up," the former patient said.

"You were quite a handful," said one of the nurses.

In spite of all the pain and suffering Bill endured during those many months, he believes the accident and injuries had a purpose and changed his life for the better.

"It was a turning point. I had been a heavy drinker and previous been in eight or nine accidents. Fortunately I never hurt anyone else but me and my cars. After this one, I joined an organization that over the past 15 years has taught me not only how to be sober, but how to live sober - one day at a time. "I'm retired now and I frequently tell my story to high school students and let them take a look at my scars. I support organizations such as MADD 100 percent. Not enough can be said for them," he said.

Bill said that during the days following the accident, he thought many times that he would die. He still lives one day at a time, but he says not one day goes by that he doesn't thank the Trumbull Memorial Hospital staff for their efforts in saving his life.

Sorry Bill, we did a lot of editing so we could print your story in the Bulletin.

Mary Lou Reese

The Tribune Cronicle , Saturday, July 25, 1987

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.

ARE YOU PLANNING TO MOVE?

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

Name _____

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City _____ State _____ Zip _____

IT WILL HELP YOU AND IT WILL HELP US.



FUND DRIVE CAMPAIGN

The month of March is Fund Drive time every year for the A.A. Cleveland District Office. During this month you will have a member of A.A. calling upon your group to remind you and to ask for your Group contributions and will also have individual contribution slips so that all will have a chance to pledge whatever they can so that we can keep our office doors open.

Most contributions are made out of gratitude for our sobriety. Even though we have a lot of members who do not call the District Office for help initially, if they are attending meetings, then Alcoholics Anonymous is helping these members, also - if you have ever found it necessary to call our office either for information or complaint - you have made use of our services. The Cleveland A.A. District Office sells literature to members of A.A. and the Groups to display on their tables so that a new person can take it home free of charge and find answers to some of their questions by doing so; the office also supplies A.A. speakers to non-A.A. groups, schools, hospitals or anyone interested in having a speaker. There is no charge for this service as we have some willing A.A. members who make it a point to accept whenever they are called upon for such a task. We have found that the A.A. message carried into the schools has helped a number of students who have a problem themselves or might have a parent or other member of the family who needs help. We would like to have more members contact us who would be willing to be on our speaker's list. In the last several years the request has mostly been for younger speakers for the schools especially, feeling that the students can better identify.

The number of groups in our area are growing by leaps and bounds. We do not keep any statistics as to how many members we have nor do we keep any record of success rate. We pray that anyone who calls for help and is contacted will make their call to us the beginning of a more worthwhile life, understanding that alcohol interfered in more ways than they realized. We respect the anonymity of the caller and always any A.A. member realizing that A.A. is so important that it is 50% of our name.

We hope that you welcome the member who will be calling on your group. This is our method of funding while, in other areas, they do not follow our pledge policy. We have had A.A. Intergroup and Central Offices from all over asking us to share our system with them. Ours is one of the approved means of getting the office support so that, sometime down the line, a child or grandchild of ours who find that they need help-the doors will open for them.

★ ★ ★ ★ 1

SOME 4th STEP THOUGHTS

When I first came on the program, I knew that the 4th Step was going to be an important part of my recovery. I heard enough people talking about how getting straight with themselves and facing up to those character defects which were potentially dangerous to them was vital that I was convinced. The problem is that I inherently don't like to look backward, especially at unpleasant things, and I, therefore, persuaded myself that the 4th Step was a major undertaking and needed more time than I had available, NOW.

Two things have happened to change this attitude of mine. First, I remembered the rule of "20/80", common to just about any line of business, which states that about 20% of your customers account for about 80% of your business - and it doesn't matter if you make something, sell some service or even collect taxes. So I said to myself that if a weekend retreat might turn up 20 defects, then if I could just find the 4 most important ones, I would have a handle on 80% of the problem and, since we are never going to be perfect, dealing with those 4 could constitute a 4th Step for me. I settled on ANGER, FEAR, GUILT and RESENTMENT.

The second thing that helped me whittle the 4th Step down to where I could deal with it, was the statement by my sponsor that I could tackle this character defect problem TODAY by simply writing down one of them on a sheet of paper with the opposite across from it (i.e. "FEAR-FAITH") and then making a conscience effort the next day to practice the opposite of the defect. I believe that the 4th Step does not seem so terrifying if I will just identify the 20% of my defects which are causing 80% of the problem and then look them in the eye, one by one, on a daily basis.

Tony I?, Lake Forest



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Harry D., Founder and Editor 1892-1968

Vol. 46 March 1988 No. 6

District Office (216) 241 - 7387

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, March 1, 1988 - 8:00 p.m.

OLD STONE CHURCH - PUBLIC SQUARE
CLEVELAND, OHIO

All Group Representatives Welcome
Be Informed

GROUP ANNIVERSARIES

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

SOLIDARITY GROUP - 32nd ANNIVERSARY

Sunday, April 3, 1988 Doors open 2:00 p.m.
Speaker 3:00 p.m. Dinner 4:00 p.m.

SPEAKER: Bob Terlak, Garrettsville, Ohio

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

WEDNESDAY NITE UNITY - 10th ANNIVERSARY

Saturday, April 9, 1988 - 3:00 p.m.

SPEAKER: Larry Van Dusen, Berea Men's Group

IN MEMORIAM

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

Ann Crow, 42+ year member of A.A. in the Youngstown, O. area and also in their Intergroup. Ann was known almost everywhere as she always was "where the action was":

Swift "Tom" Wright, Laurel Group with 3 years of sobriety.

Otto Dlugos, 42 years sober in A.A. A very grateful member of the old Euclid Wade Group

THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE

1st NATIONAL AA MEN CONFERENCE

April 15, 16, 17, 1988

Holiday Inn - 7230 Engle Rd. - Middleburg Hts., OH 44130

THEME: "A NEW ERA"

Call the District Office for details

TRIVIA

December, 1945 - Budget for operating the office for one year set at \$8,000,000

November, 1946 - Budget \$10,500.00.

December, 1946 - Decided that a committee of 20 would contact groups for finance. 10 on east side and 10 on west side.

DISTRICT OFFICE CORNER

MARCH ALREADY??? Yes it is and Hi everybody - my name is Imogene and I am a recovering alcoholic. I have had to do a remote on this column for a couple of months due to my accident but I am back trying now. Even though I can do a pretty good job of walking without it - I did return to my desk on February 10th with my cane in hand. It offers security and can be of great help after sitting a long time in preventing my staggering as I get up to go to the coffee pot or whatever. (God forbid, that should happen here).

I have just been thinking about the number of A.A. members who have left our area but are continuing their A.A. in various parts of the country and world. Upon my return, I found that another of our members and subscribers to the Central Bulletin presented us with a 'change of address' card. Jackie W. is leaving us and she will be missed probably by all of you because she contributed some nice articles for our Bulletin. Here in our area she will be missed because of her willingness to serve as a good A.A. member. We have a long list of ex-Clevelanders and ex-area, who even though they have moved, still subscribe to the Central Bulletin. One such member is Jack M. who is now living in Florida and has been a continuous subscriber, writes us that his wife, Billie is ill. This is a couple that have lengthy sobriety and were very active here. Jack and Billie were members of the Parma Saturday Group and well-known by many of us because of their active involvement in 12 Step work. We wish Billie the best and will remember her in our prayers. All of those who have moved away and are still taking the Bulletin and drop us a line now and then are folks that believe in showing their gratitude to our Cleveland A.A. That is our interpretation anyway.

I am quite anxious to get to this part. It refers to IRS and the changes all of us are dreading we will have to face when we file our income tax - so naturally, any time I see something on this, I **have** to read it. On Valentine's Day the Sunday Plain Dealer had an article headed: **Medical deduction savvy antidote to new tax 'bites!** Surprise of all surprises **Number One** on the list of things you can deduct costs for are: 'Alcoholics Anonymous 'dues', transportation to meetings, and treatment at a center for drug abusers and alcoholics, including costs for meals and lodging. But only 80% of the meal costs may be deductible". Personaly, I was amused by this and the word that began my giggle was the word **'dues!** Now we all know there are no 'dues' or 'fees' for A.A. membership but **everyone doesn't!** We don't carry any cards to identify us but we do go to meetings and most of us, when we can, put money in the basket so that **that** meeting will still be there when we want to return next week. I don't believe that there has been a year gone by since I have been in this office that some poor member of A.A. has been called in for an audit and they have been told they were not allowed to take deductions. We believe there is a reason for this - as stated above **everyone** doesn't know. One example - you don't know who your examiner will be. You see, there are some who know what we are all about and the examiner sitting just across the aisle might tend to believe more in his/her own thinking - that we just have

no will power and will not accept that alcohol is a recognized disease. So - a fellow A.A. member who actually took more deductions (padded a little here and there), has his return examined and breezes out leaving you still sitting there trying to explain.

Isn't it just another one of those things in A.A. that we can't call coincidence? This article couldn't have been more timely as the month of March is our Fund Drive Campaign time when you and your group will be approached, making an appeal for your pledges and contributions to the District Office so that we can keep our doors open. There are no demands made of you - whether you give or not is your own decision BUT I will tell you one thing - if you are called in for an audit and can produce an acknowledgement from us that you, in fact; contributed to your District Office according to our Tradition of being self-supporting through our own membership - it will be much easier for your examiner to believe the explanation of your deductions. It doesn't have to be a large amount - only \$5.00 marked paid could be the very thing that would get you out in less time. Of course, not one of us, ever tell anything but the truth, right? Like in five days, we attend 30 meetings and contribute to the collection at each one? Honesty, my fellow A.A.'s is what it is all about - now that we are in A.A.

Before I close for this month - one more thing - your explanation would be more convincing if, when you go to IRS, you do not have alcohol on your breath. . . **THINK ABOUT IT!!!**

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

According to B. J. of Lock Haven, Pa., a couple of hunters dressed completely in red were having quick ones in a bar last fall, when a middle-aged dame walked in to make a phone call. On her way out, she noticed the hunters and asked the bartender why they were dressed in red outfits. "it's a state law," he told her. Cried the lady, "What a great idea! I think all states should require drunks to wear red".

Thank you to Grapevine with permission of A.A. Grapevine, Inc.

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A "STEP" MEANS MOTION

For me A.A. is a happy program. This is a happy life, and there is no connection or circumstance that could be more attractive than living the A.A. life, to the best of my ability. Because of the joy of being alive, and a member of society, I pray continually for the courage to surrender my will, so that even greater bliss may come to me.

They told me to take out of meetings what I liked, and leave what I didn't like. How am I to know that something I dislike to hear happens to be exactly what I should be hearing? I must take everything I hear, whether I happen to like the sound of it or not.

Most of the things I heard in the beginning were unacceptable, and much of the spiritual talk was uncomprehensible. The very things I rejected in the beginning, I now accept with eagerness and joy. Just suppose that I accepted and practiced only those things that pleased me.

I have heard some strange and interesting distortions of this program, and if the advocates of these odd ideas (many of which appealed to me) had not gone and gotten themselves drunk, I perhaps would have tried to practice many of my old games, while claiming membership in Alcoholics Anonymous. I would be dead.

How does a newcomer differentiate between a person who is really in A.A. and one who is still "phony". Indeed how can an old timer tell?

Well, one thing we need to exercise is our conscience. If a speaker advocates promiscuity, with the claim that A.A. is concerned only with sobriety, I must examine this thesis. Perhaps I would like to indulge in promiscuity. Here is a self-proclaimed example of the success of this way of life. Since I "like" this idea, shall I accept it, and reject another comment which spurns this idea?

On the other hand, a speaker emphasizes the spiritual life and growth, with a recommendation that we must clean up our lives. I don't like this, but I'd better accept this, or I'm a dead drunk. So, lets examine some of those stale, trite, meaningless, possibly harmful phrases.

Another is "easy does it". . . Misinterpreted, some of us think all we have to do is park our fanny, and God, and A.A., and the Group, and the Sponsor will all pitch in and keep us sober and straight.

The definition of the word "step" is, *to move, forward or backward*. "Easy" does not imply movement. To attain sobriety, peace-of-mind and happiness, it was necessary that I move forward toward a better way of life, while moving away from old thoughts, ideas and actions.

This movement was not "easy". "Easy" did not do it. Movement did it. Movement of mind, heart and spirit. This program is simple. It was hard while I tried to juggle my old ways, with the new. It became easy to move, when my goal became more than physical sobriety.

When we offer a newcomer nothing more than physical sobriety, we are competing with sanitariums, hospitals and institutions. When a drunk calls A.A., he has decided to explore a new way of life. Should we give him the idea that A.A. is just a breeze? We know that it is going to be a monumental task to change our lives because we have already tried all the "easy" ways to stop drinking.

your servant in A.A., jc.

RECIPE FOR LIFE

Take twelve fine, full grown months, see that these are thoroughly free from old memories of bitterness, **rancour**, hate and jealousy. Cleanse them completely from every clinging spite; pick off all specs of pettiness and littleness . . . in short, see that these months are freed from all past. Have them as fresh and clean as when they first came from the great storehouse of time. Cut these into thirty or thirty-one parts. This batch will keep for just one year: do not attempt to make up the whole batch at one time (so many people omit this ingredient and spoil the flavor of the rest), eight parts of hope, seven of fidelity, six of liberality, five of kindness, four of the rest (leaving this out is like leaving the oil out of the salad - don't do it), three of prayer, two of meditation and one well selected resolution. Then put in about a teaspoonful of good spirits, a dash of fun, a pinch of folly, a jigger of laughter, a sprinkling of play, and a cupful of good humor. Cook thoroughly in a fervent heat, garnish with a few smiles and a sprig of joy, then serve with quietness, unselfishness, and cheerfulness, and a happy year is a certainty.

★★★★★

WHO'S TO KNOW

On a dreary day two years ago I was in downtown Detroit handling some very unpleasant personal business. My plans and expectations had suddenly dissolved in the worst possible manner, leaving me despondent and alone and **"When** alone, I'm in bad company! I wanted to escape in any manner possible.

I unpacked my luggage at a local motel and discovered that I hadn't packed a toothbrush, of all things. I asked the desk clerk for directions to the nearest drugstore. When I arrived I suddenly discovered something I didn't know about Michigan drugstores -**they sell liquor.**

I found myself staring at a wall of old friends. Rows of colored glass bottles had become friends in my drinking. At the end of my drinking they were my only friends.

A thought occurred to me. **Who's to know?** I wouldn't meet anyone I knew for a couple of days. Wouldn't a little drunk help me through this time? I wouldn't have to tell anyone. Is a fifth enough, or will I need a half-gallon?

I didn't have long to think. There was a disturbance right next to me. A teenager was arguing with a pharmacist that his grandmother really needed to renew her prescription for a drug long before it was due. I was familiar with the drug. It was something I'd used as "solid alcohol" (Big Book pg. 443) when the liquid stuff was unavailable. The pharmacist knew what was going on and refused to do it. I knew too.

I bought the first toothbrush I could grab and raced back to the motel. I redoubled my efforts to get to Detroit meetings. I called my sponsor. I read the Big Book. I prayed. **And I stayed sober!**

Who's to know? That face staring back at me when I brush my teeth would know. That power greater than myself that crossed my path with the teenager would also know. **Who matters more.**

Bob M., Community Sunday

A.A. AMTRAK STYLE

Recently, aboard an Amtrak train, I missed my friends. Although it had been less than a week since my last meeting, I was really enjoying the scenic Rocky Mountains from my train window, I just felt a bit lonely for A.A. Fellowship. Maybe it was hearing the comraderie of the "Club Car Gang" when the announcement was made, "Club Car is now open for refreshments" and hearing the cheers in the background. Maybe it was my Higher Power urging me on.

Whatever, I requested the porter announce a meeting of the "Friends of Bill W." - which he did after seeking permission from his superior (and follow a brief explanation from me of the group's purpose).

So four of us met in Car A: John, a 20 year member, Jerry from Chicago, and Kay who was crying and shakily saying how desperately she needed this meeting - having just boarded the train, leaving her "adoptive Mom" in critical condition, feeling very lonely - also hearing the "fun" of the "Club Car Gang"- and then thanking her Higher Power when she heard the beautiful words "Friends of Bill W. will meet in Car A".

What a great sharing we had -what strength and support we gave each other. When we closed the meeting in the usual way, I felt a deep feeling of gratitude and a close bond between three new friends-and four people had helped each other maintain sobriety!

What a gift Dr. Bob and Bill W. gave us -the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous - **EVERYWHERE** - just for the asking - of course along with working the Twelve Steps, and a trust in our Higher Power-WHEREVER **WE ARE.**
Anonymous

★★★★★

CAN WE LEARN FROM SLIPS?

When I hear members of the fellowship discussing what they've learned from slips, my reactions are mixed.

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

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

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.



TRADITION TWELVE:

**ANONYMITY IS THE SPIRITUAL FOUNDATION OF ALL OUR TRADITIONS,
EVER REMINDING US TO PLACE OUR PRINCIPLES BEFORE PERSONALITIES.**

1. Why is it a good idea for me to place the common welfare of all AA members before individual welfare? What would happen to me if AA as a whole disappeared?
2. When I do not trust AA's current servants, who do I wish had the authority to straighten them out?
3. In my opinions of and remarks about other AAs, am I implying membership requirements other than a desire to stay sober?
4. Do I ever try to get a certain AA group to conform to my standards, not its own?
5. Have I a personal responsibility in helping an AA group fulfill its primary purpose? What is my part?
6. Does my personal behavior reflect the Sixth Tradition or belie it?
7. Do I do all I can do to support AA financially? When was the last time I anonymously gave away a Grapevine subscription?
8. Do I complain about certain AA's behavior - especially if they are paid to work for AA? Who made me so smart?
9. Do I fulfill all AA responsibilities in such a way as to please privately even my own conscience?
10. Do my utterances always reflect the Tenth Tradition, or do I give AA critics real ammunition?
11. Should I keep my AA membership a secret, or reveal it in a private conversation when that may help another alcoholic (and therefore me)? Is my brand of AA so attractive that other drunks want it?
12. What is the real importance of me among 500,000 AAs?

September 1971 Grapevine
with permission of A.A. Grapevine, Inc.

AA AA AA AA AA AA AA AA AA

**I AM RESPONSIBLE.
WHEN ANYONE, ANYWHERE REACHES OUT FOR HELP,
I WANT THE HAND OF AA ALWAYS TO BE THERE.
AND FOR THAT:
I AM RESPONSIBLE.**



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Harry D., Founder and Editor 1892-1968

Vol. 46

April 1988

No. 7

District Office (216) 241 • 7387

PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF ADDRESS CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, April 5, 1988 • 8:00 p.m.

ST MALACHI'S CENTER

2416 Superior Viaduct

North of Detroit off W. 25th St.

Cleveland, Ohio

All Group Representatives Welcome

Be Informed

GROUP ANNIVERSARIES

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Y.O.U.R. GROUP - 32nd ANNIVERSARY

Sunday, April 10, 1988 - 6:30 p.m.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

LEE-SEVILLE SATURDAY'S - 25th ANNIVERSARY

Saturday, April 30, 1988

Doors open 6:00 p.m.

Dinner 7:00 p.m.

Lead 8:00 p.m.

IN MEMORIAM

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

John Kish, 31+ year member of A.A., member of the Brooklyn Group

Mike Miltner, 34 year member of AA, helped start Y.O.U.R. Group.

Katherine Pinkney, 15 years sobriety, member of Lake County Women.

Our sympathies also to our members who have lost loved ones • our prayers are with you

THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE

TRIVIA

February, 1947 - Office moved to Schofield Building. Johnny H. resigns • Crawford K. Wright accepted position as Office Secretary.

February, 1948 - Bulletin states that the Cleveland Office was the second office in America.

March, 1948 - Mentions Ass't Secretary named "Vee".

REMINDER

All holders of consignment tickets for the May 7th Intergroup Dinner should have tickets and/or money for tickets returned to the office by April 15th.

DISTRICT OFFICE CORNER

Greetings A.A. all over spring is here already-we have positive proof. As I sat down to type this column I noticed we have a light snow falling with some accumulation promised! You know what they say about Cleveland weather!

The month of March was the **real** beginning of our busiest time of the year in all departments as the Fund Drive for the Office was held and now the many pledges, payments, etc. need to be credited and acknowledged. Hopefully we will have them all completed a little earlier this year. Sometimes the initial posting is just finished when it is time to send the first reminders.

Well, fellow A.A.'s-I have returned to work- the accident still has left some reminders and I do have to be careful and, by the end of the day, I know I have been here eight hours.

It hurts my heart to report what I am going to report next. I bow my head in shame for the actions of some in the program who claim many years of sobriety - now I need to ask seriously, "**What is Sobriety?**" This **is not** sobriety as promised to me when I came into this program and I am sure that many newcomers to the program have had their hopes shattered by the happenings here - but then, what do they say about the young and their innocence? It is our hope in the District Office that many have made their entry into A.A. searching **and finding** a "New Way of Life" and are determined enough to 'believe as children' who live in a world of no hurts and no discrimination. We have some subversive influences working against Your District Office and operating in a way that might remind some of the old tar and feather days. We are taught through our Traditions "Principles before Personalities"! . . .this is a factor but a small one-if it were just that, things would be simpler. I have learned and tried to practice in **my** program and in my present position not to dignify criticism, either good or bad. What is happening here is something far more serious-they are threatening the health of A.A. in our area and this is where we need the support of all who recognize that they are benefited by being A.A. members. This particular segment of A.A. has requested a special meeting of the Advisory Committee which is our right under our Constitution and By-laws that govern the District office. The Operating Committee has responded to that request and have set a date of May 12th for that meeting. In a way of explaining further- most of the groups and names contained in the letter requesting the meeting had been placed there without their consent-it is all so sad. The whole matter prompted by a few whose years of being in A.A. total over sixty years. You will notice that I mentioned "years in A.A." not "years of sobriety". The meeting has been granted, the time has been set so we would hope that, until that specific time, these people show some consideration and not disturb meetings of the Committees that are upcoming. This month we will have the meeting announcing the 'success' of our Fund Drive Campaign and the Intergroup Dinner. Since this column is prepared a little in advance of April 1st in order that you might receive your Bulletin early in the month-we have the annual election meeting coming up so I am also including any interference at that meeting.

ALWAYS • CAREFUL • TO • INVESTIGATE • OTHERS • NEEDS

Former Cleveland A.A. members who now live elsewhere in your retirement or for whatever reason you are no longer in our area-perhaps you can join us in our efforts **not** to hurt A.A. in our Cleveland area and permit us to continue to hold our heads high that we were fortunate enough to find the Fellowship before all was lost. We would appreciate a line or two letting us know your views.

Well-just about enough of giving too much time to a bad situation-we have our work to do. We are here to answer the call for help and take **all kinds** of phone calls. In our area, our staff takes care of all the calls for help along with the literature, taking care of the books and all the other things we do-as I said earlier-this is our busiest time.

We have asked many times for articles to be submitted to our Central Bulletin but I suppose it is not easy to put into words all that we feel. We do get some offerings that tend to take us away from our purpose in our Spiritual program and we need to pass them over so that religion itself does not enter the picture and reassure you that A.A. is for people **with** a God and also for those **who have no** God. **THINK ABOUT IT!**

Imogene Z., District Office Secretary and Editor of your Central Bulletin

★★★★★

EASTER THOUGHTS

An alcoholic is like an egg. Inside of him, he is in a hard shell. Inside that shell, he is a gooey mess. Inside that mess, he is yellow, like the yolk. This egg rolls into A.A. and is greeted by the Mother Hen (a Power Greater than himself) who will sit on him and give him the warmth and support that he urgently needs.

After a period of time, this egg fertilizes-the shell **breaks**-and a new life begins. **HAPPY EASTER!**

Chuck B., Helpful Group

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REASONS FOR LIFE

I don't know how to say it, but somehow it seems to me That maybe we are stationed where God wants us to be That the little place I'm filling is the reason for my birth, And just to do the work I do, He sent me down to earth, If God had wanted otherwise, I reckon He'd have made Me just a little different, of a worse or better grade. And, since God knows and understands all things of land and sea, I fancy that he placed me here, just where he wanted me. Sometimes I get to thinking, as my labors I review That I should like a higher place with greater things to do; But I come to the conclusion, when the envying is stilled, That the post to which God sent me is the post he wanted filled.

So, I plod along and struggle in the hope, when day is through, That I'm really necessary to the things God wants to do; And there isn't any service I can give, which I should scorn, For it may be just the reason God allowed me to be born.

★★★★★

FEAR

Millions of years my ancestors faced the saber toothed tiger. It was either fight or run. They experienced FEAR and ran-that is why I am here! Fear protects us and warns us.

"Economic fear of insecurity will leave you". All my life I never doubted that I would have money. Not rich, but enough for home, family and car. I thought I deserved that as a right from society. How wrong I was! I lost it all due to the illness of **Alcoholism.** Now have a healthy fear of the knowledgait could happen again if I returned to drinking. I now live more cautiously and reasonably. I don't go for the Big Job or the Big Charge Cards. I go to A.A. meetings to try to keep my life in balance and try to enjoy living a sober life.

Ralph W.

★★★★★

TOWARD PARTNERSHIP

When the distortion of family life through alcohol has been great, a long period of patient striving may be necessary. After the husband joins A.A., the wife may be discontented, even highly resentful that A.A. has done the very thing that all her years of devotion had failed to do. Her husband may become so wrapped up in A.A. and his new friends that he is inconsiderately away from home more than when he was drunk. Each then blames the other-BUT-

Eventually the alcoholic, now fully understanding how much he did to hurt his wife and children, nearly always takes up his marriage responsibilities with a willingness to repair what he can and accept what he can't. He persistently tries all AA's Twelve Steps in his home, often with fine results. He firmly but lovingly commences to behave like a partner instead of like a bad boy.

OVER 40 BILLION PROBLEMS SERVED

Says the A.A. Preamble: "Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety." Remember? You should. We usually read it aloud at the beginning of every A.A. Meeting.

But lately at discussion meetings, after the chairperson finishes some qualifying remarks, he or she pauses, then asks, "Who has a problem to be discussed?" This despite the fact that we are all there to try to solve our "common problem" — alcoholism! — "and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety." And we have just stated it in so many words.

May I inspire you with a few of the earthshaking "problems" I've heard introduced at recent discussions? No? Well, that's too bad. Please extinguish all smoking materials and fasten your seatbelts, Because I'm about to do just that. Here goes.

Lola wants to talk about her overwhelming fear of heights. Caligula hates Ma Bell with a passion; when he gets a wrong number, he is fond of beating up telephone booths. And Mad Morris well, the judge awarded his wife a divorce and his pickup truck at the same time, and what's a guy gonna do? And then there's Irving, who wants a constitutional amendment to do away with all holidays. They make lonely people lonelier, says he.

The phenomenon is not merely local; it is widespread. I'm told the current thing is to awaken people to their "personhood"; try to get them "in touch with their feelings"; encourage them to "ventilate" their emotions, because they have a perfect right to their "space." Well, this li'l old country boy has no quarrel with that. Hop to it do your thing. (just don't bug me with it, please.)

I've observed some members, disgusted at this departure from the A.A. program, get up and walk out. Some don't return. The pioneers of our program experienced many attempts to expand (read "dilute") the purpose of Alcoholics Anonymous, but they didn't quit — they hung in there. Where would we all be today if they had left in a righteous huff? So don't swim away from your life preserver. Because — we need you.

My overriding concern, however, is with the fact that the hours spent solving the problems of Ma Bell and her attacker, Lola's acrophobia, Mad Morris's pickup truck, etc, usually end up with no one telling us **how to go one day without a drink!** And it seems to me that's what Alcoholics Anonymous meetings are all about — or should be. How come we're suddenly the McDonald's of psychiatry? (40 Billion Problems Served!)

F.L., Bangor, Me.

excerpt from "Best of the Grapevine" (pp. 227 - 229)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

A.A. members had been requested to bring male hounds to a fox-hunting party. One long-time member, however, owned only a female, and out of courtesy was permitted to include her. The pack was off in a flash and soon completely out of sight. The confused hunters stopped to ask a farmer in a nearby field, "Did you see some hounds go by here?" "Yep," said the farmer. "See where they went?" "Nope," was the bemused reply, "but it was the first time I ever saw the fox running fifth!"

A.A. IS MY FULFILLMENT.. .

A.A. is sobering up one more time than I got drunk. It is fellowship with others who have done the same things I have; who have known despair and remorse, as have I; who have experienced that awful urge to take a drink but who have said, as I have, "Not today."

A.A. is an end to my lies and excuses and alibis. It is breaking the shackles of self-pity, self-deception and self-loathing. It is saying, honestly and realistically, "Booze got me here. Not the bad breaks. Not anyone else. Just me and too many drinks, too often."

A.A. is loving the world I awakened to today. It is my reflection in the mirror, clear-eyed and calm. It is keeping an appointment at eight o'clock in the morning! It is living just for today.

A.A. is the acceptance of things and people and situations I can't change. It is courage to change what I can. It is the search for wisdom to know one from another.

A.A. is warmth derived from sharing strength and hope and experience with another alcoholic still suffering. It is life with depth and purpose.

Used with permission from AA World Services.

Copyright Grapevine, Inc., October 1968



"No, I've never tried AA. But if it's got alcohol in it I'm sure I'd like it."

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IT WILL HELP YOU AND IT WILL HELP US..



TRADITION EIGHT

**Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever
nonprofessional, but our service centers
may employ special workers.**

Spiritual as it is, A.A. remains very much of this world. Tradition Eight, like the Seventh, focuses on a vulgar five-letter word that isn't actually mentioned in either — **money**. Many of us have had to explain to some cynical prospect, "No, I'm not a social worker. I don't get paid for talking with you. I'm doing it because it's the best way to stay sober myself!"

This does not mean, of course, that the idea of turning professional has never entered any A.A.'s mind. In the lean years, Bill W. did think of becoming a lay therapist, to earn money through his experience in helping alcoholics. But, with a strong nudge from the group conscience, he soon realized that he could never hang out a shingle reading "Bill W., A.A. Therapist, \$10 an Hour!" It became clear to the early members that no A.A. should ever ask or accept payment for "carrying this message to somebody else, person to person face to face."

But new questions arose as membership grew and the word of hope spread, sending thousands of alcoholics in search of A.A. The first intergroups or central offices were usually manned by A.A. volunteers; now, most offices are so busy that full-time employees are needed as well. Naturally, A.A.'s are better suited to such jobs than are non-members — but are these A.A.'s then being paid for doing Twelfth Step work? No. . . In the office, they are paving the way for this work. Arranging to get a sick drunk into a hospital, telling a shakey newcomer where the nearest meeting is tonight, they are helping to make it possible for the alcoholic to hear the message "person to person and face to face".

A similar development has taken place at the Fellowship's "headquarters". Once a tiny office for one co-founder (Bill) and one secretary, it has grown into the present General Service Office, fully staffed, with a big **mailroom** keeping the lines of communication open throughout A.A. worldwide. The employees, both A.A. and non-alcoholic, are paid on a scale comparable to that in profit-making enterprises, so that the office force can function dependably. And the A.A. staff members are in exactly the same position as the A.A. intergroup employees. Suppose you drop in at G.S.O. one day when you're in New York. A staff member who pauses to chat with you may have been working on next year's Conference or corresponding with groups in your home area, helping them to carry the message more effectively. For that, she is paid with a biweekly check. But you may also hear her mention to another staff member that she is taking a newcomer to her group in the evening. For that, she is paid only with her continuing sobriety.

In these office jobs and in other assignments, members are actually paid for their business and professional skills. Working at a G.S.O. desk, on Conference approved books and pamphlets, or on the Grapevine, these A.A.'s use their abilities as correspondents, managers, writers, editors, artists, proofreaders — as well as their understanding of A.A. from the inside. On occasion, volunteers have given their time and talent to all these services, and their contributions are deeply appreciated. But what if the Fellowship decided that all such assignments should be handled **only** by unpaid volunteers? In presentday A.A. there's too great a volume of work to be done in spare hours here and there, and only the rich or the retired could afford to work full time. If we tried to find in this limited, group people qualified for particular tasks, obviously the field would be narrowed down — too often, down to nobody at all.

There would be another problem in using volunteers alone: It seems ungrateful — or, at least, it's socially awkward — to criticize or reject a job done for free. But paid jobs for A.A. get quite a going-over! Take our literature, for instance (like this Bulletin). Whatever the subject, we want to be sure that each piece expresses as clearly as possible the view of the group conscience of A.A. as a whole. So any new project must first be approved by the Conference. Once it is in process, the Literature Committee of the General Service Board keeps a careful eye on it at every stage. Frequently, drastic changes are required. The "finished" product then must be okayed both by that committee and by the Conference Literature Committee, and further revisions are often — "Now wait a minute!" some old-timer may interrupt, "What's going on here? Didn't Droctor Bob say, 'Let's keep it simple?'". . .



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Harry D., Founder and Editor 1892-1968

Vol. 46 May 1988 No. 8

District Office (216) 241 • 7387

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, May 3, 1988 — 8:00 p.m.

ST. MALACHI'S CENTER

2416 Superior Viaduct — North of Detroit off W. 25th St.
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GROUP ANNIVERSARIES

GARDEN VALLEY GROUP • 42nd ANNIVERSARY

Sunday, May 15, 1988

St. Catherine's Church Hall 3443 East 93rd Street
Doors open at 2:00 P.M. Speaker at 3:00 P.M.

LORAIN AVENUE MONDAY — 47th ANNIVERSARY

Monday, May 9, 1988 • 8:30 A.M.

Regular meeting place.

32nd OHIO STATE CONFERENCE OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

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IN MEMORIAM

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

HENRY WOMER • In A.A. over 30 years • known as the World Traveler.

EMMA LEWIS • 21 years in A.A., Very active member of the St. James Group.

JIM McCROY • Over 25 years sobriety, Active in the Bedford area..

GILBERT FELDKAMP -An A.A. member since the early 1940's. Active in the Lorain Area.

THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE

TRIVIA

March, 1950 - Office in need of money.

July, 28-29-30,1950 - First International A.A. Conference held in Cleveland.

June, 1957 - After working nearly four years, Jean Fitz quit and Norma Petrie was hired.

DISTRICT OFFICE CORNER

Welcome to our District Office Corner meeting this month of May. As I described in our last issue, spring brought an entire range of weather conditions not too much different than most of the country . . . maybe Cleveland can't carry the lead anymore in the "different weather" department.

Before we get to far into this article I want to express my thanks to **all** who • because they didn't quite understand the section concerning the health of Cleveland A.A. • took the time to call or stop in to ask questions. By this, even though we hit a snag from time to time, I would say that the health of our A.A. is still of the highest quality. We are not alone in some of the things we encounter • it seems that all District, Central or Intergroup Offices anywhere in the country run into similiar problems from time to time and need to take the position of explaining what we do and why we do it. The article we are borrowing this month had appeared in Chicago's "Here's How" and bears witness that none of us are entirely immune. There are also times when we need to "speak out" using the freedom of speech that others have no second thoughts about when they are doing the speaking.

Last month and again this month, we are sending complimentary copies of The Bulletin. This was done for the purpose of reaching more of the A.A. community than the regular subscriptions do . . . also • there is an ulterior motive. We hope that more members will be encouraged to take out a subscription. There are a lot of people coming into A.A. now who do not know that we have the **oldest** paper of its kind in A.A. We are also trying to encourage more of you to send in an article now and then. It has been my wish that, while I am still the Editor of The Bulletin, we might have an "all local" issue. Even if we just have **one**, you will see that it is possible.

Those who contributed to the District Office Fund Drive Campaign will be seeing a "new look" in your acknowledgements. Our computer is now on-line to post your pledges and print the acknowledgements. We, at the office, feel great that this is shaping up so well • a lot of time was spent in anticipation. The boys who are doing the work took the time to structure a program that would work exclusively for our needs . . . not using an already published method of accounting that would have to be moved around to accommodate **our** needs. This has taken many man hours on their part and we deeply appreciate all that they are doing for us • considering that they are in business and have other clients scattered around the country as well as our own area. Then, of course, we had to be taught how to use the equipment-to Frank and Glenn, we can't thank you enough!

FLASH!!! It looks like our Campaign was a success. The Victory Dinner that we had on the 11th of April looked like we have the victory . . . there were many Areas that did not report or turn anything in until the night of the dinner and we are still waiting for the rest to come in. A number of Areas had no representative at the dinner • so all looks well. When all the posting is done, we will report our final figures to all of you. Of course, none of this could have been possible had it not been for the generosity of

our members and the people who agreed to help as Captains over an area - some having many groups to cover and others, less. It all depends on the area. The work was done by the collectors who, when asked by the Chairman to help, did not refuse although it is not always the pleasantest of "things to do" in A. A. Our way of saying thanks to the workers is to treat them to a dinner. Many who worked chose not to attend the dinner but we couldn't have done it without "all of the above":

just think. . . a few years ago, we were all so hopeless that we thought there was nothing good left in us - **THEN WE GOT SOBER** - and things got better! We can do things now that we could have never done before. We have learned that sometimes it is necessary to walk through pain, to grieve hard and to hurt deeply in order to fully appreciate the life and laughter and love that are waiting on the other side. **THINK ABOUT IT!!!**

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

MEMORIAM

March 20, 1988

Dear Secretary:

My husband Mr. Gilbert F. passed away on February 16, 1988. He was known by many in the A.A. Group - having been an A.A. worker since the early 1940's.

He was a manager of the Christian Temple Group, and the United St John's Fellowship Group, for quite a few years. Even though I, myself, was not A.A., I helped him at the meetings because I enjoyed knowing and meeting people, and help was badly needed most of the time, because of the enlargement of the meetings in the last 15 years.

Gil was well known throughout this area and had meetings that were of great interest to many members.

I feel at this time - it would be nice if the Bulletin would remember those who worked diligently to keep the new members interested! Gil really enjoyed these meetings. I am - his wife. Continue sending the Bulletins, I do enjoy them too!

Mrs. Gilbert F.



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FEET OF CLAY

It was a blow when
her sponsor released her

My experience began with a small group of women who, with beaming faces, told me of their struggles with alcohol. They offered me hope. They seemed to carry the secret of sobriety. Maybe, I thought, they could give me the key. Perhaps they would sprinkle their "magic powder" on me, and pouf! I'd be well.

"Serene Jane" seemed to have the most of this magic dust. At that first meeting, I felt totally unloved and unlovable. This radiant person put her arms around me and showed me she cared. I wrote her a dear little note, dripping with alcoholic sincerity, asking her to be my sponsor. She accepted, and then and there I felt I had a person who could "cure" me.

For years I had sought answers through people, to no avail. But this would be different, I was sure. My sponsor would save me.

I put her on a pedestal. I almost worshipped her. But the longest I could stay sober was three weeks. Then boom, drunk again. Why didn't Jane make me well? During this time, she was planting seeds, but I gave them no water or sunshine, so they lay dormant. What she told me has deep meaning now; thank God, those seeds didn't die.

Jane repeatedly reminded me that she had feet of clay. She was buffaloeed by my drinking bouts. It was difficult for her, because in her ten years of sobriety she had never had a slip. I continued to hang on to my old ideas, and I drank.

At an A.A. meeting one morning, as I sat there with a hangover, I heard Jane announce that she could no longer sponsor *anyone*. She said she felt incapable and inadequate. I was stunned at the way she informed me she could no longer sponsor me. It made me feel terribly hurt and angry. How dare she! I had had rejections in my life, but this rejection of one alcoholic by another in A.A. seemed to be a new bottom. As a practicing alcoholic, I rode it to the hilt. Now I really had a reason to drink. My personal savior had turned me down. Poor me.

Without my knowing it then, my sponsor had released me with love for my own good. I am writing this to thank Jane for letting me go. I thank my Higher Power for the wisdom He gave her. After dropping out of A.A. and doing more research, I have been able now, through the grace of God, to find happy sobriety in A.A. Before, I had submitted to my problem with alcohol, but now I have surrendered and become willing to go to any length. and it's working, a day at a time.

The lesson I had to learn, which is essential in A.A., is to put principles before personalities. God and the A.A. principles are the main tools necessary for sobriety. Fellowship and sharing are a vital part of A.A., but we all have feet of clay, and reliance on any one person is not the answer to staying sober.

In this happy, joyful state I now find myself two years without a drink, I express my gratitude to Jane for lovingly letting me go, and helping me learn a life-giving lesson.

J. N. Lexington, Ky.
Mi-Rus

MOTHER'S DAY TRIBUTE

Dear Mom and Dad,
 The son you created, you loved so dear
 You gave me love, I gave you tears.
 You raised me up to be a man •
 I found my love in a can.
 You gave me love along the way
 I gave you hell and did it my way.
 God stepped in and took me over today
 when, from the start, through you he was showing
 me the way
 I love you more than ever before,
 I am your Son, forever more.

Love, Me

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

WHAT DID YOU DO TODAY

So you've been around for many years, helping spread A.A. You've worked like hell since you first came in, but what did you do today?

I heard your pitch, it was kind of long. You really told them how you worked the steps in '71, but, how are you working them now?

Do you still get up from your soft warm bed when someone is in trouble? Do you grab your hat and A.A. book and get there on the double?

Or have you forgotten the early times when you were sort of new. Maybe you've been around so long that A.A. is old hat to you?

Maybe you're one of the Senior Saints, sober and satisfied, and you've forgotten when you were sick and when you damn near died?

Maybe I shouldn't bring it up, maybe you're too blase. But just for the hell of it Mister, what did you do today?

Have you been around so cock-eyed long you leave it to Harry and Sam, cause you're not your brother's keeper and don't give a damn?

Maybe tonight the fights are on or you're going to the old ball game. So what the hell if the guy is sick, he has only himself to blame.

Well, Mister, you have the perfect right to work your own A.A. and you know you'll do it your own way no matter what I say.

But tonight before you go to bed just look in the glass and pray that you and the Lord know the answer to **WHAT DID YOU DO TODAY?**

from 'The Story': courtesy of
 "The Coastal Bender", January 1988
 Corpus Christi, Texas

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

A DECLARATION OF UNITY

This we owe to A.A.'s future:
 To place our common welfare first;
 To keep our Fellowship united.
 For on A.A. unity depend our lives,
 And the lives of those to come.

ORGANIZATION

Every nationally incorporated company must have a structure. An organization to survive. Whether it be a company of products or a non-profit organization such as Alcoholics Anonymous there must be one voice, one policy whether the group or territory be in Boston, Cleveland, Ann Arbor, Tampa, Lubbock, Chicago, Los Angeles, etc.

It has been a great achievement of the A.A. organization over the past fifty years that an A.A. member can go to an A.A. meeting anywhere in the USA and, yes, the world and recognize it as an A.A. meeting. Yes, the format may be different but the policies such as collection of monies by donation are the same. . .

The structure of an organization may be from the top down such as in an auto company, or in A.A. from the bottom up. The A.A. policy is the twelve and twelve book which tells us the A.A. group is autonomous on matters of forming a group, electing its format and officers. . .but it does not write policy. This is done through elected delegates who meet in A.A. conferences to make suggested decisions. The group reports or is overseen by the intergroup, the area and the central office. The group has a General Service Representative who voices his opinion to the Central office or General Service Organization. GSO is the link between the regional offices throughout the USA and the National A.A. headquarters in New York City.

It is only natural that A.A. members have different opinions especially today with so many coming from treatment centers with varying philosophies of therapy. The only constant is change. A.A. selects to change through the democratic process. There has been and always will be those who want change to satisfy their egos, go off on tangents, or add to A.A. some new fad about talking out personal relationships or some new wave thinking.

A.A. has been successful for over fifty years helping the alcoholic. It is not old fashioned. It is very current with its success and those therapies that copy us prove our success.

Let us keep A.A. in its present form by supporting the A.A. organization.

Ralph W.

ARE YOU PLANNING TO MOVE?

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

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IT WILL HELP YOU AND IT WILL HELP US.

CENTRAL BULLETIN



vol. XLVI — No. 9

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STEP FIVE ADMITTED TO GOD, TO OURSELVES, AND TO ANOTHER HUMAN BEING THE EXACT NATURE OF OUR WRONGS.

I'm always amused when some big-time mobster climbs into the witness box, casts a nervous eye at the prosecutor, and says for the fiftieth time: "I respectfully refuse to answer on the grounds that it may tend to incriminate me..."

Don't misunderstand me: thank God for the "Fifth" (Amendment not scotch). The fact that some thug abuses it is no argument for getting rid of a constitutional protection that protects us all from self-incrimination.

My amusement comes from the fact that, to those of us who belong to the mob of recovering alcoholics known as A.A., "The Fifth" means exactly the opposite: When WE "take the fifth", we confess to ourselves, to God, and to another human being who (Thank God) doesn't have to be a lawyer. In a sense, OUR "Fifth" is an earnest effort to self-incriminate. Our witness are another person and the God of Our Understanding. But WE are the judge, and WE are the jury, and WE alone are qualified to determine whether or not our confessions are valid, relevant and complete.

Just the other day, a very new person in the Program tried to convince me that "The Fifth doesn't really have to be told to another, since only I know if it's true." I had a quick answer for him, since I'd done my first Fifth Step with my beagle hound. No God, and no other person. It's true that only I (and some would say God) knew the truth-but it's also true that I knew full well that it's easy to lie to a dog.

Once I'd made that Third-Step decision to turn my will and my life over to the care of MY God, I could no longer lie to myself OR Him. It wasn't long before I summoned the courage and honesty to do my Fifth Step with God and a genuine A.A. sponsor.

The dog didn't mind, and it did me a world of good..

Jules S.
Akron Intergroup News

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Alcoholics Anonymous
Cleveland District office

May 15, 1988

Sirs:

Enclosed is the balance of my individual Pledge.

It is a small thing to contribute when I consider that the amount was a small amount spent in a single nights drinking. I am grateful for the opportunity to give to A.A. in return for what A.A. has given me.

If it were not for A.A., it is doubtful whether I would have a job, my sanity or even the ability to make a **small** contribution to A.A. The help rendered to me in addition to the above includes my health.

Although I did not "hit bottom" when I came through the doors of A.A., I was slipping quickly to the abyss. I had been at the bottom once before in my life (with minimal assistance from drugs and alcohol) and could not afford to go there a second time.

A.A. caught me before I slipped over the precipice.

In Zen Buddhism there is a story of a man chased by a tiger to the edge of a cliff. Faced by certain death if he confronts the tiger and probable death if he jumps, the man goes over the edge and catches, on his way down, a weakly rooted tree growing in the side of the cliff. With the tiger clawing at his head from above and with the small tree quickly becoming uprooted, he spots a wild strawberry growing next to the tree. With his free hand, he plucks the strawberry and eats it. How sweet it was!

Today I understand how that man felt. Because of A.A., I've plucked strawberries and, miracle of miracles, the small tree is still rooted. How sweet it is!

(Thank you, slightly edited) T.C.
North Royalton

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

Harry D., Founder and Editor 1692.1968

Vol. 46 June 1988 No. 9

District Office (216) 241 • 7387

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, June 7, 1988 — 8:00 p.m.

ST MALACHI'S CENTER
2416 Superior Viaduct — North of Detroit off W. 25th St.
Cleveland, Ohio

All Group Representatives Welcome — Be Informed

GROUP ANNIVERSARIES

TOBIN GROUP - 47th ANNIVERSARY

(Formerly Lorain Tuesday Group)

Tuesday, June 14, 1988

All Saints Episcopal Church — 8911 W. Ridgewood, Parma

★★★★★

BRUNSWICK SUNDAY — 13th ANNIVERSARY

Sunday, June 19, 1988 - 8:30 p.m.

Special Meeting Place.

St. Ambrose Church Hall
929 Pearl Rd. • Brunswick, Ohio

53rd. FOUNDER'S DAY CELEBRATION

June 10, 11, 12, 1988

Akron, Ohio

Further Information: Call The District office

32nd OHIO STATE CONFERENCE

OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

"A SHARED EXPERIENCE — A NEW LIFE"

JULY 15 • 16 • 17, 1988

Holiday Inn, 7230 Engle Road — Middleburg Hts., Ohio

For more information: Call District Office

241 • 7387

IN MEMORIAM

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

EUGENE "GENE" SIMMONS • DEDICATED MEMBER OF A.A., Secretary of the West Park Tuesday Group.

DAVID DUSSAULT • Active member of A.A. in the Lakewood Area • Home Group Monday Morning 12 Step Group.

THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE

HAPPY 5th ANNIVERSARY TO CENTRAL SERVICE — TYLER, TEXAS

In reading this issue of the Bulletin, we "borrowed" some of the articles from your Spring issue of the A.A. CENTRAL OFFICE NEWSLETTER. . . Somehow, you seem Part Family to us. . . The Editor, Central Bulletin

ALWAYS • CAREFUL • To • INVESTIGATE • OTHERS • NEEDS

DISTRICT OFFICE CORNER

Welcome all A.A.'s everywhere • it's hard to believe that we have reached the month of June already. One-half of 1988 has gone, where did it go? I'll tell you where this corner's contents went on this day. . . I am working on my word processor, a heavy rumbling of thunder shook my desk and **ZAPO!** there went everything I had entered so far. . . that means that I will have to start over and hope that I can remember just what I was saying • or • better still, be able to improve on it.

I feel it is important to mention here that the much looked forward to special meeting of May 12th is now HISTORY. Attendance at the meeting showed that most folks are pleased with their District Office and what we do. They love us just the way we are. As in all matters, perhaps it does us all some good to have a controversy now and then but certainly not to thrive on it. We are so grateful for the support our members gave us • even those of you who were away from the firing line and wrote us such beautiful messages of hope. It is my regret that I cannot publish all your kind words and thoughts but it might just prolong the difficult times. Rather, we are going to keep them all, date them and place them in our A.A. District Office Archives (if they ever get done).

I know that somewhere along here I was reporting that we have our computer on line now to add to the efficiency of the District Office in time but, just getting the first work on it means that we now have the program and are using it but our education is limited and so things will not go so fast in this, the very beginning, but will be an asset to all we do eventually. Change is a very interesting thing to observe just as it is when we remember the "newcomers" and the changes we see as time moves along. Especially, remembering that at one time we were the "new ones" • God, I hope we never forget those days and lose complete track of what we are all about.

The most important job we do in the District Office is take care of the call for help even though we must operate as a business to see that special care is taken that we don't lose track of any contributions coming in and that we continue to keep our groups informed about what we are doing. It's hard for some to look at our jobs as a business, thinking that we are getting payment for being A.A. members. This is not so. If all else were to fail • contributions, literature sales and the numerous other things we do. . . we would hold on as long as we could • even if we had to have one telephone in a space as big as a closet so that we would be here for that call for help. Our phone is ringing all day and we are answering every call. Not all calls are calls for help directly. Some are from concerned family members and friends. At this time, we give the caller the Alanon number. A lot of times we get a call from someone who is asking for a meeting to attend. . . it is then that we ask if they are A.A. or if it is for themselves. If the latter is true we try to persuade them that the best way to come in is to have an A.A. member call on them and accompany them to their first meetings as they can be very misunderstood by persons who just walk in. When our attempts fail, we then **do** give them the location of a meeting place. . . that way, we feel all is not lost. The hospitals and treatment centers are **admit-**

(Continued on Page 3)

WHAT IS GROUP CONSCIENCE?

We hear the phrase often before, during and after our business meetings, but do we really mean "Group Conscience?"

Whenever we ask for a vote on a controversial issue in our group, should this be called a group conscience vote? It can be if it meets certain criteria. Some of the things to consider before calling it a group conscience vote are as follows:

First, is the group well informed? Have both sides been heard and thoroughly discussed? Are we giving respectful attention to the minorities point of view? Many of us feel that A.A. should not engage in controversy, but our Tenth Tradition only talks about **public controversy**. The A.A. program was built on a great deal of controversy.

Second, if it is an important decision, has there been ample time for members not present to voice their opinion? Or is some eager beaver trying to push through a quick vote before the group becomes well informed? In A.A. we should be very, very slow in making changes. Except in rare cases, there should be no rush.

Third, has the vote been a substantial majority? If we have thirty-one members present and the vote is sixteen to fifteen, then fifteen resentments walk out the door from the meeting. One of the Warranties of the Twelfth Concept states: "All decisions should be reached by discussion, vote, and wherever possible, substantial unanimity.

If these three conditions have been met, then we can truly say we have listened to a loving God expressing Himself in our group conscience.

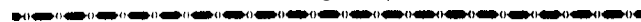
Excerpt reprinted from "Interviews"
Philadelphia Intergroup

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

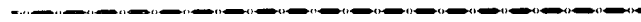
TRIVIA

December, 1957 - the Office Goal Fund Drive - \$16,000.
Office Moved

1958 - August 13th, Crawford Wright quit as Secretary of the District Office and George O'Hara started.



— Be a Bulletin Booster —



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(Continued from Page 2)

ting patients who have never had any contact with A.A. and sometimes are not informed that they should call us for a sponsor - BUT - if they go to meetings and stay sober after treatment through the meetings offering them a more comfortable sobriety - then we have another member. The only calls we count as "calls for help" are the ones that we turn over to a group so that there can be contact. In this day, when it takes the salary of more than one person to live, we cannot always reach the Secretary of the Group nearest where the caller lives and must extend ourselves beyond that area. Any call that comes into our office during the business day is taken care of before we leave the office. If we had no luck in reaching someone, we take the call home with us and see that someone gets it. We close at 5:00 p.m., an answering service takes calls and gets the name and phone number of the caller, then, at six and seven o'clock one of our members will call and get the messages that have come in. Some nights there are none - other nights they are so numerous it might take until 11:00 p.m. to make contact because members are out to meetings. From that time on until 9:00 a.m. names and numbers are taken -or the service, if it sounds like an emergency, will suggest the emergency of the nearest hospital. If it is more involved than that, the service calls me at my home and I take care of the call. I don't get too many but those I receive, I make the contact. Most of those I have received are police matters but I am available. Weekdays & Holidays, the service is called every hour on the hour from 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. A lot of "mornings after" when we return the call, we find that everything is just fine, there is no problem after all or some such excuse but the serious ones are still willing to talk to us and accept the help we can offer.

A lot of times we take abuse - if it is coming from someone who is drunk, we can take a lot and if it's coming from someone short or long-time sober, we can still take a lot. One thing we know when it comes to a drunk person - they want to talk. We give them all the time they need, not necessarily what they want. We protect the anonymity of our callers as well as all the rest.

It would be a good thing to keep in mind that if your Group has a change of Secretary they contact us so that we can have the proper information and if it is the case of someone who can't be reached during the day - maybe a member of your group who stays home most of the time would agree to make the calls and turn them over to the Secretary when he/she returns from work.

WOOPS - looks like that shock of lightening or thunder got to me. Before I begin again, I ask you -about all of the above to **THINK ABOUT IT!**

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

A drunk was hospitalized after a car accident that nearly cost him his life. Early the next morning the doctor paid him a visit. Knowing the extent of the injuries, he told the drunk that he was very fortunate to be alive.

"I guess somebody up there likes me," the drunk said. "Either that," said the doctor, "or somebody up there doesn't want you.

THERE AIN'T NO FAIRY DUST

Instant coffee, Instant oatmeal, four-course meals that can be microwaved in 4 to 6 minutes using the high setting - everything in today's world convinces us we have a right to a "quick fix".

Having trouble with your spouse, get a divorce; don't like the boss, walk out; don't like your neighbor, move; another country does something we don't like, nuke 'em. It only takes a few minutes, 4 to 6 at the most, on the right setting.

But Alcoholics Anonymous is not like that. A.A. is for the long haul. It offers no quickie solutions. And that is frustrating for the impatient alcoholic. We think A.A. ought to work fast. We want quick sobriety, peace of mind, all bills paid, and our problems solved - all at the same time, while we are drinking our instant coffee. We want A.A. to make the bad things go away - **RIGHT NOW!**

But that is not sobriety in the program of Alcoholics Anonymous - that's magic. We think that coming into A.A. and giving up drinking means we get a magic wand. Solve all our problems by saying a quick prayer, sort of like a sorcerer says a spell. Sprinkle fairy dust and have the problems disappear.

The plain truth is, **THERE AIN'T NO FAIRY DUST.** At least not in following the program of Alcoholics Anonymous. What there is, is a long bumpy road, potholes to the left, potholes to the right. The Big Book makes it clear that we have a long period of reconstruction ahead. If we want what this program can make possible for us, then we have to take the lead on that road for our own recovery. What is more, we have to take it every **day.**

We cannot expect easy answers and quick solutions to our problems. It takes a long-term commitment to following this program if we are to find real peace of mind and joy in living. That is what being a sober member of A.A. is about - whether we like it or not.

The beautiful part is, if we follow that bumpy road on a daily basis long enough, hand in hand with fellow A.A. travelers, we come to love it - potholes and all. We wouldn't trade it for all the fairy dust in the world.

Eve S.

from "Coastal Bender September 1987

★★★★★

KIND WORDS

Kind words do not cost much. They never blister the tongue or lips. Mental trouble was never known to arise from such kindness. Though they do not cost much, yet they accomplish much. They make other people good-natured.

Sad story of the Month

One night a wife was dreaming of meeting another man secretly. She dreamed she saw her husband approaching, and in her sleep she shrieked: "Heavens! My Husband!" Her husband awakened by her shriek, jumped out the window.

FROM THE BACK OF THE ROOM

In my early sobriety, I would stand by the door while the meeting was in progress. I was scared, lonely, and did not want to talk to anyone for fear someone would find out what a terrible person I was. I was always late in arriving and the first one to leave, immediately after the speaker began the Lord's Prayer. As I kept coming back to these meetings, I would occupy a seat in the last row as close to the door as I could. I suffered in silence.

Then an amazing thing took place. As I got better, I began to ride piggy back on the strength and hope of the A.A.'s in the middle and front of the room. I finally ended up sitting in one of the front rows and finally realized that never again will I have to take a back seat in A.A. anymore. Then another amazing thing happened to me. I began to give comments, became a chairman, lead meetings, fill in as Secretary-all because of My Spiritual journey from the back of the room to the front of the room.

However, often times, I reverse the process and go from the front of the room to the back of the room to greet newcomers and remember that I, too, started in the back.

Whenever I feel that I'm not making much progress in the program. I shall always be grateful for my little Spiritual journey-from the back of the room to the front of the room.

Chuck B.

Helpful Group

★★★★★

BOUNCING AROUND

Throughout those years of my continual bouncing in and out of the program, "I wanted what they had" as it says in the Big Book. I had to wait, though. I had to wait until I absolutely had to have what they had. I had to surrender my way of life, my ideals and my attitude. Then I could accept a method of dealing with my alcoholism that had originated outside myself.

When I continually practice this daily surrender, I experience all the serenity that I ever imagined. I am then reminded that this simple program's "secret" is also its origin. . . both lie outside myself.

Steve L.

New Hope Alano

ARE YOU PLANNING TO MOVE?

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

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IT WILL HELP YOU AND IT WILL HELP US.



We would like to try something different this month. We are going back some years to 1946 and take a look at articles that were appearing in the Bulletin at that time. A lot of us were not around A.A.-then-but we found it **very** interesting, in that look back in time, to learn that things are not all that different now especially in the Central Committee Meetings. The following article was published in the July issue of the Central Bulletin. . . .

FRUSTRATION

We saw evidence of growing pains during the past month and they were indeed troublous times. We saw fine people filled with zeal and ambition lose tempers and express remarks that may leave lasting scars unless treated with the most healing ointment at our command. We heard personalities exchanged, belying the true character of the persons indulging in them.

The only healing ointment which we can proffer is a common-sense evaluation of facts and calm **judgement**. Calm judgement is only possible when it is viewed dispassionately and with the serious application of the Four Absolutes which should be the basis of all settlement of conflicting theories. . **Honesty**, Love, Purity and Unselfishness!

We refer to the differences of opinion existing between the Hospital Committee and the Central Committee, which was settled officially, legally and properly at the last Central Committee meeting. Though it was "settled": we hear from different sources that the settlement did not meet with the approval of several individuals, who had worked hard to develop their Hospital Committee so it would be an established entity independent of Central Committee's supervision.

We hear violent diatribes against Central Committee. Individuals, often the accepted spokesman for the groups, conjure all sorts of crimes which Central Committee's "brass hats" are guilty of. (We use the word "conjure" advisedly). We smile indulgently at the "brass hats" domination charge, but we wonder how persons can be so credulous as to believe this to be possible.

Let's get the facts straight, honestly and sensibly, Central Committee has NO powers except that given by the groups in common assent. It is a discussion center, NOT a governing body. Each group remains autonomous and if it is not in accord with the majority opinion on a policy agreed upon, the dissenting group need not follow it. It provides a central hospital committee to establish proper liaison between all groups and all A.A. approved hospitals and nursing homes in the Cleveland Metropolitan area. It provides a unified clearing house to eliminate haphazard hospitalization plans, racketeering and unfavorable publicity. and it provides a coordinated functioning committee to deal with individual unfavorable influences which might reflect discredit upon the entire fellowship. Its one objective is service.

What better curb can any individual or any group have than a clearing house like Central Committee for the presenting of some idea which seems sane and sensible to him or to his group. If the idea is sound and has merit it will stand a better chance for success if brought before the Central Committee for discussion than if it is done in a limited way by some individual or group. If it does **NOT** weather the opinions of the majority of the groups, isn't there some possibility that the plan has no merit and was the honest result of over-enthusiasm? And if a person or group has the interest of A.A. at heart, he will be governed by the majority opinion.

Many promotion ideas have been discussed at these Central Committee meetings and many have been **rejected** and many adopted. We have seen to our regret some splendid **A.A.'s** resenting deeply the curb which Central Committee has placed on their plans. Some have been so embittered that they ridicule any progressive move that Central Committee makes. **They're frustrated.**

Let's be adult and let's cooperate. Let's keep on presenting ideas for the good of all. Bur above everything let's be big enough to accept defeat if our plan does not meet with the approval of the majority. Common sense tells that this is the only logical thing to do.

If your plan has merit, it will live. . .if not, it SHOULD die.



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Harry D., Founder and Editor 1892.1968

Vol. 46 July 1988 No. 10

District Office (216) 241 - 7387

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, July 5, 1988 — 8:00 p.m.

ST. MALACHI'S CENTER

2416 Superior Viaduct — North of Detroit off W. 25th St.
Cleveland, Ohio

All Group Representatives Welcome — Be Informed

GROUP ANNIVERSARIES

MEDALLION GROUP • 4th ANNIVERSARY

Thursday, July 28, 1988 - 7:30 p.m.

Forestdale Presbyterian Church
4030 Washington Park Blvd.
Newburgh Heights, Ohio

★★★★★

GORDON SQUARE GROUP — 46th ANNIVERSARY

Friday, August 12, 1988 - 8:00 p.m.

St. Rose's Hall-W. 116 & Detroit

32nd OHIO STATE CONFERENCE OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

"A SHARED EXPERIENCE-A NEW LIFE"

JULY 15-16-17, 1988

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241 - 7387

IN MEMORIAM

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

EDWIN L. FRANKLIN -very active A.A. member who would soon be celebrating his 27th year of sobriety, member Fairview Park Group.

STANLEY OSTROWSKI - long time A.A. member from Euclid Area. Very active. Home group was Euclid Friday and, earlier, the Friendship Group.

JACK SHEA — 19 years in A.A., 18 of them spent as Secretary of the Ford 1250 Group, very active member.

THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE

A REMINDER: All Groups - if there has been a death in any of your groups • please call the information in to the office so that **we** can list their names. It is difficult to know by reading obituaries.

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

ALWAYS • CAREFUL • TO • INVESTIGATE • OTHERS • NEEDS

DISTRICT OFFICE CORNER

HAPPY 4th OF JULY TO ALL (WITHOUT THE 5th, THEY SAY) - Summer is moving right along here now. Inasmuch as the 'Words of Wisdom' shared with you in this issue are all from the 1946 and 1947 editions of the Central Bulletin, I will give you all a break and hang out my sign:

G O I N G F I S H I N G

I kind of feel that you all need a little break from time to time and this is one of them.

★★★★★

TAXI RIDE FOR SOBRIETY

The setting was Clarksburg, West Virginia and the rider actually hired a cab - from Clarksburg to the A.A. ward in Charity Hospital.

The episode started some weeks before when two men from Clarksburg came into the Cleveland Office seeking information, guidance and literature to start an A.A. group in their community. After spending an entire week, attending meetings and spending days with several Cleveland A.A.s they returned to Clarksburg, found the nucleus of some six or seven persons who had had some knowledge of A.A. and went to work. Last week one of the original pioneers returned to the Cleveland Office for further contact. He told us of one of his prospects who, lo and behold, arrived via taxi two days after contact. Cab bill, \$75.00! Certainly a sincere desire to do something about one's problem must exist in a man's heart to ride a cab that distance for A.A. help. That power of example is a mighty weapon.

★★★★★

WHY WORRY

There are only two things to worry about. Either you are well or you are sick. If you are well, there is nothing to worry about. But if you are sick, there are two things to worry about. Either you will get well or you will die. If you get well there is nothing to worry about. . .If you die, there are two things to worry about. Either you will go to heaven or you will go to hell. If you go to heaven, there is nothing to worry about. . .**BUT** if you go to hell, you'll be so damn busy shaking hands with your friends you won't have time to worry.

ATTENTION

Bleeding Deacons

Alcoholics Anonymous
is a

NON-PROPHET
Organization

SLEEP, PEACEFUL SLEEP

When I found Alcoholics Anonymous, I had forgotten what normal sleep had been. One of the first tools I recognized was our Serenity Prayer and one of the earliest uses I put the prayer to was to get to sleep!

From the very beginning I was aware that this trick only worked when I put every ounce of concentration I could muster into thinking the beautiful words. Gradually, the senseless fears, the despair, the sweats, the shakes and the nightmares ceased.

I experienced longer and longer periods of peaceful sleep. On awaking I became aware that, usually, I had not got to the end of the prayer. And I was the woman who had been agnostic for nearly fifty years and, as yet, had not found a Higher Power.

So, I eventually heard the phrase "half measures avail us nothing," as Part of Chapter Five was read to me again, I associated the words with the effort I used with the Serenity Prayer, and understood.

The Book tells me that A.A. will become my life, if I give my life to A.A. It tells me that there is a life of contented sobriety. It tells me that such a life is available to me if I accept, **without reservation**, that I am an alcoholic.

My fellow members and friends help me to understand the path to this new and better life, and help me over the bumps. The Program of Alcoholics Anonymous, the basis of recovery, works for me when I remember that "**half measures avail me nothing.**"

Anonymous

Reprinted from Pick Me Up, Wichita, Kansas

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

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.

— Be a Bulletin Booster —

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LIST OF CALLS AT CLEVELAND DOWNTOWN DISTRICT OFFICE

August 12, 1946

A Director of Veteran Personnel called and asked for literature to be given to Veterans who should be interested. . .A member called for an Attorney. . .Member's wife called a message to her husband who will be in the office today. . .A call for information about A.A.. . .A call from an interested third party who wanted information about Negro A.A. in Pittsburgh. . .A call from a member re hospitalizing a new patient. . .Call from a man interested in A.A. for himself. . .A member called and left information concerning a group for Mr. Hilliard. . .A call from a new member who wanted to help in hospitalizing a patient. . .Mr. H called. . .Personal call from home. . .A call from a member leaving his name and phone, and is available for call during the day. . .A call regarding office hours and if there is a charge for A.A.. . .A call from a member re hospital routine. . .A call from a member re office space. . .Call from a member regarding a legal problem. . .Probation officer called re book on Yale Clinic Studies. . .Member called re legal matter. . .A member called seeking employment, for another member. . .A call from a family friend regarding A.A.. . .A call regarding hospitalizing a former member. . .A call re member who is in hospital. . .A call re unlisted number of one of the group's meeting place. . .A call re employment of member. . .A call for out-of-town speaker tomorrow night. . .A call about A.A. from an interested third party. . .A call from a former member who is in need of help. . .Wrong number. . .Call from a man seeking help for himself. . .A call requesting location of a particular meeting. . .Emergency last minute call to secure speaker for meeting. . .A call from a man attempting to locate his sponsor. . .A drunken woman who had been unable to make program work. . .A woman reporting fine treatment she received in one of the hospitalizing agencies. . .A call from a woman seeking help for her brother. . .Member reporting he had found employment. . .Take name off list. . .Secretary of group to report a particular speaker for Saturday night. . .Wrong number. . .Call from a woman ready to go to hospital. . .Man called for hotel reservation in Sandusky. . .Member called who is willing to lead meetings. . .Member from west side called and gave name and address of an interested man who lives on east side and member wants an east side contact for him. . .Member called wanting address of Miami, Fla. group. . .A member called seeking help in keeping his job. . .Member called for another member's phone number. . .Mother called seeking help for daughter. . .Call from a visitor A.A. in Detroit, seeking office location. . .A call from a member of Boston A.A. visiting Cleveland, asking information of meeting places and where the office is located. . .A call from interested second party who wanted literature sent to her. . .Member called re legal problem.

Note: Not much has changed since the above writing.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

A.A. is full of willing people:
5% are willing to do the work. . .
95% are willing to let them. . .!
reprinted with permission, The **A.A. Grapevine, Inc.**

LIFE IS TOO SHORT TO BE LITTLE

This is a world filled with trouble for all of us. It doesn't matter who we are, how highly educated or uneducated we may be, we all see both bright and dark mental pictures.

Many people go through life wearing smoked mental glasses and never realize there are many happy hours to be enjoyed if they could change their thinking and learn how much unhappiness they cause for themselves because they cannot make others act or think the way they believe they should.

At times I feel disgusted; not only with myself, because of the way I sometimes think and act, but with the way other people think and act.

If we were wise enough to realize how little we know and stop trying to make others think we have more of what it takes to get along in this world than we really have, it would help us.

"The top" is never reached. When we feel we "have arrived" we soon learn we have just begun and the more we depend upon ourselves to reach our objective the steeper the hills and the more crooked the road we are traveling becomes.

How little we really are and how difficult it is for many of us to realize our weakness, Of course, many of us do, but we still put on the same old "phony front" and seem to enjoy making ourselves unhappy by trying to make a good impression. Many men and women who spread manure around the farmyard barn lot when young, saturate themselves with rank perfume because the manufacturer claims it is the "daintiest of daintiest!" odor. Of course, they cannot be blamed. After years of cow manure all over one's clothes perhaps a change of smell really does some people good.

Man has found a formula for most everything learned men have discovered, but no man has discovered a way to carry on alone. We must have, and do receive, "outside" help. If not, we will stumble and fall and eventually be unable to rise.

Every morning before I start out to do "battle" for a living, in a world we know is filled with fakers, demagogues and "make believe" people, I thank my Creator for what little I know, the understanding He has given me and the many blessings with which He has showered me. •

If I were to believe what little success I have had was accomplished because of my own personal knowledge or good judgement I would be assuming too much.

I want to be myself - an individual. It doesn't matter how little I know, the fact that "Something" helps me is all that matters.

Author Unknown

★★★★★

For some reason, A.A.'s who do the least,
 complain the most!
 It's nice to be important,
 but it's more important to be nice!
 Forgiveness is giving up my right
 to offend you for hurting me!
 The only thing a drunk can do alone
 is get sick!

RESPONSIBILITY

In looking over the various responsibilities that we all assume in a normal, average life, we find many and varied kinds. To mention just a few: that of being a good American, those assumed at baptism, confirmation, marriage and our job.

But none of those mentioned can we succeed in unless we assume our A.A. responsibilities and discharge them in a satisfactory manner. Therefore our A.A. responsibilities must come first. If we can't be good A.A.'s we won't be good at anything else.

The A.A. program as often stated, is a program of attraction. By our performance we attract others who are seeking a way out. We have conclusive proof in our own experience that A.A. has NEVER failed, so why shouldn't we perform in such a way that doubt will never occur in the minds of others.

This is a small part of A.A. responsibility.

★★★★★

THINGS TO REMEMBER THINGS TO FORGET

As a recovering Alcoholic, what can I expect to find?
 Some hills, some valleys, some mountains to climb.
 A lot to be learned and a lot to forget.

And a mind not as brilliant as I thought it was yet.

I'll try to forget my very first drink,
 How important it made me feel and think,
 I'll try to forget the short period of fun
 When I thought I was greater than anyone.
 When false courage made me reckless and bold
 And I was convinced I would never grow old.

I'll try to remember how sick I've been
 And remember each day to thank God again.
 I'll remember the headaches, the heartaches and shame,
 The remorse, the guilt, the loneliness and pain.
 I'll remember all the misery brought on by one drink.
 I'll remember I'm an alcoholic and I must learn to think.

I'll forget the first drink and remember the last
 To find a future better than my past.
 I'll remember the most important time is "today!"
 I'll live and let live and thank God for A.A.

N.C.D.A. Newsletter

ARE YOU PLANNING TO MOVE?

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

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IT WILL HELP YOU AND IT WILL HELP US.



"OUR BUTTERFLY STORY"

If we truly love the butterfly, we must care for the caterpillar. Before this great change comes about, we can identify with this forlorn creature; in spirit we were crawling instead of soaring, withdrawing from the world of alcoholism to hide in a cocoon. Time passed - somehow we heard of the program...a tiny crack in our shell...HOPE timidly appeared. After a few meetings, the hard cocoon shell began to crack...we came out into a new way of life and a wonderful world where we absorbed the warmth of fellowship and understanding from our newfound friends. As we emerged from the depths of despair into this great family of loving people, we tried to learn how to give this message to others still suffering and sick. Like the butterfly, we try to leave with each one some of what others have given to us so that we may reach for this new way of life.

We in A.A. and Al-Anon have much in common with the butterfly, and many are using it as a symbol. Women wear pins in the shape of a butterfly while men wear tie-tacks or carry a key chain. There are several reasons for this. Long before the time of Christ, the butterfly was a symbol of resurrection and eternal life. Most of us feel that in the program, we have found "new life" indeed...and the butterfly is a visual aid to remind us that we no longer think, feel, or act as we once did. We were trapped in a cocoon of darkness, and have wrestled our way into the sunlight. The butterfly denotes gaiety and happiness-chasing after them is fruitless for like the butterfly, they flit away. But if we become still, and "at one" with God, sometimes one will light on our shoulder. We need time to be quiet, time to cultivate precious friendships, time to read and listen to God, or time just to sit and watch the changing shadows and savour the beauty of God's world. By doing these things, we cultivate a resilience of spirit.

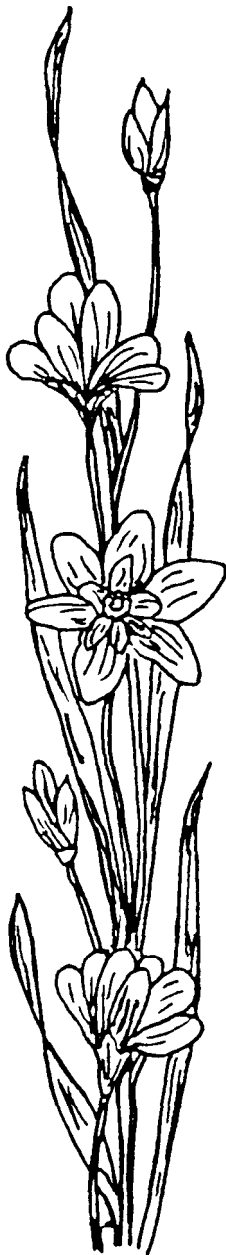
There are others who think of the butterfly as a symbol of their life of eternal beauty and freedom after they come to know God through the program. Some A.A.s and Al-Anons have adopted this as an award presented by the sponsor after the "worm" has taken the Fifth Step. To these people the butterfly is a symbol of rebirth. They are told to wear these wings proudly. The reborn find a special significance in the life of the butterfly which begins as an ugly, worm-like, fuzzy creature...emerging into a thing of beauty and joy through God's Grace and Love.

The butterfly is on earth a very short time, but it spends its time flying from flower to flower, taking pollen from one and giving it to the other, making sure each shares life with the other...and seeking to make the world more beautiful after it is gone than when it came...that's what you and I are trying to do.

Behold a small egg, then a loathsome worm...the caterpillar skin is thrown off, and it is shut up for months as if it were dead in a tomb before it bursts forth from its imprisonment and comes forth a fragile, lovely butterfly. We, too, sometimes become a loathsome crawling worm, death practically ensues, and we weave a cocoon around us shutting ourselves away from God and life for months or years, apparently with no real interest in living, and the same God that performs this miracle in the chrysalis is even more pleased to transform you and me.

We who once entangled and twisted until the light of God's Grace and His Love penetrated our hearts join together in the practice of thanking God for something everytime we see a butterfly...a spiritual symbol of a happy, enlightened soul...a reminder of each individual's life of eternal beauty and freedom after they come to know God!

Smile God Loves You-So Do I





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., 514 Superior Ave., N.W., Cleveland, Ohio 44113.

Harry D., Founder and Editor 1892-1968

Vol. 46 August 1988 No. 11

District Office (216) 241 • 7387

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, August 2, 1988 — 8:00 p.m.

ST. MALACHI'S CENTER

2416 Superior Viaduct — North of Detroit off W. 25th St.
Cleveland, Ohio

All Group Representatives Welcome — Be Informed

GROUP ANNIVERSARIES

GORDON SQUARE GROUP • 46th ANNIVERSARY

Friday, August 12, 1988 • 8:00 p.m.

St Rose's Hall-W. 116 & Detroit

N.E.O. GENERAL SERVICE WORKSHOP

Sunday, August 21, 1988

St Joseph's Church

State Route 44 & Pioneer Trail

One mile south of Route 82-Mantua, Ohio

IN MEMORIAM

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

JACK DANIELS • 19 year member of A.A. Jack's Home Group was Willoughby Monday. Very active.

DON SMAGOLA • Long time member of A.A., member of Saturday Nite Serenity Group.

SAM LONG — Member of Language and Heart Group. Had 8-9 years of sobriety.

THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE

REMINDER: All Groups • if there has been a member of your group who has passed away, please let us know, we would like to remember them in our Bulletin.

"There is an old saying, 'Self-preservation is the first law of Nature'. To paraphrase this, I should say, 'To be selfish about our A.A. program is life itself' for us. If we preserve ourselves, we are not being selfish at all. Everyone associated with us, our family, friends, employer, employees, the community as a whole benefits accordingly, and we regain our rightful place in society. We are thoughtful of others, take care of our obligations, assume our proper responsibilities, and become respectable human beings instead of the walking zombies or vegetables, as we were when we drank."

Best of the Grapevine. p. 153

reprinted with permission of The Grapevine, Inc.

HOW CLOSING MEETINGS WITH THE LORD'S PRAYER BECAME A CUSTOM

For many centuries, the Lord's Prayer has been offered by various religious denominations both in public prayers and in private worship. It is also said by non-religious groups, including athletic teams, before or after meetings and games. But when did it become a widespread A.A. custom to close meetings with the prayer? And why, if A.A. "is not allied with any sect (or) denomination," do we use the Christian prayer at all?

A.A. archivist Frank M. says: "Oldtimers' memories differ as to exactly when the Lord's Prayer was first used in A.A. According to members who came to the Fellowship in 1938 and 1939, it was said at meetings then. Co-founder Bill W. thought it might have been a carry-over from the customs of our forerunner, the Oxford Group, but he was never really sure.

During its fledgeling years, Frank notes, The Fellowship was more religiously oriented than it would be later. The main emphasis was not on one's drinking history, but on surrender, acknowledging one's character defects, and learning through the shared experience to live better lives—socially, ethically and religiously.

In those days, there was no A.A. literature; in fact A.A. didn't even have a name. And so the early groups leaned heavily on Bible reading for inspiration and guidance. Meetings probably closed with the Lord's Prayer because, as Bill explained, "it did not put speakers to the task, embarrassing to many, of composing prayers of their own."

The religious slant changed as it became evident that A.A.'s program of recovery could criss cross all barriers of creed, race and religion • and as the Fellowship developed Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions and other literature of its own. Yet use of the Lord's Prayer persisted in A.A., as it has everywhere else.

Frank points to a letter on the subject written by Bill in 1959. Responding to an A.A. member who had questioned the practice of closing meetings with the Lord's Prayer, Bill said, "This prayer is of such widespread use and recognition that the argument of its Christian origin seems to be a little far fetched."

Stressing that the leader of the meeting usually asks attendees to join him in the Lord's Prayer only "if they wish to," Bill observed, "The worst that happens to the objectors is that they have to listen to it...doubtless a salutary exercise in tolerance at this state of their progress!" He further added that most A.A.s believe in God as we understand Him, and have faith that "communication and strength are obtained through his grace. Since this is the general consensus, it seems only right that the Serenity Prayer and the Lord's Prayer be used in connection with our meetings."

Of course, Frank is quick to note, "the final decision about saying the Lord's Prayer • or about any other group activities • rests with the majority, or group conscience. As Bill said time and time again, group conscience in the long run 'will be wiser than the opinion of any single leader.' "

From Box 459, reprinted with permission of A.A. World Services, Inc.

ALWAYS • CAREFUL • TO • INVESTIGATE • OTHERS • NEEDS

REFLECTIONS ON ANONYMITY FROM THE TWELVE AND TWELVE

- ★ We need to maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films.
- ★ Anonymity to this extent is actually the practice of genuine humility.
- ★ Even within the Fellowship every member's name and story needs to be confidential if the member so wishes it.
- ★ Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion.
- ★ As a Fellowship, we wish to publicize our principles and our work but not individual members.
- ★ To us the Tradition of anonymity is far more than a sound public relations policy. It is more a denial of self-seeking.
- ★ This Tradition of anonymity is a constant and practical reminder that personal ambition has no place in A.A.
- ★ The spiritual substance of anonymity is sacrifice,
- ★ Moved by the spirit of anonymity, we try to give up our natural desires for personal distinction both among fellow alcoholics and before the general public.
- ★ We are sure that humility, expressed by anonymity is the greatest safeguard that Alcoholics Anonymous can ever have.

★★★★★

TIME TO YOURSELF

Sometimes it is extremely good for you to forget that there is anything in the world that needs to be done, and to do some particular thing you want to do. Every human being needs a certain amount of time in which he can be peaceful. Peace may take the form of exercise, or reading, or any congenial occupation; but the one thing that must not be connected with it is a sense of obligation to do some particular thing at some particular time. I had 200 letters waiting a few days ago and any amount of work which had to be done, and I deliberately spent two hours reading poetry.

Eleanor Roosevelt

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G R A T I T U D E

My daughter confronted me and said she was praying for me. That sparked hope for me and soon I sought treatment. I was finally-ready to admit my powerlessness over alcohol, people, places and friends. To do it was very difficult. I've learned a lot-that it isn't easy and it is a life long process.

Most of all the rewards of working the program are priceless. The sharing and caring of A.A. friends assure me I'm never alone. I know now that my spiritual tools will support me through lifes trials.

Most of all in these years of sobriety, I was able to enjoy quality time with my children. Freedom came when I gave up the struggle and surrendered to God's plan. Even though I cannot understand it, I choose to accept it.

A special gratitude to each A.A. member who has helped me make my life more rewarding.Thanks for being there.

Marilyn F.

★★★★★

Cowboy: "I don't mean to be nosey, mister, but you're putting that saddle on backwards!"

Drunk Dude: "Some cowboy you are. You don't even know which way I'm going!"

Grapevine, December, 1969

With permission of A.A. Grapevine, Inc.

★★★★★

TO THE SLIPPER

You probably haven't failed in A.A., because you probably haven't **tried**. Failure is unsuccessfully **trying**.

In the A.A. lexicon, no word is more important than **TRY**. Sobriety does not automatically come with membership. Success is not mere academic learning of the program. Success results from the intensity of the try, of itself.

Think back on the last time you started to drink. Before you took the drink, did you try to pass it up?

Did you **first** invoke the **24-hour** technique? Did you **first** reconsider the First Step? Did you **first** call on a Higher Power through the serenity prayer?

Did you **first** reexamine the steps of the program which you had neglected? Did **you first** pause to take a Tenth Step inventory to identify the source of the trouble?

Did you **first** telephone a friend in A.A.? Did you **first** read from the Big Book? Did you **first** walk away from wherever you were, around the block, to get away from the site of the drink? Did you **first** attempt something-or anything-to change the thought pattern? Did **you first** seek a doctor's intervention to substitute medication for alcohol?

These things illustrate trying. When you sweat it out, calling on all known A.A. techniques, and still find that you cannot master the compulsion without institutionalization, then you have really **tried**. not until then.

And then, did you "try" the apparently necessary institutionalization, combining professional aid with continued, intensive, daily A.A. therapy?

Milt G., Chicago, Ill.

TEN RULES FOR ENDING RESENTMENTS

First: When anyone hurts you, put "spiritual iodine on the wound at once": That is, pray hard about it. If you do not do this, it will fester.

Second: If the resentment has hardened in your thoughts, apply grievance drainage. That is, open your mind and let the grievance flow out.

Third: Do this by unburdening yourself to a trusted friend or write a letter to the person against whom you have the resentment. Then tear it up and while holding the pieces in your hand, pray for the person and forgive him

Fourth: Become fully aware of the harm resentment can do to you.

Fifth: Don't stop with forgiving a time or two. Do it, if necessary, seventy times seven - 490 times to be literal.

Sixth: Thinking about forgiving is not enough. You must come to a specific moment when you say, "With God's help I now forgive (insert name of person)."

Seventh: Repeat the Lord's Prayer inserting the offender's name, "Forgive me my trespasses as I forgive. . . ."

Eighth: Pray for the other person, asking specific blessings for him, especially concerning matters which have previously annoyed you most.

Ninth: Speak in a kindly and complimentary manner and as often as possible about the person against whom you harbor antagonism.

Tenth: Make a sincere study of the personality factors which created an unhappy relationship so that the "mistake pattern" in yourself may not recur.

The Oasis

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

MYSELF

I have to live with myself, and so
I want to be fit for myself to know.
I want to be able, as days go by,
Always to look myself straight in the eye;
I don't want to stand with the setting sun,
And hate myself for the things I've done.
I want to go out with my head erect,
I want to deserve all man's respect:
For here in the struggle for fame and self
I want to be able to like myself.
I don't want to look at myself and know
That I'm bluster and bluff and an empty show.
I can never hide myself from me;
I see what others may never see.
I know what others may never know.
I never can fool myself, and so,
Whatever happens I want to be
Self-respecting and conscience free.

Unknown

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

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. *

THIS IS A.A.?

Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship designed and administered by a bunch of exdrunks whose only qualification for membership is that they can't hold their booze and don't want to learn how.

It has no rules, dues or fees; nothing that any sensible organization seems to require.

At meetings, the speaker starts on one subject and winds up talking about something entirely different and concludes by saying that he doesn't know anything about the program except that it works.

The groups are always broke, yet always seem to have money to carry on. They are always losing members but seem to grow. They claim A.A. is a selfish program but always seem to be doing something for others.

Every group passes laws, rules, edicts and pronouncements which everyone ignores. Members who disagree with anything are privileged to walk out in a huff, quitting forever, only to return as though nothing happened and be greeted accordingly.

Nothing is ever planned 24 hours ahead, yet great projects are born and survive magnificently. Nothing in A.A. is according to "Hoyle." **How can it survive?**

Perhaps it is because we have learned to live and laugh at ourselves. "God" made man. He made laughter, too. Perhaps He is pleased with our disorganized efforts and makes things run right no matter who pushes the wrong button. Maybe He is pleased, not with perfection, but because we are trying to be nobody but ourselves. We don't know how it works but it does. . . and members keep receiving their dividend checks from their A.A. investments.

Unknown

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

A chap who had what he mistakenly thought was a secret drinking habit was visiting a funeral parlor where his supervisor at his place of work, recently deceased, was laid out. While there, he spotted the boss of the company, and being full of false courage, walked up to him and asked whether he could take the supervisor's place.

"Well," said the big boss, "if it's okay with the undertaker, it's okay with me."

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.



A GOOD-BYE LETTER TO ALCOHOL

Dear Alcohol

To be completely honest, I'm going to miss you. I've had a lot of good times drinking you and using you. Towards the end, I think you were using me. I've seen you make me do things that go against everything I stand for. I've seen you take things in a short time that people have worked for all their life. I've seen you take perfectly sane people and turn them into insane lunatics.

If I look back at all the money I've spent on you, I want to kick myself in the tail. I'm truly amazed at your power. I know now that I am powerless over you, and that scares the hell out of me! You scare the hell out of me!

I know that I can't even drink you socially anymore, ever, because eventually you'll take back control over me. Leading me around by the nose like a man leads his dog around on a leash. I can't have that. I need to have control over my life.

I know that it's not going to be easy. You are everywhere, in every town, every school, every street. There's no way of getting away from you, except learning to say no and how to live without you. If I take even one drink, I'll be right back where you want me—in the palm of your hand, ready to crush my will and my motivation. I can't have that. I can't have you! I've used you in the past for many reasons. Some of them being to hide my true feelings, to make myself feel important, because everybody knows if you always buy people drinks, you're important. Right! Ha, ha! I also drank to feel accepted, and to fill my life with a lot of people who I thought were my friends. Because when I had some beer or whiskey to share, everybody was my best friend. I now realize that these people are not my real friends. They could care less about me, just what I had to drink. I've used you as a ploy to pick up women, and I can't deny that it worked. But the women I met this way were as sick as I was. Nothing real or meaningful ever resulted from these sick relationships. That's just another example of the power you have over people. In today's society, you're considered chic, the 'in' drug. I realize that's a lot of bull! You're no better than any other drug—probably worse than most because of all the status that goes along with you.

I now know, through learning the hard way (which is how most of my lessons in life are absorbed), that I no longer need or want you. I now know that people can accept me and like me for what and who I am—not for what I've got. I know that by using you to hide from my feelings and emotions only results in a stockpile of crap inside me that will eventually burst out in misdirected surges of anger or depression.

Not so long ago you had me down for the count. You had what I consider the most important virtue in a human being eliminated in me, that is the will and desire to live. I wanted to end my life and tried to. Fortunately, through the grace of God and His never-ending love for me, I failed—you failed. So for now, I've won the battle, but the war has just begun. You are as cunning and powerful an enemy as there ever was. So, with the help of God and the A.A. program, I will continue to fight against you. I don't need you! I don't want you! I want to live. I'm starting to learn that it's alright to feel, just feel. Good-bye and good riddance!

Sincerely,
An Alcoholic



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

Harry D., Founder and Editor 1892-1968

Vol. 46 September 1988 No. 12

District Office (216) 241 - 7387

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, September 6, 1988 — 8:00 p.m.

ST. MALACHI'S CENTER

2416 Superior Viaduct — North of Detroit off W. 25th St.
Cleveland, Ohio

All Group Representatives Welcome — Be Informed

GROUP ANNIVERSARY

THE FRIENDSHIP GROUP - 28th ANNIVERSARY

Monday, September 12, 1988 - 8:00 p.m.

Boulevard Presbyterian Church
Euclid, Ohio

IN MEMORIAM

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

JIM POWELL • Member of Geneva Sunday Group, 32 years of sobriety.

LEONARD PORTER • Conneaut Friday Group, active in his area, 25 years of sobriety.

JOHN "Jack, the Old Goat" BRAY • Member of Monday Morning 12 Step Group, very active in A.A. with 10 years sobriety.

EDWARD KELLY • Active member of A.A., Secretary of Friday Noon Luncheon Group, Rocky River.

DAVID ELLIOTT • Member of Tuesday Oasis Group, 3% years of sobriety, doing a fine job, 27 years of age.

DOLORES (Dee) HALL - not in A.A., but the child bride of BILL HALL, long time member of A.A. & Secretary of the West Side Morning group. Our prayers are with you, Bill.

RICHARD SCHNURR • 21 year member of A.A., passed away in Columbus, O. where he was Executive Director of Talbot Hall at St Anthony Hospital. Better known by we Clevelanders for his ministry activity in Rosary Hall.

BUCK DOYLE-Washington, D.C., 34 year member of A.A., active member in his home area where he was a Counselor on Alcoholism. Buck was our key-note speaker for our May 5th Intergroup Dinner this year.

HELEN BRAY, Jack's wife, asked that we convey her "special thanks" to all A.A. members who supported her during her time of bereavement.

THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE

THE HEART ATTACK

I like to think that the basic key to good, solid sobriety is acceptance of two facts—not only that I am an alcoholic, but also that I am me and have certain limitations and abilities with which to work.

The Serenity Prayer begins by requesting God, as we understand him, to give us the serenity to accept that which we cannot change. In the beginning, I applied this to my alcoholism, forgetting other areas. But many sober experiences have taught me to try to accept other parts of myself and not try to be that which I cannot be.

I remember, in my first year in the Fellowship, agreeing with everybody so they would like me. If John was a Republican, I'd support his views. With Ed., a Democrat, I'd be a Democrat. My sponsor came quickly to my rescue on this matter by reminding me that it was important to be myself instead of falsifying my opinions for the sake of agreement. He suggested that I try a simple prayer for a while. It said "Dear God, let me be me."

My life changed as I began to try to follow the A.A. way of life. I found, through the Steps, that my horizons slowly expanded. I could leave the security of my home group and travel, going to A.A. meetings in other areas. Very slowly I grew up.

By staying close to A.A. and the Twelve Steps, I discovered a new one. This took me time, a lot of time. The process was sometimes painful, but always rewarding.

Then I experienced an event that has taxed my ability to accept almost to the limit. At the ripe old age of thirty-eight, and with seven years of continuous sobriety, under my belt, I had a massive coronary. The heart **attack** nearly took my life, and the subsequent recovery period was long. Limitations were again placed on me. For awhile, doctor's orders confined me to one A.A. meeting a week. I still cannot risk speaking at an open meeting or getting too active in Twelfth Step work. Those things, which I had so depended upon for my sobriety, were taken from me. I was unable to run to an A.A. meeting every night, as I once had, to recharge my batteries.

In short, I had to renew my feelings about accepting the things I could not change. We change as time goes by, and the full meaning of the Steps, the Traditions, and all that is A.A. must change within us to keep us on our happy road to recovery.

First, I had to quit resenting the changes in my life and accept them for what they were. Amazingly, as I did this, many restrictions were lifted. Today I have a full life, with an equal balance of A.A. work and recreation. I enjoy my family, my A.A. friends and my business associates a whole lot more than I ever did before the heart **attack**.

W. H., Palm Beach, Fla.

exerpted from 'Best of Grapevine' (pg. 79-81)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

An optimist is the fellow who takes the cold water thrown on his proposition, heats it with enthusiasm, makes steam, and pushes ahead.

HANDLING TENSION

Are you under constant strain because of "too much to do and too little time to do it?"

Stress and tension seem to be a part of modern living, with too much to be done, no time to relax, and everybody in a hurry. Here are some simple rules given by doctors to help ease the tension-or at least, help you live with them.

Do one thing at a time. This is how to work your way out from under a load that seems too heavy. When you are tense, even ordinary jobs seem too much to handle.

Do the most urgent jobs one at a time, forgetting about the rest until later. Once these are finished, things won't look so bad and the other tasks will go more easily.

If you feel nothing can wait till later, you had better stop and reconsider. Are you sure you aren't giving too much importance to the things you do? Perhaps you think you are too important. Nobody is totally indispensable-so take it easy!

Don't set impossible goals for yourself. The Superman urge - the desire to be perfect in everything - causes worry and anxiety. Wherever you are going or whatever you are doing, start in time so you won't have to hurry.

Learn to say "no" and when to say "yes". Because our time is limited, we need to put first things first. Don't try to do it all.

Decide, too, which things you do well and put your major effort into these. As for the others, don't get upset if the job isn't perfect.

Life, in spite of its responsibilities, is to be enjoyed-so have some good times!!

"The Pathfinder"

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

A cop stopped a motorist on the highway and informed him that his wife had fallen out of the auto a mile back.

'Thank goodness,' the well-oiled driver replied. "I thought I had gone deaf!"

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I DID IT IN SPIE OF MYSELF

I had heard about Alcoholics Anonymous and how it helped persons to maintain their sobriety. But, I didn't understand how A.A. could help anyone - especially me - so I stayed away from the meetings.

Earlier, in my life, I had gotten drunk beyond belief and my conduct brought the wrath of my fellows down on me. I struck out against Society again and again. Finally, I did something that forced Society to put me away for its own protection.

I was placed in a federal mental hospital. I lost my wife and house, car, pets, and what few friends I had. However, I was still able to get my booze, to stay drunk and act uncontrollable, as usual.

After about twelve years inside the walls of this hospital, I made a decision to finally give up the alcohol. I did so not because I was locked in, but because I wanted to quit acting foolish, allowing booze to control my daily movements, being irresponsible in my speech and actions.

But, it was not until I met the man, who was to be my sponsor, in the lobby of the maximum security building where I was housed, that I honestly considered joining A.A.. As a result of that decision, in June of 1988 I will be celebrating eight years of sobriety.

It is only by the grace of God and the support of my A.A. family that I am able to relate this to you. I am proud of this feat, not just because it is the only thing I have ever really succeeded in doing all my life, but because I did it in spite of myself.

I was the guy who believed he was rougher and tougher than Steve McQueen and John Wayne, both. Who never thought of just how dangerous some of the silly daredevil stuff was that he got into while drinking. I refused to admit that whatever I was drinking to achieve was destroyed.

Today, I realize that I am a concerned, confident and passionate person. Where compassion and humility help me to live and assist others, I gain in confidence and this adds to the spice of my life. I can be in love with myself for once. What a wonderful person to love! Now, I am starting to truly love life and others, for I realize how much my Higher Power has done for me.

Recently, I visited my parents and family members in the city. They were very receptive to me - quite different from the past. I have become closer with my dad, and this happiness cannot be expressed in mere words that would adequately emphasize the magnitude of my receiving his care and love. My mother, who had to struggle with my many hurts, struck with me unwaveringly. I found out in time before she died, that my mother loved and cared for me, and that I truly love her.

Sober now for eight years, I still make mistakes and forget things, but I am getting better all the time, and about this fact, I am very happy.

Daily I pray to remain sober and to try to help those less fortunate than I. I realize I will never be cured of my alcoholism, but I will always be recovering and enjoying it.

Lewis E., Washington D.C.

EVER BEEN ON A DRY DRUNK?

CHECK LIST:

- Self-Pity
- Sick Pride
- Resentment
- Rudeness
- Criticism of Others

After ten years exposure to the A.A. program, I still experience that periodic phenomenon referred to as the "dry drunk." To my own amazement and everlasting gratitude, the last seven of those years has been a period of uninterrupted sobriety. This fortunate condition has certainly been brought about by a Power infinitely greater than my puny capabilities. I believe that the times of the greatest danger of self-destruction during these years were those when I, consciously or otherwise, attempted egotistically to take over the reins of my life and tried to exercise total control over my own affairs.

This usually resulted in a dry drunk. What is a dry drunk? The following description is based on a personal viewpoint, but is also supported by those ideas which I have heard expressed at many meetings.

An alcoholic appears capable of emotional extremes ranging from feelings of unbounded elation to depths of dark despair. As an imperfect but perhaps helpful analogy, we might compare the personality of an alcoholic with a weather map. A dry drunk is an emotional storm. The emotions of an alcoholic can fluctuate much in the manner of weather fronts.

When all seems to be comparatively well for the recovering alcoholic, his general feeling of well being is like a "high pressure" weather area. This is the large mass of cool, dry air, usually accompanied by clear, blue skies and lots of pleasant sunshine. As long as we try to carry the message to others, attend meetings regularly, and seek God's guidance every day, we are frequently gifted with a sunny, love-filled spirit; our own inner high-pressure area.

You know of course, that the weather changes: day by day, little by little, the cool, stimulating air may be replaced with uncomfortable, oppressive, moisture-laden air. There develops a turbulence and confusion in the mental atmosphere, similar to the turbulence and confusion in the mental atmosphere of an alcoholic on a dry emotional jag.

This is why we are cautioned against fatigue. Take a particularly difficult day with a sufficient number of negative events, mix in normal amounts of twentieth century stress, give this dose to a fatigued alcoholic and you have a nice dry drunk in the making. Of course we can help it along by skipping lunch, rushing at a double-time pace all day long, and engaging in the doubtful luxury of such emotions as anger and worry.

I learned that, in my own case, I was more apt to become irritable and confused toward the end of the work week, when accumulated tensions and lack of rest were at their worst. Things looked darker on Friday than they did on Monday morning. In time, I was able to realize that the things that seemed so important on Friday were really minor, and that such an outlook was due mostly to my failings and not to circumstances.

We all realize that there are ways of modifying or preventing dry drunks. A dry drunk is basically an illustration that we have much progress to make in our application of the A.A. program.

The antidote is contained in the Twelve Steps. We should attend more meetings; we should seek ways to help other members - even a simple telephone call to inquire about a fellow member can shake us loose from our exaggerated self-concern. No one can express love and self-pity at the same moment; showing concern for others helps us to see how foolish we have been, how we have literally trapped ourselves in the familiar mental "squirrel cage."

When nothing else avails, we can say, "Today I am sick." Of course, this does not mean physically sick, but refers more to a spiritual disorder - a separateness from God as we understand Him. During an emotional bender, the admission that we are powerless over our own rampant thoughts, and that our lives are even more unmanageable than usual, is an act which equates with Step One.

I believe a dry drunk is a period of temporary insanity for the sober alcoholic. Step Two says: "Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity!" A dry drunk is a self-imposed separation from others and from God. We try to run on our own current, like a battery without a generator, which soon runs down and becomes quite dead.

Step Ten - the Step of continuing personal inventory - should certainly be emphasized following a dry drunk. We should attempt, in a spirit of humility and deep reflection, to see clearly where we were wrong. It helps to discuss these failures with other members, in order to crystalize our mistakes and prevent their recurrence. A series of unexpected conditions may have helped to bring about our emotional upheaval; this does not justify it, but only indicates that we are in definite need of further spiritual development.

Perhaps, in the last analysis, a dry drunk is mostly a childish tantrum, an interval of immaturity, a regression to those frantic drinking days of self-will run riot. Nevertheless, it can still be a perilous period for the alcoholic struggling for recovery. I know that there have been dark days when a will infinitely greater than my own has been responsible for my sobriety.

Grapevine, August, 1962
Reprinted with permission

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IT WILL HELP YOU AND IT WILL HELP US.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY CENTRAL BULLETIN BEGINNING IT'S 47th YEAR

Service gladly rendered, obligations squarely met, troubles well accepted or solved with God's help, the knowledge that at home or in the world outside we are partners in a common effort, the fact that in God's sight all human beings are important, the proof that love freely given brings a full return, the certainty that we are no longer isolated and alone in self-constructed prisons, the surety that we can fit and belong in God's scheme of things — these are the satisfactions of right living for which no one and circumstance, no heap of material possessions, could possibly be substitutes.

Bill W.



Published monthly by the Cleveland Central Committee of A.A., a non-profit fellowship dedicated to service. Address all letters to Central Bulletin, 946 Rockefeller Bldg., 614 Superior Ave., N.W., Cleveland, Ohio 44113.

Harry D., Founder and Editor 1892-1968

Vol. 47 October 1988 No. 1

District Office (216) 241 - 7387

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, October 4, 1988 — 8:00 p.m.

ST MALACHI'S CENTER

2416 Superior Viaduct — North of Detroit off W. 25th St.
Cleveland, Ohio

All Group Representatives Welcome — Be Informed

GROUP ANNIVERSARIES

T.C. 1005 GROUP • ?? ANNIVERSARY

Wednesday, October 19, 1988 - 8:00 p.m.

U.A.W Progressive Hall,

5605 Progressive Blvd., Parma, Ohio

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

JOHN FLOOD • 12th ANNIVERSARY

Monday, October 1988 - 8:00 p.m.

Forest City Club

2302 Broadview Rd., Cleveland, Ohio

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

SUNDAY WOMEN STAG • 3rd ANNIVERSARY

Sunday, October 16, 1988 - 5:00 p.m.

St Thomas Episcopal Church

Seminary & Bagley, Berea, Ohio

PLEASE NOTE SPECIAL TIME

**ALSO, THIS ANNIVERSARY IS OPEN
TO BOTH MEN & WOMEN.**

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

WEST 25th STREET • 47th ANNIVERSARY

Monday, October 17, 1988

St Phillip Church

3294 Denison Ave., Cleveland, Ohio

IN MEMORIAM

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

JAN ADAIR • Long time active member of A.A. The word of Jan's death came in too late to appear in the September column.

From time to time • we do mention the death of a loved one of our A.A. family. Gerry H., Ridgewood Women's Group, a very active member lost her mother in September after a long illness • our sympathy.

THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE

We all know of members who are struggling to stay alive-as well as many who will be taken unexpectedly- let's try to remember them in our prayers.

FROM ISABEL:

As of October 1st, I am retiring and want to thank everyone who purchased literature - to all I have had the privilege of knowing and to those I will meet some day
Isabel G.

By the time you receive this Bulletin, Isabel will have retired. She has been a member of the District Office Staff since December, 1975. As most of us she started out doing a little bit of everything. Every one of us with the exception of Ed, worked on the Secretaries List - typing stencils, among other things. Now, of course, the method has changed somewhat and we don't type our stencils. . .we have a machine that cuts the stencil for us, using a master list. When Dick P. retired in June, 1981 - Isabel took over the literature department and did everything from ordering literature to putting the last stamp on the package before United Parcel arrived. Theresa Fair is now in her probationary period learning the department and will probably be the new literature person. Like all families, our A.A. family in the office, discovers that it's time to "cut the cord" and let a co-worker go when they are ready.

HAPPY RETIREMENT!

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

We had mentioned the death of Bill Hall's "child bride" last month and this month we feel privileged to include the poem she wrote to honor Bill's A.A. Anniversary:

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

BY

Deloris H. Hall

This is the day to celebrate,
You earned it, yes, it's true;
Because you gave up liquor • •
And the things you used to do.
You're a much better person today,
Than you ever were before;
So, keep up the good work and stay sober,
And celebrate many more.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

TWO VIEWS

Don D. went to an A.A. meeting. He frowned when a member mispronounced a few words while reading "How It Works!" He was appalled when someone else stood up and said he was an alcoholic and an addict. Another person talked too long, Don felt. Slipping out the door immediately after the meeting, he muttered, "That was terrible; I should have stayed home!"

John J. went to an A.A. meeting. He bowed his head as he listened to the preamble and "How It Works." He listened intently as members told their stories. He was grateful for being able to attend the meeting. After clean-up and a little socializing, he paused as he locked the meeting room door and thought, "Thank God for a beautiful meeting."

Both men were at the same meeting. Each found what he was looking for there.

Grassroots, British Col. A.A.

ALWAYS • CAREFUL • TO • INVESTIGATE • OTHERS • NEEDS

JIM'S VIEW THE TWELVE TRADITIONS

I got sober on the Twelve Traditions of A.A. and, for more than twenty years now, I have stayed sober on those Traditions. When I say that at a meeting, all my friends raise their eyebrows.

This is not such an unusual statement to make when you think about it. Most of us got sober on the First Tradition. Take those last seven words - *"Personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity."* What do we mean by **unity**?

My Webster's Dictionary uses about one hundred words to explain unity. Any sober member of A.A. can tell you that the simplest definition of unity is the first three letters of that word, **u-n-i**. You 'n I together can do what neither of us could do separately. It was only after I met you that I found hope for my life. Today I realize I can only keep this sobriety as long as you 'n I can stay together.

Our fellowship is so big today. We sometimes lose sight of our own individual importance to each other. My personal recovery still depends upon you 'n I. I only go to meetings to meet you. It's why I go to A.A. conventions. Not to glory in seeing a thousand or more sober drunks sitting together in a grand hall. I go there to meet with you, to laugh with you and cry with you, to remember with you and talk about recovery and how wonderful life is. That's why you 'n I like to be together.

When I read the Traditions, I sometimes forget about the General Service Office, World-wide service, my district, the intergroup and all those other good things. It helps me to think about you 'n I and one other member, just the three of us staying sober together. When I do that, it is easy for me to see how each of these Traditions are necessary to keep us together.

The next Eleven Traditions are simply meant to keep us together. Just imagine how long the three of us could last if we decided to solicit money from outside sources. With me in charge of soliciting the funds and you in charge of spending. . . we could really pitch a wing ding, couldn't we?

You 'n I being together has made my recovery through the Twelve Steps much easier. With an ego like mine, ad-

— Be a Bulletin Booster —

mitting to another humanbeing the exact nature of my wrongs is laughable. But you told me that you did it. Because of the love and respect I've developed for you, I did it too, with your help.

In the A.A. book, Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, the first words in the First Tradition are: The unity of Alcoholics Anonymous is the most cherished quality our Society has. "our lives, the lives of all to come, depend squarely upon it. We stay whole, or A.A. dies." Principally, we are still talking about you 'n I and that one other member.

For most of my life, I was completely self-centered. The world revolved around me and a whiskey bottle. It was explained to me that I only played a small part in a big show; that I could survive just as long as I remembered this. My own personal desires and wants take a back seat in A.A. affairs. Many times this was a difficult rule to live by; but all I needed to do was think of the alternative. Desperately, I didn't want to go back to that kind of life.

Once you 'n I have achieved a modicum of sobriety, we are entitled to certain rights: the right to live in dignity; the right to make choices in our lives; the right to all freedoms that God has given us. The only requirement for keeping all these gifts is that we never forget from whence they came.

Before turning in tonight, I will get out those Twelve Traditions and read them again. I will think of them in terms of just the three of us and how they hold us together. For if the three of us can stay together, then the entire Fellowship of A.A. will surely stay together.

Jim. Silver Springs, Maryland

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

REALLY-REALLY-REALLY

As of November 11, 1988 I will have accumulated six years worth of "ONE DAYS AT A TIME". During this past year I've found myself in a vacuum of sorts. It's like I'm here but I'm actually watching myself go through the motions of living. I am **really** in A.A. I am **really** in my sixth year of sobriety, by His Grace and A.A.'s "special magic". I am **really** forty years old. That's a **lot of Really**, isn't it?

I will be A.A., ONE DAY AT A TIME, for the rest of my mortal life, because I have no other choice - and because of this "no other choice": I now **HAVE** another choice! I have another choice now because I **DECIDED TO TURN MY WILL AND MY LIFE OVER TO GOD, AS I UNDERS-TAND HIM**, because at one time, during my qualifying days, I **HAD NO CHOICE!** I do hope this makes sense to you! God and A.A. have **given me FREEDOM** of choice - and, **by God, I cherish it!**

I was in my thirties when I came to believe, and now I'm in my forties! This means a LOT to me. You see, it means I'm **REALLY** growing up - I'm **REALLY** beginning to feel better about myself - and I'm **REALLY** living my program. I just felt I had to talk this out with my Higher Power, write it all down, and **share** it with YOU, and my A.A. brothers and sisters. Maybe you don't feel any better but I sure do!

Thanks and God Bless,
Bill Z., St Charles, Wednesday

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MY GRATITUDE LIST

With Thanksgiving just around the corner, I started thinking, the other day, about all the things I have to be grateful for since I became sober four years ago.

- Sobriety
- A loving God as I understand Him
- The gift of faith in God from my parents
- A wonderful loving family
- A partner to share my life with
- Good health
- A free country in which to live
- A good job
- A nice place to live
- Enough food to eat
- Good friends
- Sponsors and sponsorees

The list could go on and on. Whenever I'm getting into self pity, I start thinking about all the things I have to be grateful for - negative thinking turns positive.

An Alcoholic, Cleveland, OH

★★★★★

TRY AGAIN

When things go wrong don't think that all your work has been in vain - perhaps it's all been for the best-so smile - and try again. It may be that your failure proves to be the magic door, that leads you to a happiness you never knew before. . . you may be weakened in the fight, but not defeated yet.

. . . It's no use wasting precious time in tears and vain regret. Stand up and face the world again, and if you keep in view-the high goal of your greatest hopes - your dreams will all come true. Draw wisdom from your old mistakes -and courage from your pain -and some day you'll say, "Thank God, I dared to try again."

from "QUIET THOUGHTS", by Patience Strong

★★★★★

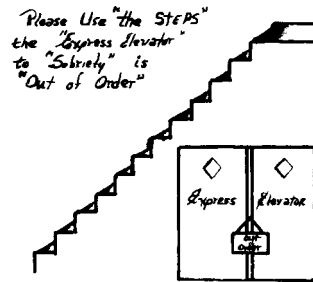
GETTING OUT A NEWSLETTER AIN'T EASY

If we print jokes, people say we are silly,
 if we don't, they say we're too serious.
 If we clip things from other papers,
 we are too lazy to write them ourselves.
 If we don't print every word of all contributions,
 we don't appreciate genius.
 If we do print them,
 they say the columns are filled with junk.
 If we make a change in the other fellow's write-up,
 we are too critical .
 If we don't,
 we are blamed for poor editing.
 Now, like as not, someone will say,
 "he swiped this from some other sheet."

WELL - SURE I DID!! !

★★★★★

COCKTAIL LOUNGE: A half-lit room filled with half-lit people.



★★★★★

Editor's Note: We received a copy of THE SILVER STREAK Newsletter from Las Vegas, Nevada asking that we exchange newsletters. We certainly will! We have a reciprocal arrangement with many newsletters from all over. Last month we began a reciprocal exchange with the Columbus, Ohio Newsletter.

In appreciation of the request from the Las Vegas Newsletter, we decided immediately to copy their front page. We found it very well illustrated

★★★★★

THOSE WONDERFUL PEOPLE IN A.A.

Everything is coming along fine for me now, but, boy, I was in one depressed state for more than a month. I thank God every day for sticking with me and that I had the knot at the end of my rope securely tied, so I was able to hang on.

I'll never forget the loving concern shown me from my group and those wonderful friends whose calls were worth more to me than all the antidepressants in my doctor's bag.

During that awful time, I told one lady to mind her own business. Above anyone else in my group, this woman is like a big sister to me and I turned around and hurt her. But still she stuck with me.

Then one morning, I got up and felt as if I had just got back from a long journey, I knew it was all over, so I phoned her and said the sun was breaking through again. By the sigh she gave, I could feel, over the wires, that I have so much to be grateful for.

It's wonderful friends like this that are helping me stay sober.

Ruth K., Wheaton, MD

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IT WILL HELP YOU AND IT WILL HELP US.

CENTRAL BULLETIN

November 1988

Vol. XLVII — No. 2



Published by
Cleveland Central Committee of A. A.

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



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October 6, 1988

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Dear A.A. Friends,

We all have been saddened by the loss of Lois Wilson, our beloved link to the earliest days of A.A., on October 5, 1988.

I am enclosing for your information a copy of the New York Times obituary. It emphasizes Lois' role as founder of Al-Anon, but I am sure that your thoughts, as mine, will turn to her importance to A.A.

In the early days the entire future of our fellowship and of countless alcoholics hung on the thread of the determination and ability of Bill W. and his co-founder, Dr. Bob, to persist in their efforts to put Alcoholics Anonymous on firm ground.

Lois Wilson is regarded by many as someone without whom her husband could not have persisted in that crucial work. Bill has referred to her as a "full partner" in the struggles and joys of those early days. Indeed, many A.A.'s feel their lives are owed to Lois as well as to Bill, Dr. Bob and Ann.

Many will remember Lois' gentle reminders, at annual conferences and dinners as recently as this year, of Bill's last message to the fellowship, which emphasizes that the most essential spiritual tradition of A.A. is the principle of anonymity.

In reflecting on the life of Lois Wilson we may renew our gratitude to A.A. and its early servants for what has been given us, to treasure and to pass on.

A public memorial service will be held at Marble Collegiate Church, 5th Avenue at 29th Street in New York City on October 20th at 4:15 p.m.

Michael Alexander,
Chairperson
General Service Board

MA:HT: fs



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 1692.1966

Vol. 47 November 1988 No. 2

District Office (216) 241 - 7387

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, November 1, 1988 — 8:00 p.m.

ST MALACHI'S CENTER

2416 Superior Viaduct North of Detroit off W. 25th St.
Cleveland, Ohio

All Group Representatives Welcome — Be Informed

Gratitude Sunday

Sunday, November 20, 1988 — 2:00 p.m.

ST MALACHI'S CENTER

2416 Superior Viaduct North of Detroit off W. 25th St.
Cleveland, Ohio

GROUP ANNIVERSARIES

SORRY!

NO NOVEMBER ANNIVERSARIES REPORTED

IN MEMORIAM

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

MALCOLM M. McBRIDE - Long time A.A. member who passed away June 30th-his obituary and memorial service were just announced.

DICK MORGAN (Richard T. Sr.) - 37 years sober in A.A. His home group was the Fairview Park Group and he was the founder of North Olmsted Fellowship.

HENRY STEWART - 33-35 years sobriety, very active member of Garden Valley Group.

LEONARD O. BERNARDY - Long time member of A.A. and a member of the Helpful Group. Leonard was often at the District Office to purchase literature for his group.

GENERAL FLEMING - One year sober in A.A., very active member of the Golden Link Group.

THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE

ACCEPTANCE

Sometimes, we have to find the right kind of acceptance for each day. Sometimes, we need to develop acceptance for what may come to pass tomorrow and, yet again, we have to accept a condition that may never change. Then, too, there frequently has to be a right and realistic acceptance of grievous flaws within ourselves and serious faults within those about us - defects that may not be fully remedied for years, if ever.

Bill W., "What is Acceptance?": Grapevine, March '62
Reprinted with permission of A.A. World Services, Inc.

ALWAYS • CAREFUL • TO • INVESTIGATE • OTHERS • NEEDS

A.M.

God, please direct my thinking; especially divorce it from self pity, dishonest and self-seeking motives.

As I go through this day and face indecision, please give me inspiration, an intuitive thought or a decision. Make me relax, and take it easy - don't let me struggle. Make me rely upon the inspiration, intuitive thoughts and decisions derived from **YOU** instead of upon my old ideas.

Show me all through this day what my next step is to be and give me whatever I need to take care of each problem. God, I ask you especially for freedom from self-will and I make no requests for myself only. But do give me the knowledge of Your will for me and the power to carry it out in every contact during this day.

As I go through this day make me pause when agitated or doubtful and ask you for the right thought or action. Constantly remind me that I am no longer running the show, humbly saying many times today, "Thy will be done" - and agreeing that it is.

I will be in much less danger of excitement, fear anger, worry, self-pity or foolish decisions. I will be more efficient. I won't be burning up energy foolishly, as I was when trying to run life to suit myself. I will let you discipline me in this simple way. I will give You all the responsibility and all the praise.

P.M.

God, as I retire tonight, let me constructively review my day. Was I...

Resentful?
Selfish?
Dishonest?
Afraid?

Do I owe an apology? Have I kept something to myself which should have been discussed with another person at once?

Was I kind? Loving? To all? What could I have done better? Was I thinking of myself most of the time? Or was I thinking of what I could do for others? Of what I could pack into the stream of life?

However, having considered my short comings, God please let me not fall into worry, remorse or morbid reflection, for that would diminish my usefulness to others.

God, forgive me and let me know what corrective measures I should take.

Adapted from *Alcoholics Anonymous pp. 86-87*

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

OUR PROTECTIVE MANTLE

Almost every newspaper reporter who covers A.A. complains, at first, of the difficulty of writing his story without names. But he quickly forgets this difficulty when he realizes that here is a group of people who care nothing for acclaim.

Moved by the spirit of anonymity, we try to give up our natural desires for personal distinction as A.A. members, both among fellow alcoholics and before the general public. As we lay aside these human aspirations, we believe that each of us takes part in the weaving of a protective mantle which covers our whole Society and under which we may grow and work in unity.

FAITH

Commercialism is usually far remote from anything spiritual. But an advertisement now appearing in national magazines, sponsored by E.R. Squibb & Sons, carries a picture appeal that speaks far more strongly than words. A sightless person is pictured walking confidently down the street, his hand resting on the harness of a guide dog.

An accompanying text reads "A man who cannot see walks down the street-confident and unafraid. Here is complete faith-in both man and dog. The man relies on the loyalty and intelligence of his companion. The dog has faith in the friendship of the man. This faith has come to each other-thru experience. Faith grows like this-firm and sure. It is one of the truly solid things in an uncertain world. It gives a man something to measure the unseen values, the things that count most."

It makes us think of A.A.; the beginner, blind and sick from alcohol, placing his trust in the member who assures him A.A. will work, and seeing the neophyte and member walk hand in hand, each helping each other to learn and live the program and put his faith in a greater Power.

Reprinted from June 1949, Here's How

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

REFLECTION FOR THE DAY

In a letter to a friend, A.A.'s co-founder Bill W. once wrote, "Nothing can be more demoralizing than a clinging and abject dependence upon another human being. This often amounts to the demand for a degree of protection and love that no one could possibly satisfy. So our hoped-for protectors finally flee, and once more we are left alone-either to grow up or to disintegrate." We discover in The Program, that the best possible source of emotional stability is our Higher Power. We find that dependence upon His perfect justice, forgiveness and love is healthy, and that it works where nothing else will.

Today I Will Remember...God offers perfect love.

Today I Will Remember...To have faith in His love.

from *A Day At A Time*

— Be a Bulletin Booster —

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HEARING A FIFTH STEP

I regret that within A.A. literature there is no clear-cut directions for hearing someone else's Fifth Step. I heard my first Fifth before I did my own, and I got some valuable suggestions from my sponsor, such as, "Pray, asking God how you can be helpful."

Review the first-three steps and do the Third Step prayer together if they wish. Don't take on their stuff let it go right on by. Share your own experience and defects if that is helpful, but remember this is their time. Listen for the "exact nature" of the wrongs, the fear, selfishness, dishonesty, etc., which is underneath the specific details, and write those down for the person to review at Steps Six and Seven. This writing also gives my head something to do, so I stay centered on the business at hand. Write down the people they may owe amends to if they want to destroy their Fourth Step. (I burned my first Fourth and felt set free by that symbolic act. I kept my second and share it with people when that is helpful - it lets them know they're not dealing with the Blessed Virgin). If you hear minimizing, rationalizing or sliding over something, bring them back to look at what's being avoided.

Don't reveal anything shared in the Fifth Step - it is a vital confidence not to be broken. I have been privileged to hear many Fifth Steps.

I always learn something about me, and I always feel closer to the person who is willing to share honestly. The two men whose Fifth Steps I have heard taught me that men and women are not different in this disease - different words, same music and the same fear, selfishness and dishonesty. I basically hear Fifth Steps the same way that mine was heard - it worked real well for me, and as we say, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

from *The Triangle*, Helena, Montana

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

DIRECTION

"I have a sense of direction and meaning to my life. If that's what you want, then come in my direction until you find your own. I was once like you; I had the same confusion and fear; I remember how overwhelming my problems were; not knowing where to turn. I don't know what direction your life is going to take, but if you'd like to follow mine for awhile, then share your problems and confusion and fear with me. I can tell you how I found my way over and around them when they arise in my path. Maybe my solutions will work for you, until you find some of your own..."

...Once I was confused and hurt and didn't know what to do. I turned to a man who said he felt that way, but not anymore. I wanted what he had. I listened to all his words-a little anyway-and I tried to understand. But mostly, I think I learned by watching what he did. And when I began to do the things he did, I began to get what I've got. Not exactly what **HE** got, but what **I'VE** got..."

Anonymous, *If You Want What I Have*
Grapevine, June '87

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CAME TO BELIEVE

Some years ago, I heard a story which has been making the rounds in Midwest A.A. circles for years. I don't have any names to back up this story, but I have heard it from many sources, and the circumstances sound believable...

A man in a small Wisconsin city had been in the program for about three years and had enjoyed contented sobriety through that period. Then bad luck began to hit him in bunches. The firm for which he had worked for some fifteen years was sold; his particular job was phased out of existence, and the plant moved to another city. For several months, he struggled along at odd jobs while looking for a company that needed his specialized experience. Then another blow hit him. His wife was forced to enter a hospital for major surgery, and his company insurance had expired.

At this point he cracked, and decided to go on an all-out binge. He didn't want to stage this in the small city where everyone knew his sobriety record. So he went to Chicago, checked in at a North Side hotel, and set forth on his project. It was Friday night and the bars were filled with a swinging crowd. But he was in no mood for swinging-he just wanted to get quietly, miserably drunk.

Finally, he found a basement bar on a quiet side street, practically deserted. He sat on a bar stool and ordered a double bourbon on the rocks. The bartender said, "Yes, sir," and reached for the bottle.

The bartender stopped in his tracks, took a long, hard look at the customer, leaned over the bar, and said in a low tone,"I was in Milwaukee about four months ago, and one night I attended an open meeting. You were on the speaking platform, and you gave one of the finest A.A. talks I ever heard." The bartender turned and walked to the end of the bar.

For a few minutes, the customer sat there - probably in a state of shock. Then he picked his money off the bar with trembling hands and walked out, all desire for a drink drained out of him.

It is estimated that there are about 8,000 saloons in Chicago, employing some 25,000 bartenders. This man had entered the one saloon in 8,000 where he would encounter the one man in 25,000 who knew that he was a member of A.A. and didn't belong there.

from Came to Believe via
A.A. Lifeline

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

TO GUARD AGAINST A SLIP

Suppose we fall short of our chosen ideals and stumble: does this mean we are going to get drunk? Some people tell us so. But this is only a half truth.

It depends on us and on our motives. If we are sorry for what we have done, and have the honest desire to let God take us to better things, we believe we will be forgiven and will have learned our lesson. If we are not sorry, and our conduct continues to harm others, we are quite sure to drink. These are facts out of our experience

PROFANITY AT MEETING LEVEL

A Question and a Gripe

When I first came through the doors of Alcoholics Anonymous, I thought profanity was necessary to make a point.

One day an oldtimer came up to me and said something about being thrown out of bars and social gatherings for foul language, back in his drinking days. And he told me I didn't need to swear anymore. I didn't need to hide behind my dirty mouth anymore. It was time to express my feelings. Time to talk. Time to learn. We came to A.A. to get well, to recover from alcoholism, and take our right place in society.

The longer I'm around, the more I see what a crutch swearing can be. It's been necessary for me to learn to express my feelings of anger and fear in a new, positive and healthy way. I've learned to feel, and express myself without hiding behind profanity. I've had to learn how to feel and to say what I feel, to stay sober, in learning how to communicate! I'm learning about respect, and love, and God of my understanding. I'm learning about the 12 Traditions, and about our common welfare. A dirty mouth is not about our common welfare. A program of attraction? Where does profanity fit there?

Once I understood about profanity - I found myself to be responsible for my language. I'm responsible to take the newcomer aside, let him or her know its OK to vent one on one-and let them know about our common welfare (Tradition One).

I was at a meeting recently and someone was on a vulgar tirade - several people walked out, and others have chosen to go to different meetings. What did we tell the newcomer? What are we telling non-A.A.'s who attend open meetings with spouses, or children? A program of attraction?

This we owe to A.A.'s future—
To place our common welfare first
To keep our fellowship united
For on A.A. unity depend our lives
And the lives of those to come.

C.A.P. Los Altos

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Success is not permanent, the same is for failure.

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IT WILL HELP YOU AND IT WILL HELP US.



Season's Greetings

Yes, it's in the air! The spirit of Christmas once more warms this poor distraught world. Over the whole globe millions are looking forward to that one day when strife can be forgotten, when it will be remembered that all human beings, even the least, are loved by God; when men will hope for the coming of the Prince of Peace as they never hoped before.

But there is another world which is not poor. Neither is it distraught. It is the world of Alcoholics Anonymous, where thousands dwell happily and secure. Secure because each of us, in his own way, knows a Greater Power Who is Love, Who is Just and Who can be Trusted.

Nor can men and women of A.A. ever forget that

The Central Bulletin editors could find no finer way to express their wishes than to hitch their greetings to the above. They are just as sincere.

only through suffering did they find enough humility to enter the portals of that New World. How privileged we are to understand so well the divine paradox that strength rises from weakness, that humiliation goes before resurrection; that pain is not only the price but the very touchstone of spiritual rebirth.

Knowing its full worth and purpose, we can no longer fear adversity; we have found prosperity where there is poverty; peace and joy have sprung out of the very midst of chaos.

Great indeed, our blessings!

And so-Merry Christmas to you all-from the Trustees, from Bobbie and from Lois and me.

BILL WILSON

December, 1944 Central Bulletin

THE RE-BIRTH

This is the season of rebirth in the forces of nature, when the dying sun reaches its lowest point and begins to retrace its steps. There is still a period of darkness and trial that we call winter, but the growth of the heat as the sun continues on its new course finally enables vegetation to burst out anew, to grow and to thrive. As spring advances to summer, we see nature in the fulness of life.

This, too is the season of spiritual rebirth, the season in which the spirit of man is reborn again, the season in which the spirit of man receives the grace that enables him to "cast away the works of darkness and put on the armor of light,"

The season is of particular **significances** to us, since we have been reborn again in a special sense. We were reborn when we accepted the fact that we had become alcoholics, that we were powerless over alcohol and our lives were unmanageable. In our rebirth, we turned to a power greater than ourselves. In due season, we observe the beginning of spiritual growth as long as we continue in that growth.

We have to cultivate our new growth by turning continuously to the Divine Power. We have to cultivate our new growth by daily inventory, by rooting out the weeds of pride, of covetousness, of envy, of anger, of sloth of gluttony, of lust. Any of these weeds, left to thrive, will crowd out our new growth. Finally, we have to develop our new growth by giving something of ourselves to others.

Those of us who are new in this way of life, still have to learn the first steps in **personal** control. We have to be thorough and honest with our inventories and diligent in our work. We must avoid the temptation of making an exception in taking "one little drink": or an exception in some kind of wrongdoing.

Those of us who are not new in this new way of life, still have to learn. Some of us still have to learn the first steps, still have to learn not to make exceptions. Others of us may have reached the level at which we can learn something on the positive side.

Pride and covetousness and gluttony and anger and envy and sloth and lust are the great sins that we have to watch all the time. We must learn too, to develop in the virtues. When we have learned prudence and temperance and justice and fortitude, then we may know **also faith** and hope and charity.

As we light the lights of this Christmas season and thus celebrate our rebirth, our newness of life, may we feel the blessing that comes to us from our Higher Power, and may we **face** the new year with determination to continue our growth in the things that are good.

December, 1946 Central Bulletin



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Ham D., Founder and Editor 1892-1968

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District Office (216) 241 • 7387

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, December 6, 1988 — 8:00 p.m.

ST. MALACHI'S CENTER

2416 Superior Viaduct — North of Detroit off W. 25th St.
Cleveland, Ohio

All Group Representatives Welcome — Be Informed

GROUP ANNIVERSARIES

SORRY!

NO DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES REPORTED

Reminder: If you would like to list the date and time of your group Anniversary, please try to have the information in at the office before the 15th of the month before your anniversary.

IN MEMORIAM

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

JULIUS WARE (Grandpa) Akron, Ohio • 18 years in A.A. and active in the Akron Area.

RUSSELL "PAT" ROCK • 20 year member of A.A. His home group was the Angle Group.

EDITH HORVATH • 11 years sobriety, and an active member of A.A. on the west side.

BEAULAH "BEA" BAYLERS • 26 years in A.A., active member of the East Side Oldtimers Group.

MILTON MAXWELL • Non-alcoholic trustee from 1971 to 1982 and as chairperson of the General Service Board of A.A. from 1978 to 1982. His devotion to A.A. was apparent in everything he did and said.

THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE

THINK ABOUT IT

Each year A.A. becomes one year older, larger, and more active.

Each year A.A. members become one year older. Eventually they reach an age when they are less vigorous and it becomes more difficult for them to continue to drive to meetings. Occasionally some become ill, so are temporarily without wheels, or are otherwise grounded. They would love to get to meetings but are reluctant to **continue** to ask for transportation.

In most groups, each year older members drop out of sight. They are not actually forgotten, but, because they are not regularly seen at meetings, they are not "Actively" remembered. Does this imply that, to our other cliches, we should add "out of sight-out of mind?"

ALWAYS • CAREFUL • To • INVESTIGATE • OTHERS • NEEDS

There are many that have mellowed in A.A. They helped "keep the door open" for those who followed them into the program. Isn't there much that we could enjoy while driving them to and from meetings? If this would require that we hear about their aches and pains • well, isn't this a small price to pay for the privilege of helping a fellow A.A. -and in so doing help ourselves?

A new member has a sponsor to help him get started in the program. Should older and incapacitated **A.A.'s** also have sponsors (probably with a different title) to help them get to and from meetings?

Unless a program is planned -with someone responsible for its effective implementation, most plans just expire. Should, and can, we inaugurate a plan to regularly bring pleasure and fellowship to those who helped make certain that A.A. remained available when we needed and wanted it? Many of us are approaching the age when such a plan would be helpful to us, possibly faster than you think.

★★★★★

AWARENESS

A.A. spends so much time and effort on new members...when I was there all the time. Do you remember me?

I'm the person who didn't want to have to join but I paid my dues and wanted to be a faithful and loyal member.

I came to every meeting, **NOBODY** paid any attention to me, I tried to be friendly, but everyone seemed to have their own friends to talk to and sit with. I sat among unfamiliar faces, they didn't pay any attention to me.

I hoped someone would ask me to join a committee or to participate and contribute, but no one did.

Finally, I missed a meeting. Next meeting no one asked where I had been. I guess it didn't matter if I were there or not. Next meeting time I decided to stay home. Upon returning to the following meeting, again no one asked where I had been.

You can say I was a good sober person, a little lost maybe—do you know who else I am?

I'M A PERSON WHO NEVER CAME BACK

★★★★★

May you be loved and know it.
May you have love and show it.

An alcoholic is a man who, invited to an evening of wine, women and song • wants to know what kind of wine.

★★★★★

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Each month in the Bulletin newsletter, Intergroup tries to print articles of interest, containing information we believe important to pass on to the A.A. community. What we would like is more articles contributed by local A.A. members. We are interested in what you think and feel and how you work your program of recovery. The topic is open as long as it pertains to A.A. and/or recovery. So feel free to write about what interests or concerns you. (Please no poetry.) We are interested in you! So let us hear from you!

THE TWELVE TRADITIONS

THE THIRD TRADITION

"THE ONLY REQUIREMENT FOR A.A. MEMBERSHIP IS A DESIRE TO STOP DRINKING"

When I think how brilliantly our founding fathers put this program together, then I know there is a loving God expressing Himself in our group conscience. This is particularly true of the Third Tradition. I believe that almost any one of us would have included dozens of requirements for A.A. membership. Certainly, I would.

Back in the days of vodka and roses, I didn't belong to many organizations. Usually it was because of their requirements for membership: "Are you of good moral character?" "Do you have bank references?" "Do you have good credit?" "Do you have fifty dollars per month for dues?" "Have you ever been arrested?" Some would get very personal: "What are your drinking habits?"

Then along came A.A. with only one requirement for membership and I didn't have that! Thank God, there was nobody there at the door to question me. I was beginning to get the idea that A.A. was a very simple, informal association. I was told that I was a member when I said I was a member. I liked that. No obligations.

Everything I ever did seemed to be associated with booze. If I went to a ball game, it was only natural to take a bottle along. When I went to parties, everyone was drinking. Nothing on earth could be more boring than the thought of going through life without booze. I felt if I could go to A.A. meetings long enough to get hold of myself, I'd be able to return to normal drinking. Then I'd never permit myself to get like this again.

My wife once said to me, "If you'd stay away from those people you run around with, some day you might amount to something." After I started coming to meetings, I realized that you were the same people she was talking about. I enjoyed being with you in the bars and at the parties. We seemed to have a lot in common. I was able to talk to you. You always seemed to be my kind of people.

My sponsor was a man who knew me in my drinking days. Once, just a few weeks before my first A.A. meeting,

he was the bartender at a picnic and was the life of the party. Later I was amazed to learn that he had more than ten years of sobriety in A.A. at that time. "How could he have so much fun and be sober?" I wondered.

As I kept coming to meetings, slowly that requirement for A.A. membership started coming to me. I was attracted to you and wanted to be like you. Then I started doing the things that you were doing, like getting involved. In a relatively short time, I declared myself a member. When I gave my name, it became easy to add: "I...and I am an alcoholic!"

Around the world many associations with other problems have followed the A.A. philosophy. Gamblers, neurotics, drug addicts and overeaters have adopted a way of life based on the Twelve Steps of A.A.

If we didn't have this third tradition, I wonder if this phenomenon would have taken place. The simple thing would have been for all of us to have banded together in a common meeting.

This situation actually existed back in 1844 with the Washingtonian Movement. It started out the same as A.A. with one drunk helping another and was highly successful. Membership has been variously estimated from 400,000 to a million members. Like many of us, they felt they could solve the problems of the world. By 1848, they had disappeared off the face of the earth.

Once I wondered what happened to all of those alcoholic members. Suddenly, I knew what WOULD HAPPEN TO ME, IF I no longer had you.

Jim M., Silver Spring, MD

★★★★★

THIRTEENTH STEP

When I first came to A.A. three years ago, I often heard of the Thirteenth Step. I asked what it was and I received the following answer:

THE THIRTEENTH STEP IS ATTENDING A.A. MEETINGS FOR THE PURPOSE OF MAKING SOCIAL CONTACT WITH MEMBERS OF THE OPPOSITE SEX RATHER THAN FOR THE PURPOSE OF OBTAINING SOBRIETY.

After hearing this, I thought to myself-I could get the same results if I went to bars, parties and other gatherings. I was thirteenth stepped shortly after. I was wise to it and turned down the offer.

For the years I've been in A.A., I have seen how the thirteenth step can hurt people. I have seen many people leave because of it; some have never come back. Would they have stuck around if things were different?

When I started coming to meetings, my mind was not functioning properly. I felt alone, isolated and hungry for human contact. These needs left me in a vulnerable position. Luckily, I met people who cared about my sobriety.

My advice is to get a sponsor of the same sex. Opposite sex sponsorships only encourage the thirteenth step. We need to inform new members about the thirteenth step so they don't fall victim to it.

Any A.A. member who encourages a program not based on the twelve steps is not working a good program of recovery. The original twelve steps have worked for over fifty years. Why try to change them? Thirteen is an unlucky number anyway.

Adrienne L.

Be a Bulletin Booster

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November 1, 1988

Central Bulletin
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Dear Friends

The following from the December, 1962 A.A. Grapevine has been a favorite of mine lo these many years -The beginning of time for me was the week following Thanksgiving Day 1959. May God continue to Bless Lloyd H., Sister Ignatia and so many to follow and especially Central Bulletin.

This is an inspiring thought at this time of the year - at least it seems to me and all of us who seemed to find the Holiday Season tough.

MY CONFESSION

I shall attend to my errands of love early this year, so that the brief days before Christmas may be unhampered and clear of the fever of hurry. The breathless rushing that I have known in the past shall not possess me. I shall be calm in my soul and ready at last for Christmas. 'The Mass of the Christ!'

I shall kneel and call out His name; I shall have LEISURE. I shall go out alone from my roof and my door; I shall not miss the silver silence of stars as I have before.

And, Oh perhaps-if I stand there very still, and very long-I shall hear what the clamor of living has kept from me: **THE ANGEL'S SONG.**

Thanks to all of you Dear People for being there.

We love You,
/s/

Frank B. and Farnily

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

TO THE NEWCOMER

You think **we are** watching you: that we know all the rotten things you've done -just **how** worthless you think you really are!

We do!

Frank and Fanny, Joe and Jane, Mike and Mary have told us your story. You see, there's a little of each of them in you and a little of you in each of us.

The reason you drank? They have been counted many times, long before you entertained your first thought of sobriety. They are all **false!**

You drank because you have an illness-a **disease** - called alcoholism. No way of life or code of conduct may offer immunity to this disease. It **plays** no favorites.

By being here today, you are taking the first step toward a new life and **recovery.**

Each of us is trying to recover **our** sanity, our ideals, our selfesteem, and a lot more.

By being here today, you are sharing **in** and of our experience, our strength, our hope.

You are a participant in the recovery of each of us! Thank God you are here. We do.

FIRST YOU STOP DRINKING

The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. This is the beginning but there is SO much more to it. That Tradition gets the foot in the door. Now, if you want to **STAY STOPPED** it means getting *involved*.

FIRST, understand what this Alcoholics Anonymous thing is all about. Get yourself a "**BIG BOOK**" and it helps if you read it.

GET YOURSELF A HOME GROUP. This is where the feeling of self worth and belonging materializes. In your **HOME GROUP** you share your experience, strength, and hope with your friends. Your common peril becomes your common bond and a family evolves. Love and trust begin to replace fear and contempt. Because you attend this meeting on a regular basis, you know immediately when someone comes in the room who is new. You learn how to extend your hand in friendship, welcoming the newcomer. For the first time in your life you experience unconditional love. **GOD'S LOVE.** Giving a small portion of yourself to help another, without expecting anything in return. The amazing thing about that is that we get the greatest gift in the world in return, **OUR SOBRIETY!**

By this time maybe the over-inflated ego has dwindled in size a little and you may feel need for a **S-P-O-N-S-O-R.** A sponsor is not a "Higher Power": It is simply another drunk who has traveled the path before you. Ask for help and direction and they will be glad to share their experience, strength and hope with you.

For me, this is how I learned the meaning of the word "**FRIENDSHIP?**"

Reprinted from "*Silver Streak*"

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

SHORT SNORTS

Kowalski had just been convicted of public drunkenness. The judge looked down sternly from the bench and said, "Mr. Kowalski, this is the tenth time I've seen you in court this year. You ought to hang your head in shame!"

Kowalski, indignantly, "That's true, your Honor, but I've seen you here ten times too, and I don't criticize you."

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IT WILL **HELP** YOU AND IT WILL **HELP** US.