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A Monthly Journal devoted to those seeking further knowledge on the problem of alcoholism, in the hope that it may prove a unifying bond to all alcoholics everywhere. Individual opinions expressed here are not, necessarily, those of A.A. as a whole.

THE MEDITATIONS OF OLD MR. PERELMAN ON "DYNAMIC DRUNKS"

In my painful profession, the sole point of which is to juxtapose familiar words into an unfamiliar pattern and thereby maintain a full head of steam in the boilers of my dependents, I have been thrown into contact with countless newspapermen. Most of these romantic and legendary creatures today, of course, are based on Hollywood, where they function as scenario-writers; the inconsiderable few who happened to be allergic to celluloid have gravitated into advertising, publicity, and radio. It goes without saying that the majority of them are not the noisy, colorful desperadoes of *The Front Page* but industrious, God-fearing tax-payers who like nothing better than a fast bout of parcheesi with their loved ones at eventide. Unluckily, as I look back on the pressmen I have known, my memory plays me a shabby trick. I cannot recall the quiet, sensible, prudent ones; all I remember is the series of dynamic drunks I have had the ill fortune to encounter at point-blank range, ever ready to share my last dollar with me, always eager for a romp that might result in a broken rib, a lawsuit, or a writ of attachment on my household goods.

There was, for example, the burly sports writer I ran into one evening in a Los Angeles bar while looking for my mother. Proclaiming his undying fealty, he draped himself about me like an Inverness cape, demanded that fresh casks of usquebaugh be broached, and began detailing his newspaper exploits. I was reasonably familiar with them, having heard him recount them annually the preceding ten years, but he held me in a grip of iron. At three a.m., just as he was modestly admitting he had solved the Halls-Mills case single-handed, the bartender civilly voiced a

longing to retire. In the ensuing shower of broken glass, profanity, and fists, I escaped to my car, dragging my succubus after me. I was conveying him home to his bed (an act of sheer Christian charity, as I lived a dozen miles away), when I caught him staring fixedly at my chin. "What are you looking at?" I asked nervously. "Your jaw," he said vaguely, "I got an idea it's glass." Before I could throw a guard around it, he drew off and clipped it with a small steamer trunk welded to his wrist. I awoke a few minutes later on a mound of shredded Buick at the foot of a date palm. My friend had vanished, but he reappeared the next morning at the hospital bearing a peace offering, a quart of brandy which he drained at the bedside. As he arose to take leave of me, he gave me a piece of advice. "It's your own fault," he said sagely, "Alcohol and gasoline don't mix."

I can also recall without any nostalgia the former foreign correspondent I encountered several years ago on Fifth Avenue, whom I had known casually in France in the mid-Twenties. He immediately reminded me of glorious escapades in Montparnasse, of gallant lads and lasses long since dust. All I could remember was that he had borrowed nine hundred francs he had never returned, but as I say, my memory has always betrayed me. On the pretext that he needed a haven to finish a novel, he somehow conned me into loaning him my country place for a week. Though his tenancy was brief, he managed to leave the imprint of his personality along with his soiled laundry. I found all the groundhogs, squirrels, rats, mice, spiders, and ants in the Delaware Valley convened in the kitchen, banqueting on the remains of my canned goods. In the living room, he had assembled a valuable collection of late Pennsylvania glass, thirty-three empty rye-and-gin-bottles of various sizes. His structural changes were minor; apart from burning down the guest wing by smoking in bed, he had not

made any extensive alterations. As I was thoughtfully stroking my van Dyke over the debris, the local grocer sped up and presented me with a bill for 88.50 he had charged in my name.

But only the mean in spirit hold a grudge. I hold no grudge against the three reporters who sublet my apartment one summer, sold all my books, and decamped owing me a two-hundred-dollar telephone bill. I hold no grudge against the two playful rewrite men who, flushed with wine in my rooms, threw my radio out of a fourth-story window. They were all jolly good fellows and staunch companions. They all had printer's ink in their veins and they all had printer's hang-over. And if I never see another newspaperman with a glass in his hand this side of Jordan water, it'll be much too soon.

S. J. Perelman

JERSEYITES BUY BIG SOCIABLE CLUBHOUSE

To the A.A.s of North Jersey goes the honor of being the original contributors to one phase of A.A. history, geographically speaking. They are the first of the "Along the Metropolitan Circuit" groups to buy a clubhouse of their own.

Members of a dozen North Jersey groups, forming a company called Alanon Association (Joe B. is their counsel), participated in the deal that ended, in October, in the purchase of the three-story brick building at 8th Ave. and North 7th St., Newark, N. J., known as the Roseville Athletic Association.

The purchase price of 22,000.00 includes furniture and equipment, which in turn includes such things as pool and billiard tables and bowling alleys. The transaction involved a first mortgage of 15,000.00 with a non-alcoholic A.A. supporter, the remainder (a large por-

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EDITORIAL:

On the 1st Step

The first of the 12 steps in the creed or philosophy of Alcoholics Anonymous is, "We admitted that we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable." By such an admission any alcoholic, provided he is sincere, has achieved his first success on the road to well-being.

Such an admission is usually very difficult for the alcoholic to make. The very nature of his disease makes him shun the knowledge of his inability to cope with the problems of everyday life. Hence his desire for something that will rapidly create whatever he *thinks* he lacks as an individual. With a few drinks under his belt he can fashion the most wonderful dreams about himself. These dreams *can* become his real characteristics—but only when he recognizes that he must dominate alcohol rather than have alcohol dominate him.

The sincerity with which the newcomer takes the first step is the gauge by which his recovery through A.A. can be measured.

Over the years the alcoholic develops a three-dimensional ability at picture building, which is a kind way of saying that alcoholics are adept liars. So that by really taking the first step—admitting freely and without reservation that he is an alcoholic—a person starts to build a new pattern of thought. The whole, at last, is fabricated from truth rather than wishful thinking or fantasy.

"Ye shall know the truth—and the truth shall make you free" applies certainly to the first step in this program—for truth, to the alcoholic, is simply admitting to himself that he can't handle alcohol, and because of this his life is unmanageable. To those who accept this first step the other eleven follow in the natural course of events—as the scope of the teachings of A.A. become realized and some small rewards have been received.

John B.

Points of View

Dear Grapevine: As a non-alcoholic, I write this in a spirit of envy. Through friends in A.A. I have had the opportunity for several months to see the remarkable results of your program and it is beginning to seem as though alcoholics were getting all the breaks.

Everybody can't be an alcoholic, and there are many other equally serious, if less spectacular, problems which unfit people both for their work and for living in the world around them. Anyone suffering from a great insecurity or anxiety or who is so introverted that he cannot get along with his fellow men becomes a chronic problem to himself and his friends. In some cases medical treatment or psychiatry

can be helpful. In others, as with alcoholism, all known methods seem to fail.

Would it be possible and would A.A. be interested in trying to formulate a 12 point program for non-alcoholics? Could such a man as Dr. Jellinek, for instance, be persuaded to work on such a project? Even now there is at least one neurotic in every family and after the war the numbers seem certain to increase. If there were a program in existence which could be used by families, by veterans' organizations and chiefly, of course, by people themselves, it might cut down the work of doctors and psychiatrists and even of you A.A.s.

E. K., Now York, N. Y.

Dear Grapevine (Complaint Division): As one of the two original Boston subscribers to an essential A.A. ingredient, *The Grapevine*, why, oh why, and by what lottery-like methods do you send out your copies by mail? . . . We have been plugging the paper here in Boston, but our temperamental A.A. clientele is sore, because they not only do not get the paper, but their subscriptions are not acknowledged. If I were waiting for something of no importance such as *Fortune* or *The New York Times*, I wouldn't give a hoot . . . but please, oh please, send us our *Grapevines*.

John L. P., Boston, Massachusetts

[*Boston, dear: We're glad you, brought the whole subject up. We think it's all because the U.S. Post Office treats 3rd class matter like a stepchild. Of course, it may be that your Boston censors have confiscated us. Please send us a re-check of these addresses and we'll see that Bostonians get their Grapevines.*]

Dear Grapevine: Just a line to let you know that I am receiving my *Grapevine* and how much I enjoy it. . . I would like to know if you would consider sending it to a young man in the State Penitentiary at McAlester. He read the copy of the book which is in the library there and wrote to the Oklahoma City group and some of us are corresponding with him. . . Most of our work in this case will have to be done by mail and everything will help.

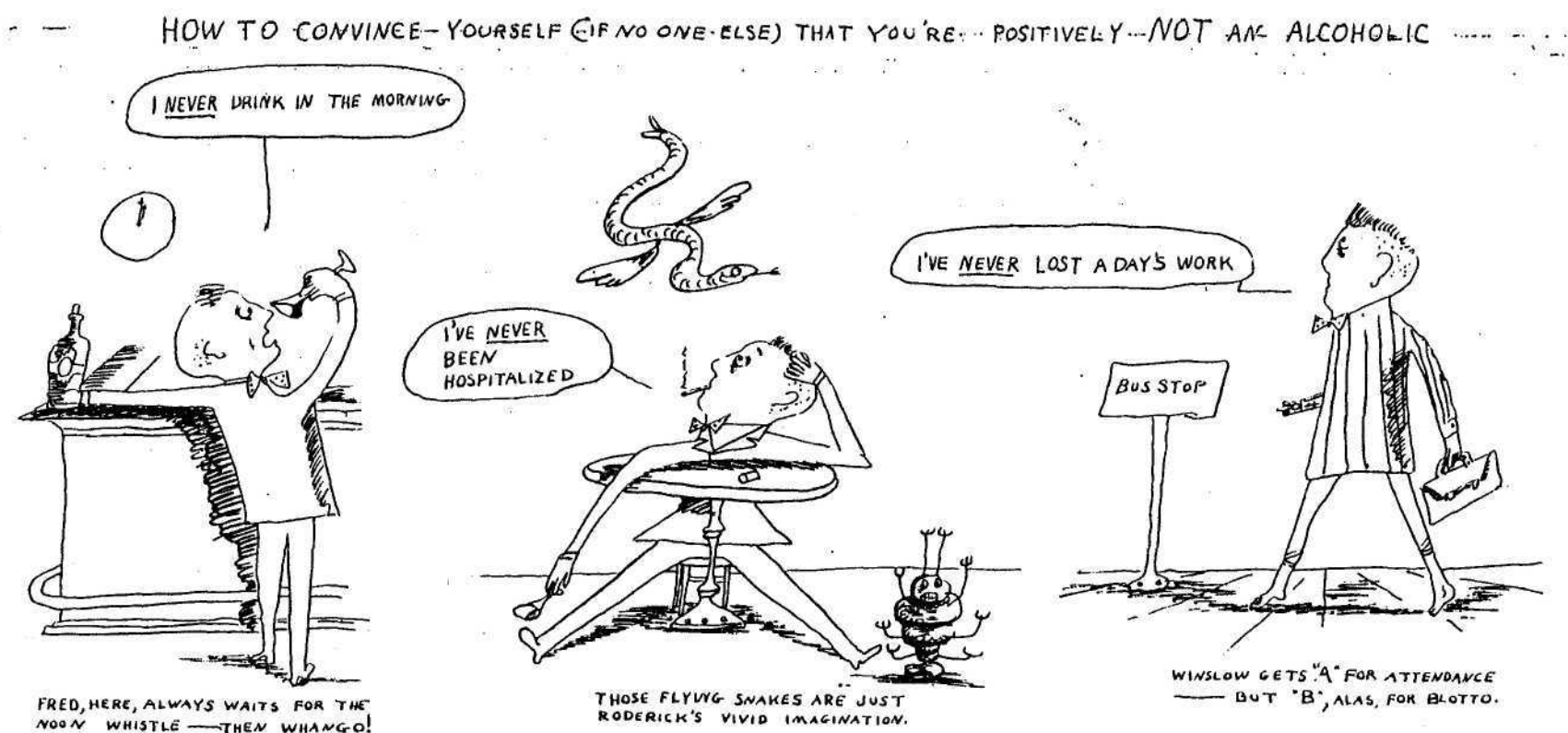
Cody C., Oklahoma

Dear Grapevine: We thought *Grapevine* readers might be interested in what has happened at the offices of the National Committee for Education on Alcoholism in the two weeks it has been opened, as those happenings affect A.A. Almost every piece of publicity we had mentioned A.A. and possibly that was why we had the kind of response we did.

We have had an average of fifteen telephone calls a day from alcoholics themselves, or the families of alcoholics seeking help. These calls have all been referred to the 24th Street Clubhouse. We have also had from ten to fifteen letters a day from all over the country, mostly from families of alcoholics, asking where they could find help. We sent A.A. literature to each of these requests.

In short it seems to us that we are just another channel through which those in need can find A.A., and although all *Grapevine* readers know that that is not our primary function, Marian and I would like them to know that we are very happy to be doing mass production 12th step work.

Marty M., New York, N.Y.



HOW IT FEELS TO MAKE ONE'S FIRST BEGINNINGS IN A. A.

The First Realization . . .

Harry I. of the New York A.A. is up here at the farm. Seeing he is here for two days, I am pumping him for all I can get out of him on A.A. He has opened my eyes to a lot I never knew. You would be surprised how I have gotten over resentments of family and life in general. I now look at their side of a resentment instead of mine. In doing so it lifts a great load off my chest and makes me see life more clearly. This being sorry for one's self is one of the ways to sap up your normal outlook. To think straight today means that tomorrow with all the other tomorrows will take care of itself. This is a great foundation for thinking clearly. I never should have left T—Hospital without coming up here. I did not know of this place until too late. Plus my nerves being all raw—plus I was trying to fight this thing out by myself, which you can't do alone.

I regret I messed up so much in the last few years paying no attention to A.A. when A.A. could have made my life so simple to face instead of all the hell I have caused people and myself. I realize that it will take me a long time to get the whole program—but with what I have gotten in common sense from Sister and about A.A. from Harry, along with talking to people up here about their problems and resentments, I will come out know-

ing myself better, and so face life with a more open mind and have an eye to judge myself. I realize now what the trouble with me has been. I have wanted happiness and refused to work for it. I have held grudges and resentments that have warped my mind. I have not been tolerant and fair to others and through your program I have begun to see life as it should be, not as the way I have looked at it.

I want to thank you again.

The First Questions . . .

Felt fine, but tired. Up too late. Did bills, called M. and got set for A.A. lunch. More bills—more and more nervous till I decided I was too shy to go to lunch alone. Relaxed and finished bills. Dressed. Lunch at Pierre—4 glasses (big) of champagne—good lunch. Then bookshop to finish overseas packages. Raining—taxi to school [a *school instructing in occupational therapy*], but changed address to Longchamps—more champagne—to hell with school. How could I work? This at Longchamps. . . .

Joining A.A. means "Eventually—why not now?"

Funny, this is not hard. It's easy and I want it. But, gosh, am I suddenly frightened. There's no reason, as I'm calm. Guess it's just nerve reaction.

Maybe it's easier to read the handwriting on the curb than to read the handwriting on the wall. In the gutter you feel despair. On the way you feel a fool. In despair you seek an end of despair and make a break.

You [meaning A.A.s] hurt the suffering beginner when you show you know more than he does—until he can know it too. Actually you are telling someone else what their wife is doing before they know it. Play the game. Show them the earmarks till they too know, then you can both talk on a similar (not the same) level.

About meetings. Too much laughter even good-naturedly doesn't help a guy who is desperate. He is immediately surrounded by physical hell—you remember? Let everyone know he can talk to some one alone. You know it but the stranger—complete stranger—doesn't. Why not announce that one doesn't have to talk in public? Let the shy desperate know he can contact an individual, and that in A.A. as everywhere there are many personality differences and sometimes a meeting isn't all. *IF* a guy *really* needs personal help rather than group therapy at the very start for casing the way, he should know he can get it.

This is wondering: If you are desperate you'll go through with A.A. (Even if you're drunk you'll absorb it.) If you know you're headed for it but not desperate, not there yet, the

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HOW IT FEELS TO JOIN A. A. LONG BEFORE YOU HAVE TO

It was a lovely spring morning last June, warm and full of promise—a day that fills you with love of life and a desire to live it fully, to accomplish all the things you have dreamed, to work, to love your fellow man. It was the first day of my vacation after a busy year—a vacation eagerly planned for and set aside to do a piece of creative work which was a joy to me. The night before there had been a late party to celebrate the finish of the old and the bright beginning of the new. I was shaky that morning, having celebrated thoroughly, so before I started to shop for my new equipment I decided to have a martini or two before lunch. I awoke at twilight with a bewildered sense of loss. The lovely day was gone. A shiver of terror went through me and then the slow, steady creep of smothering panic. Something terrible was the matter with me but WHAT? This wasn't the first time this had happened in spite of my best intentions and plans. It had happened with increasing frequency whenever I was released from responsibility. A cold, damp sweat folded around me like a blanket and I was filled with violent nausea. Later I phoned the liquor store. I had to have a drink so I could think this through clearly.

At the end of a week with days beginning and ending in the same way I was reduced to despair and gibbering panic. I couldn't go out in the street, let alone ride in a bus. I was afraid to get in an elevator. I couldn't sit in a movie for fear of screaming out loud. Safe in the apartment the walls started moving in on me. The long vacation yawned ahead like a dark valley of horror. In my despair I doubted if I'd find myself alive at the end of it, let alone well and ready for work. There was no reality but the fight between me and my panic and the only weapon I knew to fight it with was a drink. I had had psychoanalysis and supposedly should not be suffering this recurrence of panic but it was worse than in its original form. There was no further help to be sought from that angle. Slowly a thought had begun to focus in my terrified mind. Could the panic have any relationship to my drinking?

I didn't believe it for a moment but in my despair I couldn't afford to ignore the possibility. If that were all, then everything was simple, I'd just stop drinking and things would straighten out.

I hated to stop drinking, of course, because I actually enjoyed everything about it: the taste, the smell and the effect which gave me a sense of well-being, gaiety and courage, for

I suffered from an awful shyness and tension with people. Also, liquor had been a daily part of my life for years; helping me through difficulties, being a reward for work well done and a solace when I was depressed. In fact, as I thought about it, liquor was a pretty constant companion in good health and ill, for better or for worse. It went on weekends with me and came home with me. It was waiting for me after work and spent many evenings with me when I should have been following some of my other interests. It frequently went to bed with me and was there in the morning whenever I needed it in the last couple of years. It had lunch with me when it could. It monopolized my vacations because I was carefree. I look it with me where I knew I wouldn't find it. Several times I decided that a temporary vacation would do me good but I never stayed away more than several days.

Generally, it had been a good companion, reliable and restrained for years, especially when I had work to do. It indulged itself on weekends and at parties and plagued me with hang-overs—some pretty bad ones in the last two years, but it had never interfered with a job or made me sick for more than a holiday or Sunday. It hadn't separated me from my friends or landed me in a hospital. My doctor had never discussed it with me, having no reason and my analyst had told me that it was not the factor in my disturbance though it might be wise not to drink so regularly. But now I made up my mind to stop drinking entirely for the rest of my vacation. To my horror I found I couldn't. The decision to do so seemed to enhance terrifically the desire to drink and all I accomplished was to make of myself a battle ground—one part of me fighting to drink and the other part fighting not to drink. The battle lasted one day and that night I got plastered. The victor rode the field for a week in varying degrees of being slightly tight to being drunk. I never passed out but I kept trying through the fog to figure out what in hell had broken loose. One side of me was making a souse out of me with all the symptoms, while the other was reeling around helplessly.

Then I remembered reading about A.A. and hearing that a friend of mine had joined. I phoned and went to see her not, of course, telling her the whole story but inquiring about symptoms. She advised attending a meeting, where I behaved like the patient outside the dentist's office who decides he doesn't

have a toothache after all. I fought every identification of myself with alcoholism. I had stopped drinking with no effort after the second meeting and for two weeks I attended every meeting with the sole purpose, I recognize now, of proving to myself that I wasn't an alcoholic. But in that time I read the book several times and began to follow the program. I talked with other members but nowhere could I get what I wanted—a flat, factual statement that I was or was not an alcoholic in their opinion. It seemed that I had to decide for myself with the wealth of knowledge and experience spread before me at meetings, talks and in the literature. Then, suddenly, I had to go away for two weeks and I began to drink again with the friends I was visiting. But something had happened to me. Sometimes I think you get this program through the pores by just going to meetings, being with members and keeping your mind and heart as open as you can. Once you get inside, as my father used to say to us kids: "the Lord has you by the hand!" Something bigger than myself certainly had me by the hand. I stopped drinking with my friends and began the work I had wanted to do—placing my whole problem in the care of the Power greater than myself of which I had heard so much. My mind cleared, an unknown sense of peace quietly took hold of me, my work went well. I humbly followed the 24 hour plan and asked no questions of myself or IT as to what path I was being lead along or what it signified.

That was two months ago. I returned to A.A. so glad to be back and with no inner resistance. Since then I have attended all the meetings that my work permits, have started some 12th step work and have grown to know many people and to depend upon their help and wisdom when I am frightened, troubled or depressed. The panic has gone and I have no desire to drink now though I don't avoid parties and situations where there is drinking. There is a new, fresh interest in my job, an unexpected reserve of material and ideas for it, and an unexpected energy of a different quality—deep, easy and relaxed. Most important of all is a consciousness of a growing experience with a Power outside myself which I depend upon and trust and which takes over for me things which are too much for me—more things than my drinking. All this fills me with awe and a profound gratitude to A.A. for this new and happy life I am living.

Beatrice

Mail Call for All A.A.s in the Armed Forces

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On this page in the July issue, we printed a letter from Sergeant Bob H., then in Hawaii. Bob has recently returned from the Islands to attend Officer's Candidate School in the United States. While he was in New York on furlough, we asked him to contribute an article on how A.A. had helped him over the rough spots in an Army career of approximately two years. Emphasis should be placed, we think, on the fact that Bob entered the Service after only four months as an A.A. He had, however, so firm a grasp of the program that he has made an uninterrupted progress in a completely new field of endeavor.

Bob's Story: "Two years ago, about to be inducted into the Army, I was secretly scared stiff. I had been in A.A. only four months, and while I had managed to stay "dry", it had been touch-and-go with me on a number of occasions. When I'd had the jitters I'd always been able to stave off that fatal first drink by getting in contact with one or more members of the local group. This, combined with frequent attendance at the various meetings, had sufficed to keep me in line so far, but what was I to do now? I knew I would have none of the physical contacts with A.A. upon which I had been relying; and I knew too that without something to fall back upon I would be a gone goose.

The solution to which I turned in desperation was the 11th step in the A.A. program—"prayer and meditation". I knew nothing about prayer and very little about meditation, but I reckoned it was a case of start learning or "else". It was very difficult for me at first (it still isn't easy), but by attending chapel whenever I could, I finally came to believe that I was discovering some of those spiritual values which in the past I had never even known existed. Anyway it worked; and it kept me "dry". And certainly it paid dividends from a more materialistic viewpoint—I got my promotions with reasonable regularity, and finally received an appointment to an Officer's Candidate School, to which I am now on my way. Without A.A. I *might* now be in line for some bars, but they certainly wouldn't be shoulder bars."

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A BEGINNER IN THE WACS

We are indebted to the Philadelphia Group for a letter from a comparative newcomer to A.A. The author of this letter, upon learning of A.A. through her doctor, wanted help so

badly that she moved to Philadelphia from her home 125 miles distant and got a job so that she might attend meetings regularly.

The fact that I have not written before is no indication that I have forgotten you or any of the members of A.A. I think of you all quite

often, remembering the few short weeks I spent in your midst. With that in mind I purposely chose today to write you. It may be just another day to you, but it marks an anniversary for me. It was just three months ago to date that I first entered your clubhouse in Philadelphia. Three months that I have remained "dry" and maintained complete sobriety. How well I recall how far away that three-month period seemed then. Until that time had expired I could not feel as if I had accomplished anything, but now at least, my feet are on the first rung of the ladder. But I've learned my lesson well. My fingers are still crossed. I know I can never be sure.

Little did I think then that I would be a member of the Woman's Army Corps today. I led such a useless, wasteful life—and now, though I am playing only a very small part—I am, at least, a useful citizen. Sometimes I have to pinch myself to see if I am dreaming. In the beginning I used to envy you all so much. You seemed so light-hearted and gay, so thoroughly happy and at peace with the world. I used to ask myself, "Will I ever be like that? Will my mind some day be free from worry and care?" I doubted it then, for I was still confused, my brain a tumult of conflicting emotions. The future loomed ahead as some hideous nightmare. I was convinced that nothing could ever make me enjoy life again. But you were all so kind, so tolerant, so helpful, so willing to listen to my tale of woe without censure, criticism or boredom, that gradually the cobwebs began to disappear, the weight was lifting from my heart, and I was learning to smile again. And then before I quite knew what had happened, I suddenly realized that my decision in coming to your group had not been in vain—that I had at last found the contentment that I had been so long in searching for. Nothing that I could ever do or say could sufficiently show my gratitude. I regret very much that I was unable to do anything about the 12th Step, but this war won't last forever and the A.A.s will always be in existence, so perhaps, God willing, some time in the future I will have the opportunity to put that into effect.

May God bless you all.

K.

The Pleasures of Reading

Alcoholics and non-alcoholics alike would profit by a careful reading of *Alcohol: One Man's Meat*, by Edward A. Strecker, A.M., M.D., and Francis T. Chambers, Jr. (The Macmillan Co., 2.50). Mr. Chambers is an alcoholic who hasn't indulged for many years. He is also a psychotherapist of high repute. In his introduction, the non-alcoholic Dr. Strecker, one of our foremost psychiatrists, makes a brilliant plea for the alcoholic: "... If the alcoholic were directly chargeable with these high crimes and misdemeanors against his own flesh and blood and against society, then no amount of scorn and punishment would be too severe for him. There are at least two reasons why he is not directly guilty as charged . . ." One of these, says Dr. Strecker, is that the alcoholic is definitely a sick person, just as sick as the patient who has tuberculosis or pneumonia. The second is that the makings of his alcoholism often reach far back into his childhood and are not within his control. There are enlightening chapters on normal and abnormal drinkers, the introverted personality, the extrovert, alcohol and sex. *Maeve S.*

An A.A. member who prefers to remain anonymous, has written a mimeographed condensation of Aldous Huxley's *The Art of Seeing*. *The Grapevine* will send it without charge to those interested.

Alcoholics Anonymous (Works Publishing Co., Box 459), Grand Central Annex, N. Y. 17, N. Y. (3.50).

AN A. A. GLOSSARY

ALKIE: An alcoholic. A drunk. Us. Maybe you.

BUTTERFLIES: Stomach spasms.

DESIGN FOR LIVING: The A.A. program.

ELIGIBLE: Anybody ready for A.A.

FIRST DRINK: The come on, or teaser.

GROUP: Gatherings, large or small, of A.A.s.

HIGH BOTTOM: Finding and using A.A. long before hitting the gutter.

LOW BOTTOM: Really hitting the gutter.

INITIATION FEE: The many things we missed.

The harm we did. The mental and physical pain we suffered, plus the money we wasted.

JITTERS: A feeling of tension (See the *Lost Week-End* for vivid description).

LITTLE BLACK BOOK: For emergency reference.

The addresses and telephone numbers of other A.A.s.

ON THE BEAM: Getting on with the business of living—by using A.A.

PERIODIC: One who has regular or irregular cycles of excessive drinking.

SKID ROW: The Bowery. Panhandle alley. All hope, all initiative gone.

TELEPHONITIS: Compulsion to use the telephone. All alcoholics, drunk or sober, seem to have it.

Do You Know: ABOUT HOME CARE FOR THE ALCOHOLIC

By the time most of us have reached A.A., we have suffered and, contrary to our expectations, have survived many hang-overs. This happy and surprising turn of events is seldom due to the magic potency of advertised nostrums. Nor to the "infallible remedies" so enthusiastically endorsed by well-meaning friends and fellow-sufferers. The victim, however, may be relieved of the physical symptoms of a hang-over.

This short dissertation is concerned only with the physical side, which is a problem in physiological chemistry and is amenable to a rational approach. It is not to be expected that the sufferer will be capable of any rational approach. However, his friends and well-wishers should bear in mind certain definite objectives. These objectives are to replace the fluid and salt deficiency and to restore the nutritional deficit, which is due, not only to a lack of food intake, but also to a depletion of the bodily reserves. In the latter, vitamins play a part, but only a part; when used alone they fall into the class of the aforementioned infallible remedies. Depending on the severity of the hang-over, it may take anywhere

from one to five days to achieve results.

To replace water, you do not give water alone, but fluids. This sounds like double-talk, but it is of the utmost importance. Without a concomitant replacement of salt, a dehydrated person cannot utilize water. Ginger ale, coca-cola, soup, milk, and fruit juices may be used. Salt may be added to all of these, but not to the point where they are unpalatable. Salt tablets are useful; two to four a day should be plenty. The body has its own mechanism for re-establishing chemical equilibrium. All the sufferer has to do, and as a matter of fact all he is capable of doing, is to supply the where-withal. If nausea and vomiting are severe, fluids should be forced slowly, by sips. The nutrition will be amply taken care of in the first few days by the soup, milk, and fruit juices. Sugar is the most easily assimilated of all food stuffs and should be added to the fruit juices or taken in the form of hard candy. Vitamins may be supplied in tablet form, preferably the shot-gun type which contains all of the vitamins. The normal dose may be doubled or tripled since an excess does no harm. The amount of vitamin deficiency pres-

ent depends upon the length of time the victim has been drinking and whether or not the drinking has been accompanied by eating.

When to begin regular meals is a decision that can be reached only by the sufferer. Do not try to force a meal on an unwilling person; concentrate on the fluids. He (probably) will not starve to death. Food preferences should be entered to regardless of how outlandish they may seem. Hunger marks the turning point; after that the rest is easy.

Rest is of great importance, and it does not necessarily mean sleep. The sleep mechanism of most actively practicing alcoholics, as we well know, is a horribly jumbled up affair and is not going to be rearranged overnight. If the insomnia is severe, protracted, and distressing, it warrants a doctor's attention; if not, it affords a fine opportunity for attending meetings and for the tactful presentation of the A.A. program.

In conclusion, it should be remembered that, as one of our members pointed out, "90% of the hang-over is up in the noggin." Being an alcoholic, I must disagree. Let's call it 75%.

An Anonymous Doctor

ALONG THE METROPOLITAN CIRCUIT

BERGEN COUNTY INVITES EXCHANGES . . . The new Chairman and Secretary-Treasurer, elected recently at a closed meeting, immediately embarked upon an enlarged program. The aim is to accelerate activities to accommodate the large influx of new members coming in as a result of this Group's advertising which has been appearing three times weekly in the *Bergen Evening Record* since last August. The new officers will welcome proposals to exchange speakers with other groups along the Metropolitan Circuit. . . . Address: P. O. Box 282, Englewood, N. J.

THE BRONX GROWING—AND HOW! . . . We're still talking about the outstanding meeting that the South Orange delegation held here in October, and Stoney S. and the man "with the charley-horse between his ears." Our thanks to them all. Our attendance is steadily increasing, due to the hearty cooperation of our members, physicians, and the clergy. Since most of the membership is newly enrolled, it would provide inspiration and encouragement if some of the veterans of both sexes from neighboring groups would participate—and talk for us. We think this would exemplify 12th Step work in a most practical manner. . . . We were well represented at the recent Matt Talbot Retreat. . . . Address of our *sumptuous* new quarters: 2500 Marion Avenue, near East Fordhum Road. P. O. Box 19, Morris Heights Sta., Bronx, N. Y.

EAST ORANGE ET AL INVADE VERMONT . . . Ruth and Joe F., and Francis M., of the Morristown Group, along with Hal R. of East Orange, lately did some New England A.A. pioneering. As a result of their talks before local organizations in Montpelier and Burlington, Vermont, groups were created in both towns. With continued cooperation of A.Aers generally, it is expected that these newly-established groups will soon be thriving.

FLUSHING CORRECTS WQXR . . . A guest speaker on Charlotte Adams' WQXR program, "The Run of the House," stated that there was no help for alcoholics. Mrs. Frank L., non-alcoholic wife of our member Frank L., immediately wrote to Mrs. Adams, enclosing our A.A. pamphlet and the reprint of non-alcoholic Jack Alexander's excellent *Saturday Evening Post* article. Over a later broadcast Mrs. Adams very graciously corrected the erroneous impression she had given to her listeners: she read over the air excerpts from Mrs. L.'s clarifying letter. . . . We'll be exchanging meetings with the Patterson Group,

Nov. 14th. . . Johnny W. has recovered from his recent appendectomy. . . . We have three new members—all men.

FOREST HILLS ALSO MOURNS GEORGE T. . . . We, too, greatly feel the loss of George T., who was originally a member of our Group. . . . The Jim Y.'s have a new baby boy. . . . Charlie S., from Buffalo, now living in Jamaica, N. Y., is one of our newest acquisitions. . . . Mount Vernon conducted a splendid meeting for us in October. . . . With guests from eight neighboring groups, our Monday night attendance has been between 100-160 . . . in the fountainless "Fountain Room" of the Forest Hills Inn. We begin promptly at 8:30.

MANHATTAN CLUBHOUSE STIRRING . . . We go to press before a report can be given on the last business meeting held at the 24th Street clubhouse in late October. But at the previous turbulent meeting in September it was voted that three committees should be formed, participants to be chosen by Chairman Ernest M. On the Club-Searching committee are Dan C., Eugene K., Thomas C., and Jack N. On the Hospital committee are Marty M., Jack N., and Bert T. In the next issue we'll report on their findings. Astrid L. is in charge of the new entertainment committee which has evolved an already popular program: three nights a week, Monday, Wednesday, Friday, hosts and hostesses are now at the clubhouse to welcome new and old members alike. Every Saturday is open-house night, with other groups invited to take over whenever they wish—as did the Brooklyn Group so delightfully in October. . . . The Hallowe'en party was tremendously successful, thanks to Astrid L. and her assistants, including our cooperative custodian, Tom M. It means a lot of extra work for Tom, and we are grateful to him for his excellent assistance. . . . Our hot-trumpet player, best known as "Muggsy," is dedicating at Nick's Greenwich Village nightclub a song entitled "The A.A. Blues." . . . The newly-weds, Mr. and Mrs. Reginald McH., and Henry M., were recent visitors from the Baltimore Group.

MONTCLAIR REORGANIZES . . . Unable to operate effectively without committees, we have finally come around to having some. One of the most active, which includes Ed S. and Harry T., is the entertainment committee. Our hilarious Hallowe'en party was the first of a series to be given at Thanksgiving, Christmas, the New Year, etc. We are also planning to have dances, dinners, and various sorts of entertainment the last Saturday in every month. . . . We have a new Secretary—DAVE R.

MOUNT VERNON HAS TWO ADDRESSES . . . Welcome to our Saturday Open House in our new Club Rooms at 4 Fourth Avenue. Cards, checkers and chess in the afternoon and plenty of fun at night. Each week a host and hostess will be delegated to arrange the program for the evening. No chance for the Saturday night gremlins these days. . . . We will also hold a closed meeting in the rooms every Thursday at 8:30 P.M. . . . But the open meetings on Monday night continue to be held at the Westchester Women's Club, as before. . . . Secretary Nobby is arranging for one exchange meeting every month.

NEWARK STORY, PAGE I . . . On that page you will read an account of the new clubhouse recently bought by various members of a number of North Jersey groups. We're so busy with last-minute details that all other news must wait for the next *Grapevine* issue. As stated in the article, our Group will continue to hold meetings there.

NORTH JERSEY STORY, PAGE I . . . The above applies to us also. In one week's time we formed the corporation, put up a neat sum of cash as option on the clubhouse, and got the deal well under way. It keeps us hopping—those of us members involved in the proceedings. Members of all groups throughout the United States who happen to be visiting in this area are invited to come and see us in our new home.

WHITE PLAINS SALUTE . . . Greetings to *The Grapevine* and our fellow groups! We, in central Westchester, are just muddling happily along in typical A.A. fashion—one slip last week, while two newer members graduated to the speaking stage. So it goes—with one step backward we take at least two forward. . . . The latch-string is out every Wednesday night at the Westchester Republican Headquarters (party affiliation unnecessary), corner of Martine and Mamaroneck Avenues, at 8:30. We heartily welcome all visitors, whether they are of the A.A. variety or interested friends.

INTER GROUP MEETING IN MANHATTAN; Capitol Hotel, 51st Street and 8th Avenue, Walnut Room; every Tuesday evening at 8:30. Room open from 5:30. For all other meeting information watch group news on the Metropolitan Circuit page, and check the most recent issue for changes of time and location.

JERSEY CLUBHOUSE

(Continued from Page 1)

tion of which has already been subscribed) to be pledged by individual A.A.s. Certificates of indebtedness are to be issued to all contributors, bearing interest, and redeemable in five to ten years. The plan is, however, to clear off all indebtedness as quickly as possible, including the mortgage. (Up to the time of purchase the building had sustained itself financially with revenues from bowling, pool, billiards, and tobacco.) The dues system will be voluntary weekly contributions—the amounts kept a strictly confidential matter—with 1.00 as tops.

Participation of the A.A. men and women in Alanon, Inc., is entirely as individuals. There were no group commitments, and care was taken to avoid involving Alcoholics Anonymous in any way. The Board of Trustees of the corporation are: Chairman, Tom M.; Secretary, Jim G.; Treasurer, Herman G.; Recording Secretary (handling dues), Hal R.; Stuart S., Dr. Arthur S., Pete O'T., Oscar O., Helen D., Bea W., Ed M., and Leo S.

The Newark Group, who have been holding their meetings at the Roseville A.A. for three years, will continue to do so. Maintained for 58 years as a conservative gentlemen's club, there has *never been a bar in the club*. However, food facilities, which also do not exist at present, will be installed pronto.

The big building is located one block from the Roseville Avenue station of the Lackawanna R.R., about 20 minutes from New York. It is expected that the clubhouse will develop into a clinical center for new people, and a social haven for all A.A. men and women, irrespective of their group membership.

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HOW IT FEELS TO BEGIN

(Continued from Page, 3)

"better than thou" attitude is not too good—nor laughing. Maybe closed meetings should be more closed. The most sincere individual (the one who is only just on his way; you don't reach for the straw until you *can't* swim one more stroke) is jolted and not rightly. Maybe new members seeking membership definitely should have a trained and tried group of members at a closed meeting where the numbers are not uncontrollable but big enough for helpful trained instruction. The one who is just interested won't be hurt—but the fellow in despair who knows no one or the one who wants a considered and trained answer is apt to be driven off by meetings where unauthorized people and antagonistic personalities shout their mouths off. Maybe that's the job of the chairman; to spot the problem and tell the guy his is the type question that is best handled by experts. As I say—I'm wondering. . . , It's OK if you're intelligent or can wealthily go to the grave via a swank bar stool. But the guy who is at the end financially, with a wife and kids estranged through alcohol, with no family to case him over—only loneliness, black "bottom-mountain" stuff—needs more help than others.

There is a parallel in the psychoneurotics of the war with whom I've been working. Those going to families that understand and can afford to care for them are (comparatively) OK. It's the other ones—with no understanding friends—no means—nothing but knowing it's all wrong, who need a touch at the beginning of *personal* help—at least a small and trained group. A private word of encouragement or serious discussion is worth more than ten meetings for some people at the beginning—and believe me it may only entail one sincerely spoken personal statement—then group stuff. The group may *keep* you on a path but it takes an individual to *put* you on—or keep you off.

Steve

The First Time . . . at 60

I was in my 60th year when I first contacted A.A. I had always been a steady and heavy drinker. Having what drinks I wanted was as much a natural part of my life as smoking. So far as I was able to tell at that time it had never interfered with my life, either business or social. Then business became slack, drinking heavier and more steady and, at some time unknown to me, alcohol took over and became

the boss. I was only conscious of the intense physical and nervous discomfort and attributed the almost melancholic depression to these factors. I got to the end of my rope and life was not worth living. The end of the run was, morbidly, hoped for and would, I think, have been welcomed.

At this time I contacted A.A. I haven't the least recollection of what was said at the first meeting. One thing stood out, and that was the fact that these people had gone through the same slough of despond that I was in and now were normal and happy. So it *could* be done and they were the proof for they *had done it!* That fact was the piercing ray of light that was given me.

Then came the usual over-exaggerated depressions. But the group was always there to give balance and knowing advice. "Day by day" became month by month and gradually the old habits changed. And, believe me, Brother, habits don't change as easily at 60 as they do at 30! And then came the seemingly insurmountable matter of the "spiritual angle." In time, entirely unknown to me, that came to be a simple natural fact, brought about in great part by the feeling of gratitude being so great that I had to go beyond myself to express it or account for it. To you who are starling this happy journey I can only say, "Don't press; don't worry about it. Just keep the gates of your mind and heart open and it will come simply and naturally." Just let nature and A.A.'s lessons take their course. That will be the beginning of all blessings, the consciousness of dawning faith. Faith in yourself, faith in others, faith in the feeling that the world is governed and going ahead to better things.

And where did all this come from? Just from drying up with the help of the finest lot of men and women alive. Silly, isn't it? Doesn't seem to make sense. Well, my good friend, you just try it. Drive with an easy rein; don't worry; seek and be with the Group as much as you possibly can. Coast along with us, work with us, and you will gradually find *fear* being replaced by confidence, *doubts* taking wing; *depression* being replaced by happiness and *faith* in yourself and others and in the future emerging into the full light of everyday living. Just try it; keep dry, *think*, a little plea for help from some greater Power. Have patience and you will get the answer to real living and happiness. Then try to return just a little of all that has been given you by trying to pass it on to others who are sick and need help. It's the road to the top of the mountain—into the sun—and it's yours for the effort.

Elliot D.