

January 1945

Granite Vermont opens its Heart to A.A.

Curious things happen here. For instance, Bill and Doc were born here and perhaps they felt there was no need for A. A. in this quiet, kindly, historic state. But they have not been here for some time and things have changed since then.

The beginning of A.A. in Vermont is credited wholly to Joe. About a minute after he deposited his bags on arrival, he began to look over the "larger" cities such as Burlington (23,000) and Montpelier (7,500). He found plenty to do. Joe had an A.A. group going in each of these cities in no time.

In Burlington the group consists of a printer, an electrician, an insurance broker, and a sound engineer; and a doctor is a good prospect for the next meeting. Montpelier has a few more members; there is Jim B., who owns an excellent dry-cleaning business; yours truly with varied interests - office machines, a taxi business, and an ice cream and dairy store in town; George B., owner of a wholesale candy business (won a grand betting on F.D.R.); Ted K., writer, farmer and breeder of Aberdeen Angus cattle; Wayne D., right now selling Christmas trees and farming - treasurer; Merrill P.; farmer; Ralph H., chef in the hospitable and attractive Montpelier Tavern. We also have Elbert C.,

wholesale and retail pork products (ten years dry this month, our real standby in a pinch, and Wayne B., owner of large lumbering interests in Stowe, Vermont, twenty miles away. Wayne has not missed a meeting since the group was started in October. Two other out-of-town members are Dick L., merchant of Waterbury, which is twelve miles away, and Dick C., a merchant of Newbury, thirty-eight miles away. Our one honorary member, Bill F. (three years dry), is an associate of Joe's and is now in New York City.

The plan for now is to keep the group small and to meet at the home of yours truly. In the spring we hope to come out with open meetings and take on all comers. With this in view we just will not *allow* any slips. Each member knows and understands the plan, having actually voted on it at a regular meeting. This means, of course, they just *can't* slip, which would be a catastrophe for Vermont. After all, it's Bill and Bob's state and it is the most recent to come into A.A.

We do not stop here, however, as the real back-field, Jim B., Wayne D., George B., Ted K., and the secretary, are at it daily. We have spoiled lots of drinks in Montpelier, we know, and even some non-admitting alcoholics are seen in the drug stores and coffee shops more than in the past.

As you all know, Joe is a tireless worker for A.A., and on a recent trip to Montpelier we made many contacts. One of the most pleasant was lunch with our Governor-Elect, a non-A.A. He had little knowledge of our program and Joe covered it fully. He has promised to come to one of our meetings some Monday night. He was informed that no funds are now available for the care and treatment of alcoholics in any Vermont institution. In fact, not even one bed is available. By way of contrast, Joe told what New Jersey is now doing in this respect.

We of the Montpelier group feel fortunate in having such an outstanding sponsor and such fine friends from New Jersey. We feel that we have the jump on most new groups.

By combining A.A. with his regular business trips about the state, our Secretary hopes to start many A.A. groups in Vermont. We boast that we will have at least six groups going before April.

Much credit needs to be given to the wives in our group. Each week two volunteer on the eats and we are yet to be disappointed with any of the sandwiches, pumpkin pie, ice cream, cake, maple syrup and raised doughnuts, cheese and coffee, coffee, coffee.

We are also pleased with the fact that two Ration Boards have granted gas for our work, so Vermont is in high spirits as this is written.

"Monty" and Ted K., Montpelier, Vermont