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The national monthly journal of Alcoholics Anonymous, devoted to those seeking further knowledge on the problem of alcoholism, with the hope that it will help all alcoholics everywhere. Individual opinions expressed here are not, necessarily, those of A.A. as a whole.

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Group Meetings Grow, and So Do Expenses

(Are the expenses of large group meetings becoming a burden? Can they be distributed more equitably? Or can they be reduced? Here is what one A.A. thinks would help.—Ed.)

From Long Bench, Calif.

MORE AND MORE, our meetings are outgrowing the small home gatherings where meeting needs are at a minimum. The greater proportion of meetings are now of necessity held in some hall or meeting room where it is necessary to pay rent.

The very growth of A.A. and the size of the average group is the primary factor behind this necessity. By the same token, expenses mount. Heat and light are in some instances added expense. The increasing demand for A.A. literature becomes an expense factor. The group share of area Central Committees and the A.A. Foun-

DELAYED EN ROUTE

Sometimes the editorial staff gets a little behind in its work and *The Grapevine* reaches its subscribers a few days late.

Or, the printer may get piled up on his presses, with the same result.

For once, however, both can plead not guilty. The reason the October issue was so long reaching everyone was the railway express strike in New York. This diverted a lot of shipping into the postal system. The postoffice, though working around the clock with augmented personnel, was swamped. Mail stacked up ceiling high, and the *Grapevine* was one of scores of magazines that lay piled in the postoffice for days until overworked hands could send it on its way.

The strike has ended and all should be back on schedule for this issue, or nearly so. But if there is still a few days drag, you'll know why.

dition must be counted in the overall group expense budget. An increasing number of groups also give A.A. year pins to members who have attained a year of sobriety. In the larger groups, this becomes quite an expense item. Many groups also purchase a limited number of copies of *The Grapevine*, *Eye Opener* or other local area paper, to be given to newcomers. Even refreshments add to the expense.

Actually, this meeting cost may now average more than 50 cents per person, per meeting; and, when we remember that newcomers and non-alcoholics do not contribute, that means at least one dollar per alcoholic member per week.

In the face of this growing expense, our group leaders bravely and proudly stand before the groups and proclaim to the world that, "We are self supporting?" No outside financial aid is solicited or accepted; that our expenses are small and are taken care of by voluntary contributions of members at each meeting.

The leader may also say, "Visitors please do not contribute," and so the visitors depart later in complete ignorance of the fact that the local secretary has hastily called a quiet meeting of a few of the steadfast members to inform them that the evening collection was far short of the amount needed to meet the cost of the meeting. These few steadfast members, who have earlier put their dollar bill in the collection, calmly and quietly make up the deficit: thankful that they have enjoyed another evening of sobriety, which, even counting the extra donation is far less costly than an evening of drinking. Unconsciously they have added to their insurance that another evening of drinking is extremely unlikely.

Another group who happily departed as soon as they had their coffee, were those members

who never visit any other meeting, but religiously, once each week, set aside an evening to attend their own group meeting, and having done so, close the book for another week. They have done their duty. They have attended a meeting and when the hat was passed they carefully put in the usual 25c. For the balance of the week they will not be disturbed; no 12th Step work, for they have carefully refrained from divulging their telephone numbers. A.A. is a great thing! They are sober! Happy? No, they can't claim much happiness, but, they are sober!

Then there is that group of people who are always the last to leave the meeting; who are deriving so much good and so much happiness from A.A. that they prefer A.A. meetings to any other way of spending an evening. They make it a point to meet and talk with the newcomers at each meeting, take the address or phone numbers of newcomers and call them or visit them during the week. They quietly drop a dollar bill in the hat at every meeting, nearly always

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ONE WORLD IN THE MAIL

One day's mail received at the A.A. Central Office in New York recently brought letters from Manila; Mexico City; Puerto Rico; Capetown, South Africa; Dublin, Ireland; and points in England and Finland.

As a further indication of the spread of A.A. throughout the world, requests also have been received at the Central Office for the translation of A.A. literature into the Slovak, Polish and Finnish languages. Spanish inquiries are already being handled at the office in Spanish.

Alcoholics Anonymous

Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism.

The only requirement for membership is an honest desire to stop drinking. A.A. has no dues or fees. It is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy, and neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to stay sober and to help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.

The A.A. Program of Recovery is incorporated in The 12 Steps. The A.A. book of experience, Alcoholics Anonymous, and other literature, including The 12 Points of Tradition, are available through any group or the Central Office, P.O. Box 459, Grand Central Annex, New York 17, N. Y.

EDITORIAL:

On the Value of Tradition

Mutual experience is the common ground on which A.A.s meet individually and upon which A.A. has been built collectively.

As written in the pamphlet, "Alcoholics Anonymous Tradition: Twelve Points to Assure Our Future," A.A. was not invented by anyone—it grew. "Trial and error has produced a rich experience. Little by little we have been adopting the lessons of that experience first as policy and then as tradition. That process still goes on and we hope it never stops. Should we ever harden too much, the letter might crush the spirit. We could victimize ourselves by petty rules and prohibitions; we could imagine that we had said the last word. We might even be asking alcoholics to accept our rigid ideas or stay away. ..."

But, as the pamphlet says further, "the lessons of our experience count for a great deal—a very great deal. . . ."

What each of us has experienced individually counts for a great deal in helping to show another how to gain sobriety in A.A., and in developing even beyond the level of sobriety into a new and fuller way of life.

Likewise, the experience of each group may be invaluable to other groups, new and old.

Sharing experience for mutual good is an A.A. principle and practice.

The "Twelve Points of Tradition" cover all of the most vital experiences encountered in A.A. For instance, why is anonymity so important; what are its spiritual values? Why should A.A. as a whole, and each group individually, have but one primary purpose? What has been learned through actual experience about the problems of money, property and authority? What does experience say on the question of professionalism?

These are some of the topics incorporated in the Twelve Points. They are indeed vital to A.A. now and to the future of A.A.

For this reason, the Grapevine editorials, beginning with the next issue, will take up each one of the "Twelve Points of Tradition" in succession in the same manner that "The 12 Steps" have been covered successively in the past. And, as was done with the Steps, different writers will give their views on and interpretations of the Points of Tradition, so as to gain a cross-section treatment.

Again this will be a sharing of experience—the practice and the principle by which A.A. grows, and A.A.s grow.

Incorporations:

By Bill

Many an A.A. Group ruefully writes the New York General Office asking how to unscramble endless difficulties which have arisen over the incorporation and financing of clubs, drying-out places, educational projects, and the like. Most sincerely, these *Groups wish that they had never gone into business.*

Once off to an awkward start, these difficulties are sometimes hard to cure. Still, if we intelligently use the experience we've already had, our newer Groups ought easily avoid these growing pains. The purpose of this piece is to assemble and focus our experience on these particular problems.

First, let's review those parts of the "12 Points of A.A. Tradition" which bear directly on the status of incorporations and their financing:

"Tradition 6" states: "We think, therefore, that any considerable property of genuine use to A.A. should be *separately incorporated and managed*, thus dividing the material from the spiritual. . . . An A.A. Group, as such, should never go into business. . . . Clubs, hospitals, etc., ought to be incorporated . . . so set apart that they can be freely discarded by the Groups . . . hence they ought not use the A.A. name . . . their management should be the sole responsibility of those who financially support them. . . . Hospitals or places of recuperation ought to be well *outside*. A.A. and medically supervised. . . . An A.A. Group may cooperate with anyone, but such cooperation ought never go so far as affiliation or endorsement, express or implied."

"Tradition 7" states, after declaring for full financial self-support as soon as possible, "that any public solicitation of funds using the name, 'Alcoholics Anonymous,' is highly dangerous, whether by Groups, clubs, hospitals, or other outside agencies—that acceptance of large gifts from any source, or of contributions carrying any obligations whatever, is unwise . . . that we view with concern those A.A. treasuries which continue, beyond prudent reserves, to accumulate funds for no stated purpose . . . that nothing can so surely destroy our spiritual heritage as futile disputes over property, money, and personal authority."

Being clear on these basic principles, it is next suggested that four of the articles in this booklet be carefully reread—the ones on money, clubs, hospitals, and outside enterprises, which show our past experiences in these fields. They clearly reveal the fundamentals of our "money-management" Tradition. And, in a general way, they quite clearly indicate what the corporate status of any useful or related enterprise ought to be.

Next, then, just what special type of incorpora-

Their Uses and Misuses

lion is best, how should it be corporately named, what should be the limit of its scope, who should be its members (or stockholders), and how should it be financed? Many A.A.s write us asking for samples of model charters. As precise Group purposes, local conditions, and state laws may vary much, it would probably be unwise for A.A. Headquarters to try to meet these requests. Any good attorney, once he is sure just what is needed and just what should be avoided, will do far better than we.

In response to the many Group inquiries, we wish, however, to be as definite as possible. So here follows a set of typical questions such as Groups ask. To them we append definite answers. Of course, these answers aren't to be construed as final or perfect. Nor are they to be thought of as rules, regulations, or "musts." But they may help in perplexing situations.

1. Q. Should an A.A. Group, us such, ever incorporate?

A. No. Some have, but usually wish they hadn't.

2. Q. Should an A.A. Group as such go into the business of running a Club, a hospital, a research, educational, or "rehabilitation" venture?

A. We think definitely not. Experience has been telling us to avoid this. The A.A. Group ought to remain a spiritual entity.

3. Q. But how about Clubs? Being so close to A.A., shouldn't they be an exception; just why shouldn't they bear the A.A. name and be managed by the Group itself?

A. We used to think they should. When a Group is small and merely hires a room, it is quite natural to call the place an "A.A. Clubroom." Conversationally, most clubs are still called "A.A. Clubs." But when an area contains many A.A.s, and perhaps several Groups, not all the A.A. members will care for Clubs. Hence the business management of the club (or clubs) in the area must become the function of those who individually contribute to their support and the corporate title should omit "A.A." The contributors ought to elect the business management. Then other A.A.s can "take the club or leave it alone." Club Corporations often adopt a related title, such as "Alano" or "Alkanon." But more remote ventures, such as farms or drying-out places operated by individuals A.A.s, ought not use these "related" titles.

4. Q. Our Group *did* form a separate Corporation for our Club. We made every one of our A.A. Group members a voting members of that Corporation. Now the

directors of the Club Corporation are at odds with our Group rotating committee. The Club directors try to run both the Club and the Group. The Group committee also tries to run the Club. What do we do about that?

A. This is a natural difficulty. It can be corrected by a realization on the part of the Club directors that theirs is the duty of providing a suitable Club only—a pure business operation. They merely hold or rent the property, keep the place policed and swept out. They raise money from individual monthly pledges; they also receive rentals from the treasuries of such A.A. Groups as may hold meetings in the Club. This is usually a generous proportion of those funds which result from "passing the hat." Each A.A. Group ought to have its own small treasury. Out of these funds the Group pays for whatever use it may make of the local Club. This avoids confusion as between Group monies and Club Corporation funds. Under these conditions the Club has no special hold on the Group or vice versa. Pure A.A. matters are handled by the Group committee. But jurisdiction over social activities in a Club will vary; sometimes the Club directors handle them, sometimes the Group committee, sometimes a special committee.

There is often confusion between Club membership and A.A. membership. In a limited sense, they are one and the same thing, as practically all Clubs open their doors to every reasonably well-behaved A.A. who wishes to frequent them.

But when *Club management* is involved, we are beginning to believe a distinction should be made between Club privileges, Club voting membership, and A.A. membership. Any A.A. interested in a Club ought to be willing to contribute regularly to its support. Though he may not be able to contribute much, it will be something. Obviously, as a monthly contributor, he should be eligible to serve as a Club officer or director and should vote at business meetings. While straight A.A. is free as air and most Clubs are wide open to all, there seems no good reason why a persistent non-contributor should claim any right to vote at a club's business meeting. If he wants to help manage the Club's money, he ought to contribute a little himself. So, when we come to distinguish clearly between Club privileges, Club voting membership, and A.A. membership itself, we shall have surmounted many current troubles.

5. Q. Our Group is small. Every local A.A. member is a Club enthusiast. Do you think we should incorporate just the same, even though A.A. membership and Club



I can take it, or leave it alone.

membership is identical, and in our town everybody contributes to the Club?

A. If your Club has to sign a lease, buy property, or have a sizable bank account, by all means incorporate. Establish this way of doing and thinking and you will avoid later complications. We suggest you be careful about mixing A.A. affairs with your business meetings—business only there!

A Clubroom may, of course, be so small and inexpensive, or its future so uncertain, that it would be premature to incorporate. That's a matter for sound judgment.

6. Q. Should a Club Corporation charter include other activities—such as rehabilitation, hospitalizations, education, research, etc.?

A. We think definitely no. We suggest you limit Corporation charters to one activity and one location only. To incorporate the whole world of alcohol and mix that up with A.A. almost invariably leads to confusion. A simple, sharply limited objective is best. Mixtures of several functions we have sometimes tried, but usually with poor results.

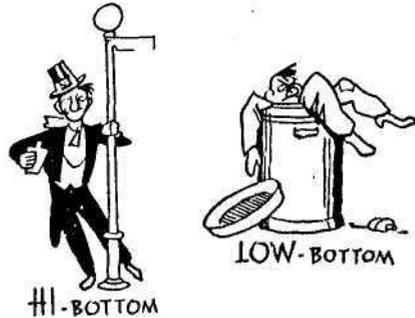
7. Q. May individual A.A.s organize Foundations and raise money for research, education, rehabilitation, etc.?

A. There can be no objection if they act as *individuals only* and *do not use the A.A. name in any way*. But experience shows that there is always a strong temptation to use the A.A. name. If that is done, the project will ultimately suffer because the surrounding A.A. Groups will protest strongly—and rightly so, we think. The Alcoholic Foundation itself, though it unofficially represents A.A. as our General Service Board, has solicited no outside funds in recent years and it will soon abandon the title, "Foundation."

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YOU HIDE IT, THEY FIND IT!

Bottoms Up!



Just about everything from hot water bottles to dog houses have been used for hiding the bottle, judging by the letters that have been entered in the Best-Hiding-Place contest being sponsored by the Bottoms Up Editor.

The alcoholic must have been especially good at "Hide the Thimble" and all other similar games of childhood. His ingenuity in finding places to protect his supply from discovery—and destruction—stands unsurpassed. If you don't believe it, read a few of the following:

Big One that Got Away

From Chapin, S. C.

"I have a small cottage on a large lake. We (wife) fish a lot, so I could arrange before time to tie a pint on the back of the boat. It worked several times until she hooked a large bass and the line got around my bottle cord. She lost the fish and after a good argument I lost my pint." —H.E.L.

Over-Dressed Turkey

From Warm Springs, Mont.

"This, I believe, is the prize hiding place as revealed by a group member of Montana State hospital who prefers his anonymity be maintained even in correspondence to you:

"The patient, an alcoholic who was working in a butcher shop in eastern Montana, had tried all the time-worn recipes for seclusion of the bottle. Although no secrecy was necessary at home because he lived alone, this alky was at wits' end when it came to keeping a supply at the store for 'medicinal purposes.' There was no sneaking out nor chasing down the alley for a quickie.

"So he stuffed a fifth into a 15-pound turkey, and put the bird in the walk-in refrigerator. The butcher sold the bird, which strangely weighed more than it should, and the customer walked out. The alky watched the transaction in horror; the customer was rather straight-laced and a fifth of whiskey was hardly apropos for a dressing. The alky made a hasty excuse to the butcher, dashed madly out of the door in his white apron and pursued the customer. The chase ended in a grocery store. 'Pardon me,' said the alky, 'part

of this bird doesn't go with the sale.' And before the astonished eyes of the owner of the bird, he unwrapped it, dug deep into the turkey's inner sanctum and extracted the bottle. Then he calmly re-wrapped the bird, handed it back and said, 'Thank you.' —I.S.

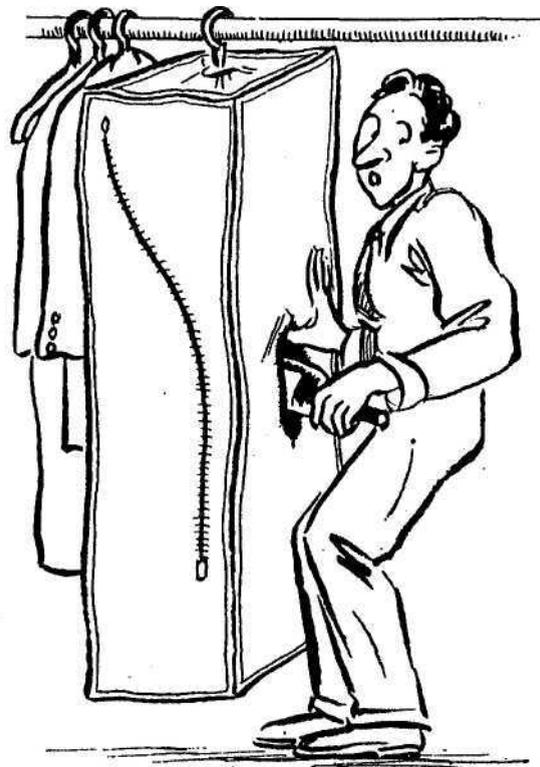
Four Roses, No Doubt

from Sugar Creek, Mo.

"My gravest problem when on a binge was where to hide a big drink where it could not be found and yet easily accessible when I awoke from my nightmarish sleep. My wife, through some sixth sense, almost always knew when I had a bottle.

"My wife and I (when I'm sober) love cut flowers about the home. By watching closely I managed at times to empty the water from a flower 'vase' and fill same with something more potent. The unhappy flower, of course, was soon pretty no more.

"Whiskey was always my favorite but due to the conditions that prevailed I often used gin for a 'morning after.' . . . There was usually a cup or two or sometimes a glass filled with water among the dishes soaking in the sink from the night before. I found that by refilling one of these with gin it was never discovered." —S.D.



Most popular of all hiding places seems to have been the clothes hamper, with slit cut as shown to facilitate quick removal and replacement of the stock.

A White Christmas

From Albany, N. Y.

"A favorite hiding place in winter was in the snow on the porch roof outside my bedroom window. Many times I concealed a pint in each overshoe.

"But my best hiding place was several tons of gravel which had been dumped against the house near the back door. . . . It certainly beat the coal bin and was much cleaner, too.

"A friend disposed of the contents of several bottles of maple sugar which his wife had in their cellar storeroom and filled the bottles with whiskey, he put the whiskey in the vinegar cruet and used it at the table, once even putting it on his morning cereal." —G.C.M.

Who's Hiding Who?

From Midland, Mich.

"Regarding hiding places, here is a story about one that involves a bit of reverse English.

"We lived in a small house and it was not very long before I ran out of successful hiding spots. My wife had acquired the faculty of knowing about when and where to make a search. She would find the bottle and, somewhat seriously, re-hide it. Then, in her absence, I would do the same. It turned out to be a sort of unplanned game for a while.

"One day, however, I missed a bottle and for the life of me could not find it, even though I was very positive it had been re-hidden. I needed a drink at the time.

"Later I found out that my wife had transferred the liquor into an empty vinegar bottle where it serenely stood on the pantry shelf in plain sight and as big as life. In my search of the pantry, I had pawed all around it without the slightest suspicion." —S.P.F.

My Aching Tooth!

From Union City, N. J.

"My husband works a five-day week and when I wanted to drink weekends I had to think up some weird methods. One Thursday I told him I had a toothache. He naturally suggested that I take my troubles and my aches to a dentist and have the darn things yanked. Friday (my toothache being just a snappy figment of my imagination) I carefully cleaned the house, ordered enough food for the weekend, bought myself two fifths of rye and put them in the laundry hamper. I washed off my makeup, put on a layer of white pan-cake makeup and a little blue eyeshadow on my lips to make me look 'suffering.' I soaked a good-size hunk of cotton in oil of cloves and put that in my mouth. It made a nice looking swelling and killed all scent of alcohol. Next I filled my hot water bottle with rye and climbed into bed.

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A.A. Utilizes Factors Inherent in the Alcoholic Personality

(Editor's Note: The first in this series of two articles appeared in the September issue.)

III

Following a working definition of the alcoholic, an attempt was made in our last discussion, to point out some of the assets and liabilities of the alcoholic personality. Among the handicaps to recovery we found a so-called lack of will power and a loss of faith. On the other hand, there are three qualities present which make regeneration possible: an innate gregariousness, an innate altruism and "the seed of God in us" (Eckhart).

In its application to this situation the A.A. Program makes use of at least four principles and techniques: (1) the principle of identification, (2) the practice of self-analysis, (3) the principle of altruistic activity, and (4) the preparation of the ground for the spiritual experience.

As Dr. Fosdick has said, "we set an alcoholic to catch an alcoholic," and thereby employ a

You Hide It. They Find It!

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"When my husband came home he was naturally concerned . . . 'You poor kid. You just stay right there in bed and I'll take care of you . . .'

"That was just what I wanted. While he would be busy in the kitchen, I could take out my oil-of-clove-soaked cotton, unscrew the stopper of the hot water bottle, take a good swig. . . Did I tie on a good one! But Monday I was out ten dollars I could ill afford and I had the grandmother of a hangover. I thought I had pulled the wool over Ed's eyes in a very, very intelligent way—but like all alcoholics, I was fooling only little me."—J.S.

(The contest will close Nov. 30. You can still win—if you know a better hiding place.)

a familiar and tested psychological principle. The suggestions and advice, however sound, offered to alcoholics by professional advisors have usually been rejected or disregarded because of the source whence they came. The same counsel out of the mouths of fellow alcoholics is received with credulity and even eagerness, and, more important, is acted upon, also because of the source whence it comes. The principle of identification is at work, and, whatever the explanation may be, its efficacy is beyond question. It is the talisman that opens the candidate's heart. It is the open sesame to the Program.

Self-analysis is induced by the fact that man has always been curious about himself and his make-up. This quality of curiosity has impelled him to explore his body, investigate his mind and examine his soul, sometimes in sheer wonder, at other times in search of a clue to some malady or disorder. Long before they have become aware of the gravity of their problem or set out in an honest and systematic way to solve it, many alcoholics have vaguely felt that something should be done about their condition and that they should begin with a sort of mental purge. In theory they were, of course, right, because a clearing of the mental blocks is a process required in any alcoholic therapy, but they were seldom intellectually honest enough to undertake the job or were otherwise incapable of carrying it through. But when they come to the point of making a sincere effort to rid themselves of the liquor habit, this inquisitiveness about the self, so inherently characteristic of human nature, becomes the basis upon which a personal inventory may properly be made and the mental catharsis achieved which must be at the center of any plan of recovery having prospect of success.

The third principle which is applied in the Program is one which again takes a man as it finds him, exploits a quality with which everyone is endowed and turns it to therapeutic advantage. In this instance, it is the quality of altruism—devotion to the interest of others—as evidenced in the 12th Step which inspires the good works without which we are told faith is dead.

Psychologists have told us repeatedly that a man, even a man whose conduct is normal by current standards, cannot be happy unless he cultivates habits that interest and serve others. These students of human behavior maintain (and without thought of any religious implication) that man cannot live a satisfying life, unless, in addition to pursuing his more materialistic activities, he engages in some cause having social significance or in some more or less continuous endeavor of value to other individuals—in other

words, charity in the broadest and truest sense of the term.

If we find among some alcoholics on the road to recovery a sudden and abrupt change in their mentality and overt behavior in an altruistic direction, it is because, in the rendering of assistance to other alcoholics, they find at hand an almost perfect outlet for the altruistic urge. The alcoholic is peculiarly qualified to help other persons in like conditions, and so he need look no further for a "cause" so conveniently supplied by the mandate of the 12th Step. Such a satisfaction of what is a powerful, innate desire to serve other people without ulterior motive is, as we all know, one of the most potent and efficacious therapeutic agents in the Program. Moreover, it goes without saying that the altruistic interests of the awakened alcoholic may be as varied and as broad as his inclinations favor and his time and resources permit him to satisfy.

IV

If, as was stated at the outset, a spiritual experience or conversion in some form is essential to the ultimate recovery of the alcoholic in the fullest sense of that word, how does the A.A. Program bring this about—or does it bring it about—or is it intended to bring it about?

These are difficult questions to answer. We are, perhaps, on surer, if narrower ground, if we say that participation in the Program does not of itself bring about the conversion, but that it prepares the ground for the entry of the spiritual element. A place is cleared for the spirit. The individual is made ready for a process of transubstantiation. On the passivist side, we have obeyed the injunction to resist not evil, and turned the problem over to a Higher Power. On the activist side, we endeavor to overcome evil by good and practice our new faith even before we may be intellectually convinced of its validity.

The resulting transmutation of the dross of materiality into the gold of spirituality is an operation as ineluctable as it is unexplainable in secular terms. All we know is that it does happen.

Nor is this a purely theological concept. We have it on the authority of the great pragmatist James that "God is real because He produces real effects" and that "We and God have business with each other and in offering ourselves to His influence, our deepest destiny is fulfilled." Moreover, James says that "prayer, or intercourse with the spirit, is a process wherein work is really done and spiritual energy flows in and produces effects psychological and material within the phenomenal world." When we real-

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The GROUP MEETING Page

Letters received following the initial appearance of the Group Meeting Page in the last issue indicate that this new feature will prove helpful in suggesting topics for discussion meetings.

Obviously, any topics suggested here are just that—only suggestions.

The topics will be presented in question form. How they are answered is a matter for each A.A. to determine—in keeping with the A.A. tradition that each individual applies A.A. as he understands it.

Any thoughts that may follow the topic questions are intended merely to amplify the question and provide still further leads for discussion. Anyway, they are of course only the opinions of the individual writer, "and not necessarily those of A.A. as a whole."

ANONYMITY

The question: Does anonymity involve more than the individual's own feeling as to whether he wants to remain anonymous or is willing to let it be known that he is a member of A.A.?

One A.A.'s Thoughts: Yes, much more. Each has the right, of course, to reveal that he himself is a member, but he does not have the right to reveal that someone else is a member unless he knows surely that the latter has no objection, either.

Even for the individual who does not mind it being known that he is in A.A. there is another question to consider. The majority of newcomers—even as you and I were—are skittish at the start. The most notorious drunk in town, whose escapades have been public property for a long time, may still shy sharply from the thought of it ever becoming known that he is joining A.A. He wants to be dead certain that the "anonymous" part of Alcoholics Anonymous means just that. He's not likely to think so if he hears members shouting their own names from the housetops and disclosing the membership of others.

Too little regard for anonymity may in this way drive some poor soul away from A.A., at least for a time and prolong his misery unnecessarily.

Then, too, there is the angle of responsibility to A.A. when an individual member publicly proclaims his membership. Once he has done that he has set himself up as a symbol of A.A., an example of A.A. Suppose he slips; that reflects on all of A.A. To be sure, the effect is not serious. A.A. continues to grow and its record and reputation need no defending, yet each member naturally wants to add to, not detract from, A.A. if he can.

There is a still greater value in anonymity



Group Meeting

than names. Anonymity has a great spiritual value. By preserving anonymity, principles are placed ahead of personalities. It is through anonymity that we renounce personal glorification and dedicate ourselves to the practice of modesty and humility.

The principle of anonymity is protection against the misuse of A.A.'s good name for personal gain. In so far, as it is preserved, it proves that A.A. practices what it preaches, and that individual members are really giving of themselves and their experience without thought of material return or personal publicity. Anonymity is the foundation of genuine brotherhood moved by an honest desire to give, not take. It is proof of sincerity; it is consistent with the other principles of A.A.

Finally, anonymity probably has done more than any other thing to gain A.A. its high public standing. The public would not respond to a band of self-seekers, or personal ballyhoo promoters, as it has to A.A. The world has too many self promoters now. It welcomes and respects a group of people who show they are willing to forego personal gain and glory to preserve a principle.

A.A. DEVICES

The question: Isn't the reliance A.A. places on certain mechanical devices inconsistent with its basic philosophy?

One A.A.'s Thoughts: By "mechanical devices" probably is meant the suggestion made to new members that they get into the telephone habit—"a nickel in the slot may save you a lot," if you'll call an A.A. when you get jittery. Or, that he eat a candy bar, or take a glass of milk, or eat a bowl of soup, when the "beer flash" comes. Or, that he write notes to himself as reminders of what he does not want to do during the next 24 hours.

There are many such mechanical devices, and

they are props. If they were to be relied upon indefinitely, they could be called inconsistent with the basic A.A. philosophy. Certainly they are an indication of insecurity.

But, they are intended mainly as temporary gadgets, for use during that early, troublesome period when the new member is trying to overcome a habit pattern of 10, 15 or 25 years, and trying to readjust to a new way of life.

During the transition period, the newcomer needs every bit of assistance he can get. He needs to know, and he is entitled to know, all of the little tricks of the trade that have helped others before him to make the long step from drunkenness to sobriety.

Not all newcomers; can make that long step in one leap. In fact, few of those who have now been enjoying sobriety for a long time made it in one jump. Usually there is a period of uncertainty, of groping and stumbling—a period when one misstep can throw the newcomer back into the morass he's trying to climb out of. One little thought can do it.

During this period, the newcomer is not thinking too much about basic philosophy. He may not even understand what those A.A.s are talking about when they are discussing a "new way of life," or "spiritual growth," or "a bridge to happy, normal living." He's worrying at the moment about how to keep from taking that first drink, how to get over his jitters, how to quench the "beer flash" without beer, how to get out of the depression.

The mechanical devices have been found to be highly useful in getting a person through the first, most hazardous time, helping him to hobble along until he can find more solid footing.

As a matter of fact, these devices are always useful, no matter how long one has been in A.A. Most anyone experiences a siege of depression now and then, or gets restless and nervous on occasion. If he ignores the danger signals, even he may slip back into those old grooves that are still deep even though no longer used. It always helps to call up an A.A., even if the main subject is not mentioned and the conversation is about the weather or the ball game or business. And a bit of food, or a cup of coffee can be used as a stimulant, while a walk may be the action that helps to break the grip of melancholia.

To be sure, the more one grows in A.A. the less need he has of mechanical devices, and once he has gained the basic philosophy and draws upon the spiritual strength that he has discovered, he may never have to resort to mechanical devices. But he's wise to use them as long as he feels he needs them. They work.

A.A. UTILIZES ...

(Continued from Page 5)

ize, if not yet from our own experience at least from observation of others about us, that what the psychologist James describes really happens, we can perceive and understand the cryptic wisdom of St. Augustine when he said:

"To have faith is to believe what you do not see,
And the reward of faith is to see what you believe."

It is said that faith is a gift which comes by grace following an act of the will. We conceive, from the standpoint of the A.A. Program, that the act of will here involved is the exercise of volition which is explicit in the 1st Step. The grace which descends upon the individual and makes him receptive to the gift of faith may come under a variety of circumstances. Thus, Mrs. Clare Booth Luce, writing in another but similar connection, observed:

"A conversion is sometimes preceded by a convergence, a swift coming together in the mind of all that the individual has ever been through or thought or felt. It is the culmination of confusion, the exhaustion of expediency, the zenith of doubt, the nadir of faith and the crisis of despair."

The same writer furnishes a brilliant and penetrating description of doubt which is the root of the alcoholic neurosis. She says, in part:

"Doubt distills its own strange poisons in the mind and heart. It is at the bottom of that painful feeling of uncertainty, malaise, restlessness, discontent, depression, insufficiency, nonentity, that seizes you, sometimes in even the most triumphant or successful moments. ... It is often that unaccountable all-gone, sluggish, inert, what's-the-use-of-it-all feeling that wells up in you when you are not absorbed in the radio, movies, games, drinking, dancing, romance or business. It is also what drives you to these things so frenziedly, that you may forget it. . . ."

The fourth principle of the Program, then, which we have selected for discussion is that we try to facilitate the removal of the alien doubt, to restore in its place our natal faith and to prepare the way for the admission of the spirit—without which life is barren and with which life is fruitful. This is all that is attempted under the Program. It is a great deal to attempt, but it is within the demonstrated powers of a regimen based upon the sound psychological and spiritual principles just briefly described. What saner, more sensible and more practicable objective could we have than that which was so simply stated almost 300 years ago by the great French thinker Fenelon:

"It is mere self-love to be inconsolable at

The Pleasures of Reading

HOW TO KEEP AWAKE—AND LIKE IT!

To newer A.A.s who complain that they can't sleep, and to older members who have wakeful nights every now and then, this reading list of mystery-detective-thriller novels is dedicated on the proposition that, if you can't sleep, you might as well have good reason. And any one of these little adventures into fearland will accomplish far better results than your own morbid imaginings, which are likely to be, after all, merely amateur efforts at scaring yourselves.

Your nearest rental library will have most of these titles. Space alone limits the extent of suggestions, which could be as many as an alcoholic's rationalizations.

FIRE IN THE SNOW by Hammond Innes: An international spy thriller that effectively combines suspense and action. *Good for all night.*

NEVER BY CHANCE by Sylvia Tate: One of the so-called "psychological" mysteries, all about a Hollywood piano player and a light o' love, who, believe it or not, lied to the poor guy. *Blah, but chilling.*

MURDER IN THE TOWN by Mary Richart: Professor plays detective in atmospheric tale filled with interesting characters. In the Leslie Ford tradition. *Good for half the night.*

DEPARTURE DELAYED by Will Oursler: Amnesiac ex-sergeant attempts to unravel killing of which he may be the sponsor. *Improbable, but try it.*

SEARCH FOR A SCIENTIST by Charles L. Leonard: Investigator Kilgerrin at it again this time in Marseilles for the Intelligence Service, as usual. *Excellent international espionage thriller.*

DARK INTERLUDE by Peter Cheyney: Post-war British intelligence in France, with our old friends Shaun O'Mara, Quelvada and Quayle, plus that super-adventuress, Tanga. Only Callaghan, of the other Cheyney series of thrillers, is missing. *No droopy eyelids on this one!*

FASHIONED FOR MURDER by George Harmon Coxe: Young Boston commercial photographer gets mixed up with New York model, and how! Not as good as most Coxe detections, but still *many chills ahead of the average.*

THE SEVEN DEADLY SISTERS by Pat McGerr: Second attempt of the author at long distance deduction; the first, **PICK YOUR KILLER**, being a successful novelty. This time the formula fails to jell. *If you're only half awake.*

BLUE CITY by Kenneth Millar: Hard-boiled, fast paced, Hammett type of thriller about veteran who returns to home town and gets involved with practically everything nasty. *Try to sleep on this!*

THE STRIPED SUITCASE by Carol Carnoc: London humor tale about misadventures connected with identical striped suitcase. Well told, but not unguessable. *If you're determined to stay awake.*

DEATH TAKES A PAYING GUEST by Aaron Marc Stein: Again those archaeological crime hunters, Elsie Mae Hunt and Tim Mulligan do their stuff, this time in Washington, D. C., guest houses. Amusing; good characterizations and nimble, if slightly far-fetched plot. *Pleasantly wakeful tale.*

THE CASE OF THE FAN DANCER'S HORSE by Erie Stanley Gardner: Another Perry Mason, this time with horsehair on its shoulder, and in its plot. Sub-par for Gardner. *Action will keep you awake, along with strip tease.*

HOUSE OF DARKNESS by Allen McKinnon: Excellent international adventure yarn, satisfyingly reminiscent of John Buchan's tales. *Good for all night!*

AND HOPE TO DIE by Richard Powell: Arab and Andy again, this time in Florida. If your thinking is alcoholic, you won't know which is you and which is the story. Good for a laugh and a thrill. *Eye-opener.—C.P., Manhattan.*

seeing one's own imperfections; but to stand face to face with them, neither flattering nor tolerating them, seeking to correct oneself

without becoming pettish—this is to desire what is good for its own sake and for God's."—*R.F.S.*

Univ. of Minnesota Institute on Alcoholism

(The fourth of a series of articles reporting on research, educational work, studies and other activities underway throughout the country related to the subject of alcoholism.)

The University of Minnesota is another of the country's leading educational institutions which has been giving formal attention to the subject of alcoholism.

The University has set up the Institute on Chronic Alcoholism, to direct attention to "the social handling of the chronic alcoholic." Two sessions of the Institute have been held at the Center for Continuation Study on the main campus, the first in 1946 and the second early this year.

As stated in offering the second program, the "aim of the University this year is to carry for-

ward the study begun in 1946 and to analyze the actual handling of the chronic alcoholic by various agencies of our society. This study calls for a review of what we know about the chronic alcoholic as a diseased person and a portrayal of what we do as a society in handling his case. The discussion of those subjects by experts in the medical, psychiatric, legal and social service professions will, it is hoped, point the way to more intelligent and more effective practices."

In addition to the University's own staff, the policy for the Institute is to draw upon specialists from other institutions and agencies for their particular contributions, as speakers at the sessions which this year extended over three days.

Although the Institute is open to all inter-

ested persons, special invitation is extended to lawyers, social service workers, psychologists and psychiatrists, probation and parole officers and others representing a community interest in the problems of alcoholism.

A feature of the program each year has been participation by those attending in the discussions, with the specialists from the various fields of study.

Between the sessions of the Institute, material brought forth at each is placed under analysis and continuing study.

The Institute furnishes another example of the various ways in which data and thought on the whole subject are being accumulated in the hope that additional guidance will be developed for the treatment of the problems of alcoholism.

Reference Library — Remember This One?

JOHN BARLEYCORN

by JACK LONDON

Jack London's first brush with alcohol or John Barleycorn, as it was called in the days when the problem was not faced as openly as it is now, came at an extraordinarily early age. He was a small boy of five years and he had been commissioned to carry a pail of beer from the house to a field where his father was plowing. It was a hot day, The pail was heavy and the little boy sought to lighten his task by drinking some of the beer. Once started, and in spite of a nauseous aversion to the taste of the drink, he continued to gulp it down until he had drunk all that he could hold.

Before arriving at his destination, he made a quick cover-up by stirring the remaining beer with a slick to make it foam up to the brim. His father drank from the pail without noticing that half of the beer was gone, but it was a very sick little boy who later was carried back to the house.

The boy grew into a youth of curiously dual personality. He was sensitive, studious and conscientious; hoarding; the few pennies that he did not have to turn over to his family against the day when he would go to college. On the other side he was wildly adventurous and at the tender age of fourteen was learning to hold his own with water-front characters such as "Whiskey" Bob, "French" Frank and "Old Scratch" Nelson, whose reputation for violence was a legend. The spirit of adventure won and when he became the proud possessor of the sloop Razzle Dazzle, he joined the ranks of the oyster smugglers and felt himself a man indeed.

This is a story of alcohol, written by an al-

coholic, no matter how he wriggled and squirmed in attempting to avoid the appellation, and is intensely interesting as such. Jack London's fight against the disease was a robust, two-fisted one and time after time it was only his physical stamina that saved him from what seemed sure death.

Aside from the alcoholic angle, "John Barleycorn" is a good racy yarn of the author's life from the time he sold newspapers on the streets of San Francisco, through the colorful years when he bore the title of Prince of the Oyster

Pirates and out-drunk the toughest of the long-shoremen in the water-front saloons. It takes him through adventures on the high seas, the first gold rush into the Klondike, through vicissitudes too numerous to mention and leaves him at maturity; wealthy, successful in his chosen field of writing, a family man of substance, owner of everything he could wish for in a material way, yet surveying his life with a jaundiced eye, sad because John Barleycorn is still beside him.

With great ingenuity throughout the book. London rationalizes his drinking. He drank because liquor was available at every turn, to be a good fellow, to prove his manhood, because he was a host or a guest, because fortune turned his way or was set against him. For the thousand and one reasons that cause any drunkard to drink.

It all seemed quite logical to him. He did not like the taste of liquor—therefore he could not be an alcoholic. He had long periods of sobriety—therefore sobriety was his natural state and the orgies were purple streaks of insanity which could eventually be controlled. He was willing to vote for Women's Suffrage because he thought that the women's vote would hasten prohibition; not for his own sake, mind you, but for the Youth of Tomorrow.

He is very convincing, at times, about his plans for an eventual triumph over alcohol, and if one did not know that at the last during an illness, he succumbed to it entirely and died from a self-administered overdose of drugs, one might be tempted to say "Here was the one man who was strong enough to beat the game—the Superman who fought his personal demon through a lifetime and came off victorious."—M.N.



AA's Country-Wide News Circuit

Grow Into New Quarters — The Long Beach, Cal., Group has moved from the Ebel club, scene of many fine meetings to new quarters in the New Masonic Temple and will continue to meet on Wednesday nights. Recent open meetings have been drawing about 250 members. The Monday night closed meeting in Bowling Green club house continues to attract good attendance while the Paramount Group of Downey supplies A.A. needs for Tuesday nights. Friday nights the San Pedro Group keeps all in that end of the "harbor area" happy and there are rumors of a new Sunday night group to complete the weekly cycle. The Wilmington Group, meeting on Monday nights in the Woman's Club, has to compete with the other Monday meeting as does the Men's closed meeting in North Long Beach on Thursday nights. The speakers' committee of the Los Angeles Central Committee has been providing the harbor groups with excellent speakers. . . . Newest group in the harbor area is the East Bay of Long Beach, which had an average attendance of 55 at its first nine meetings. It is an open session, Thursday nights, in the dining room of the Naples Hotel. This group has P.O. Box 3531 and a new secretary. . . . Recently the Signal Hill Family Group was honored by a surprise visit of about 20 members of the Glendale 20-40 Group. These younger members have a deep understanding of the basic principles and the 150 present enjoyed their presentation of A.A. concepts.

Farthest Northeast? — Island Fall, Me., is advancing a claim to being the farthest northeast group of A.A. Our correspondent hopes to be able to report at least one other member soon to form the Big Woods Group since he is the only member. He moved to Maine from Baldwin. L. I., N. Y.

Program Strengthened — When the Plainfield, N. J., Group was in its infancy and the meetings small, new members attending their first gatherings were the center of attraction and got plenty of A.A. help. Growth was so rapid during the next year and the attendance so great at the Friday night meetings that new members were quite often taken for oldtimers from neighboring groups and unintentionally neglected during a period when A.A. was required in big doses. To overcome this condition a New Men's meeting was inaugurated and has been held each

Monday night, the purpose being to indoctrinate quickly the new men in the program principles and to acquaint them better with their fellow alcoholics. Meetings are of an informal, educational nature and attendance has averaged over 30. Few who have attended regularly have had trouble regaining or maintaining sobriety. . . . Finding that many women had difficulty in making the A.A. program, the Plainfield Group decided to give women early and proper A.A. help to carry them past the first enthusiasm, which was found to wane too often. To remedy this and to promote better understanding and friendship a New Woman's meeting was inaugurated about three months ago. Successful from the start, they are held semi-monthly at members' homes and are patterned very much along the same line as the New Men's meetings. Many women who previously had trouble with the program are reported to have benefited.

Good and Hot — With a gain of a member or more every meeting, members of the Woodland, Cal., Group report that they are "hot" and their aridity is good. Troubles are few and even those who were really hospital cases have recovered.

Second Fall Festival - Inaugurated as an annual affair last year to regenerate enthusiasm for the winter season and rededicate combined efforts to A.A. work and study, the second annual Omaha, Nebr., groups' Fall Festival was attended by more than 200 members, many with their wives and families. Saturday evening at the Elks club they attended a banquet with no speeches, but with a program featuring an array of professional talent which starred "Miss Omaha," Madalyn King, whose fast tap dancing won the talent award in the Atlantic City Miss America Beauty Pageant. Song leaders from two Iowa groups competed in leading the community sing with a Council Bluffs member winning over one from Des Moines, Ia., both putting on excellent shows. A free Bingo game with several hundred dollars worth of prizes was followed by dancing, cards and impromptu entertainment. Sunday morning members and guests had breakfast at the Alano club, then visited Father Flanagan's Boys Town and other places in Omaha. The meeting of the day was at the Elks club with Omaha's oldest member as chairman and members in attendance from Iowa, South Dakota, Missouri, Illinois, Colorado and Nebraska. The principal address was delivered by Roy M. of Chicago. The open house session at the club ran into morning hours.

New Quarters, New Group — The Permian Basin Group at Odessa, Tex., has moved in, set up shop and begun holding meetings in its new and first clubroom. Moving wasn't difficult, *The Grapevine* hears, as possessions consisted of a couple of dripolaters, a pound of coffee, some cups and a dozen folding chairs. The club is at 219½ West Third Street, or as members point out, between the city jail and an undertaking parlor. Meeting night has been changed from Wednesday to Tuesdays and Thursdays, while plans are being made to include a regular Saturday night openhouse... Another Group, the Andrews-Seminole, has been home by the already prolific Permian Basin Group, bringing the number to four. Regular meeting night will be announced later. . . . The Odessa-Permian Basin Group held the first of a series of regular monthly open meetings about two months ago with A.A.s from Big Spring, Midland, Seminole, El Paso, Hobbs, N. M., and San Angelo on hand for brief addresses.

St. Mary's Is Host — Simplicity and punctuality helped to make the gathering of more than 250 guests a success when the St. Mary's, O., Group entertained neighboring A.A. groups at the National Guard clubhouse on take St. Mary's. The affair was so successful that it has been suggested that this be made an annual affair at the same place. Guests attended from Lima, Marion, Toledo, Defiance, Findlay, Dayton, Van Wert, Columbus, Bellefontaine, and Canton, O., and Ft. Wayne, Muncie, and Richmond, Ind. Two prominent speakers led meetings in an afternoon and evening session with a substantial lunch and social time in between. The St. Mary's group was started January 31, 1947, and now numbers 15 members.

North Carolina Groups Solid — From Kings Mountain, N. C. *The Grapevine's* correspondent reports that not only his own Group with 12 members, but others, are "solid." The Kings Mountain Group was started some years ago by Paul M., a non-alcoholic, who provided transportation to Shelby for anyone wishing to try the A.A. way. The group reports a gain of about a member each week. . . . The Shelby Group is over six years old and has been aiding men from all over the South. . . . Lincolnton is growing and has a fine clubroom open all the time, while Hickory, too, has a growing Group and good quarters. . . . The Gastonia Group has started for the third time, with new determination to suc-

(Continued on next page)

ceed. . . Rockhill now has about 30 members. They meet with men from York, Chester and Fort Mill each Wednesday. Members from other towns also attend. . . Andrews Group has also been growing and helping Conway, S. C., and Myrtle Beach get going. Bennettsville, S. C., and Rowland, N. C., are holding regular weekly meetings with good results. . . Average attendance at Charlotte has been about 50 with six to eight new men at each meeting. The new club room is ready to go. The Myers Park Group meets at Myers Park Methodist Church Monday and Friday nights at 8, with open sessions and fellowship gatherings following. New men and women from all groups meet at the YMCA on Sunday night to the number of about 85 to 90, starting with a general subject and splitting up into three discussion groups.

Another Women's Auxiliary—Along with a list of 10 subscriptions to *The Grapevine*, the Hickory, N. C., Group reports that all these new subscribers are part of a recently formed A.A. Auxiliary of 36 members who plan to study A.A. as well as help other women who are "going through what we have, and maybe through the wives bring other men into A.A." There are two meetings and one social every month.

Chicago A.A.s at Retreat—Twenty-eight members of Chicago, Ill., A.A. attended a retreat at Childerly, a country estate owned and maintained by the Calvert club of the University of Chicago, principally for its Catholic students and alumni, near Wheeling, Ill., recently. Both Catholics and non-Catholics were in the group which included a Catholic priest who was the retreat master, and a brother who belonged to one of the Catholic orders, eight salesmen, two insurance adjusters, two tax collectors, a lawyer, accountant, advertising writer, buyer, advertising agent, business agent, broker, advertising art director, mechanic, physician, manufacturer, storekeeper and printer.

History and Humility—Members of the Spencer, Ia., Group report that they are having a hard time getting rid of a little tinge of human pride since the recent celebration of the first anniversary recalled the history of the group. . . Organized on August 6, 1946, the Spencer Group now has 50 active members on its rolls. Besides that 13 men, residents of Estherville, came to their first meetings in Spencer and now have their own group. The Storm Lake Group also was founded through Spencer, making a total of 77 individuals who got their start there. . . Some 316 A.A.s and their friends joined at the Walther



League Camp on take Okojobi for the birthday party and heard the principal speaker, Carlos C. of Sioux City, who, a year ago, made three trips from his home town to help the original three members get launched as an active group. He traced the history of alcoholism and the handling of its problems. Other speakers included Ray H. of Des Moines, Ia., and Spencer representatives. . . Eleven Estherville members were present with four from Storm Lake, while there were others from Ft. Dodge, Pocahontas, Sioux City, Des Moines, Cedar Rapids, Algona, Ida Grove and Knoxville, Ia., and Minneapolis, Minn.; Fremont, Wakefield and Omaha, Nebr., and Yankton and Sioux Falls, S. D.

Advertising Draws Many—A series of advertisements run in Winona, Minn., papers have brought many inquiries, some for the local Group and others for information in other places. The Winona Republican-Herald carried a good account of the open meeting at the Senior high school auditorium on October 20 where A.A.s, as well as local physicians, clergy, judges and others, spoke. There, was much favorable publicity on the radio as well as in the press. The Winona Group held its final picnic recently in the form of a birthday celebration for three members, one having two years' sobriety and the others one year each. Attendance was about 50 with representatives of one family each from Dubuque, Ia., and Rochester, Minn.

Speakers to Montreal—the Forest Hills, N. Y., Group recently made plans to send three representative members to speak at the opening meeting of Montreal groups which comprises eight groups joining in the first session of the season.

Public Forum Planned—On October 17 the Danville, Ill., Group held a public forum with guest speakers from Indianapolis, Ind. This is a part of the community activities of the Group which recently sent members to speak before a civic group at Sawville, Ill., to disseminate knowledge of A.A. Members have also been calling on patients at the local Veterans Hospital, where one of the chaplains has been conducting meetings for patients. Two patients now out of the hospital are attending the Danville meetings. In addition The members were recently asked to participate in an open meeting before some 60 people to help start a group in the Champaign-Urbana area. Officially organized in September,

1946, with three members, the Danville Group now numbers 24 and meets Saturday nights at the YWCA at 8 with the women meeting in an adjoining room. Out of the present active members only three have had slips. All are back on the plan and doing well.

Goshen Growing—The Goshen, Ind., Group now numbers 14 members.

Group Interest Helps—Although a relatively small group of 21 members, the Greenville, Mich., A.A.s find that active interest in social and business affairs of the organization pays. Picnics, fish fries, annual banquets and get-togethers help to make good fellowship possible. This Group also reports it has the sheriff's office and the probate and circuit court judges behind the program. Sheriff Walter Arntz frequently attends the meetings, accompanied by one of his "pupils" and has frequently said, "Jail is no place to cure an alcoholic." Probate Judge Rasmussen and Circuit Court Judge Morris K. Davis of Ionia and Montcalm counties.

Card System Inaugurated—A card index of all members has been started by the West Palm Beach, Fla., Group. Cards have also been printed listing the place and time of meetings and these are being mailed to all hotels, churches and police stations, along with a letter asking them to place it where everyone interested can see it. Other activities include the appointment of two correspondents for *The Grapevine*; naming three men and three women as a welcoming committee to receive new members who arrive at meetings without sponsors; and having the 12 Steps printed on a banner which is hung back of the speaker's stand at each meeting. With the annual influx of winter visitors the group anticipates many old and new friends.

Happy Birthdays—Helping the Niagara Frontier Area celebrate its sixth anniversary at a banquet at Hotel Buffalo were delegations from Toronto, Hamilton, Guelph, St. Catherines and Simcoe, Canada, Eric and Bradford, Pa., Cleveland, O., and Elmira, Corning, Rochester, Salamanca, Lockport, Jamestown, Eden, Niagara Falls, Tonawanda and North Tonawanda, N. Y. Trustee Dick S., formerly of Akron, O., and now of New York, was the speaker, taking as his theme the traditions and the need of unity. Among the 500 in attendance were several guests who have been good and helpful friends of the Buffalo groups, including Chief Judge of the City Court John J. Hillery, Dr. Donald C. O'Connor, superintendent of Meyer Memorial Hospital, and Sunderland P. Gardner, chairman of the Committee on Alcoholism for the Council of Social Agencies. Invocation was pronounced by Rev. Robert

F. Kilroy, O.M.I., who authored an article on A.A. that was widely circulated in Catholic publications earlier this year. Through the courtesy of RKO, the film, "I Am an Alcoholic," was shown as a finish to the largest and most successful A.A. demonstration ever held on the Niagara Frontier. . .

"Remember Des Moines in November" was the slogan for the fourth anniversary holiday, November 1 and 2, at Des Moines, Ia., where the two day program started on Saturday with a noon lunch at the club, followed by a closed meeting for alcoholics, while the women were entertained at Hotel Ft. Des Moines at a tea with Betty Wells, radio commentator, as speaker. Saturday evening there was a banquet and floor show at the hotel. Sunday morning began with a free "chuck wagon" breakfast at the club, followed at 2 o'clock by an open meeting in the grand ballroom of the hotel with Clem. L. of Chicago as speaker. Des Moines gestures of thoughtfulness included a transportation committee to take guests any place in the city and a committee to carry luggage.

The fourth anniversary banquet of the St. Cloud, Minn., Group was attended by 235 from all parts of the state. Members of the Minneapolis and St. Paul Groups spoke briefly and to the point, while other talks were given by public officials and members of the clergy.

Scheduled for November 16 and 17, the third anniversary plans of the Wichita, Kans., Group were not complete at the time for *Grapevine* copy. Open house at the club rooms, 536 North Broadway, on Saturday afternoon and night with the dinner and main meeting to come Sunday afternoon are the principal plans. Good representation from groups in Kansas, Oklahoma, Missouri and Texas is expected.

Jamestown, N. D., Group, which was organized September 28, 1946, observed its first anniversary recently with the two members of the St. Paul, Minn., Group who started the organization returning for the meeting to present year pins to three of the original group. During the year the Group has tripled in growth and in becoming associated with the North Dakota State hospital in the city has aided with hospitalized alcoholics as a major part of its 12th Step work. More than 30 patients have been exposed to A.A. through this group and have been sent out to other groups or to organize their own groups in some other part of the state. The project for the coming year will be to acquaint better the local and civic community with the workings and benefits of A.A.

First anniversary celebration for the Park Slope, Brooklyn, N. Y., Group was observed with a dinner-dance at Michel's restaurant on October 23. Starting with eight members in August, 1946, and without quarters, the Group has had its own clubhouse since March, at 80 Sterling Place.

The club is open every night from 7:30 to about midnight and from 1 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays. The Saturday night open meetings have long since outgrown the club, which holds about 100. Meetings are now held in the school across the street.

The Rosemead, Cal., Group celebrated its first year in the Rosemead Women's club with a home-prepared super-colossal spaghetti dinner. Over 250 members and guests from surrounding A.A. groups were present. A year ago the average attendance of the Rosemead Group was around 30, while now it runs between 100 and 125. The women's group, started last spring with seven members, has grown so large that meetings are now held in a hall at 1921 E. Valley Boulevard, Rosemead, on Thursdays at 8 o'clock.

Into Larger Quarters—Since September the Kansas City, Mo., Group has been holding its Friday night meetings in the ballroom of the BPOE at 612 Grand Avenue. After many months of searching the committee decided the Elks ballroom to be the most suitable place as it offers parking facilities as well as direct public transportation from any part of Greater Kansas City. The hall, at 34th and Main Streets, will continue in use for other activities.

Two New Iowa Groups — A.A.s from Waverly, New Hampton, Greene, Ionia, Allison, Osage, New Haven, Oelwein and Waterloo, Ia., gathered recently at Rockford, Ia., to help launch a new group there. About 40 attended. . . Independence, Ia., has also taken her place in the A.A. register with the help of members from Oelwein and Waterloo. About 25 visitors braved a storm to attend the meeting in the gymnasium of the parochial school of St. John's church.

NEW GROUPS

The following new groups reported organization to the Central Office during September:

FLORIDA—Coral Gables, West Palm Beach
ILLINOIS—Paris
INDIANA—Goshen, Michigan City
IOWA—Independence, Monticello
KENTUCKY—Harlan, Maysville (K.O. Group)
MAINE—Island Falls (Big Woods Group)
MASSACHUSETTS—Medford
MISSISSIPPI—Columbus
NEW YORK—Geneva, Merrick, New York City (Lexington Group). Staten Island Day Group
NORTH CAROLINA — Asheville (Beverly Hills Group), New Bern
PENNSYLVANIA—Honesdale
TEXAS—Bryan
VIRGINIA—Emporia, Front Royal (Warren County Group)
WEST VIRGINIA—Weirton
WYOMING—Casper

EXPENSES

(Continued from Page 1)

remembering how much cheaper that is than a fifth or a pint. They seek out the leader or co-leader after the meeting, thank them and tell them what a good meeting it was. Frequently, they quietly approach the local treasurer and ask if the collection was adequate and offer to help if it was not. These are the backbone of the A.A. movement! Happy? You bet they are happy! They will tell you that they never before have enjoyed the happiness that is theirs since finding A.A. Serenity? Yes, they have at last found a serenity they did not dream would ever again be possible for them.

This is not an attempt to scold. Neither is it an attempt to take The other fellow's inventory. Rather, it is intended as a helpful suggestion that we in A.A. receive more benefits from our participation in *all* A.A. activities as we give more of our time and of ourselves to the program, morally, spiritually, physically, as well as materially. A constructive suggestion that the group is only as successful as the participants allow it to be; and a reminder that we in A.A. strive for the greatest good for the greatest number.

These are controversial issues, you say? And you further remind me that we do not indulge in controversies. Can we not look at these things as the less pleasant details of our daily living? Things which we all hate to bring up, yet, of which we are always conscious? Isn't it far better to discuss them openly here where all may participate, than to have them arise in whispers in corners after the meetings? Shouldn't we, as normal people now, squarely face the small common issues which so closely touch our daily lives? Doesn't "our path" partially consist of sharing *equally* the cost of holding meetings for our mutual benefit?

Let us fairly admit that the group expenses are the responsibility of every alcoholic in the group and each of us should honestly try to do our share. Let us go beyond the expenses and each bear our share of the little tasks of operation. Where necessary, help place the chairs and tables, help clean up after meetings, offer our services on the various committees appointed to attend to the mechanics of meetings. Let us be thankful that we have the companionship and fellowship of these meetings. Thankful that we have the blessings of sobriety. Humbly grateful for the happiness and serenity that is offered to every person who will accept and practice the principles of the program.

"Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path."

We can be self supporting.—H.J.W.

THE CLIP SHEET—*Excerpts from the Public Press*

Altoona, Pa., *Mirror*—"Dr. Roy W. Goshorn, superintendent of the State Mental Hospital at Hollidaysburg, at a public meeting early this week said, 'Alcoholism is a disease and of all the types of sick people in our society the alcoholic is understood the least, sympathized with the least and consequently, helped the least by other members of society.' It is commendable that Dr. Goshorn showed a willingness to take the lead among professional men to widen public knowledge of Alcoholics Anonymous. Any program which has as its goal sober, constructive living is certainly worthwhile."

Gastonia, N. C., *Gazette*—"A small but growing group of Gastonia men assembles in a room in uptown Gastonia each Thursday in the interest of self help. It is a sober group, pursuing a sane and sober objective. It is a unit of Alcoholics Anonymous, an organization of those suffering from the disease of alcoholism or near-alcoholism, and to reclaiming their lives for wholesome and productive living. That it is a stride forward in the interest of both the individual and society is evident from the thousands of lives reclaimed from stagnation and turned to constructive pursuits by A.A. already."

Salt Lake City, Utah, *Desert News*—"One of the simplest and least expensive cures for what is now being called the disease of alcoholism—a condition always heretofore known as confirmed drunkenness—is that offered by the group known as Alcoholics Anonymous. Almost unbeknown to most people, this movement has now spread over the whole country and persons having a sincere desire to throw off the yoke of drink are being helped to do so."

Bloomington, Ill., *Pantograph*—"Last night more than 200 men and women dined at the Illinois hotel and drank soft drink cocktails. Many were out-of-town members of Alcoholics Anonymous. Those who are members were once the worst of common drunkards. The fact that today they are respected, and more important, self-respecting, members of the community is because A.A. literally picked them out of the gutter. The organization succeeded in 75 percent of the cases. The cases they took on were only those that had been given up by social agencies, the church, the medical profession and in many instances, their own families. This record is A.A.'s own tribute. Few could name a more useful organization."

Clinton, S. C., *Chronicle*—"Alcoholics Anonymous is one of the most remarkable organizations that has come into existence in many years. It recognizes alcoholism as a major problem and is doing a marvelous job for those who seek its help. We know some fine fellows who have been

saved through The influence of this group. They have a new sparkle in their eyes. The more we learn of the organization and what it is accomplishing, the more fully we realize it is a blessing to humanity."

Saint Joseph, Mo., *News-Press*—"St. Joseph A.A. has had a split. That organization dedicated to sobriety has gone the way of all flesh. The news stories do not say just exactly what happened. But a faction has drawn away from the 522 South Twelfth Street location and taken clubrooms in the King Hill building. All this goes to prove that the A.A.s are not creatures apart at all, at all. They're human beings just like the rest of us. As we say, we do not know what brings two A.A. bodies where there was

only one. The St. Joseph A.A.s probably just got too big for the close knit, little family association that marked the early months of A.A. One thing may be taken for granted. The break did not come over whether or not the club should have a bar."

Fairmont, W. Va., *Times*—"Members of the Rotary Club heard a startling speech last week when a member of Alcoholics Anonymous told something of his own experience and more about how A.A. works. This speaker left the Rotarians convinced that the work being done by A.A. is the right approach to the drink problem. . . . This newspaper stands ready to assist the A.A. movement in any way that it can. Of all the different methods employed in the effort to help alcoholics we believe the A.A. method offers the best chance for success. . . . We agree with them and wish them continued success in a movement that is a lot more spiritual in a practical way than they would have you believe."

Incorporations: Uses and Misuses

(Continued from Page 3)

8. Q. We want to build a Clubhouse. Should we do so? And how shall we finance it?

A. Chances are that any Club built will prove too small. Better lease if you can. A thickly populated A.A. area will eventually do better with several small leased Clubs than a single costly one. If a Club is big, expensive, and owned outright, it can later prove very difficult to "take or leave alone."

It's always better for members to raise the money among themselves if they must build, supplemented if absolutely necessary by a friendly outside loan calling for easy but definite repayment. Our reputation for complete self-support is a valuable asset. Beware of loans or contributions, with implied obligations, political entanglements, or controversial issues attached. And, obviously, public solicitation using the A.A. name a dangerous.

9. Q. What about drying-out places—how ought they be handled?

A. We feel that A.A. Groups shouldn't go into these ventures. But individual A.A.s sometimes handle these situations very well if they avoid public solicitations and advertisements using the A.A. name. Places of recuperation ought to be private undertakings purely—and privately financed.

10. Q. What should be the attitude of an A.A. Group toward "outside" ventures like education, research and the like?

A. No attitude at all. Participation in them is an individual matter. But individuals should not be discouraged from participation if they are careful of the A.A. name. Please reread The article in this booklet on outside ventures.

"11. Q. We realize that our present Club (or hospital) set-up is contrary, in some ways, to the general experience. But it hasn't yet given us much trouble. Shall we now change it to conform to the A.A. Tradition?

A. That's entirely up to you. The material in this booklet is suggestive only. If your present set-up works very well, it may not be worth the trouble to change now. But if there is much serious objection locally, it may be well to try those principles best proved by our large general experience.

12. Q. Just what form of corporation structure is usually best?

A. Most states and countries have special corporate forms variously called membership, charitable, eleemosynary, etc. Trust your lawyer to select the best. You might emphasize to him these points: If humanly possible, eliminate the name, "Alcoholics Anonymous" from the Corporate title. (This name ought to be the sole property of A.A. as a whole.) Limit the "purpose clause" to one simple objective only. Limit the activities of the Corporation to one locality or address only. Don't try to incorporate a whole state or country; otherwise A.A.s in nearby places may well object.

This article has been written to help alleviate the many complications that have arisen throughout A.A. touching Clubs, hospitals, and "outside ventures." There is nothing infallible about the principles set forth above. But they are, nevertheless, the distillation of much actual experience. It's very greatly hoped they will prove of especial assistance to our hundreds of new Groups. They may be able to avoid many of the natural but painful mistakes we A.A. oldsters have so often made. Bill.

Mail Call for All A.A.s at Home or Abroad

Letters to this department are invited on any subject pertinent to A.A. Due to space limitations you are asked to hold your letters to a maximum of 350 words.

Only initials will be published unless the writer authorizes use of his first name as identification for A.A. friends.

The A.A. Grapevine will not divulge the full name of any writer but will forward A.A. communications addressed to the writers of letters published here.—The Editors

DUBLIN ANNIVERSARY

from Dublin, Ireland

We are very pleased to get your letter and are eagerly awaiting... *The Grapevine*.

Progress has been slow of late, probably due to the summer holidays, but A.A. is getting itself known over here in surprising fashion. When we do get over our growing pains I fancy we'll find a lot of unsuspected ground already half prepared. New ideas breed slowly over here.

We hope to celebrate our first anniversary on November 25.—*S.M.*

The 12th Step

From Wollaston, Mass.

In the August issue, under heading "Mail Call for A.A.'s at Home and Abroad" there was a letter from Long Beach, Calif., signed Gay M.B.

The author points out the possibility of keeping sober by working the 1st and 12th Step and by so doing you are, supposedly, subconsciously and automatically working the other Steps.

So many people get the erroneous idea that the 12th Step merely embraces the carrying of the message to other alcoholics. There are three definite phases to the 12th Step, if we read it carefully. The step reads: "Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics and practice these principles in all our daily affairs."

This would mean that before we are ready to carry this message to alcoholics, we should have experienced a spiritual awakening as a result of the other eleven Steps. Does this not indicate that we must or rather should, work on all of the Steps? Then the last part of the 12th Step "and practice all these principles in all our daily affairs." How can you practice these principles if you intend to ignore the principles referred to in the other 11 Steps.

Too many of us (alcoholics) take the slogan "Easy does it" too literally. We were always past masters at taking short cuts and procrastination. I can't imagine sobriety without happiness and the only way I can see for an alcoholic to be sober and happy is by a personality change. The only way I can visualize this personality

change is by practicing the principles of the 12 Steps in all our daily affairs. You will get out of the program in proportion to what you put into it.

If you only take I 1/3 Steps of the program I don't see how you can expect to experience the benefits contained in the 12 Steps. You can also make the program so simple for yourself that it will be elusive. The effort required to attempt to practice all of the principles will not equal the effort put forth to create our alcoholic dilemma. You will notice I said "attempt" to practice all of the principles, and that's all that is required. We strive for progress not perfection.

The peace of mind that we hope for is not the absence of conflict, but our ability to cope with it, and this ability increases as we make progress in the practice of the principles contained in the 12 Steps of the program.—*J.A.M.*

About Little Rock

From Los Angeles, Cal.

How can you in the name of A.A. allow such an article as the "Little Rock Plan" be printed in the Grapevine. . . . This sounds more like the police department or probation department plan.

There is only one A.A. plan and that is right out of the book. No organization. No rules. That's the plan we in Southern California try to follow.—*A.M.*

More Little Rock

From Detroit, Mich.

Good grief and little fishes! What have they got out there in Little Rock, Ark.—a concentration camp? It sure doesn't sound like A.A. to me, at least not like anything I ever heard or read about A.A. in the four years I've been in (no slip, either).

Where do they get the authority to keep anybody out of the group? Or, rather, where do they get their authority—period! One of the great virtues of A.A. is that it vests authority in no one. Those people, if that's a correct report, just seem to have appropriated it on their own.

Imagine bragging about making it tough for anyone to join A.A.! As I read the book, one of our obligations is to get the message to as many as we can, help everyone we can, open the door wide to everyone who knocks.—*H.E.T.*

And Little Rock

From Memphis, Tenn.

Around here we were treated to quite a con-

trast recently. Bill came down here to speak to the regional convention. As always, he was tolerant, understanding, sympathetic—no big shot stuff from him; no expert speaking with authority. No "do's" or "don't's," or "musts."

Then I read that thing from Little Rock. Quite a difference between the way they think and the way the founder of A.A. thinks.

No wonder that group has only had 500 pass through it in seven years. That's pretty slow growth and quite understandable. They seem more interested in statistics on slips than in practicing A.A.—*T.L.*

Plus Little Rock

From Boston, Mass.

So Little Rock prides itself on being tough . . . and obviously the article you published sounded as though they pride themselves more on their slip record than on letting everyone who asks it have a helping hand from A.A.

That may be a group of something but it didn't sound like on A.A. group. . . . They really believe in rules and regulations, don't they? I wonder who judges out there.—*E.B.T.*

Simple or Complex?

From Oklahoma City, Okla.

Enclosed please find check for renewal of subscription for Grapevine. Enjoy same very much, but some articles like one published last (Sept.) issue from writer in Montclair, N. J., are too deep for me. In my 18 months of A.A., the best has always come from the "humble."

The A.A. program is fundamentally sound. It is only complex when one wants to make it complex. The further we stay away from "theory" and the nearer we get to "reality" the quicker we get "results." The alcoholic—after sobering up and getting on the program, should again be a normal person, and should be so

handled and advised. That an alcoholic has a deep dark background of mystery is plain nonsense. The doctors told us 50 years ago that consumption (T.B. now) was incurable. They say the same today about an alcoholic. God's fresh air, God's sunlight, God's abundance of good food, God's factor of "time" as a dealer and "rest" were what the consumptive needed. God, to man alone, gave the power of "reasoning." In man's drinking era this "reasoning power" went dead. After sobriety and A.A. man regains same. This "reasoning" plus "time," plus "A.A." is all the medicine the alcoholic needs. Why confuse the issue? Sure, we are

(Continued on next page)

going to have our percentage of "slips" just the same as we are going to have bankers that steal bank funds. The "alcoholic" as a problem is only complex when he or she makes it complex. This invariably leads to excuses or alibis to cover up their own short comings. The daily prayer of an "alcoholic" should be "God helping, let me be a part of the answer and not part of the problem."—*E.E.A.*

Thought Power First

From Watertown, S. D.

Just finished the article "Will, Through A.A. Fosters Spiritual Grace," published in April Issue. It's an armful of thought starters. What we alkie should cultivate most is thought power. Will power will follow right in the groove.—*B.W.H.*

Articles Enlightening

From Detroit, Mich.

Just received The Grapevine, and believe me, we can be proud of our A.A. magazine. Every item in it is worthwhile, and even the cartoons are good. I was indeed glad to read articles under the caption "Last Seven Years Have Made A.A. Self-supporting." Those articles were most enlightening to us early A.A.s. That new item on the Cleveland meeting is also very interesting, showing the tough time you had starting A.A. Like all worthwhile efforts, it certainly required patience and persistence in those early days.

I am now on my seventh year in A.A. absolutely dry since June 20, 1941—thank God and A.A.—*L.C.L.*

Miracle of Healing

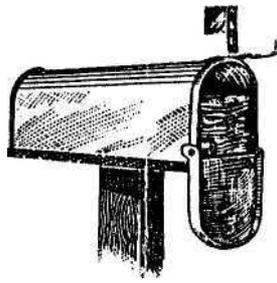
From East Orange, N. J.

"I was very interested to read in the September issue that 'Rip' of Eau Claire, Wis., in his message to the Rochester, Minn., Group, on the occasion of their first anniversary, said, "We are gathered here to celebrate a miracle."

Alcoholics Anonymous is indeed a miracle—yes, thousands and thousands of miracles—modern miracles. Miracles just as miraculous as those described in the New Testament, specifically the miracles of healing. Certainly, it is easy to see the comparison of the blind who were enabled to see. Have not we, who were blind, been given to see? Have not we been literally bidden to take up our beds and walk?

Every one of us who has been privileged to experience this spiritual awakening, this change of personality, this transition from mental and physical Hell to peace of mind, is, in effect, a living example of a modern miracle—yes, undeniable evidence that miracles are not dead, not confined to the days of the New Testament.

We, who daily reap the rich rewards of this



modern miracle of healing, are obliged to keep the miracle alive—to pass it on. "Having had a spiritual awakening"—we must carry the message to other alcoholics in order that they, too, may benefit from the miraculous healing, and, in turn, pass the message on.—*Bill R.*

No Wasted Words

From Mt. Sterling, Ky.

I believe the following is the shortest "appeal" ever received at an A.A. office:

BEREA, KY.

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS,
LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY.

HELP!

(SIGNED) WILLARD T.

I might say that Willard T. was immediately contacted, our A.A. kit was opened to him, he took a small "dose," attended our next meeting and now is a member in whom all of his associates have great confidence.—*H.G.H.*

He Didn't Strike Out

From Wallkill, N. Y.

"The count was three and two on me," the umpire explained. The man who said this had formerly been a professional baseball umpire but through, drink had ended up as an inmate at Wallkill Prison. He was telling The A.A. Group that alcohol had been responsible for this count on him but that after coming to prison and finding A.A. he felt that he could not be struck out. That man has since been released from Wallkill and is speaking before groups several nights a week. Through A.A. he found the means to arrest his alcoholism and once more faces life without an alcoholic fog clouding his vision. This is typical of the cases of other men who have left here and are succeeding due to the help of A.A.—*An A.A.*

Experience Can Help Teach

From Bronxville, N. Y.

In A.A. the incongruous often is right and logical in the operation of the program. For instance, a few Sunday nights ago my attention was riveted on a young lad at an open meeting. He looked about 17, except his eyes showed the utter bewilderment that I have recognized in so many "first timers" at meetings. I was introduced

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IN ALL HONESTY, WHO FAILED?

(Editor's Note: The following article was written by a priest, of the Holy Cross Fathers Order, and The A.A. Grapevine is glad to observe, his request to join our anonymity.)

Because by the grace of God (no credit to myself) I never had any leanings towards alcohol, I cannot be eligible as a full-Hedged A.A. However, I have attended many A.A. meetings and have tried to be an apostle of A.A. everywhere I go. I cannot speak for others but for myself, I say that when I leave the meetings, I leave with the firm determination to walk on the straight and narrow path and do what I can to help others back on to the right road.

There is one statement, however, which I have heard and read time and again which needs clarification. As a recent issue of this magazine put it, "It's not your drinking that's stinking, it's your thinking..." Correct thinking leads to correct living. This statement so often heard, usually is spoken by new members in an effort to sufficiently extol the glories of A.A. and manifest their gratitude towards the society. They say with great vigor, "I've tried doctors and they failed me. I tried religion, it failed me. I found A.A., it saved me."

Is this statement 100% truthful? I know a man born with crossed-eyes. Growing up, he was kidded and ridiculed so much (a crime worse than drunkenness) that he became highly self-conscious. Later, he started drinking his troubles away. He became a hopeless drunk and was confined to a mental institution. An understanding official looked into the case, arranged for an operation on the eyes and not only were the man's eyes straightened but he has straightened out his life. But even here, the main trouble was not the man's eyes but his vision of life. His thinking was crossed up more than anything else and the reason why pills, potions and doctors cannot cure the alcoholic is because these reach the body and it's not the body that's at fault but the spirit. And the Bible certifies, only God can reach the spirit of man, he who created us to His own image and likeness.

And why did religion fail the alcoholic? Or did religion? Did God fail you? Rather, did you not fail God? Did you not try to write out your own prescription on your religious cure? We cannot go to God on our terms; man must go to God on His terms. So often, we're afraid God is going to ask too much, that He will take away all beauty and joy in life, as though He is pleased when we are miserable. A.A. does not seek to substitute for God; it does not replace religion, it helps us see Our Heavenly Father for what He is, a true Father, vitally interested in our welfare, able

and willing to help even the worst of us, if only we trust Him and ask Him.

Our first task in A.A. is to correct our thinking about the two most important persons in the world, in our viewpoint, God and ourselves. When we see our true relationship to each other, then our cure, our joy and happiness will follow as the light of day follows the rise of the sun. Is it not the tendency of man to make himself the center of the world? To take the easy way out? Not to stand up and face a problem but to avoid it or escape it through drink? Why, we tend to make God approach us on our mean terms. When we think thus, we're due for a quick fall, But to avoid this fall, we must first literally fall on our knees, and with bended head, plead for help. Then, to borrow a phrase from Clare Booth Luce, we will rise, for God Himself will reach down to lift us up. A.A. properly understood fosters this correct thinking. As we say in the prayer at the close of the meetings, "*Our Father, Who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy Name (not mine but Thine) ;...Thy will be done on earth—(again, not mine but Thine).*" Sometimes, we catch ourselves really meaning these words. Why not put meaning into these words? Then life will enter in, for there's no joy living alone, even among the best of men, even in A.A., unless we have our Heavenly Father with us, watching over us, helping us, blessing us —*AFriend.*

AND A MOTHER WINS BACK HER SON

From Chicago

It is sometimes said that the age of miracles is past. I'm afraid I can't agree. Why? Because I've been sober for a year. I don't remember what I was doing a year ago, but I am sure of one thing. I was drunk. I detest the word and all that it implies, It isn't ladylike. Neither was I ladylike then.

Twelve months ago I was finishing up a binge that had been going on for years; a binge that grew steadily with the passing days, and months, and years; a binge that was robbing me of my health; a binge that had all but alienated my son and my husband; a binge that had completely divorced me from all friends. I didn't realize it then, but I was at the end of my rope. I was on "skid row" figuratively if not literally.

I had done all the usual things. I had been a social drinker. One drink would give me a lift; two, a bounce. Three brought a delightful fog in which the world was lovely, everyone was so nice, and "weren't we having fun?"

But this didn't last long. All my life I had suffered from an inferiority complex. The drinks—in those days bathtub gin—made me forget myself. They calmed me down, made me

seem like other people, in fact made me "superior" to many of them. It wasn't long before The quantity had to be stepped up. And it wasn't long before I had to have a few drinks before dinner.

From then on the pattern is that of thousands of others. More drinks to calm down, frequent oblivion as the result of too many, a hangover in the morning. Then all day drinking, and all night drinking, then just drinking, not knowing or caring whether it was night or day. A compulsion to drink that I couldn't control, and the certain knowledge that my continued drinking would take from me everything that I wanted and held dear.

Then came the inevitable collapse. I was hospitalized. Three days later I realized where I was. Those 12 days of terror, fear, misgivings, recriminations, physical torture, the beginning of D. T.'s, of which the Good Lord permitted me only a glimpse, make up a period in my life which I recall only with horror. But through the maze that my alcoholic mind wandered constantly recurred the only thought that had penetrated from a visit of three A.A.s the night before my illness became acute.

That thought was: "A.A. can save you! A.A. can save you."

I clung to it as a drowning person does to a straw, for I knew that without it I would die from drinking or end in an insane asylum.

To most of us the early days in Alcoholics Anonymous are days of confusion. The transition from a life of alcohol to a life divorced from the bottle is abrupt. Those first few weeks and months are difficult. We are impatient to grasp all at once all that A.A. has to offer, to grab at it like a package we might purchase at the store. We want immediately to become as non-alcoholic in our thinking and actions as we once were alcoholic.

Despite my haste, one thing firmly embedded itself in my reasoning very early in my rehabilitation. To me it is the most important thing in following the 12 Steps. That requisite is honesty, not honesty with others but honesty with one's self. It has been harder for me to be honest with myself than anything I have ever tried to do. I find, though, that if I am honest with myself, I don't have to worry about honesty with others. It comes automatically.

With that as a stepping stone, I am slowly building a structure in which I can live with myself. As the structure rises I find many of the bricks and stones are placed imperfectly and have to come out and be reset. I make mistakes, but I am soon aware of them and make an honest effort to rectify them. Many times I am not

A.A. Digest—Excerpts from Group Publications

A.A. Tribune, Des Moines, Ia.—"At the house committee meeting last night we discussed sponsorship, and the lack of it, and how we are trying, with growing numbers, to hang onto close sponsorship. And then we also named several new men and women who came in on their own, who were not coddled, who just got from A.A. what we hoped they would get—and they are doing such a wonderful job. We concluded that at least in some instances, if a man wants sobriety strongly enough, he'll get it with attendance at one meeting, whether he's chauffeured to the meeting or not—and whether or not he's coddled into A.A."

The Screwball, Nacogdoches, Tex.—"Are you willing to forget what you have done for other people and to remember what other people have done for you; to ignore what the world owes you and to think what you owe to the world; to put your rights in the background and your duties in the middle distance and your chances to do a little more than your duty in the foreground; to see that your fellowmen are just as real as you are and try to look behind their faces into their hearts; to own that probably the only good reason for your existence is not what you are going to get out of life, but what you are going to give to life; to close your book of complaints against the management of the

universe and look around you for a place where you can sow a few seeds of happiness—are you willing to do these things even for a day? Then you can stay sober."

The Eye Opener, Los Angeles, Cal.—"The world and other people are all wrong? So what? Are you going to try to straighten out the world—or you own life? One successful A.A. attitude is, 'If I quit drinking, get sober and clear-headed, then I can do something about situations that now defeat me.' Your first problem is: What do you do about yourself?"

Squad One, Washington, D.C.—"Are you in the doldrums?"

"The members of Squad One who attended last Monday's meeting asked themselves that question and some decided that they were. . .

"For the purposes of the discussion the doldrums was defined as not making much progress in advancement on The A.A. program, or at best, very little progress.

"Like any A.A. discussion, this one produced a good many varying ideas, but there seemed to be a pretty general agreement on this:

"There is no standing still in this A.A. business. You either go forward or you slide back. And if you are not going forward you are courting disaster.

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A.A. RETREAT

A group of A.A.s made a pilgrimage high into the Sierra Nevada Mountains during September to hold a two-day "A.A. Retreat" on the shores of Lake Tahoe. Lying 6280 feet above sea level, Lake Tahoe is the largest body of water in the world at that high an altitude, and is about six hours by auto from San Francisco.

The retreat was "devoted to reaffirmation of the 3rd Step and to gain a deeper understanding of the 11th Step," and was defined as:

"To think deeply and courageously.

"To make a sincere and open minded inquiry into the problem of maturity.

"To reaffirm Step 3 ..."

"To afford an opportunity for each reatant to evolve for himself within the framework of group discussion, an appropriate program of action to answer the crucial question—'How can I improve my conscious contact with God, as I understand him.'"

WINS BACK HER SON

(Continued from Page 15)

honest with myself. But when I am not, that which goes hand in hand with honesty—conscience—asserts itself immediately. And to live with myself I have to do the right thing.

I accepted A.A. on blind faith. I didn't try to reason it out. I couldn't rationalize it. All I knew was that other people who had embraced A.A., people who said they were as bad or worse alcoholics than I, had become sober. It was the last street car as far as I was concerned.

I accepted what I was told to accept. I did what others said they had done, and out of that blind faith has arisen a faith of my own, a faith that has carried me along for a year. I don't know whether it is truth, or honesty, or conscience, or good, or God. I call it God. And I pray for his help each day to enable that faith to carry me through a succession of 24 hours as long as I live.

I think my greatest desire for sobriety was that I might restore myself in the eyes of my son, a 19-year-old Navy photographer. I wrote him some time ago that I had been hospitalized, that I had become an A.A., and I told him what I was trying to do. I'd like to quote a portion of his answer to me:

"It wasn't such a horrible thing to admit you needed care, Mom. You said this fact might startle me. On the contrary, it is the best thing that could happen. I am prouder of you than I have ever been before. Please believe me. This is from the bottom of my heart. I am proud of you for facing the music and your spirit for not quitting. I feel all empty inside when I try to express my gratitude. I thank you, Mom, with all the humbleness in me."

And they say the age of miracles is past!—J.Y.

MAILCALL

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to him, but somehow when they said he was an alcoholic (his own admission) and had just been in one of the most robust state institutions, it seemed incongruous and I made a mental bet that he'd be gone for many more years and we'd never see him when the heat was off at home. But he haunted me for two weeks and I wished I had drawn him into conversation. I called the woman who had introduced us. "He's been drunk most of the time since the meeting," she said. "His family are aghast at his even considering A.A.—his father is a well-known liquor dealer." There it was. The kid was trying A.A. against some first-class odds. The next week I met him at another open meeting. His eyes looked more frightened than before. Finally he said, "I decided to come here at the last moment. Things have been bad for me all day. I've got a pint in my pocket and planned to go to New York and drink it. I'm terribly shaky."

I asked him his age. He was 21. What came out of the afternoon together proves my point of the incongruous often being right in A.A.

I am 48. The lad opened up all the stops to me after I had told him the story of my drinking up to the time I was his age — adding, "think what extra grief you can save *now*." His story from early boyhood to the present was so near like mine one almost could change the names and I would be the boy. It was so uncanny I felt certain this could be no happenstance. When I added the story of my life of drinking *after* I had been his age, pointed out the lost opportunities, the misery and frustration and failures — I know the boy was thoroughly jolted.

If the results with this lad are good it certainly can be traced to a divine guidance in bringing together a boy and a man with carbon-copy histories, one to help the other. At least he didn't open the pint; more than I would- have done at 21!— P. B.

RESPONSE, IT'S WONDERFUL!

Subscriptions have been pouring in by the scores in response to a letter from the editor to group secretaries asking their assistance in acquainting A.A.s with *The A.A. Grapevine*.

The letter explained that although no effort had ever been made, or ever would be made, to "promote" the Grapevine, the editors did feel that the magazine was available to all who might want it. The group secretaries were asked to make announcements to this effect or post notices on their bulletin boards. Every one of them must have complied, judging by the response in new subscriptions received since.



MEMPHIS FIGURES

Final registration figures from Memphis, Tenn., reveal some interesting things about the heavy attendance at the regional meeting held there in September.

A total of 24 states and Canada, and 112 groups were represented in the registration. Tennessee, of course, led in both the number of groups represented—11—and in the number of individual A.A.s attending—173. Alabama was second with 57 members from 10 groups attending. North Carolina was third in the number of groups represented, accounting for nine, but Oklahoma, though technically outside the conference region, reported the third largest number of individual A.A.s present, with 47.

Total attendance in the Auditorium for the program at which Bill gave his talk was estimated at approximately 2,200.

The Memphis newspapers, the Commercial Appeal and the Press-Scimitar, gave the convention considerable attention, publishing altogether 12 news articles on the meetings.

The Clinics which were held each morning, with two going on simultaneously each period, covering various group problems proved to be one of the most interesting and useful features of the convention.

PETITION WINS CLUBHOUSE

From Burlington, Vt.

Aided by a petition signed by interested citizens including doctors, lawyers, ministers, a judge and the sheriff, the Burlington Group now has a two-story brick building for its headquarters. The building, owned by the city, provides a meeting hall, kitchen, lounge and recreation room, and a "recuperation" room.

DIGEST

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"As Pete put it, 'This is not a program you can play with and fool around with.'

"And Howard, an old weather forecaster, says he can always spot the approach of the doldrums. The first sign: Missing meetings,"

Rope Yarn, Seamen's Club, N. Y.—"Why does the alcoholic want to win every round in the battle of life? Most of us, a little thought will prove, are of a volatile nature given to vivid flights of imagination that sometimes carry us into a never-never land. Man, inherently, has the urge to create, to add to the construction of the society in which he lives. But, the men who contribute most to their fellow men are men of vision. They are not visionaries, who set fantastic goals for themselves and feel frustrated when they fall short. That is a failing of the alcoholic setting his sights too high, and, the perfectionist that he is, neglecting to accept partial success if that is to fall his due."