



VOL. I, NO. 11, APRIL, 1945 P. O. BOX 328, GRAND CENTRAL ANNEX, NEW YORK, 17 YEARLY, 1.50; COPY, 15c

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

## BIG LIGHT CAN BE SHED ON ALCOHOLISM IF A.A.s FILL THIS IN AND RETURN TO GRAPEVINE

The purpose of this questionnaire is to ascertain at what age the incidents or experiences listed below first happened. The order in which they are set down may not accord with your own experience, but please fill in the year after the item anyway. If you never had a particular experience, leave the space blank. The samples are intended to be suggestive only and are in no way definitive.

AT WHAT AGE DID YOU FIRST: AGE

1. Get drunk?

*(No example or illustration is attempted or necessary. If you were, ever drunk you will know what we mean)* \_\_\_\_\_

2. Experience a blackout?

*(Example: Wake up in the morning after a party with no idea where, you had been or what you had done, after a certain point)* \_\_\_\_\_

3. Start sneaking drinks?

*(Example: Take, a quick one in the kitchen without anyone seeing you when you were pouring drinks for guests)* \_\_\_\_\_

4. Begin to lose control of drinking?

*(Example: Intend to have, only a couple, and wind up cockeyed)* \_\_\_\_\_

5. Rationalize or justify your abnormal drinking?

*(Example: Excuse, your drinking on the ground that you were sad, or happy, or neither)* \_\_\_\_\_

6. Attempt to control your drinking by changing its pattern?

*(Example: Deciding to drink only be.fore.dinner)* \_\_\_\_\_

7. Attempt to control your drinking by going on the wagon?

8. Act in a financially extravagant manner while drinking?

*(Example: (cashing a check for*

*more than you need and spending all of it without getting anything for it except a hangover)*

9. Start going on week-end drunks?

10. Start going on middle-of-the-week drunks?

11. Start going on day-time drunks?

12. Take a morning drink?

*(Example: Feel the need of and take a drink the first thing in the morning in order to get yourself going, or "for medicinal purposes only")*

13. Start going on benders?

*(Example: Staying drunk for more than a day without regard for your work or your family or anything else)*

14. Develop indefinable fears?

15. Experience acute and persistent remorse?

*(Example: Realizing that you have, made a fool of yourself while, drinking without being able to shake the realization off)*

16. Develop abnormal and unreasonable resentments?

*(Example: Going into a rage because dinner wasn't ready the minute you got home)*

17. Commit anti-social acts while drinking?

*(Example: Pick a fight with a stranger in a saloon for no justifiable reason)*

18. Realize that your friends or family were trying to prevent or discourage your drinking?

19. Become indifferent to the kind or quality of the liquor you drank so long as it did the business?

20. Experience uncontrollable tremors (i. e., the jitters, the shakes, or whatever your pet name is) after drinking?

21. Resort to taking sedatives to quiet yourself after drinking?

22. Seek medical advice or aid?

23. Seek psychiatric advice or aid? (This includes advice or aid from any adviser, such as a minister, a priest or a lawyer, as well as from a psychiatrist)

24. Have to be hospitalized as a result of drinking?

25. Lose a friend as the result of drinking?

26. Lose working time as the result of drinking?

27. Lose a job as the result of drinking?

28. Lose advancement in a job as the result of drinking?

29. Use alcohol to lessen self-consciousness concerning sex?

30. Attempt to find comfort in religion?

31. Desire to escape from your environment as a solution for the drinking problem?

*(Example: Deciding that all would be well if only you could get a job in Chicago instead of having to go on working in New York)*

32. Start solitary drinking?

33. Start to protect your supply?

*(Example: Buying a quart on the way home so you would be sure, to have a drink in the morning)*

34. Admit to yourself that your drinking was beyond control?

35. Admit to anyone else that your drinking was beyond control?

36. Reach what you regard as your lowest point?

PLEASE STATE THE FOLLOWING:

(a) Present age.....(b) Sex.....

# EDITORIAL:

## On the 6th Step

*"Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character."*

This step is most important because here we are ready for God (as we understand Him) to walk along with us and guide us as we seek to improve our character and eliminate the defects which contributed to our alcoholic problem.

With God's help we'll now apologize quickly when we are curt to others. We'll overcome our resentments. We'll become humble and remember it's our own character we want to improve, not the character of others. We'll remember that as we aren't perfect we haven't any particular right to be critical toward others.

We'll ask quickly for help each time we are aware of wrong thinking and whenever we begin to feel sorry for ourselves. When we wish to judge others, we'll remember that not so long ago we were in no position to judge anyone.

Resentments, our biggest stumbling block, can be dropped right here. Resentments against those who loved us and tried to help us; resentments against the boss, against our fellow-worker, and all the million other little and big resentments must be turned over to a higher power.

At a later date, as our character becomes sound, we'll find that these resentments disappear.

We must ask God to help us understand others.

It takes a continued program of doing and thinking our best each day to lead us ahead, out into the open, where we can join the company of our fellow-men.

The same help we seek in dealing with our alcoholic problem must be used to overcome our other defects. Knowing our problem is in God's hands will give us serenity and peace of mind.

In other words, we will turn our will over to God, asking that His will be done, and we'll work on our defects one by one as they make themselves known to us.

*Mark H., Buffalo, N. Y.*

## *Letters to The Grapevine...*

*Dear Grapevine:* An eminent engineer with years of experience as a consultant to industry, says that the average plant has ample buildings, machinery, and engineering skill. Where it fails, he finds, is in lack of human engineering — broken-down individual relationships.

Alcoholism, in the person of the alcoholic executive or worker is one of the most challenging problems facing production men today. To date, industry's efforts to cope with

alcoholism have met with heartbreaking and expensive failure.

A.A. is the most potent force yet found to help industry protect its investment in individuals, trained to fit jobs both big and small. We know that thousands of men and women have returned to sobriety, have taken up their responsibilities, filled their jobs and re-created normal, happy home lives. As we in industry turn to technical experts for advice in any given field, so we can now turn with confidence

to A.A. for help in dealing with our alcoholics.

It has been the writer's good fortune to become acquainted with and have the co-operation of A.A. groups and to see their effective handling of alcoholics. We shall ever be thankful to members of A.A. for the unselfish and untiring work they are doing. Through their understanding, and guiding hands, many who were a loss to the war effort, to themselves, and to their dear ones have been brought to sobriety and happiness.

The challenge to produce things which make for more comfortable living has been met by industry. We can feel confident that industry, after the war, has still more to offer. We are becoming aware, however, that we cannot fully enjoy material wealth unless our industrial human relationships keep pace with scientific progress. Much midnight oil is being burned to develop blue-prints that will prove valuable in the development of better industrial relations.

In days past it was not considered industry's business to concern itself with human relationships. In the words of the old type foreman: "It's none of my business what these fellows think or what they do or if they are happy, but it is my business to get top production from them." Today we know this is a short-sighted attitude. It is industry's responsibility to produce what the human family needs, and what makes for human happiness, at a profit to investors and workers. This can best be done by the best possible industrial relations.

We pay Alcoholics Anonymous a sincere tribute for the consistent work being done for bewildered people.

The law of the universe sanctions the principles of A.A. "There is nothing good but a good will; there is nothing bad but a bad will." Dr. Alfred Adler, originator of the phrase "inferiority complex," attributes all human failure to inability to grasp the fact that "it is more blessed to give than to receive." A.A. folk know this is true. Their usefulness to society springs from the acceptance of this principle.

*Clemens Mortenson*

*Personnel Manager,*

*Division of The American Hardware Corp.*

*Dear Grapevine:* The following quotation, written in 1820 by a certain C. C. Colton, might be of interest to your readers:

"Drunkness is the vice of a good constitution, or of a bad memory; of a constitution so treacherously good that it never bends until it breaks; or of a memory that recollects the pleasures of getting drunk, but forgets the pains of getting sober."

*E. M. Jellinek, Yale University*

*Dear Grapevine:* The New York A.A. Hospital Committee, which consists of three members from each of the Brooklyn, Manhattan, Bronx, Flushing, and Forest Hills groups, would like to make a report on the hospital service for alcoholics in New York City.

For some time we have been seeking a general hospital in Manhattan where alcoholics can be hospitalized at a cost within their means, and where visiting hours will be extended to A.A. members throughout the day. Such a plan is being worked out and should be in order by April 1st. We hope to have a complete report for the next issue.

Until several weeks ago, there was no place in the City of New York where alcoholics could be hospitalized without going to great expense. There was only one alcoholic hospital and a very few general hospitals, which required private nurses in attendance. The psychiatric ward of Bellevue was free, but grim. Lately hospitalization in Bellevue has undergone a complete change, due to the efforts of Mayor LaGuardia; Dr. Bernecker, Commissioner of Hospitals; Dr. William F. Jacobs of Bellevue; and Edward McGoldrick, all of whom are very sympathetic toward the hospitalization problem of the alcoholic.

Perhaps the finest men's alcoholic ward in the United States has been opened in Bellevue. A man is taken into a thirty-bed ward where he is treated as a sick person and is confined to his bed. You who have been familiar, in the past, with the old setup at Bellevue would be pleasantly surprised with this alcoholic ward. It is no longer necessary to see how drunk you can get a man before you can put him into the ward and the routine has been very much simplified. The admitting and staff doctors are very co-operative with A.A. members who have patients to hospitalize. With the shortage of help and nurses, it is wonderful that they can do this at this time.

Women alcoholics are also hospitalized in wards of the medical division of Bellevue, rather than confined to the psycho ward. We are in hopes that sometime in the near future an entire ward for women can be set up, similar to the men's.

If you have a patient you wish to hospitalize, get in touch with the secretary of your group; he will give you the names of the members of the Hospital Committee, and they will explain the routine and, if possible, go with you to hospitalize your patient.

We of the Hospital Committee and all members of A.A. are deeply grateful to His Honor the Mayor, the doctors, and all of the people who helped effect this change of treatment of the alcoholic in Metropolitan New York.

*Jack N., Chairman, Hospital Committee.*

## Tall, but true, Tales: as told in A. A.

I was pacing the hospital floor. The brand-new psychiatrist was sitting on the bed.

"Well, what made you drunk this time?" said he.

"The cat," said I.

"How could the cat get you drunk?" said he.

So I told him that it started on the day we were moving to the country. My wife didn't want to give me very much to do. She knew that I had a resentment against moving days. All I had to do was to fetch Sandy Hook, our alley cat, from the veterinary where he had been hospitalized for an operation. He had a fighting fixation induced by a sex-superiority complex. I also resent cats.

Sandy Hook was the name chosen by the children because the cat was the color of sand and had a hook in his tail.

It was a very hot day but I was cold sober. I got the cat in the car and partly closed the windows so that he couldn't jump out. But the cat meowed. I couldn't stand it. I parked the car and went in for a few touches of Scotch.

When I got back—all was quiet. After driving about ten miles I thought I would have another touch or two.

In this place where I was now drinking the proprietor asked me if I was alone. I told him that I was not, that I had Sandy Hook with me. He wanted to know who Sandy Hook was and I—by then a little hallucinated with grandeur—told him it was our Siamese cat.

A be-jeweled and elderly lady sitting on the next stool volunteered the information that she was a connoisseur of Siamese cats. She said that she would simply love to see mine.

Well, it was dark outside and I figured that she couldn't see much anyhow because of her age and her slightly cocked condition.

So the boss and she and I went out to the car. Sandy Hook was gone. The boss suggested that I had had enough and that I go home.

On returning to the bar for meditation and Scotch to soothe my anguish I decided I couldn't go home. My sweet wife had given me only this one thing to do and what was more she liked the cat better than me.

I announced that I would drive back the ten miles, and withdrew.

When I reached the first spot I got out and started walking up and down the street, calling, "Here, Sandy Hook. Here, Sandy Hook."

A large cop appeared and asked me gently what I was doing. After explaining the whole

matter I asked him if he had ever lost a dog or a cat. He said yes and he said it was a sad case. In fact he said he would help me. So he went along the road with me, calling, "Here, Sandy Hook," and clapping his hands.

Cars stopped and their passengers watched the proceedings. Some even waved their handkerchiefs.

Finally we gave up. I invited the cop in for a drink. At the foot of the bar sat Sandy Hook. This happy reunion called for a celebration. Everyone present seemed pleased to join in, tousling the prodigal cat.

Four hours later I was about to pass the place where I had failed to produce Sandy Hook. I thought it might be unwise to stop because I figured that I had had enough. On the other hand both the boss and the elderly lady might be thinking that I was drunk or slightly nuts. So I decided to show them Sandy Hook.

My entry with Hook in my arms caused an ovation. The elderly lady with the jewels was plastered. She said it was the finest specimen of a Siamese cat she had ever seen. So we had another celebration in which everyone seemed pleased to join.

When the sun came up over the bay I arrived home. I had done the one thing my wife had asked me to and I reasoned I had done it rather well, considering.

I put Sandy Hook in my wife's bed and started to tell her about meeting such a nice policeman. She wasn't interested.

So I drank for a few days.

The psychiatrist said, "You were faced with responsibility—you were frustrated—it's another case of escape." I said, "Sure. The cat escaped but I got him back."

He said, "I'll have to psychoanalyze you to help you."

"How much will that cost?" said I.

"About 2,000 dollars," said he.

"I haven't 2,000 dollars," said I.

"Have you 1,000 dollars?" said he.

"No," said I, "but I'll give you an acre of land I own on Long Island."

"Does everyone think that an acre there is worth 1,000 dollars?" said he.

"No," said I, "only me."

"Well," he said, "you'll have to stop drinking and there's only one thing that might help you. And that's A.A."

So I now am a member of A.A. and it was and is the only thing for me because I have faith in A.A. and the people in it and the principles behind it.

*Fred S.*

# from "September Remember": a Novel about A. A.

Concluding Chapter XXI, begun in the *March Grapevine*. *September Remember*, by Eliot Taintor (a writing team, one of whom is an A.A.), will be published April 16th, by Prentice-Hall.

*(Rick the hero of September Remember, is deeply concerned over Joe's continuing slip. Joe is Rick's best friend and original A.A. mentor. In an effort to learn how to help Joe, Rick has consulted Joe's psychiatrist, Dr. Wales. Together, Wales and Rick have gone up to New Haven where. Wales is to address the Yale Summer School for Studies on Alcohol. Rich hopes to meet and talk to Bill Griffith, the co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous, who will be there.)*

## Chapter XXI... continued

Two men were already seated there. One, "a long, lean, humorous, intelligent Vermont Yankee," must be Bill Griffith, from Joe's description. The heavier man, Dr. Jellinek, Director of the School, spoke briefly... introducing Bill Griffith. Rick watched the lean Vermonter unfold himself, look over the audience, walk down the steps from the rostrum to the main floor and say with a grin and a slight drawl that he welcomed the spirit of informality and would like to talk as if this were an A.A. meeting. "Some while ago," he began, "a few of us from A.A. met with a group of distinguished physicians who were studying what they called 'recovered alcoholics' and 'un-recovered alcoholics'—medical terms. They mentioned a third group—'normal people.' Maybe some of us who had been 'dry' several years were hurt to find that we were still not considered 'normal.'

"The doctors were very humble—like our good friend Dr. Sam Wales, here—they admitted that medicine has not done much for the alcoholic. They seemed to think that alcoholics are more sensitive, more emotionally childish than normal people and this hurt us—we had always considered ourselves intellectually precocious.

"In other words, they were describing the alcoholic character much as I would have put it. Let's say — the alcoholic tends to the grandiose.

"I was that way myself even as a child on a Vermont farm. I can remember the day my Granddad told me about the boomerang of Australia which came back to you if it missed the animal you were throwing it at. Granddad concluded with the dogmatic state-

ment that nobody but an Australian could make a boomerang. That made me mad. You see, I had grandiose ideas. I determined to show him that I, Bill Griffith of Vermont, could make a boomerang. I neglected my lessons. I forgot to fill the woodbox. I spent all my time reading all the books on Australia in our town library—except for the time I spent with drawshave and saw on every likely piece of limber I could lay my hands on. My Granddad got good and mad when I sawed the headpiece out of my bed.

"As luck would have it, this turned out to be the right piece of wood for a boomerang. I threw it around the Congregational Church steeple and it came back to me. Then I called my Granddad out for a demonstration. I threw the boomerang, it went around the steeple, came back and nearly decapitated Granddad."

Bill paused while the audience, laughed. "Now there was an example of the grandiose. I had spent an utterly unreasonable amount of study and exertion for no useful purpose—simply to prove my own importance.

"I could give you other examples that might look as if I had been developing some admirable qualities, such as persistence—actually I was developing my ego. In school and in the war. It was during the war that I made the great discovery that a few drinks released me from self-consciousness.

"After the war I went to New York. I was overcome by the vastness of the place, the numbers of sophisticated people. I felt a great urge to show these city folks that a Yankee from the Vermont hills could hold his own with them. I went to night law school. My wife and I lived in cheap rooms to save money—we had decided that money was all-important in getting ahead. My social drinking increased. Little did I realize that I was building a boomerang that would come back and nearly decapitate me.

"From a legitimate means of relaxation and release, liquor was becoming a necessity to me. And I was pouring it into a body that was very sensitive to alcohol. We have a way of stating it in A.A.—alcoholism is an allergy of the body combined with a compulsion of the mind. That was what was happening to me. My hangovers became worse. Each time

I drank I got drunker than I intended. But my business career was going ahead. I was making money in Wall Street, getting the social recognition I craved. Only I couldn't seem to live without liquor—or live very happily with it. I was a drunk by 1924.

"By the time the depression hit, I was being supported mainly by my wife, Lois, who is down there now in the fourth row." He waved a long arm toward a grey-haired woman with a gentle face, gentle and strong, and with the same look of serenity his own face had.

"Then came, my big chance. I was offered a job as manager of a large syndicate. I had succeeded in staying sober during the preliminary talks—six or eight weeks, I guess—but they all knew about my drinking and before the deal was closed one of them came to me and said, 'Bill, are you sure you can stay off liquor; not take one single drink?'

"'Oh sure,' I said, 'of course I can.'

"'Well, would you mind if we put that in the contract?'

"'Not at all, not at all.'

"So they wrote in that if I look one drink my job as manager was ended."

Rick knew what was coming—it was the same sort of thing that had happened to him when he'd tried to go on the wagon on account of an important job—and landed behind the eight ball. The A.A.s around him were all grinning reminiscently as Bill Griffith went on to tell how he had gone out to New Jersey to inspect the plant and gotten into a poker game afterward at his hotel with some of the company engineers. They had had a jug of "Jersey Lightning" and offered him a drink. He had refused repeatedly, but late in the evening he had gotten to thinking that in all his long drinking career he had never lasted "Jersey Lightning." So he had had a drink. Three days later he had come to on his bed in the same hotel. The phone was **ringing**. It was his new boss, telling him his job was ended.

"Now I submit to you," Bill undid the buttons of his coat and pulled at a dark blue tie with white curlicues, "that is not the habit of drinking. That is an infinite projection of

*(Continued on Page 8)*

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

"I have just returned to the States after 20 months overseas, during which time my only contact with the group has been *The Grapevine*—(but what a refreshing contact that was!). And, as in most other things these days, remarkable changes have taken place, and much progress. After a lapse of so many months, of course the first thing that strikes one is the tremendous expansion in all groups everywhere. Many have been obliged to take on new quarters, and the ones which I have seen have all been an improvement over the old. As we had all hoped, the A.A. program has been made available to thousands more people who have been struggling with the problem, and it is a fine thing to meet so many new and happy A.A.s who have embarked on the wonderful adventure afforded by the program. An outstanding feature to be noticed today is the large number of 'high-bottom members,' those who have gained an early understanding of their problem through A.A. Perhaps because of the fact that A.A. is becoming so well known nationally, they have not had to bounce all the way down the hard road, losing everything, before realizing that something must be done about it, and, what is more important, learning *how* to do it.

"It is evident, too, to one who has been away, that present-day conditions are putting a pressure on the civilian population which has caused day to day existence to be speeded up in a manner reminiscent of the 'terrific twenties.' As a result, there is necessarily more drinking going on generally, I should say, than before the war. During my 17 days on leave in the New York area, friends have brought me into contact with three people who have gone beyond the 'safety line' of normal drinking. So the group is needed more than ever before, in all areas of the country.

"Most satisfactory of all, however, is the fact that in spite of the great nation-wide expansion in A.A., the same warm, friendly, and happy spirit prevails everywhere—just as it always has. So—it's great to be home again—with the grandest bunch of people in the land!"

*Attached is a very precious letter written by a young bomber pilot in Italy, this son of a Springfield A.A. who has been a member since November, 1944.*

*It is addressed to the A.A.s everywhere in appreciation for what A.A. has done for him through his mother.* C.W.

Ten years ago my mother recovered miraculously after almost losing her life in a Chicago hospital. It was God, and her love for her family, that pulled her through.

It was following this recovery that I first remember her drinking to excess. Not too much at first, but as years went on, things

grew worse. I'd come home from high school in the afternoon to find her in a drunken stupor, and inside I'd be boiling mad, and sick at heart. I never said anything particularly unkind to her while she was like this, as the words would have been forgotten in the morning, and I'd only get as a reply to anything I said, that "everything was o.k.—everything o.k." But I'd lie awake half the night planning what I would tactfully say in the morning. Morning came and mother would be her bright, very beautiful and very gracious self again, and I could never get up enough courage to say anything that might hurt her. So things went on. I'd be afraid to bring a

friend home from school because I didn't want him to see my mother like that. I hadn't cried from pain in many years, but at night I'd lie in bed, tears rolling down my cheeks, praying to God to help. God had answered in saving her life the only other time I asked Him to help.

At intervals in the last two or three years my mother told my sister and me that she would give it up. She *tried*, I know, but never was successful.

There was one way left that I thought would do a lot of good, but it was a very hard thing for me to do. I wrote a long letter appealing to my mother's love for her family. It hurt her deeply, as I knew it would, but with her great love she fought all the pent-up emotional disturbances within her to a great degree of success. To help reduce the great strain on her mind and to insure a rapid comeback to a happy life, my sister and a member of A.A. induced her to join your organization. You don't know how extremely happy and proud a person I am today. To be fighting 3,000 miles from home and know that your family is back on the road to complete happiness after ten years of discouraging disappointments is a wonderful thing and it's even more wonderful to be able to love every little thing about your mother with all your heart, and with all your soul.

I am extremely grateful to you for the way in which you have helped. A heartfelt of thanks and sincere good wishes from—a son of one of you. W.A.L.

## MEDICINE FOR SELF PITY

"I've wanted to write for a long time, but my days are long and full. We all are too much in this work to really observe it. If I were on a schedule like this back in the States I'd have blown my top regularly just like the noon whistle at the biscuit factory.

"Of course, I often think of A.A. It's one of the things we have to do. But when you see men who have been through the real hell of war, and you hear from them what it's like (you can't know unless you've been there), or you see them laugh with tears in their eyes as they tell you how their comrades were killed all around them, you wonder how you could ever have taken yourself so damned seriously.

"I'm very well in every way, and living only for the day we can all take up where we left off." Pvt. John D., BUSH Hospital, France

Y.G.

# DOWN ALIBI ALLEY: with Hal H. of Chicago...



## Do You Know: THE CATCH IN QUITTING ALONE?

In 1936 I quit drinking, not knowing then that I was an alcoholic but knowing I was a drunkard. I desperately wanted to quit and knew I had to, if I was not to lose everything I valued.

I had been a long-time, every-day, heavy drinker with frequent binges in between. The first six months were agonizing, and there were times when I feared my doctor's prophecy, that I would have to be locked up for at least six months, would after all turn out to be correct.

By coincidence, I devised my own 24-hour plan, and after six months of not drinking, the going began to get easier. At the end

of the first year I no longer had a craving for the first and fatal drink. As time went on I became proud of having quit against the prophecies that I couldn't do it, and seriously planned to write a book entitled, "How To Quit Drinking if You Want To."

Instead of writing this, I decided in 1941 that after five years I ought to be able to drink normally. For a limited time I did just that, and then came the recurring three-day drunks, which left me puzzled and with an ever-increasing sense of hopelessness.

I have been in Alcoholics Anonymous since September, 1943. There is a great difference between this 18 months and all of the

five previous years of being dry. I have learned in this period to be happy without drinking, and to live without any sense of loss or privation. My point of view now is positive. I am now staying dry, whereas before A.A. I was regretfully refraining from drinking.

I don't question the possibility of some alcoholics drying up for a time wholly on their own. I do know the process is a lonely and unhappy one, and the chances are ultimate failure.

If I were asked, "What's the difference between being dry by one's self or in Alcoholics Anonymous," my answer would be one word—"Happiness."  
*Jack B.*

# A. A. 's COUNTRY-WIDE NEWS CIRCUIT

The role which A.A. can take in curbing absenteeism in industrial plants due to excessive drinking was recently outlined before the Chattanooga, Tennessee, Industrial Personnel Club. Stanley Davis of Cincinnati, analyst of the Ohio Personnel Testing Laboratories, displayed personnel tests showing the qualifications of a normal worker and the marked deviation by alcoholics from the norm. He also showed how alcoholics "come back," even passing the norm, after joining A.A. The program was arranged by a prominent businessman, who is a member of the non-alcoholic advisory board for the Chattanooga A.A. group.... Can anything be done for the valuable employee whose drinking is out of control? To some employers this is still a baffling question. The Delaware A. A. groups have distributed a booklet, "What About the Alcoholic Employees?" to personnel directors in organizations throughout the state. The booklet contains a reprint of the chapter in the A.A. book describing the experiences of an employer in dealing with alcoholism.

Norwalk is the latest to join the A. A. ranks in Ohio. At their first open meeting were Judge Edgar Martin of the Common Pleas Court, Judge Luther Van Horn of Probate Court, Prosecuting Attorney Herbert K. Freeman and County Welfare Chairman George W. Lawrence.

Another new group has been formed in Stockton, California, and Pennsylvania has a new one in Uniontown. As for Iowa, you may take the word of its members that A.A. is ticking there. They have watched it grow from a meager beginning with five members in October, 1943, to nine groups with a present total membership of more than 260 persons. So far, there have been few women members: two in the Ottumwa group, two in Des Moines, and one at Waterloo. With the Tampa A.A.s as the sponsoring body, there's now another group in Florida, in the town of St. Petersburg.... Oklahoma's expanding A.A. has now reached to McAlester.

Judge Karl V. King of Salt Lake City, Utah, has recommended to the city commission the establishment of a clinic for alcoholics. The judge would then commit alcoholics who have been arrested four or five consecutive times to the care of the clinic for a period not to exceed six months. They would receive the necessary medical care, and ser-

vices of psychiatric workers. When released they would be paroled to A. A. It is proposed that this clinic be financed through the federal, state, county and city governments.

Which reminds us that Austin R., author and member of the Eau Claire, Wisconsin A.A. group, recently spoke on A.A. before the Eau Claire State Teachers College.... According to the Chicago Municipal Court records, the sex ratio of alcoholic addicts has changed from one female to four or five males in 1931, to one female to two males in 1943, as reported by Dr. D. B. Totman, director of the psychiatric institute of the Municipal Court of Chicago in a late issue of the Journal of the American Medical Association.

Our school system is gradually being instructed in A.A. Paul C. Young of the Louisiana State University faculty was recently quoted in the state newspapers for his enthusiastic support of our program.... Dr. Charles L. Outland, medical director of Richmond Public Schools, was the principal speaker at a meeting of the Richmond, Virginia group.... Adhering to wartime needs, A.A.s throughout the country are establishing swing shift groups, some meeting in the morning, some in the afternoon. Flint, Michigan is flourishing on its new swing shift basis.

A. A. groups of Westchester County, New York, are beginning a plan of co-operation with Grasslands Hospital authorities, under which volunteer attendants will be supplied for night duty in the hospital's psychiatric building. The announcement was made in connection with the organization of a Yonkers (N. Y.) group at a recent open meeting. Other participating groups are Mount Vernon, New Rochelle, White Plains and Peekskill. The emergency plan, by which the A.A. members will meet a serious manpower shortage, was worked out in a conference with Dr. John G. Lynn, chief psychiatrist at Grasslands, and Mrs. Blanche P. Mack of Scarsdale (N. Y.), director of volunteer service at the hospital. Effective since the latter part of March, the Westchester groups are supplying three volunteers a night to serve as attendants at the psychiatric building. The plan is an outgrowth of a continuing program of co-operation between Grasslands and A.A. in helping alcoholics in Westchester to recover.

Here are some more statistics, not the usual boring kind but dynamically alive.... 600, 000

chronic alcoholics were institutionalized last year, of whom New York's Bellevue Hospital took care of 8,562.

An overseas letter from Lt. Don Aho of Fairport Harbor, Ohio, reprinted in the Fairport Harbor *Beacon*, with favorable editorial comment, says "I have been reading about the Alcoholics Anonymous in various periodicals with keen interest. I am really glad to see it branch out. It uses the best psychology of education and leadership that I have ever seen applied.... A.A. is setting a fine example for our educators to follow. Perhaps the day will come when all graduates will emerge from school trained and prepared to meet life's problems without fear of failure."

Lunching in the Senate dining room the other noon with Dr. E. M. Jellinek, director of the Section on Alcohol Studies of the Laboratory of Applied Physiology at Yale, were a significant collection of people. Discussing with Dr. Jellinek the establishment of clinics for alcoholics in Washington, D. C., were Senators Arthur Capper and Theodore G. Bilbo of the Senate District Committee; Representatives Jennings Randolph, chairman of the House District Committee; and Representative Karl Stefan, member of the House Appropriations Committee for the District.... A step toward co-operation with A.A. is being taken at Washington's District Jail, Howard B. Gill, superintendent, announced a few days ago, with a Committee from the Washington A.A. group visiting the jail regularly. Statistics show a majority of the 12,000 alcoholics passing through the District Jail each year are old offenders. Most frequent visitor is a man now on his 157th sentence.

Ted Le B., a member of one of the many groups on Long Island, New York, gave a talk in Buffalo a while ago that has been widely written up in newspapers throughout the country. Ted said that "these 12 A.A. steps really are a masterful abridgement of the only possible ultimate international peace program.... The splendid truth given to a half-crazed drunk who fell to his knees and asked God for light may some day deliver all mankind from chaos just as it delivered him. The mustard seed may become the tree." Ted went on to suggest substituting the word "materialism" for the word "alcohol" and "materialist" for "alcoholic." The editors of this country thought what Ted said made a lot of sense.

(Continued from Page 4)

habit which might well be called an obsession."

From then on things had gone from bad to worse pretty rapidly. Bill had been in Towns Hospital in New York, where Kidd Whistler had taken Joe. Even his doctor and his wife had about lost hope for him. Then one day an old friend, a former drinking pal, had come to see him. Bill had offered him a drink and Ebbie had refused. Ebbie had looked different. He said he had got religion. He had talked to Bill about it.

"Now I never thought much of the God business," Bill smiled, "but Ebbie called it simply 'a power greater than ourselves' and I had always believed in such a power. After Ebbie left I began to ask myself, 'Can beggars be choosers? Does a cancer patient quibble about cures?' No, he goes to the best physician in utter dependency.

"This thought kept sticking in my mind through two or three more weeks of drinking. Then suddenly I cried out in abject desperation, 'I am willing to do anything. *Anything*. If there is a God, will He show Himself?' I had no faith at all but suddenly I was overcome with a feeling of being surrounded by Something. I felt transported to a mountain top ... I had a sense of light and ecstasy, followed by great peace.

"'Oh, so this is the peace that passeth understanding,' I told myself. But I became cautious. Scared. I called the doctor. I thought I was going crazy.

"'No, boy, you're not insane,' he said. 'Whatever it is you've got hold of, you'd better hang on to it. It's a lot better than what you had before.' I did hold on ... That was

---

Cut This Out and Mail to:

*The Grapevine*

P.O. Box 328

Grand Central Annex, N. Y. 17, N. Y.

Herewith 1.50 for one year's subscription to *The Grapevine* (Monthly)

For additional subscriptions enclose separate sheet with name and address clearly printed.

Checks payable to *The Grapevine*.

Total Enclosed.....

PLEASE PRINT

Name.....

Address.....

*Note: Subscriptions received up to the 15th begin with the current month's issue. Those received after the 15th will begin with the following month's issue.*

ten years ago and I haven't had a drink since."

He looked around the solemn gathering and grinned. "Some of my irreverent friends in A.A. call my religious experience 'Bill's hot flash,' but it is very similar to several described in William James's *Varieties of Religions Experience*. You could call James a founder of A.A. although he never heard of it, and Ebbie, certainly, and a man in Akron, Ohio who believed that what had happened to me could help other drunks.

I am not saying that every man and woman in A.A. gets this sudden type of 'conversion,' as our doctor here called it. As a matter of fact," and here Rick felt as if Bill Griffith were looking directly at him, speaking to him, "most of our members approach the spiritual angle of our program tentatively—some of them skeptically—but it comes. Slowly, often. Unobserved by the person himself, perhaps, but the personality change, is just as much of a miracle.

"It may come through faith—or it may come through works. You see we get people both ways. The 12th step of our program is helping other alcoholics. That is religion too.

"Our program has been borrowed from both religion and medicine. For instance," he raised his left hand, "the doctor recommends analysis and catharsis." He raised his right hand. "The priest, or minister, advises examination of the conscience and confession." He looked at his left hand again. "The psychiatrist says, 'You have stepped out of the herd. You are an introvert. You cannot be happy unless you can make contact with your fellowmen.'" He turned to his right hand. "And what does the religious man say? 'Think of others and you will be at peace. Practice the Brotherhood of Man.' The medical man tells his patient to 'find a hobby, some new compelling interest,' and the religious man talks about the 'expulsive power of a new affection.' They are saying the same thing in different words, and we have found that what they say is true.

"So... A.A. is a synthesis of religion and medicine—plus our own experience. We have added two main things: first, transmission by alcoholics—we've proved that only a drunk can help another drunk; second, group therapy—membership in our society takes away an alcoholic's feeling of being a pariah and gives him a new, compelling interest in life. A newcomer feels more important each day that he does *not* drink. And we've been told pretty often that we are all the type that has

to feel important. That's another reason for A.A.'s success."

Rick was impressed by the way Bill Griffith handled the questions which followed the enthusiastic applause. . . .

When the audience swarmed around Bill Griffith, Rick moved forward and joined Dr. Wales. Suddenly Bill detached himself from the persistent questioners, his arms outstretched.

"Well, Rick. I'm glad to see you at last."

"How the devil did you know me?"

"Wales whispered to me on the platform that you'd come with him. But I guess," Bill laughed, "I'd have recognized your famous high bottom anyway. Joe's talked a lot about you. You're, his prize case.

Rick's face darkened.

"Joe Kelly will be all right." Bill Griffith put his hand on Rick's arm. "Joe has come, too far along in A.A., helped too many other people, to fold up permanently now. Right, Doctor?"

It wasn't a question, really. Rick felt that Bill Griffith's confidence would have stood up even to a negative answer from Wales.

Wales smiled. "Doesn't the Bible say that faith can move mountains, and Kelly is just a man—a man who's had a bad blow but who has your faith. It's the thing that will help him most now. And I'm speaking as a psychiatrist," he added.

"It didn't help Sylvia," Rick said. "Joe didn't help her. None of us helped her."

Bill Griffith looked at Rick's dark, unhappy face. This was harder than any of the questions he had had to answer after the meeting, but he faced it with the same honesty. "Maybe, we did help Sylvia for a while. She said she was happier in A.A. than she had ever been in her life. Maybe we failed. Look at it this way, Rick. A.A. may fail once or twice—or a dozen times—and we may be sick at heart and full of self-reproach, but that isn't a healthy altitude. It isn't even statistical. We've got to keep our minds on the hundreds of men and women A.A. has helped—the hundreds more, it is helping every day. Sylvia was a lovely person, but Sylvia was one and we are many."

Rick could see Sylvia in her white dress leaning against the column of Joe's porch, her lovely, pointed medieval face lifted in challenge, hear the ringing certainty of her voice. "A.A. keeps on—men and women learn how to live without alcohol, even if some of them learn slowly, even if some of them fail. It doesn't matter."