



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.

PHILIP WYLIE JABS A LITTLE NEEDLE INTO COMPLACENCY

An editor of *The Grapevine* called on me and asked for a piece. He asked because I'd recently reviewed a book about a drunk—Charles Jackson's *The Lost Weekend*. He thought that what I'd said in the review showed I had an interest in alcoholics. I have. The editor didn't know that I am one.

I quit solo—by which I mean here that no organized group like A.A. was around to assist or advise. But I had plenty of assistance and expert advice, much of which curiously parallels what I know now about A.A. To reach a point where I can say that I am not drinking and have not been drinking for a long time, took years. It took an unconscionable amount of energy. It left me with a few ideas that I'd like to pass along. It left me with a couple of hunches that I'd like to ask about.

The things I did are, maybe, the things many others are doing. I was psychoanalyzed twice. I studied psychology after that—Jungian, Freudian, Adlerian, behavioristic. Then I read all the basic religious books. Then I read the philosophies. Then I went to insane asylums, and looked at them. Here are some of the ideas that came my way:

One of the "reasons" I had given myself for drinking was that I was then able to do easily a great many things other men could do sober and I could not. So I did them sober. I did everything without a drink that I had done when drunk, excepting for the destructive troublemaking ones. Everything. That was useful to me.

I had jitters that there is not literary skill to describe—though Charles Jackson has come as close as any writer ever did. Every fear, phobia and compulsion entered my head—

and not always just when I was hung over. So I got into the habit—a suggestion of a psychiatrist—of writing down in detail the nature and formidability of these mental distresses. Maybe the fact that I am a writer gave that system special merit. But I found I couldn't endlessly retail the awfulness of my obsessions—sitting perfectly comfortably in a quiet room. On paper—they weren't gigantic and overwhelming. They grew silly. They made me laugh at myself and so deflated themselves.

Dr. Jung himself suggested that I look at a few asylums. I didn't know why until I made the visit. Then it became evident to me that the inmates were not like me at all. Thus I got to know that my alcoholism was not the onslaught of insanity—and I got to know I had been subconsciously afraid of precisely that.

The Jungians, incidentally, give a different name to the "religious experience" which you discuss in A.A. They arrive at that "experience" by different methods—methods which conform to their scientific psychological technique. They call the spiritual quantum which gives rise to the experience a "transcendent symbol." Naturally, I haven't room to describe the method here: it would take more than this magazine—a book, perhaps. But, whether you call it a religious experience or a transcendent symbol does not matter—and it may be of interest to alcoholics who are semi-knowingly engaged in protesting formal, churchly "religions" to learn that there are thoroughly abstract, non-religious routes to this same, universal, human contact with inner integrity, truth, and the "nature of nature itself."

Of course, I read everything about alcoholism I could find. And I became interested in the care and condition of alcoholic friends. Among them I noticed two who still make me wonder about the possible relationship of

epilepsy to alcoholism in some cases. These two friends of mine had had fits. They both had the epileptic "picture" on the electroencephalogram. The new drugs that avert or postpone epileptic attacks seemed to aid these two men in stopping their alcohol addiction. I know that if I were a doctor—and an alcoholic—I'd investigate this special aspect of the puzzle thoroughly. The possible future values of chemistry should not be overlooked by any of us in the presence of the proved value of psychological and philosophical regeneration.

I also have a hunch that insanities, neuroses, and all other aberrations vary largely with the passing of centuries. Alcoholism, too. I do not believe people in the main were exactly the same sort of alcoholics and for the same reasons in 1700 as in 1944. That is to say, I believe such conditions of the soul are "us if" epidemic—and definitely of a social causation. That is what especially interests me about A.A.: it represents to me the first really effective effort to deal in kind and in scale and in the right category, with alcoholism.

Philip Wylie

BILL'S COMMENTS ON WYLIE IDEAS, HUNCHES

Philip Wylie's piece in this issue of *The Grapevine* will endear the man to every A.A. And why? Because, of course, he's so very alcoholic! Neither can anyone miss the author's generous and self-sacrificing spirit. Forgetting his own worldly importance, he snaps his fingers at what the public may think; he discards his *reputation* in order to share with us his *character*. A traveller who has felt his own way out of the night, he tells how he discovers haven. We could ask no better spirit of anyone. Mr. Wylie can be a member of A.A.

(Continued on page 3)

EDITORIAL:

On Matters of *Grapevine* Policy

The originators of *The Grapevine* did not lay down any specific policy when they began assembling material for the first issue. We were, however, in unanimous agreement that the paper must represent, in the broadest sense possible, the general philosophy of A.A. Now, after three issues, the Editors feel that a definite policy has crystallized:

1. *The Grapevine* does not presume to speak for A.A. as a whole; no one member or group of members, can. The Editors, however, are dedicated to furthering, to the best of their abilities, the philosophy of life and action laid down in the 12 steps of A.A.
2. The Editors are resolved never, knowingly, to print anything that might conceivably harm A.A. as a whole, or any member of A.A.
3. *The Grapevine* takes no position whatsoever on controversial matters, such as religious beliefs, politics, or economics. And *The Grapevine*, like A.A. as a whole, has no official attitude toward either Wets or Drys.

The Editors also feel that it is the privilege and duty of all *Grapevine-reading* members of A.A. to express themselves fully should they feel that *The Grapevine* is transgressing any part of the 12 steps. The section called "Points of View" is wide open to each and every one of you to register your protest, disagreement, or (we hope) approval.

The Editors

Points of View

Dear Grapevine: Would appreciate it very much if Mount Vernon mailed us one of their Sponsor Cards (See *Metropolitan Circuit, August issue*). I think it is an excellent "safety first" for most of the new members coming into the group.

George B., Palo Alto, California

Dear Grapevine: The article about closed meetings in last month's issue kind of put me on the spot ... it so happens that I'm the A.A. who brashly suggested that it wouldn't be a bad idea for an additional closed meeting to be held here in Manhattan for older members. ... I'm not suggesting that it doesn't help us to do 12th-step work in these meetings with newcomers. It certainly does! But week after week of closed meetings where we devote the entire time to discussing the problems of first-timers, or second-timers, or third-timers doesn't give older members (say, for the sake of argument, members who have

been dry one or two months, or more) much chance to discuss their own problems; and believe me, older members' problems can be mighty important, too! For that reason ... let us at least have one closed meeting a week where members who have attained a reasonable record of sobriety can discuss their own problems, and obtain group help. Another cup of coffee, waiter!

Realist, New York

Dear Grapevine: Today I received my first copy of *Grapevine*, and have just enjoyed reading it through. I am a member of Alcoholics Anonymous—Quincy group. We meet every Friday at 8 p.m. On August 10th I had been a member of this group just one year, for which I am more than thankful to the two men who introduced me to A.A. in Boston. I have served as chairman of our group and recently was elected treasurer for three months. I mention all this because before en-

tering A.A. I was almost a hopeless alcoholic, having spent time in hospitals and being sentenced to the house of correction, all through alcohol. But today I'm back . . . serving as foreman in the shipyard where I'm employed, and really living again. Our home is one of happiness; both my wife and myself attend the meetings regularly at Quincy and Boston where we find so many fine friends. In our Quincy group we have from 20 to 40 at our meetings each Friday. We have done considerable work amongst alcoholics in our community and find that the name of A.A. is spreading fast. There is so much to be had in A.A. for so little. . . . I hope those who need A.A. will be fortunate enough to find it before they sink too far. Thanks to that Power greater than myself, and A.A., I remain,

George L., Quincy, Massachusetts

Dear Grapevine: I noticed recently in an issue of *The Grapevine* a letter from Doc N, who had found release from narcotic addiction through A.A. This letter I was most glad to see, and hasten to assure him and others that his experience is one that is beginning to be shared by quite a few. We have in our club five men who have had many years of drug addiction but who are finding complete freedom from drugs and are well on the highway to successful and happy living. Their period of freedom varies from 5 months to 6 years and they all attribute this to the help of a Higher Power that has come to them through A.A. These men, with one exception, were all primary alcoholics, and I believe this is largely true of all "hopheads." I think all drug addicts will have less difficulty in accepting Step No. 1 than the ordinary alcoholic: that their lives have become unmanageable, and that they are powerless over narcotics. I think we feel the need of even greater help than does the usual alcoholic. Our spiritual lines of communication must be kept clearer and there is need for greater voltage from the spiritual dynamo. The Higher Power is able unto the uttermost to supply this; and many others should find the answer in A.A. I'm sure that other A.A. groups have men who are finding the new life of freedom and I earnestly wish, that we may get into communication with each other; and I suggest the possibility, some time, of interesting the U. S. Public Health Service in the establishment of an A.A. group in the United States Public Health Service Hospital, which is in Lexington, Kentucky.

Doc M., Shelby, North Carolina

SCIENTIST DISCUSSES 2 POINTS RAISED BY WYLIE'S ARTICLE

Point 1: The present scientific view of the connection between epilepsy and alcoholism may be stated briefly as follows:

1. There is a much greater percentage of excessive drinkers among epileptics than among the general population.
2. The use of alcohol even in moderate amounts aggravates epilepsy.
3. There are persons who have latent epilepsy. They may have inherited a constitution which is liable to epilepsy. In such persons, epilepsy may be released only by some precipitating factor. Such a precipitating factor is excessive drinking.
4. There are persons who acquire a nerve injury which predisposes them to convulsions which resemble epilepsy. In these persons, too, the excessive and sometimes even the moderate use of alcohol may activate this predisposition.
5. Since active as well as latent epileptics, and persons with nerve injuries as mentioned above, are temperamentally liable to excessive drinking, it follows that convulsions may be observed in a fair number of excessive drinkers.
6. Alcohol cannot *cause* epilepsy. But, as said before, it can either aggravate the condition or precipitate the latent condition which perhaps would not have been provoked by other means.

Point 2: Anthropologists have recognized for some years that neuroses and psychoses are not the same the world over. They vary according to cultural patterns. In many primitive societies the young man who is being initiated into men's society is expected to have visions at the time of the initiation ceremonies. In our culture, a vision at any time would be regarded as an indication that the person in question must be considered in line for the mental hospital.

The forms which alcoholism takes on, and the drives behind alcoholism, vary not only among different cultural patterns but also within a given culture, as that culture becomes modified in time. In the first half of the 19th century, alcoholism was mainly a problem of the craftsman who had been crowded out by machines. In the 16th century, on the other hand, alcoholism was much more prevalent in the higher than in the lower social classes. The drunkenness of the ancient Roman aristocracy had the function

of blacking out the boredom of an overbred people who could not find any thrill in the ordinary pleasures of life. At other times, people drank a vague, indefinable feeling of insecurity away, as for instance at the time that Nazism began to threaten the world.

But varied us the origins and forms of drunkenness may have been, they were always due to tension. Because tension may arise from many causes, and because it may sometimes arise only in a part of the population, alcoholism too must appear in many forms. Whatever may be said about the variation of alcoholism in the course of human history, the fact remains that, at any time, any form and motivation may be found in the individual case. The historical trend means only that the majority behaves in a given way, but it does not mean that each and every individual of society behaves in that way. At any time there is much individual variation. There is nothing in this problem which would permit of simplifications.

E. M. Jellinek

Director: Section on Alcohol Studies, Yale University

BILL'S COMMENTS . . .

(Continued from page 1)

the very day he says so!

It is tradition among us that the individual has the unlimited right to his own opinion on any subject under the sun. He is compelled to agree with no one; if he likes, he can disagree with everyone. And indeed, when on a "dry bender," many A.A.s do. Therefore, no A.A. should be disturbed if he cannot fully agree with all of Mr. Wylie's truly stimulating discourse. Rather shall we reflect that the roads to recovery are many; that any story or theory of recovery from one who has trod the highway is bound to contain much truth. Mr. Wylie's article is like an abundance of fresh fruit. Perhaps we should take the advice of the housewife who says, "We shall eat all we *can*, and then *can* what we can't."

What caught my attention most was his reference to the spiritual experience, "a la Jung," seemingly induced "by scientific psychological technique." What a boon that would be to us who wrestle every day with the agnostic newcomer. If only we could give him a straight dose of that "transcendant symbol" and have it over with! We wouldn't have to bother with that tedious business of waiting while our prospect batters himself into sufficient open-mindedness to accept the possibility of a "Power greater than himself."

But, as Mr. Wylie broadmindedly observes, it doesn't matter too much how the transforming spiritual experience is brought about so

long as one gets one that works for him. Somehow the alcoholic must get enough objectivity about himself to abate his fears and collapse his false pride. If he can do all this through his intellect, and thereafter support his life structure upon a "transcendant symbol," more power to him! Most A.A.s, however, would think this design for living pretty inadequate. They would consider downright humility and faith in the power of the Living God a much stronger medicine. A.A. draws frankly upon emotion and faith while the scientific intellectual would avoid these resources as much as he can. Yet the more intellectual techniques do work sometimes, reaching those who might never be able to take the stronger dose. Besides, they remind us, when over proud of our own accomplishment, that A.A. has no monopoly on reviving alcoholics.

In fact, it is already evident that the scientific world is becoming more appreciative of our methods than we are of theirs. In this respect they are commencing to teach *us* humility.

Listen again, as our friend Dr. Harry Tiebout, psychiatrist, closes his paper, "Basic Techniques of Alcoholics Anonymous," before the American Psychiatric Association: "The lesson for psychiatrists is clear, it seems to me. Although we admittedly deal with emotional problems, we, as a group which tends to be intellectual, distrust emotions too much. We are self-conscious and a little ashamed, when we are forced to use them, and always apologetic with our confreres if we suspect they have reason to think our methods are too emotional. In the meantime, others, less bound by tradition, go ahead to get results denied to us. It is highly imperative for us as presumably open-minded scientists to view wisely and long the efforts of others in our field of work. We may be wearing bigger blinders than we know." And again, as he says, "A religious, or spiritual experience, is the *act of giving up reliance on one's own omnipotence.*"

As we A.A.s are people who are *supposed* to have given up *all* our own "omnipotence," I'm sure that Mr. Wylie will be read with the attentive interest he deserves!

Bill

Important Reminder

Copies of *The Grapevine* are sent free to all A.A. Servicemen and women. If you know of any member of the Armed Forces who is not on the mailing list, please send his or her name to P.O. Box 328, Grand Central Annex, N. Y. 17, N. Y. Our thanks to the Groups making this part of their official business.

CENTRAL OFFICE NOTES: The Honolulu Story

Continued from the August Issue

*P.O. Box 459, Honolulu
Feb. 24, 1944*

Dear Central Office:

Thought it about time to send in another communication from the Pacific area. . . . **We** have been working long hours and A.A. has now come out of its swaddling clothes—it takes up quite a bit of the time of quite a few people over here. Not that we're not extremely happy to spend our time that way . . . all of us are still **gaga** with wonder and joy at finding ourselves sober, and discovering how capable and talented and happy we are that way.

You can have no idea how much your letters mean to all of us. So far we have had a letter each meeting and they have certainly added a lot. The letter telling of the experiences of other groups with clubhouses, etc., was deeply appreciated. **BUT**—even before it arrived we had given up the idea of a house in which to try bringing **people** off benders. Rest assured, however, that no one ceased being active just because one idea failed.

Yes, A.A. is growing up fast here. In the three meetings since **I** last wrote, we had, respectively, 9, **11**, and **13** present. **We** have now organized as a club, and elected officers: a secretary, two co-treasurers, and a chairman. Our chairman, Eddie, is a wonderful addition to our group. He is the most famous alcoholic in Hawaii. **We** used to discuss whether or not we should approach him on A.A. He was once very prominent in Hono-

lulu—then he drank himself out of everything: family, friends, position, savings, and even a place to stay. For seven years he was practically never sober, except in jail or the Territorial Mental Hospital. He made one trip after another to the asylum, jail and the psycho ward—between times he drank extracts, wine tonics, bay rum, rubbing alcohol and everything else he could lay his hands on. One night he was drunk as usual but still fairly lucid, and he ran into Pete and me. He remarked that he hadn't seen us drinking for some **time**, and said how well we both looked. **We** told him we had quit, and had not taken a drink for a couple of months. He said, "Well, I wish you'd tell me how you do it." **We** had the perfect opening. **We** gave it to him with both barrels. **We** both thought he'd probably forget it, but the next day he was back for more information. He kept seeing us, but was unable to stop drinking for a week or two more. Finally he began to try to get admitted to the hospital, and with the help of our philanthropist friend we were able to get him in. Eddie is a very intelligent guy, and as soon as he was thoroughly sober we all felt that he had gotten the idea and was a cinch to **be** a successful A.A.

Then T and N, the alcoholic couple I wrote you about, fixed up some quarters on their place for him to stay in when he came out of the hospital. Within a few days he went to work at his old profession. All Honolulu is goggle-eyed with interest and amazement.

Yesterday he and Dick (our journalist member) were walking around together and were stopped by a prominent business man who is also an alcoholic. He said, "Why don't you boys let me in on your secret?" They asked what secret, and he went on, "Something has **happened** to you two **men**, and all Honolulu is wondering what it is. The Police Department is so shocked they're all speechless. Everyone is talking about how changed you both are, and I want to know what happened." They made an appointment to see him today, so I guess we'll be able to chalk up another victory for **A.A.** soon.

Eddie and T and N have enjoyed working together on other alcoholics so much that Eddie has rented the cabin he was staying in so they can all work together permanently. And are they a team! They are not only responsible for a large part of the recent growth of A.A., but have been a great help in strengthening and improving the rest of us. They have a large place with spacious grounds, and almost any evening you can find **some** happy released alcoholics having a "bull session" under the coconut palms out there. **D** has christened their place "Alcoholic Acres."

You remember **I** wrote that N and T came in through their doctor. His name is Dr. Nils Larsen, and he is a real friend of A.A. He recently returned from the mainland where he studied A.A. in New York and Boston. He himself was working in the hospital in Bos-

(Continued on page 8)

Do You Know: ABOUT A. A. TELEPHONE TECHNIQUE

It was in Washington in the Spring that the telephone technique of A.A. saved me from a tumble. I had just accepted an invitation to dinner from an old bingeing companion who had laughed gaily when I told him not to order extra liquor as I was "not drinking." He had heard that before—and when **I** had finished talking to him I felt that "liquor flash" and I knew **I** was going to drink that **night**—unless something new had been added by my five months in A.A. For never in my 13 A.A. days had I been able to shake off the **obsession** when the flash had taken shape as a picture. **I** paced the floor, but the picture built up—just a few this Friday **night**, slightly

mellow at the races tomorrow, none or just a few beers Sunday so as to be **in** shape for work Monday. Perfectly logical, said Screw-tape. I tried to pray but no go as **I** was too jittery—and then I thought of the name of the New York A.A., now living in Washington, which my sponsor had had me put down in my A.A. telephone book. **I** called him, explained my predicament and after a two-minute conversation **I** told him he did not need to come around **as** my alcoholic picture had vanished. **I** stayed sober because **I** talked on the telephone with a man I had never seen but who, **I** knew, would understand my problem and offer help. Small wonder then that

in the more than two years that have passed since my Washington experience (miracle, if you like) I have always considered the telephone as one of the best "gadgets" in the A.A. kit of practical aids. And thank God **I** reached for it before (and not after) the drink. So to new members: Get yourself a "little black book" and in it put the names and telephone numbers of those A.A.s you meet; and carry it with you; and at the first sign of a liquor flash (or even before if you are feeling low) get on the phone and talk to a fellow A.A. But do it before, not after, the drink. That matter of timing is the crux of the whole technique. *J.A.D.*

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

We received a letter from Bill X., who has been in Northern Ireland, which starts innocently enough with a pat *on* the hack for the Editors and winds up with the germ of a great idea for a new column for the paper:

"Congratulations to the staff. Two copies have come along now and *Grapevine* has proved a 24th Street extension course for me (24th Street refers to the New York clubhouse). It will be particularly helpful for isolated individuals sweating out the prologues to pub-crawling without the Group; and for new Johnny-come-latelys out in Jeep town, Arizona, with the book only. *Grapevine is a meeting by mail.*

That new group in Honolulu will be aided no little by the publication of their tribulations in getting started because we are all rooting them in from all over the world. The house organ idea, with the chit-chat, lore and some party line thinking, establishes a newer sense of unity which projects the group therapy phase a step further. It's terrific.

Why not have a little 'Alibi Alley' or 'rationalization of the month' column, printing the phoniest excuses submitted. For example, 'Well it was like this, see, it was the night of the invasion, and here I am sitting back hundreds of miles from the action, squarely behind a typewriter, a chair-borne paragraph trooper. So, getting such lousy breaks, and being such an eventful day, how could a little drink or possibly two hurt anybody, and even if it did hurt a bit, how could it compare to the thousands of casualties on the beachhead, and how could such an insignificant taking of a drink or possibly two be noticed during such a catastrophic, world-shaking event. And, oh yes! I have just been promoted to sergeant, and that in itself calls for a little good-humored drink of celebration or possibly two, in itself.'

That's right, you only get promoted to sergeant once. After showing up at noon the next day when I was on duty, and with the shakes no less, I damn near got busted. Since that time I have taken some active steps including coming clean on the whole deal to my boss. And I have a date with one of the highest churchmen over here to pass the story on, etc. *Grapevine* (the first issue) had come a few days after the 'slip' and it was a real antidote to the fogs and fears. I simply sat down and had a meeting with the whole outfit. So you can understand my enthusiasm for *Grapevine*."

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Permission, accompanied by the encouraging comment, "More strength and success to you," was obtained to print this interesting official communication: "The Army War College Library would appreciate greatly being placed on your mailing list to receive future copies, and also to receive a copy of each back number. This is a subject which has a bearing upon the efficiency of military personnel." To the Librarian, our best *Grapevine* bow.

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LIEUTENANT RE-DISCOVERS BEAUTIES OF 'EASY DOES IT'

One of the strongest motives behind the starting of *The Grapevine*.—in fact the main thing that pushed the Editors from the talking to the acting stage—was the need so often expressed in letters from A.A.s in the Service for more A.A. news. We felt that their deep desire for a feeling of contact with A.A. might be fulfilled at least in part by such a publication—by us and for us. And, as the first issue emerged from the presses, a letter came to one of the Editors from a woman A.A., a Second Lieutenant stationed in an out-of-the-way place. It was a cry for help:

"... if things keep up the way they have been going I'm going to be in more trouble than I can handle. . . . I've been recommended for promotion, *but* . . . My work is more than satisfying, but off duty I'm a total loss. There isn't a single soul here that speaks the same language. . . . The Army is a funny place. One is expected to drink, but not to get noisy or pass out or do any of the things drunks do. . . . I've met a few A.A.s but we've only been in the same place for a short time. Several of them were in the same boat as I, skating on thin ice, but I don't know the outcome. Frankly, I'm scared. Has this problem been discussed at meetings? If so, has anyone offered any constructive suggestions?"

M.L.

A copy of *The Grapevine* went off by return mail. And now comes this:

Dear Editors: The second copy of *The Grapevine* just arrived. Does that mean I'm to get it every month? It's proving no end of a help to me. Thanks so much for getting it started, anyhow. . . . I guess there isn't much one can do about the sort of spot that I'm in. There isn't anything wrong but loneliness and boredom, and there's no way out of that, for now.... Right after the first copy of the paper arrived I decided to try to take it a little easier (I'd forgotten all about 'Easy Does It'). . . . I was working so very hard that the hectic on-duty and the static off-duty hours didn't mix. For some reason it doesn't seem as bad to be bored now.

M.L.

P.S. I got that promotion I wrote you about.

The Pleasures of Reading

Mystery stories may be an alcoholic form of escape, but at least, they're a pretty harmless form, and the blood flows between book jackets instead of straightjackets. So, you crime-hungry A.A.s, here's a nice, criminal check list of recent blood-and-thunders that may whet your post-alcoholic appetites!

No Little Enemy, O. W. Bayer (DD*): A brilliant political cartoonist goes on a war bond tour with some nifty chorines; the combo knocks a lot of people dead. Well-written, lively, fast-paced.

Button, Button, Marion Bramhall (CC*): The hobby boys go button hunting with a vengeance. Unusual setting, nice writing, fair mystery.

Towards Zero, Agatha Christie (DM*): Typical Christie with an interesting crime theory worked out. Good stuff.

Dead Ernest, Alice Tilton (Norton): A Leonidas Wetheral mystery, well up to par; by author of Asey Mayo whodunits.

Rim of the Pit, Hake Talbot (S&S*): Spooky, bloody Hollywood thriller about resurrection of corpses. Good for a nightmare.

Man with the Lump Nose, Laurence Lariar (DM*): Unusually good mystery spotlighting a comic strip creator-detective.

A Fish for Murder, Edward Lee (CC): Fast action, kinda tough.

Six Silver Handles, Geoffrey Homes (Morrow): The best, to date, of this author's all-good yarns. California setting; lotsa action, good detecting.

Mr. Angel Comes Aboard, Charles G. Booth (CC): Bloody doings on the high seas and in Cuba. A good one-night stand.

The Groom Lay Dead, George Harmon Coxe (Knopf): Another swell Coxe mystery, involving a returned Marine in the Finger Lake country. Not a sleeping tablet. (Incidentally, a future *Grapevine* issue will discuss the bad effects of sleeping tablets on many alcoholics.)

*(DD), Doubleday, Doran; (CC), Crime Club; (DM), Dodd, Mead; (S&S), Simon and Schuster.

Charlie P.

Rudy, Pee Wee, Paula, Peggy & Johnny

In last month's issue the story was told of Rudy, the greatest French horn player in the country, his friend Pee Wee, one of the finest hot trumpet players, and Paula, who is Russian, not Polish as we mistakenly reported last month. Let's see what happened to Peggy and Johnny, the remaining two of our "Five Musicians Looking for the Perfect Pitch":

Peggy says that if she plays the piano, after more than one drink, her hands become numb. But this fear of liquor didn't keep Peggy from it. With a long list of shows and night club singing to her credit, she still kept slip-

ping. She says, "I was with Herbert Marshall in 'Blossom Time.' One night I was winning the war single-handed, and showed up with a shiner. I covered it with grease paint. It didn't show, but I showed. My eye closed like a morning glory. They didn't fire me, but—" Peggy says she had Rudy's trouble. People didn't pick up her contract. She got cased out of a good night club job in Boston, for giving the show upstairs, in the bar, instead of downstairs, with the floor show. Impromptu shows were Peggy's specialty. One night she gave one at Sardi's, free. A friend said, "Dear, while you live, Duse will never be dead." This

(Continued on page 8)

TIME ON YOUR HANDS?

In discussing hobbies with some cronies recently, it transpired that those who, in one opinion, are the steadiest and most integrated members confessed that they had no time or desire for any hobby other than A.A. We are all aware that A.A. is a way of life or a design for living, but considering it from the viewpoint of being a hobby has presented food for thought. The idea certainly lifts the 12th step out of the duty or obligation category and imbues it with a much-to-be-desired light touch. It enables us to pursue it, not as an unpleasant dose of medicine which is part of our cure, but as one of life's soul-satisfying pleasures. Newcomers, members of new groups, scattered lone members and others may well ask here, "That's fine, but how, when and where?" For those of you who belong to an established group, go to your secretary and tell him (or her) that you want to do some work. You will probably be sent out with an older member at first; but after you know the ropes you will find that you are surrounded with opportunities to work. New members, old members, travelling members and lone members can all go to their ministers, priests, doctors, psychiatrists and tell them about A.A. and what it has done! for them. In almost every instance, the physicians and men of the cloth are grateful to hear of our work and will usually pave the way for our first call. If business takes us on the road, we can always make an appointment with the hold doctor and talk A.A. to him. The hotel doctor often has a "case" in the hotel, right then—maybe it's your next door neighbor!

In the June issue the study of braille was discussed a little, however it appears that this important branch of war work could be stressed again. We wonder if any of our members with time on their hands have ever considered the possibility of transcribing the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, from the printed word to a series of bumps which would bring light to the otherwise darkened vision of a returning soldier. One who, seeking escape from his affliction, has turned to the bottle. There will be many such. Wouldn't it be just possible to have sufficient A.A.s trained in the art of braille to be able to teach returning sightless "suspects" how to read our book and others? What an opportunity to bring happiness and joy to fellow sufferers who have far more bitter problems than ours to face. Two of the headquarters where you may learn braille are: THE AMERICAN RED CROSS, 315 Lexington Avenue, or THE LIGHTHOUSE, 111 East 59th Street, N.Y.C. Look up your cities'.

ALONG THE METROPOLITAN CIRCUIT

BERGEN COUNTY RATES NEWSPAPER EDITORIAL . . . The County's leading newspaper, *Bergen Evening Record*, is emphasizing editorially the important work being done by the Bergen Group. Donald Borg, the editor, is an ardent supporter of Alcoholics Anonymous. "To assist discharged veterans," says Mr. Borg, "is a task of major importance." We agree with Mr. Borg that the post-war alcoholic situation will probably be one of serious proportions. Therefore, it was resolved at the 3rd Anniversary meeting that each Bergen County member would expand his individual efforts towards enlarging the membership.

THE BRONX CORRALLED BY JOE H. . . . At long last a dire need has been fulfilled. An A.A. group has been formed in the Bronx. Meetings will be held every Wednesday at 8:30 p.m., at 518 Willis Avenue, corner of 148th Street. Joe H., through his untiring efforts, founded the new group. Known as the Boro of Universities, with a population of 1,500,000, the Bronx is a city in itself. It opens new fields for the Cause. 65 men and women came to the first meeting August 9th, among whom were many well-wishers from neighboring groups. Joe H. presided. He was supported by speakers Bob W. of Brooklyn; Mary C. of Forest Hills; Ed T., formerly of the Manhattan Group, now of the Bronx Group; Earl S., the Creedmore potentate; and a surprise speaker, the very popular Stewart (Stony) S. of Jersey.

BROOKLYN REVIVES OLD CUSTOM . . . At our closed meetings we have revived an old A.A. custom: discussing only one step at each meeting. The members know in advance which step will be under discussion. The result is a highly informative and interesting evening. We now have in our group about 50 members who have been sober for more than a year. . . . We are happy to report that Tommy M., one of our oldest members, has recovered from a recent operation and is back in circulation again. . . . Our P. O. is #91, Brooklyn, N. Y.

EAST ORANGE HITS THE NEWS . . . *The East Orange Record* gave some decidedly favorable publicity to Alcoholics Anonymous in their August 3rd issue. At the following Sunday night meeting, 3 prospects appeared for the first time. Bob C. will be host to the entire membership at Lake Hopatcong over a forthcoming week-end. Doc M. has been asked by the Kiwanis to talk to their membership on A.A. J. Hudson C., Jr., chairman of our group, in addition to his activities at the "Brook," believes his efforts will produce a team of bowlers to join the league now in the making.

FLUSHING SNIFFS OLD CROW . . . The climax of the hilarious Group anniversary party at Mike D.'s July 22nd, was the minute inspection—and one sniff—of a

bottle of Old Crow, part of the family medicine cabinet. Two of our members, Jimmy S. and Emmet F., who were ill, are all recovered now.

FOREST HILLS GOES TO PHILADELPHIA . . . A number of us went to Philadelphia August 11th, dined there, conducted a meeting in the charming clubhouse of that group, and returned home on the 11:30 p.m. train. Altogether a delightful evening. Our representatives were Mary C., Henry Z., Earl S., Mel C., Dave R., and Jim Y. Soon the Philadelphia A.A.s will complete the exchange and come to us for an evening.

MANHATTAN REPORTER PIONEERS FROM THE SEASHORE . . . A few weeks ago, no one in this isolated Long Island village had ever heard of A.A. The villagers had always looked on drinking as *sinful*. One day a native discreetly spoke of a former vacationer. Seems the man had been losing job after job. After much prodding, we learned that the man . . . drank. Shocking. "Please don't ever mention it to a soul," said the woman. The man and his wife live in New York. Soon they'll know about A.A. Another acquaintance had left her husband, or vice versa. This year their summer home was vacant. The wife was in a sanatorium because "she had been drinking too much." That woman has now received A.A. literature. Thinking a little pioneer work wouldn't be amiss, we invited to tea a dozen men and women, some natives, some summer residents. Some of the natives looked at us wonderingly after that tea. But not the summer residents. On the beach we were besieged with questions about A.A. No longer is this isolated village ignorant on the subject of alcoholism.

MT. VERNON INTERGROUP CIRCUITING . . . The closed meetings we are now holding every Thursday will, we hope, prove helpful. In the Yonkers, Bronxville and Mt. Vernon sections 3 closed meetings are held each week. Next month we're going to have a picnic for our members and their families. The soft-ball men are out every night for practice. A new series of Inter-Group meetings was inaugurated at Mt. Vernon in August. We were host to New Rochelle, White Plains and Greenwich.

NASSAU-SUFFOLK SENDS THANKS . . . As a group We extend to J. M. and T. K. our sincere thanks and congratulations for the excellent talk on A.A. given at the Garden City Rotary Club, August 7th, 1944.

NEW ROCHELLE THINKS OF THE RETURNING SOLDIER . . . In September we plan to include in our program one closed meeting a week. Ways of aiding men and women returning from our armed services will be discussed. The accent will be, of course, on the alcoholics among them. In the meantime, each member

is to acquaint at least one potential prospect with the benefits of A.A. . . . Aside from the exchange meetings with the other 3 southern Westchester County groups (Greenwich, Mt. Vernon, White Plains), we are looking forward to interchange meetings with the Brooklyn Group in September . . . Bowling teams will soon be exchanging matches . . . Sept. 10th we'll be joint-picnicking with Mt. Vernon and White Plains. . . . Our meeting night is Sunday, 7:30, at the Y.M.C.A. Building, 185 Division Street, New Rochelle—a short walk from the New Haven R. R. station.

NORTH JERSEY MEASURES FOB V-DAYING DRUNKS . . . On V-Day all members of the North Jersey Groups will rush to the Community House in South Orange for a dry but hilarious celebration. The entire building has been engaged for that date. There'll be coffee and cokes and food galore. A practical, preventive measure. Everybody welcome. As a result of persistent plugging by A.A.s, the Newark City Hospital alcoholic wards, male and female, are now open to the organization. Meetings are conducted there 4 evenings a week: Mondays, Montclair Group; Tuesdays, Newark; Wednesdays, East Orange; Thursdays, Irvington. The State Hospital at Greystone Park permits patients to attend A.A. meetings under escort at Morristown. At Essex County's Overbrook Hospital, A.A. meetings are held every Monday night. Dr. Reynolds of the Bonnie Burns Sanatorium in Scotch Plains, N. J., has been approached with the idea of opening an A.A. group in the sanatorium. The South Orange and North Jersey Groups are planning another Retreat at Loyola House in Morristown, October 6th. ELIZABETH and PLAINFIELD will be exchanging meetings in the near future.

WHITE PLAINS GOES IN FOR HIGHER LEARNING . . . We fought shy of closed meetings for 3 years. Just in the nick of time to avoid being shamed into action by *The Grapevine's* article on the subject, and because our first off-spring, the Mt. Vernon Group, had started to hold closed meetings every Thursday night in 3 different localities, we instigated this time-honored custom as a monthly experiment. The first meeting brought out a gratifying number. A vastly interesting discussion was the result of Wilbur S.'s reading lesson No. 1 of a Course of Instruction compiled and used by the Hartford Group from findings of the Yale Clinics, A.A., and other acknowledged authorities on alcoholism. Our regular open meeting is held every Wednesday at the Westchester Republican Headquarters (party affiliation unnecessary), corner of Marline and Mamaroneck Avenues, at 8:30 p.m.

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

A. A. IN AUSTRALIA

In the A.A. pamphlet, a letter is reprinted from the Central Office to a doctor in Australia. He wrote it over a year ago asking for information, saying that his dearest wish for years had been to help alcoholics, but that he had not been able to do very much. Even with the ensuing correspondence and our literature, progress was slow. Apparently the personal touch of an alcoholic who had recovered through A.A. was necessary.

So when one of our members who is in the Navy, Jack J., found that his ship put in fairly frequently at the port city where the interested doctor lives, the Central Office asked him to look the doctor up. It proved to be the needed spark. Several of the doctor's patients were contacted by Jack, interest spurted up, and a regular A.A. meeting was arranged to take place on his next call. We are eagerly watching the mail to hear more about our first Australian Group, and we'll pass it on to you as soon as it comes along.

RUDY, PEE WEE ET AL '

(Continued from page 6)

didn't get Peggy jobs. For two years she floundered, sometimes out of work, sometimes doing anything she could. She got a job in a department store. Anything, to eat and drink. The manager of the hotel where Peggy was staying watched her making a beaten trail between her bedroom and the bar. One night she got impatient and temperamental and ran the elevator herself. "The manager decided it was time to speak to me about A.A.," she says. "He was in it himself. I stayed sober and came to meetings for awhile. Then I decided I could do it myself on beer. I did it on beer, then on Scotch, and the Scotch did me." Peggy, back in A.A., again, is determined to

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stay sober. She's just gotten a good government job. She may go back in show business one day. But she's engaged, full time, for the present, in this business of staying sober, and getting straightened out.

Johnnie is the best swing drummer in the country. He missed a chance to have his own orchestra. After Kate Smith's manager had put ten thousand dollars in the band, he got drunk, choosing the perfect time for it—when he was to appear on the air, in a publicity interview. Pee Wee, one of the finest hot trumpet players, who has played with such bands as Isham Jones; Ray Noble, Tommy Dorsey, and Benny Goodman also missed out on his band. This time the fall guy was Pee Wee's psychoanalyst, who thought he had Pee Wee cured and straightened out.

All three of the boys are making good money on radio now. All are sober, working steadily, trying to make their achievements come up level with their abilities.

This goes for Paula and Peggy, too. One need hardly wish any of them good luck, for with the help of A.A. they have all straightened out their snarled personality and career problems. They talk to one another, help each other and hope to find more artists and musicians who need help. This way they'll be sure to achieve the perfect pitch.

THE HONOLULU STORY...

(Continued from page 4)

ton, but he sent his wife and daughter to meetings and read everything he could get, and he became sold on our therapy. He certainly has a wonderful way with alcoholic patients if N and T are any sample. I've never seen the program "take" more thoroughly and quickly than it did on those two. Last night we held our meeting at Dr. Larsen's place out by famous Diamond Head on the other side of Waikiki Beach. It was a swell meeting, and he gave us a talk on "What and Why Is an Alcoholic" that sure made good sense. He laid forever the idea that if we had gone a week or a month or a year without drinking, we had built up strength enough to "be able to drink like a gentleman this time." All the members actually love the man—he devotes so much time to us that I don't see how he has time for his practice. He has offered his beautiful place, with a private bench and bath houses, as another "Alcoholic Acres" for us to use for recreation any time we want.

There are lots of alkie in Honolulu who seem to have been seeking something like this for some time and as the word passes

from one alkie to another we are swamped with requests for information and help. Strangely, we have yet to meet any dead-beats who try to get material help but have no desire to stop drinking. Of course all are not able to stop immediately, and maybe some of them will never be able to do so, but as yet we have not had an occasion to write a single case off. I honestly believe that every alcoholic who has come in has been helped—and I'm *certain* we have been helped by them. You mentioned there might be people who would ridicule the members for quitting drinking. There were, and in one case particularly I was criticized for mentioning A.A. to one alcoholic who subsequently took great delight in trying to get members to drink again and in ridiculing them for joining "such a screwy set-up." There was an interesting sequel, however. A few days ago I had a call from a stranger, from the lobby. I went down and he told me of his troubles, and that he'd heard that some of us whom he knew had been able to quit drinking through an organization called Alcoholics Anonymous. He didn't need help other than information and said he wanted to join us. I asked him where he'd heard of us, and he said M (the one who'd been ridiculing) had told him what little he knew about it, and had said that "apparently it was working, even if it did sound "screwy."

The fast-growing group of Honolulu A.A.s again says,

Aloha, E. G.

MEMO TO GRAPEVINE READERS

Next month's issue is pivoted around the Yale-sponsored National Committee for Education on Alcoholism. This Committee has great significance for us, as A.A.s, on two counts. First, because it is an extremely important, highly organized effort to get the American public to understand alcoholism as a disease. And second, because Marty M., the first woman to get well through A.A., is its Executive Director. *The Grapevine* will interview Marty at length, asking her all about the Committee's plan in detail, and learning where we, as groups and individuals, can add our strength to this great campaign of education on alcoholism.

NOTE TO GROUP SECRETARIES: The November issue will devote itself to the "Trials, Errors & Successes of the A.A. Beginner." Do try to get your writing members to send us their experiences as ewe-lambs. *Grapevine* readers want to hear from all parts of the country: North, South, East, and West!