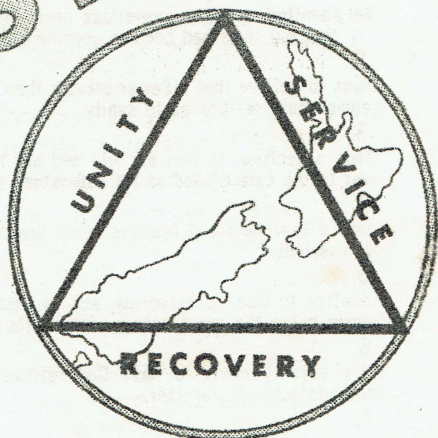


# A.A.

is our

# MAINSTAY

VOLUME 10      No. 12  
MAY              1965



AN A.A. MEETING IN PRINT  
Adopted As

THE VOICE OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS  
in New Zealand  
BY THE

New Zealand  
GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE  
of Alcoholics Anonymous

SUBSCRIPTION 10/- A YEAR FROM BOX 6458  
WELLINGTON.

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

The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for AA membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. AA is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy, neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.



## The Twelve Steps

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol . . . that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

## The Twelve Traditions

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon AA unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority . . . a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants . . . they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or AA as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose . . . to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.
6. An AA group ought never endorse, finance or lend the AA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every AA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. AA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the AA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

I want to get some gripes out of the way about things I hear at meetings which are pure baloney, whether this bleeding deacon or somebody else spouts them.

1. "There are no musts in A.A." Who sez? Obviously someone who hasn't learned that we **MUST** not take the first drink if we want to stay sober. Or someone who has looked only superficially at the programme of recovery described in the Big Book. Glance at pages 14, 44, 73, 74, 79 and 85. You'll find at least eight "musts". And what about the self-imposed **MUSTS** we all use? Of course the book does **NOT** say you **MUST** recover!

2. "This is a selfish programme". When I acted that way, I got drunk. It is, to be sure, a self-survival programme, but the way to self-survival, we are clearly shown in AA, is by being unselfish.

3. "This is a cafeteria-style programme". When I was a child and got loose in a cafeteria I usually carefully picked out five or six sweets and got awfully sick.

4. "We are not concerned with the cause of our illness, only with recovery". On page 82 of "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions" you'll find, beginning on line 16, a flat statement about the cause of alcoholism. Most of the Twelve steps work at removing causes.

5. "I've never read the Big Book... or I only take steps 1 and 12... and yet I stay sober". Accent is usually heard on the "I". Did you ever hear an illiterate ignoramus brag that he's so much smarter than other folks he didn't need to go to school to be a success? When I boasted that I could stay sober easier than others because I was smarter than many, I got drunk. Even if you don't isn't that a tasteless example of un-humility? (Over).



6. "I don't care anything about AA's organization--I just know that I am sober". Did any real drunk ever make it a practice to throw away two-thirds, or even one-third of every drink or bottle? Why settle for less than the fullest, deepest benefits of sobriety, including those in AA's Second and Third Legacies, not just the First? When I stopped at One, mine was a dry and joyless aridity. Richness of recovery comes with the full AA draught examples keep showing me. Why be a foam sipper only?

7. "He wasn't ready for it yet" is one of the excuses I give my guilty self when I haven't worked very hard at a sponsoring responsibility.

8. "Nobody but an alcoholic can understand another alcoholic." Non-alcoholics who have understood us very well-and still loved us- include one Dr. Silkworth, a certain Rev. Shoemaker, a Father Dowling, a Sister Ignatia, a Mr. Jack Alexander, a Dr. Jung, a Dr. Tiebut, a Lois W, and an Anne S. (In N.Z. Prof. Caughey-Dr. Coonley-Dr. Satyanand-Dr. Mirams-Dr. Fraser McDonald-Mr. Wall-Dr. T. Maling and others).

9. Any sentence that begins "All alcoholics are..." or "like a typical alcoholic".

10. "Some of us are sicker than others". Maybe so but who in AA is qualified to make such professional diagnoses? When I ~~w~~ say this I'm just throwing up my hands on a tough case, or politely saying I don't like somebody's behaviour or ideas. Get that--I don't like !!!

Anonymous in the "Grapevine".

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An AA attended a party. His hostess said "George I'm not offering you a cocktail-you're president of the Temperance Committee". "No" said the AA, "I'm chairman of the Vice Committee". "Oh" said the hostess, "I knew there was something I shouldn't offer you".. Chit-hat.

## A NEW APPRECIATION

One morning about five years ago my phone rang and one of our good medi-friends said "I'm sending you a new member for your group". Ten minutes later I was shaking hands with Tony- a likeable young man in his thirties. Tony went for the programme "boots and all" and, although he lived 18 miles out of town he never missed a meeting for 2 years. Then disaster struck for Tony, his wife and young children. The diagnosis was brain tumour. How we prayed that it be not malignant. Alas-it was. Brain surgery in Dunedin was followed by cobalt treatment in Palmerston North. Thus began for Tony his "Apostolate of Suffering" which was to last for two years. But his faith in A.A. never wavered, and he applied its principles to his fatal illness. Twelve months ago in peace of mind and heart, and soul Tony was gathered to his Father in Heaven.

Last week, while his widow was packing to move back to their home on the shores of the lake, she came across an article written by Tony and obviously, I think, intended for "Mainstay". Here it is ;

My name is Tony and, thank God, I am an alcoholic. This may sound screwy, but, if I had been an ordinary sort of drinker, as for a short time I was, I would have missed so much. My friend up above invented an extraordinary thing called A.A.: and luckily for me, made me an alcoholic. Thus, I was eligible for membership. He gave me the grace to enter this wonderful group of men and women and so open a new way of life, a new appreciation of all that is good and so wonderfully beautiful.

I have a home on the edge of a beautiful lake (my Cobber up above helped me



salvage it out of the wreck and enabled me to hand on to it.) Many were the evenings I would sit on the front porch and blearily watch the sun dropping behind the hills across the water. "Gee, it's a great life", thought I, with glass in hand.

Just recently I went back-sober. It was dull and cold with a bleak northerly blowing straight across the lake bringing with it and odd dirty shower. Do you know it was beautiful--more so than I had ever thought. The only sounds were of wind and rain and the lapping of water on sand. As night closed in the lights twinkled on across the lake and looked warm and happy.

I wonder why I had not noticed this beauty before. Only the fine nights were pretty last year--now every night has something beautiful about it.

I have been on a farm for some time and as the grass grew-the cattle fattened-and the wool grew longer on the sheeps backs, I could watch them and mentally turn those pounds of beef and wool into pounds and pence and thence to how many bottles of my favourite brand. "Mm, it's a good life this farming".

Now the paddocks and rolling hills look cared for when the grass grows, the sleek cattle contented and the sheep are happy to grow the wool that will help clothe the world. The beef and mutton will be bringing in the wherewithal to improve the farm and so produce more to feed many of God's little ones. That is why God wants those cattle fat-to feed His hungry flock-not to buy me bottles of Scotch.

The sun and rain, the cold and warm, are all part of the plan and it makes life so much easier to accept them as such and appreciate the benefits that come to us so easily.

There was a time when I was far too busy to help anybody. "Oh, the pressure of work, you know." (Actually- the interferring

with my drinking! ).

Now, in AA, I have so much time. It is good to be able to help the school committee put down a new tennis court - and satisfying to drive past and think- "I did a bit of that". It is nice to have the hedges trimmed and the house painted. "The place looks well-dont you think ?". These little pleasures and a thousand more of the good, decent and beautiful things in life I would have missed but for the grace of A.A. and I humbly ask God to preserve within me the strength to continue to appreciate these many new and beautiful things by not taking that fateful first glass. Tony H.

These were the beautiful thoughts of a serene and peaceful mind. Tony had found his answer in the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous.

AVE ATQUE VALE my friend.  
"Scriblex"

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WHAT CAN THE FAMILY DO ?

THE FAMILY CAN....

...recognize and accept the determination of competent diagnosticians that the individual is an alcoholic, and thereafter abandon attempts at "home" treatment.

...understand that alcoholism requires long and painstaking motivation, treatment and rehabilitation.

...avoid "cushioning" or trying to ward off the consequences of drinking episodes, even when it is humiliating to the patient and embarrassing to the family.

...examine their own motives and their possible hostility to the patient's gratification of psychological and physical dependence on alcohol. Boston Committee.



## THE GATES TO PERMANENT SOBRIETY.

Here are some excerpts from the very informative talk given to the Public Meeting at Lincoln College by Dr.T.Maling.

"The main problem in treatment is not to get a person to stop drinking-it is to get him to STAY STOPPED. Now obviously the first thing of all he has got to do is to stop drinking because,until he does he doesn't get himself into a condition where he can think clearly and face the facts that he has got to face."

After describing the physical state of the alcoholic on admission to hospital and the drying out procedures he continues ; "The road to contented sobriety has several gates along the way through which every prospective traveller must pass. There is no way round. The first gate through which he must be shepherded is the Gate of Learning ; learning what are the marks of an alcoholic by reading and talking with other alcoholics. Once through this gate the patient should be in a position to make up his own mind whether or not he is an alcoholic. It is essential that he does. A decision leads to the second gate ; The Gate of Admission.Immediately he says "Yes-I am an alcoholic" with full understanding of that term he is at "The Gate of Acceptance": acceptance of what it means to be an alcoholic.The alcoholic must know that he suffers from an incurable disease.He must know that when he has lost control of his drinking he has lost it for his lifetime. He now has two choices ; one is to continue drinking with its inevitable progression and the other is to stop drinking. He must surrender unconditionally to alcohol and recognise that alcohol is his master. This is the Gate of Surrender.Only when he has passed this

one is he really ready to say in all honesty that he wants to stop drinking ;and wants to stop NOW. Unfortunately some alcoholics think that once they have made this decision this is all they have to do. The truth is that self knowledge is not enough. When an alcoholic stops drinking he is highly vulnerable. The fact that many soon lose their craving for drink is no indication of progress.....unless he does something constructive,that is to say,tries to prevent states of fear,anger resentment,intolerance,jealousy,boredom and loneliness recurring he is in danger of returning to the only source of relief that he knows-the bottle. So what the alcoholic has to do is to learn how to live without alcohol. He has to find contentment. If he is not contented he will not stay sober. Some make the mistake of transferring their allegiance to the pill bottle. In general I think that it is true to say that for the person who is addicted to alcohol the pill bottle presents as big a hazard as the gin bottle.....He needs help in the rebuilding of his life. A.A. offers a blue print for this rebuilding ; a blue print that has already helped thousands of alcoholics to find a contented sobriety.A.A. offers him the blocks with which to rebuild-but A.A. does NOT provide the builder. The rebuilding must be done by the alcoholic himself."

The talk will be available in leaflet form shortly and on a tape from the Tape Library C/o Box 96 Wanganui.

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5 June 1965 CENTRAL AREA ASSEMBLY  
PORIRUA

R.S.A. HALL McKILLOP ST. PORIRUA EAST.

Buffet from 12 NOON Assembly 2 p.m.

6 P.M. Buffet tea 7 P.M. Public Meeting



The word you see is not God ; it is only a few squiggles on a piece of paper. Now say the word "God" ; that is not God either. Just the sound of a word -- mere noise. Years ago I read about "Semantics" in "Mainstay" and curiosity led me further. It said that semantics was the real meaning of words but that does not go quite far enough. It is rather the meaning of meanings or what we mean when we use words. Do they mean to others much more or much less than they mean to us ? Or are written words merely odd marks and spoken words just noises ? I had heard that a conception of a power greater than myself must necessarily be a vague nebulous thing and I looked in our Big Book and took notes. "God, Allah Confucious, Prime Cause, Divine Mind, Great Reality, Creator, Infinite Power, Love, Etc. --many, many, more words.

When I began to recover I used to say how, in the preceeding years I had been very clever at reading between the lines and not reading the words on the lines which were important. I soon realised that there was more to it than just that. I had had certain experiences but had never held on to them as they seemed and nebulous when I tried to express them to others. This time I had had another experience and it was important that I did not lose it. So I tried to tell others about it and what I said seemed to be mostly noises to others. Yet I had to believe and accept my own experience or I was lost and would drink again.

Recently a member asked me if I got down on my knees to pray and I told him that I did not really use words. I felt a prayer as a deep need and that in this

spiritual area words failed me as being inadequate to express my emotion. Yet my conception of "God as I understand Him" is not a vague and nebulous something because He is my spiritual experience and my words may convey nothing to anybody. What my words lack is supplied by what I can only call "The power greater than ourselves", and in my experience "it works --it really does".

As I walked in the grounds of Hammer Hospital I felt overwhelmed by the deepest despair. To stay sober I would have to learn to be happy about it and I felt nothing but bewilderment and misery. It was certain that if I stayed like this I would drink again--God help me-. I was doing my best but my life seemed an utter failure--God help me--if I feel like this much longer I'd drink again and I'd die--God help me--. Hadn't someone said we should have faith enough to ask God for strength in the morning--God help me--and not bother him again ? He get impatient with one of so little faith. We were to be "as a little child". If I had a little child with me asking for help all the time--I'd give it all the time--well most of the time ; but if the child keep pestering me continuously I'd get impatient. Yes-- I would get impatient and probably angry--quietly now-- that was my trouble --keeping God down to my size. I needed a God who never got impatient or angry who always understood ; Infinite Love and wisdom. I went to the Big Book again: We constantly remind ourselves we are no longer running the show, humbly saying to ourselves, many times each day--"Thy will be done." And now I write this it reminds me that to begin each day right is not enough unless I continue throughout the day to practice the A.A. way of life --to experience a faith that is greater than words. Jack B Christchurch.



OUR READERS WRITE.

### WAINUI-O-MATA GROUP.

This is a message from the newly formed Wainui-o-mata group which had its first meeting on a recent Sunday. We all appreciate deeply and sincerely the support we received from our brother groups outside our little valley.

The message passed on by the speakers did us all the world of good & has convinced us that our meeting is going to be a great success in carrying our message to those less fortunate than ourselves. There is a tremendous amount of work to be done over here and we are all firmly dedicated to the task in hand.

When we reflect on how fortunate we are to be living in this age when the alcoholic can receive understanding help, we realize fully the tremendous extent of the debt we owe. Since we cannot repay what we owe in pounds, shillings and pence it makes each and every one of us all the more determined to carry the message.

We extend a warm and hearty welcome to all members of other groups to meet with us on Sunday evenings at the Union Parish Hall at the corner of Wainuiomata Rd. and Rata St. 7-30 p.m. to help us with our task.

Bill + Al. + George + Alex + Ewan/  
7-30 any Sunday Parish Hall, Wainuiomata Rd. and Rata St. Wainuiomata.

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### TRIBUTE TO A WELL REMEMBERED FRIEND.

"A few thoughts crossing my mind at the moment are of my first contacts with AA in Wellington of the wonderful sponsor I had old Bob C. who I shall always remember as the best A.A. member in the world. He was the first I met and he was a good salesman. He sold me something I really needed. I say "sold" because we

do not get this sobriety for nothing, we have to work for it: the tools are the 12 Steps -the application is ours. I'm glad my need was great enough when I first contacted A.A. and my pride(false pride) was lowered enough for me to accept the help that was offered, and the new life that followed. I'd like through "Mainstay" to say "thank you" to all who helped me get hold of this thing- especially my old group-the Sunday night one.

George R. Auckland.

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### "BLOW OFF THE FROTH"

Please cancel my subscription to Mainstay. The last few months of issue have been of little interest to me. The magazine now seems to be mainly reports of Assembly meetings and notices of future meetings. The reports of various groups which were of such interest to me now seldom appear. My needs of A.A. are, of necessity very simple ones and I know that we must ever remember our primary purpose..to obtain or rather strive to attain contented sobriety and to help others to become sober. Organisation in A.A., in my opinion is the least important factor in all our A.A. activity, and today the organisation of groups into Assemblies instead of individuals into groups seems to be the all important mission of many of our members.

But we know that this froth will blow off and time will level all this down and eventually A.A. in this country will once more be a simple devotion to our duty as recovered alcoholics, and all energies will be seeking and offering help to the still suffering alcoholic.

Les G. Dunedin.

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FOR SUE(although she is not on a holiday  
we hope it will bring a laugh).

### Smoetimes Everythnigg Goes Wrognn"

My typist has gone on a holifay  
My typist has gohn on a spree  
Mx typist hap gohn oh hyr haliduy  
a bring bacq mu jypist to me  
Bling bac% ok sring back  
Oh Bynk b4ck mu typisth to mi,tu mo  
Btung bicq oscling 'ack  
Ah 8lunch B!! my t $\frac{1}{2}$ psy to m $\frac{1}{4}$

That's just how I feel after typing an  
issue of "Mainstay" Editor.

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### APPRECIATION FOR HELP AND COMFORT.

I would like to extend to Mainstay  
my appreciation for the help and comfort  
it has given my husband and myself dur-  
ing this last year of subscribing to the  
magazine. Most particularly did we app-  
reciate the high standard of artistic  
work put into the Christmas number-I am  
sure that many other subscribers must  
have too. My husband died in April after  
a long illness-for him it was a happy  
release as he had been so patient and  
thoughtful throughout his illness ; no  
one could have asked him to bear any more.

He was an alcoholic and had a very  
hard life-fighting an uphill battle with  
alcohol as in his younger days when he  
most need help-no one in Nelson knew  
what alcoholism meant.Through a subscrib-  
er to Mainstay on Waiheke Is. my husband  
and I were introduced to it and have both  
been helped tremendously. B.M. Auckland.

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CENTRAL GROUP INVERCARGILL  
ROOMS NITH & TAY STREETS

Open every Friday night 7 p.m. to 9-30 p.m.

Fellowship & Refreshments

From July in phone book 5574.

# ONE DAY AT A TIME



YOUR AA CALENDAR

29th. MAY 1965 ASHBURTON  
SOUTHERN AREA ASSEMBLY.  
AT  
REPETORY THEATRE TANCRED &  
WILLIAM STREETS.

2 p.m. ASSEMBLY 8 p.m. PUBLIC METING  
( phone contacts Harry 5004; Ken 4638 )

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5 June 1965 PORIRUA  
CENTRAL AREA ASSEMBLY

R.S.A. HALL McKILLOP ST. PORIRUA EAST

Buffet meal at noon ASSEMBLY 2 p.m.  
Buffet meal 6 p.m. Public Meeting 8 p.m.

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12 JUNE 1965 WHANGAREI  
NORTHERN AREA ASSEMBLY

2-30 p.m. ASSEMBLY Buffet Tea 6 p.m.

ODDFELLOWS HALL NORFOLK STREET

PUBLIC MEETING 7-30 p.m.

Contacts Jean phone 70807 Whangarei  
Lewis G 10-334 Auckland. Pup 80-787 Akl.

A hearty welcome to all in range .

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7/8 AUGUST 1965 "Arahina" MARTON

CENTRAL AREA ASSEMBLY

ANNUAL RESIDENTIAL WEEKEND COMBINED WITH  
AL-ANON. MEETING OF GENERAL SERVICE CON-  
FERENCE.

A.A.'s book through Area Secretary Box  
719 Gisborne or Box 6458 Wellington.

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