

A.A.

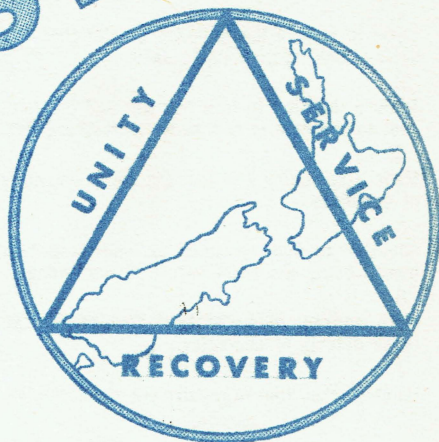
is our

MAINSTAY

Vol. 10 No.

JANUARY

8
1965



AN A.A. MEETING IN PRINT

* * * * *

ADOPTED AS
THE VOICE OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS IN N.Z.
BY THE
New Zealand
GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE
of Alcoholics Anonymous

ALCOHOLICS **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.

WELCOME 1965.

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.

With nine issues completely prepared and posted from Wellington "Mainstay" in its new home and your "Mainstay" team looks forward to preparing for you twelve issues in 1965. It was a surprise to your editor how much work is involved-especially on the business side buying stationary-receipts-new subscriptions and altering addresses. The total number printed has risen almost 100 during the year. This we take as a sign that the paper is filling a need and is generally approved. As a policy we have adopted "attraction rather than promotion" and are therefore almost completely dependent on the goodwill of our readers for increase in circulation. We are managing too on our present subscription although we will probably ask the membership at the Lincoln gathering for permission to raise this. Prompt payment of your subscription is very helpful -there are regularly 30 to 50 overdue up to 3 months.

The editors position is not an easy one ; for he must make the decisions on what is published and stand by the result. Should we have an editorial and what do you look for in them ? Our Webster says an editorial is " an article explicitly stating the opinions of the editor or the publisher". Your editor translates this to mean that he should draw the attention of the readers to current thinking both in and around A.A. and that this will be both "on and off the beam". The resultant reaction and expression of views and experience should tend to keep us all "on the beam".

A contented-progressive and happy New Year to you all. Let us all remember with gratitude in action the great fact of our recovery.

Editor.

4
S O U T H E R N A R E A A S S E M B L Y

The Southern Area Assembly of A.A. met at Timaru on Saturday, 5th. Dec. 1964. This Assembly includes groups from Christchurch to Invercargill. More than 100 delegates and observers attended. All had one thing in common ; an inability to control their drinking and a willingness to share their faith and hope in recovery through the A.A. way of life.

Common problems and a minimum of business engaged delegates early on Saturday afternoon. A closed meeting occupied the remainder.

The highlight of the Assembly was the Public Meeting held on Saturday night. A.A.'s (eight men and one woman) told their personal stories and how the experience, strength and hope to be found in the fellowship of A.A. set them on the road to recovery.

Percy(Christchurch) was a man who had sought help from the medical profession for the seemingly mysterious complaints which plagued him to the point where hospitalization and surgery seemed inevitable ; only to find that frothy emotional appeals to "stop drinking" - "pull your socks up" - or "pull yourself together" ; were the only medications available. Many attempts to stop drinking ended in progressively longer and more serious benders. Only when Percy asked for help and took the first step in the recovery programme of A.A.("admitted that we were powerless over alcohol and that our lives had become unmanageable") could he see some alternative to insanity and death.

Other speakers were Eric, who spoke with the authority of a man with 14 years of sobriety behind him and Frank from Lawrence brought back memories of early days in A.A. as he told of the domestic problems which loom large in the life of ev-

5
drinking alcoholic and of the faltering steps he made and is making to restore a happy home life. John (Hanmer Springs) compared the misery of drinking days with the happy and serene life he now enjoys. He emphasised the 24 hour programme in which an alcoholic lives "one day at a time". That alcoholism is no respecter of persons was proved by bright and vivacious Francis (Christchurch) who testified that the fears and resentments of an alcoholic are experienced just as strongly by women.

What A.A.'s call the "geographical cure"-in which the alcoholic tries to leave his problems behind him was taken on the grand scale by August (Dunedin) who had come from Europe to find sobriety. An eloquent speaker August was impressive with his sincerity and proved beyond doubt the truth of the saying that wherever you go -you take yourself along. Bill, a professional man from Christchurch told how years of lies, deceit and egocentric behaviour culminated in a drastic move by his wife. One morning she removed and concealed his trousers and left him with the A.A. book as his only reading material. Bill does not recommend this method to all wives of alcoholics but it was sufficiently drastic to make him realise that he had a drinking problem and that A.A. was the only answer for him. Dave(Christchurch) had a reputation in the ring and around the streets by the time he had to admit that he could not control his drinking. Still bearing the scars of his boxing career Dave told how he finally gave in to an opponent who always floored him, and that giving in brought release from fear and tension.

Carrie(Dunedin) spoke for Al-Anon the group of relatives and wives and friends of alcoholics who band together ; not to try and stop an alky drinking but to learn how to face the situation and provide a better atmosphere in the home for all-including the alcoholic-drunk or sober.

from "MARLBOROUGH EXPRESS 7/12/64
Alcoholics Anonymous Meeting

Probably More Than 500 Cases In Hospital Board District

In the Marlborough Hospital Board's district of 26,000 persons there were probably from 500 to 700 alcoholics, Mr G. A. Wall, deputy-superintendent of Wairau Hospital, told a public meeting, convened by Alcoholics Anonymous, in Blenheim on Saturday night.

Mr Wall said that not all those victims of the disease were necessarily in the last stages of alcoholism, but they were faced with that prospect unless the disease was arrested.

The Mayor of Blenheim, Mr S. P. Harling, presided at the meeting in the Masonic Hall, which held an attendance of nearly 200.

Mr Wall said that alcoholism was a disease as most people understood the term, and though the cause was unknown, that could be said of many other diseases.

Though the effects of alcohol had been known for thousands of years, it was only in the past 20 that it had been generally recognised as a disease, and even now some doctors did not recognise it as such. Unlike other diseases doctors were dependent on data provided by reformed alcoholics.

"Practising alcoholics are not necessarily liars, but they do distort the clinical picture so far as doctors are concerned," said Mr Wall amid laughter.

Mr Wall described the unusual features of the disorder for which he said there was no cure and could be halted only by total abstinence. He pointed out that it was not now necessary for the alcoholic to go through all the terrible stages of the disease before achieving a cure because much more was now known about it.

SPIRITUAL APPROACH

Alcoholics Anonymous had rediscovered the value of a spiritual approach to the problem, and one of the most dramatic aspects was the fact that Alcoholics Anonymous was now convincing more and more medical men that this approach was the right one—not only with this disease, but also with other involving emotional factors.

Various aspects of alcoholism were described from their personal experience by members of Alcoholics Anonymous, including the problems faced by the families of alcoholics, described by a member's wife.

During Saturday afternoon a meeting of the central area assembly of Alcoholics Anonymous was held, the first of its kind in Blenheim.

The assembly represented A.A. groups in the central districts of the North Island and the northern part of the South Island. It was formed to supply the services that A.A. needed to carry its message to alcoholics.

EDITORIAL "MARLBOROUGH EXPRESS" Alcoholism In Marlborough

Alcoholism as a community problem as well as a personal tragedy is brought sharply into focus by the startling assertion that in the district served by the Wairau Hospital there are probably 500 to 700 alcoholics in a population of only 26,000. Whether this incidence is higher or lower than the New Zealand average is beside the point; the grim fact is that the disease exists in our midst in a serious degree—serious for the victims and their families and a drag on the economy of the Province.

No exact statistics are available, of course; alcoholism is not a notifiable disease in the ordinary sense and a large number of cases remain officially undiagnosed because the sufferers have not submitted to examination nor reached the stage of self-confession or candid admission that they are in the group who cannot drink in moderation (or at all) without dire consequences. The local figures are what may be described as a "guesstimate"—an informed guess—by Mr G. A. Wall, the Marlborough Hospital Board's deputy medical superintendent, and were given in an address to Saturday night's public meeting in Blenheim convened by Alcoholics Anonymous.

Clinic At Hospital

Mr Wall is in a special way qualified to assess the position because he is a recognised authority on the disease and since coming to Blenheim has developed an alcoholics clinic at the Wairau Hospital which has helped many local residents and has drawn sufferers from further afield. The magnitude of the work being undertaken at the Hospital, or the existence of this specialist clinic there, is probably not generally realised by the public; but the fact that there is a steadily increasing awareness of the gravity of this insidious affliction is indicated by the attendance of almost 200 at the meeting. The response was well merited recognition of the invaluable work being done, necessarily inconspicuously, by A.A. in the district.

The fact that one person out of every 40 to 50 of our population, men, women and children, is a victim of the disease or a potential full sufferer underlines the need for and the urgency of the help A.A. members hold themselves ready to give, unobtrusively and in many cases sacrificially. The only reward for those engaged in this fine voluntary service lies in the knowledge that the sufferers they are helping are already on the way to recovery, for alcoholism is an incurable disease for which there is, paradoxically, a total cure—lifelong total abstinence.

A wider public knowledge of the work must result in an atmosphere of greater encouragement and support. Mr Wall has made it abundantly evident that there is a positive, urgent need for it.

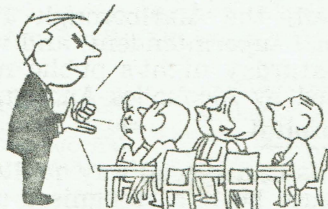
The 2nd Tradition

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.

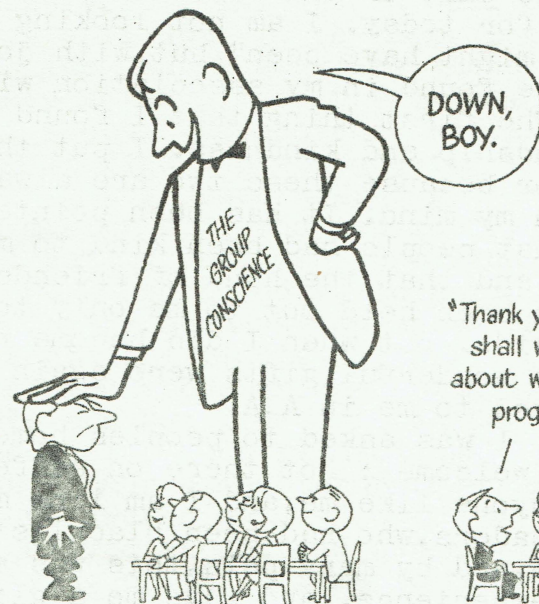
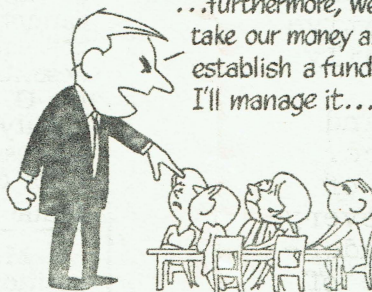
"Now that I've been elected Secretary, I'll show this group some real leadership!"



"There's only one way to do it and I'll tell you what it is..."



"...furthermore, we'll take our money and establish a fund... I'll manage it..."



"Thank you. Now shall we talk about working the program?"

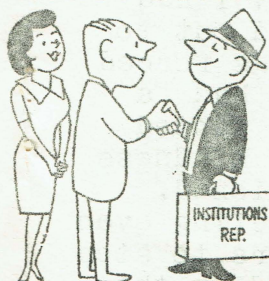


Service in AA can be very good for our humility...



We are paid off in sobriety, respect and love.

When we have finished one job we may be elected to another...



but ultimately we will make way for newcomers who must have their turn.

Eventually we become "elder statesmen" (if we don't choose to be "bleeding deacons")



AA leadership? The group conscience, aided, advised and abetted by the wisdom, experience and humility of the elder statesmen.

We are told that we mustn't look at the past or the future too much, but live for today. I am not looking back at "what might have been" but with joy at what I have found in my association with A.A.

The first thing that I found was friendship and kindness. I put them together because these two are always linked in my mind. It has been pointed out to me that people had been kind to me all my life and that the hand of friendship had often been held out to me only to be turned aside. But when I did become receptive these wonderful gifts were again readily offered to me in A.A.

I was asked to peoples homes and made welcome ; not there on sufferance. To anyone like me, and I am like many of my readers, who had been blacklisted everywhere, and by many pals, this was a wonderful experience, and gave me a glimpse of a new life ahead. At first I shut my eyes to this and returned to the trough. I was not ready ; the thought of a life without booze was abhorrent to me. Every time I saw a fellow go into a pub I wished it was me. Small wonder that shortly I had a row with my landlord and rushed out to the local. Like many another I was forced to return to A.A. But even then I had a hard row to hoe before I really wanted to stop. Then it was I found the kindness and friendship which I have mentioned.

When I went to my first meeting even before I had really got the desire to stop drinking, I felt that I was wanted in the group as, of course, every new member is wanted. Without them A.A. would die. I listened to speakers and, although I did not approve of all that was said, I came to realise that these people had suffered as I had suffered, and gone down to the

depths--but were now happy sober members of society. I got hope ; which is the beginning of the path up.

"Came to believe in a Power Greater than ourselves". This was a hard one for me. I was anti God. In the Army I refused to go to the Church services ; and had altogether severed myself from any early beliefs. I could understand that it was not hard to find a power greater than myself--for I was powerless. I got round this by making A.A. and two men my higher power. I put my faith in them and it worked. So I had found faith which - of course- is the cornerstone on which A.A. and-in fact-life itself is built.

I stayed sober which-in itself was a miracle and yet I used to shudder when God came up too much at meetings, and I couldn't understand the reference to a "spiritual awakening".

I stayed around and saw men and women giving of their time to help others who were trying to stop drinking. I had a period of frenzied 12th step work myself. I would drive hundreds of miles to try and help a drunk. I didn't have many successes but I kept sober myself.

I have found a dedication amongst my fellow members and I am sure that the unreserved giving of what one has gained is an integral part of this way of life.

Some four years after I got right for good (I thought) I slipped up badly. I got thinking of poor little me and not of others-- and then I wanted to drink-- and did. I did not learn my lesson fully and 18 months later the same thing happened again--only worse.

Since my last slip-or relapse- I have learned a lot. I have really come to believe in this outside Power ; my anti God ideas have disappeared. I have re-read the 3rd Step and found that "we made a decision to turn our will and our

lives over to the care of God, as we understand Him"- and that has made things so very much easier. I have found that when we just TRY to help someone-with no thought of gain-we have had some spiritual experience. I have found that no one can be helped who doesn't want to stop drinking.

Thank God for the Friendship, kindness, Hope and Faith that I found in A.A.
Tubby C. Christchurch.

AA*****AA*****AA*****AA

AUCKLAND PRISON.

COMBINED OPEN MEETING

On the 29th. November an A.A. meeting was held in the Auckland Prison in which the Matthews and Eden groups were combined for the last open meeting of the year. A large crowd turned out for it. The evening began with some items to entertain our visitors. First a sing-a-long led by Bill Limpus and accompanied on the piano by the Matthews Group sponsor Bill (M.B.) B. A Maori group comprising members of each group then gave some Maori items. There followed humorous skits, solos and instrumental numbers. The final item was by the Prison Padre who surprised a great many by the versatility and range of his extremely fine voice. The first A.A. to start the ball rolling was Basil M. who gave an interesting discourse on his personal approach to the A.A. preamble. He pointed out that the basic foundation to A.A. was enclosed in this vitally important opening introduction to every A.A. meeting held by alcoholics the world over. Johnny S.-secretary of the Eden group was the next speaker. He outlined how A.A. and its stabilising influence has helped him enormously to face up to those factors in his life that have been instrumental in bringing him to prison. A very well known

and respected visitor-Justin-was the next speaker and his talk was of extreme importance to everyone present. His main theme was the part that tension played in the life of most alcoholics and it's results if one is not strong enough to evaluate this complicated feeling and control it properly. Mick G. of the Matthews group brought the evening to a close by pointing out and emphasising the importance of being sincere if one is to be a success in embracing and living the philosophy of A.A.

Our thanks to the caterers who prepared and set out a tasteful supper. During supper a presentation was made by the secretary of the Mathews Group-Wally Te H. -to Bill B. sponsor of our group. Bill expressed his thanks to the men and pointed out how very proud he was of the gift. Johnny S., secretary of the Eden Group also made a presentation to their sponsor, Eddie who was profoundly touched by this gesture and deeply appreciated the high regard in which the men of the group held him. Other speakers were Harry M. and Mr. Burns, Acting Superintendent who pointed out how very pleased everyone in the Prisons Department was with the influence A.A. had on all who had contact with it. Special thanks to our chairwoman Elaine who so capably controlled the meeting. Her wise and profound observations on each speaker's story were gladly accepted by all. From all the boys up here goes to one and all who came up here : a big vote of thanks; It was your presence which made the evening such a success for us. Thank you for bringing the story of A.A. to us. Wally Te H. Matthews Group Private Bag 50-123 Upper Symonds St. Auckland.

aa////////aa////////aa////////aa

"Thought is the ladder between earth and Heaven- AND between earth and hell"
Anon.

GROUP NOTES.

PRESENTATION

A presentation was made to the Rev. O. and Mrs. Baragwanath at the Christmas meeting of St. David's Group on the 22nd. December in recognition of the valuable work done to help alcoholics. Also to Mr. & Mrs. Simpson who have supported our efforts so well. A wonderful supper was a feature of this well attended meeting.

AA////////AA////////AA

Mt. Roskill also turned it on for their Christmas Eve meeting ; strawberries and ice cream being much appreciated.

=====

SPECIAL NOTICE.

THE PONSONBY GROUP which usually meets at St. Stephens Hall, Jervois Road and Shelly Beach Roads, Ponsonby each Friday will--from the 8th January-- meet each Friday at 8 p.m., at the Service Centre Rooms, 48 Albert St. This is during alterations to the hall estimated to take 6 weeks.

FROM 8 JANUARY 1965 PONSONBY GROUP

Service Centre 48 Albert Street

8 p.m. EACH FRIDAY NIGHT for 6 weeks.

CORRECTION.

CENTRAL AREA ASSEMBLY

PALMERSTON NORTH

27 MARCH 27 MARCH 27 MARCH

(February given on back cover)

New Zealand Assembly

Christchurch 20/21 FEBRUARY

GREAT MEETING PLACE FOR A.A.'S OLD & NEW

God grant me the
Serenity
to accept the things I
cannot change...
Courage to
change the things I can
and Wisdom to
know the difference...

COMING EVENTS :

SATURDAY 6 Feb. 1965

WAIKATO/BAY OF PLENTY AREA ASSEMBLY
HAMILTON

Red Cross Hall, London Street.
(from 1 p.m. cup of tea and sandwiches).

2 p.m. Area Assembly Meeting

8 p.m. Public Meeting

Good fellowship and something doing
all the time. Contact Sel R. 80483.

Saturday & Sunday 20/21 Feb. 1965

NEW ZEALAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

LINCOLN COLLEGE CHRISTCHURCH
A.A.'s Al-Anons Alateens

Full board available from Friday night
to Monday morning. £2 per day with unit
charges for part days.

Book through your group secretary -
Inter Group or Area Assembly or ;

CHRISTCHURCH : BOX 2062(A.A.) Box 2148
Alanon & Alateen.

WELLINGTON : Box 6458 (A.A.) Box 2728
Alanon and Alateen.

2nd. Meeting of General Service
Conference.

Open and Closed Meetings.

aa////////aa////////aa

SATURDAY 27 FEBRUARY 1965.

CENTRAL AREA ASSEMBLY
PALMERSTON NORTH.

SATURDAY 13 MARCH 1965

SOUTHERN AREA ASSEMBLY

INVERCARGILL

SATURDAY 13 February 1965

NORTHERN AREA ASSEMBLY. HOSTS NORTH
SHORE GROUPS..DETAILS FROM CENTRAL OFFICE.