

**Alcoholics Anonymous - The Jack Alexander Article**  
*Saturday Evening Post*  
 March 1st, 1941

**“Alcoholics Anonymous”**

THREE MEN sat around the bed of an alcoholic patient in the psychopathic ward of Philadelphia General Hospital one afternoon a few weeks ago. The man in the bed, who was a complete stranger to them, had the drawn and slightly stupid look the inebriates get while being defogged after a bender. The only thing that was noteworthy about the callers, except for the obvious contrast between their well-groomed appearances and that of the patient, was the fact that each had been through the defogging process many times himself. They were members of Alcoholics Anonymous, a band of ex-problem drinkers who make an avocation of helping other alcoholics to beat the liquor habit.



The man in the bed was a mechanic. His visitors had been educated at Princeton, Yale and Pennsylvania and were, by occupation, a salesman, a lawyer and a publicity man. Less than a year before, one had been in shackles in the same ward. One of his companions had been what is known among alcoholics as a sanitarium commuter. He had moved from place to place, bedeviling the staffs of the country's leading institutions for the treatment of alcoholics. The other had spent twenty years of life, all outside institution walls, making life miserable for himself, and his family and his employers, as well as sundry well-meaning relatives who had had the temerity to intervene.

The air of the ward was thick with the aroma of paraldehyde, an unpleasant cocktail smelling like a mixture of alcohol and ether which hospitals sometimes use to taper off the paralyzed drinker and soothe his squirming nerves. The visitors seemed oblivious of this and of the depressing atmosphere of psychopathic wards. They smoked and talked with the patient for twenty minutes or so, then left their personal cards and departed. If the man in the bed felt that he would like to see one of them again, they told him, he had only to put in a telephone call.

THEY MADE it plain that if he actually wanted to stop drinking, they would leave their work or get up in the middle of the night to hurry to where he was. If he did not choose to call, that would be the end of it. The members of Alcoholics Anonymous do not pursue or coddle a malingering prospect, and they know the strange tricks of the alcoholic as a reformed swindler knows the art of bamboozling.

Herein lies much of the unique strength of a movement, which in the past six years, has brought recovery to around 2,000 men and women, a large percentage of whom had been considered medically hopeless. Doctors and clergymen, working separately or together, have always managed to salvage a few cases. In isolated instances, drinkers have found their own methods of quitting. But the inroads into alcoholism have been negligible, and it remains one of the great, unsolved public-health enigmas.

By nature touchy and suspicious, the alcoholic likes to be left alone to work out his puzzle, and he has a convenient way of ignoring the tragedy which he inflicts meanwhile upon those who are close to him. He holds desperately to a conviction that, although he has not been able to handle alcohol in the past, he will ultimately succeed in becoming a controlled drinker. One of medicine's queerest animals, he is, as often as not, an acutely intelligent person. He fences with professional men and relatives who attempt to aid him and he gets a perverse satisfaction out of tripping them up in argument.

(Continued in September District 13 Newsletter)

# District 13 Newsletter



Volume 12 Issue 8

August 2007

**Statement of Purpose**

The primary purpose of this newsletter will be to carry the message to alcoholics and practice the AA principles in all it's affairs. This newsletter's goal is to create a more informed community within AA as it serves District 13. The opinions expressed are those of the contributor, not necessarily that of District 13 or AA as a whole.

**Tradition Eight**

Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

**Step Eight**

Made a list of all people we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.

**Concept 8**

The Trustees of the General Service Board act in two primary capacities: (a) With respect to the larger matters of over-all policy and finance, they are the principal planners and administrators. They and their primary committees directly manage these affairs. (b) But with respect to our separately incorporated and constantly active services, the relation of the Trustees is mainly that of full stock ownership and of custodial oversight which they exercise through their ability to elect all directors of these entities.

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.

On March 1, 1941, the *Saturday Evening Post* featured an article with the title "Alcoholics Anonymous". The article was written by Jack Alexander, a writer who met Bill Wilson in the early days of AA. The positive portrayal resulted in a surge of interest in our fellowship. This lengthy article will be re-published in the newsletter in unedited form over the course of the next three months. We hope you enjoy it. We would also like to take this opportunity to publish the Grapevine Article, appearing May 1945 that sheds some light on the background of the *Saturday Evening Post* article. -District 13 Newsletter Committee

**The History of How The Article Came To Be**

Jack Alexander of *Saturday Evening Post* Fame Thought  
 A.A.s Were Pulling His Leg  
 AA Grapevine, May, 1945

Ordinarily, diabetes isn't rated as one of the hazards of reporting, but the Alcoholics Anonymous article in the *Saturday Evening Post* came close to costing me my liver, and maybe A.A. neophytes ought to be told this when they are handed copies of the article to read. It might impress them. In the course of my fact gathering, I drank enough Coca-Cola, Pepsi-Cola, ginger ale, Moxie and Sweetie to float the Saratoga. Then there was the thickly frosted cake so beloved of A.A. gatherings, and the heavily sweetened coffee, and the candy. Nobody can tell me that alcoholism isn't due solely to an abnormal craving for sugar, not even a learned psychiatrist. Otherwise the A.A. assignment was a pleasure.

It began when the *Post* asked me to look into A.A. as a possible article subject. All I knew of alcoholism at the time was that, like most other non-alcoholics, I had had my hand bitten (and my nose punched) on numerous occasions by alcoholic pals to whom I had extended a hand--unwisely, it always seemed afterward. Anyway, I had an understandable skepticism about the whole business.

My first contact with actual A.A.s came when a group of four of them called at my apartment one afternoon. This session was pleasant, but it didn't help my skepticism any. Each one introduced himself as an alcoholic who had gone "dry," as the official expression has it. They were good-looking and well-dressed and, as we sat around drinking Coca-Cola (which was all they would take), they spun yarns about their horrendous drinking misadventures. The stories sounded spurious, and after the visitors had left, I had a strong suspicion that my leg was being pulled. They had behaved like a bunch of actors sent out by some Broadway casting agency.

(Continued on pg 2)

(Continued from page 1) Next morning I took the subway to the headquarters of Alcoholics Anonymous in downtown Manhattan, where I met Bill W. This Bill W. is a very disarming guy and an expert at indoctrinating the stranger into the psychology, psychiatry, physiology, pharmacology and folklore of alcoholism. He spent the good part of a couple of days telling me what it was all about. It was an interesting experience, but at the end of it my fingers were still crossed. He knew it, of course, without my saying it, and in some days that followed he took me to the homes of some of the A.A.s, where I got a chance to talk to the wives, too. My skepticism suffered a few minor scratches, but not enough to hurt. Then Bill shepherded me to a few A.A. meetings at a clubhouse somewhere in the West Twenties. Here were all manner of alcoholics, many of them, the nibblers at the fringe of the movement, still fragrant of liquor and needing a shave. Now I knew I was among a few genuine alcoholics anyway. The bearded, fume-breathing lads were A.A. skeptics, too, and now I had some company.

The week spent with Bill W. was a success from one standpoint. I knew I had the makings of a readable report but, unfortunately, I didn't quite believe in it and told Bill so. He asked why I didn't look in on the A.A.s in other cities and see what went on there. I agreed to do this, and we mapped out an itinerary. I went to Philadelphia first, and some of the local A.A.s took me to the psychopathic ward of Philadelphia General Hospital and showed me how they work on the alcoholic inmates. In that gloomy place, it was an impressive thing to see men who had bounced in and out of the ward themselves patiently jawing a man who was still haggard and shaking from a binge that wound up in the gutter.




Akron was the next stop. Bill met me there and promptly introduced me to Doc S., who is another hard man to disbelieve. There were more hospital visits, an A.A. meeting, and interviews with people who a year or two before were undergoing varying forms of the blind staggers. Now they seemed calm, well-spoken, steady-handed and prosperous, at least mildly prosperous.

Doc S. drove us both from Akron to Cleveland one night and the same pattern was repeated. The universality of alcoholism was more apparent here. In Akron it had been mostly factory workers. In Cleveland there were lawyers, accountants and other professional men, in addition to laborers. And again the same stories. The pattern was repeated also in Chicago, the only variation there being the presence at the meetings of a number of newspapermen. I had spent most of my working life on newspapers and I could really talk to these men. The real clincher, though, came in St. Louis, which is my hometown. Here I met a number of my own friends who were A.A.s, and the last remnants of skepticism vanished. Once rollicking rumpots, they were now sober. It didn't seem possible, but there it was.

When the article was published, the reader-mail was astonishing. Most of it came from desperate drinkers or their wives, or from mothers, fathers or interested friends. The letters were forwarded to the A.A. office in New York and from there were sent on to A.A. groups nearest the writers of the letters. I don't know exactly how many letters came in, all told, but the last time I checked, a year or so ago, it was around 6,000. They still trickle in from time to time, from people who have carried the article in their pockets all this time, or kept it in the bureau drawer under the handkerchief case intending to do something about it.

I guess the letters will keep coming in for years, and I hope they do, because now I know that every one of them springs from a mind, either of an alcoholic or of someone close to him, which is undergoing a type of hell that Dante would have gagged at. And I know, too, that this victim is on the way to recovery, if he really wants to recover. There is something very heartening about this, particularly in a world which has been struggling toward peace for centuries without ever achieving it for very long periods of time.

Jack Alexander  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

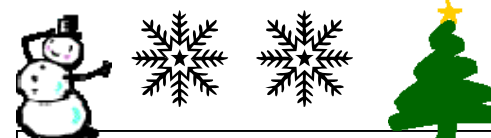
<p>AA's 1st Harley Riders Bill and Lois</p> 	<p>Hampshire Grenadier Grave</p> 	<p>Bill W. and Ebby</p> 
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**Volunteers Needed**  
Help is needed transporting people to meetings. Volunteers are required to have one year sobriety. Call Gail at 603-881-4848 for more info.

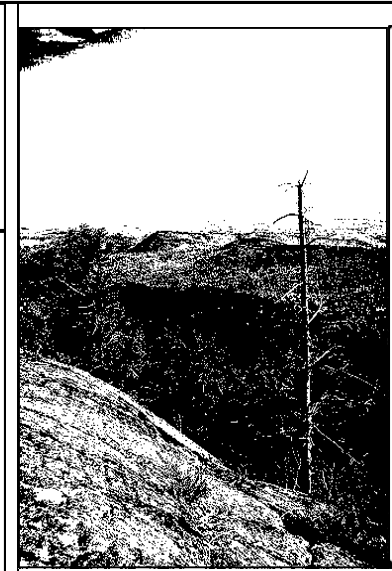
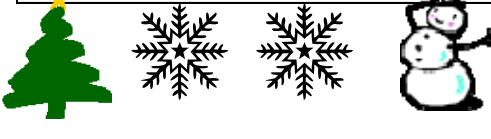
- Dates To Remember**
- District 13 GSR Meeting, YMCA, Merrimack August 15 at 7:00 PM
  - District 13 Function Committee, July– **NO MEETINGS** August 21st Weekly Mtgs. Resume, Tuesday 6-7PM at Good Shepherd in Nashua
  - Area Assembly August 25 (See below)

**Area Assembly Saturday August 25**  
Assumption Hall • School St., Newport NH

8—9am Registration  
9—12 Workshops  
12 Noon: Lunch Break & Bookie Swap  
1:00—4:00pm Officer Reports & Area Business (directions at [www.nhaa.org](http://www.nhaa.org))



**HO-HO-HO**  
**The Alkathon Committee**  
will be meeting for the first time.  
Thursday, August 23rd.  
Church of the Good Shepherd in Nashua  
Time: 6.00 p.m. to 7.00 p.m.  
Volunteers needed  
Please join us, it is a great way of giving back.  
Michelle H 566-2731  
Steve C 204-7907



**MOUNTAIN TOP MEETINGS**

**South Park Monadnock**  
**11<sup>th</sup> Step Meeting**  
1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of every Month /April-October  
5pm at the Summit  
\$2.60 Park Entrance Fee  
Hike or Drive to Top

**Mt Kearsarge**  
**Gratitude Meeting**  
2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of the Month/May – October  
7:30 a, at the Summit  
\$3 park entrance fee  
Hike up from Warner or Wilmot

**Faith**

*When times are the hardest we like to run,  
it's easier than sticking around to do what needs to be done.  
Our heads become filled with all these fantasizing thoughts,  
forgetting about all the wonderful things we've lost.*

*The drugs and the drinking took us down paths we never thought we'd go,  
drowning in misery being swept out by the undertow.  
We had so many dreams that we never got to fulfill,  
all because of this disease made us so ill.*

*We lied we'd cheat, we stole until there was nothing left to do,  
We made so many promises that all fell through.  
It was all because of us and we're the only ones to blame,  
but lift your head up and there will be no more shame.*

*Smile, laugh and enjoy life for what it's really worth,  
because god has a purpose for you here on this earth.  
Get on your knees when you wake up and before bed,  
so now you can live those dreams going on in your head.*

By Steve M  
Men's Peace of Mind (TSDD)

**ANNIVERSARY**  
**B& M Honesty Group**  
**40th Anniversary**  
Sunday August 19th,2007  
Our Lady of Mercy Church  
Merrimack, Baboosic Lake Road  
9:00am Coffee  
9:30am Potluck breakfast  
10:15am Raffle  
10:30-11:30am Meeting

**Newsletter Deadline**  
This is YOUR Newsletter. If you would like to contribute an article or personal experience for publication or advertise an upcoming event for your group, please send the information to:  
District 13 News  
P.O. Box 3513  
Nashua, NH 03061

Email: [dcm@nhaa13org](mailto:dcm@nhaa13org)  
Subject line: District 13 Newsletter  
**Deadline For Next Issue —August 9th**