

District 13 Newsletter

Volume 13 Issue 01

January 2008

Statement of Purpose

The primary purpose of this newsletter will be to carry the message to alcoholics and practice the AA principles in all its 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 One

Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on A.A. unity.

Step One

We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.

Concept Twelve

The final responsibility and ultimate authority for A.A. world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole fellowship.

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.

Alcoholics Anonymous, by Jack Alexander Saturday Evening Post Article March 1st, 1941

(Continued from the December Issue of the District 13 Newsletter)

IN A BOOK, which they published at that time, the recovered drinkers described the cure program and related their personal stories. The title was Alcoholics Anonymous. It was adopted as a name for the movement itself, which up to then had none. As the book got into circulation, the movement spread rapidly. Today, Dr. Armstrong is still struggling to patch up his practice. The going is hard. He is in debt because of his contributions to the movement and the time he devotes gratis to alcoholics. Being a pivotal man in the group, he is unable to turn down the requests for help, which flood his office.

Griffith is even deeper in the hole. For the past two years, he and his wife have had no home in the ordinary sense of the word. In a manner reminiscent of the primitive Christians, they have moved about, finding shelter in the home of A.A. colleagues and sometimes wearing borrowed clothing.

Having got something started, both the prime movers want to retire to the fringe of their movement and spend more time getting back on their feet financially. They feel that the way the thing is set up, it is virtually self-operating and self-multiplying. Because of the absence of figureheads and the fact that there is no formal body of belief to promote, they have no fears that Alcoholics Anonymous will degenerate into a cult.

The self-starting nature of the movement is apparent from letters in the files of the New York office. Many persons have written in saying that they stopped drinking as soon as they read the book, and made their homes meeting places for small local chapters. Even a fairly large unit, in Little Rock, got started in this way. An Akron civil engineer and his wife, in gratitude for his cure four years ago, have been steadily taking alcoholics into their home. Out of thirty-five such wards, thirty-one have recovered.

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TWENTY PILGRIMS from Cleveland caught the idea in Akron and returned home to start a group of their own. From Cleveland, by various means, the movement has spread to Chicago, Detroit, St. Louis, Los Angeles, Indianapolis, Atlanta, San Francisco, Evansville, and other cities. An alcoholic Cleveland newspaperman with a surgically collapsed lung moved to Houston for his health. He got a job on a Houston paper, and through a series of articles, which he wrote for it, started an A.A. unit, which now has thirty-five members. One Houston member has moved to Miami and is now laboring to snare some of the more eminent winter-colony lushes. A Cleveland traveling salesman is responsible for starting small units in many different parts of the county. Fewer than half of the A.A. members has ever seen Griffith or Dr. Armstrong.

To an outsider who is mystified, as most of us are, by the antics of problem-drinking friends, the results, which have been achieved, are amazing. This is especially true of the more virulent cases, a few of which are herewith sketched under names that are not their own.

Sara Martin was a product of the F. Scott Fitzgerald era. Born of wealthy parents in a Western City, she went to Eastern boarding schools and "finished" in France. After making her debut, she married. Sara spent her nights drinking and dancing until daylight. She was known as a girl who could carry a lot of liquor. Her husband had a weak stomach, and she became disgusted with him. They were quickly divorced. After her father's fortune had been erased in 1929, Sara got a job in New York and supported herself. In 1932, seeking adventure, she went to Paris to live and set up a business of her own, which was successful. She continued to drink heavily and stayed drunk longer than usual. After a spree in 1933, she was informed that she had tried to throw herself out a window. During another bout, she did jump or fall - she doesn't remember which - out of a first-floor window. She landed face first on the sidewalk and was laid up for six months of bone setting, dental work, and plastic surgery.

IN 1936, Sara Martin decided that if she changed her environment by returning to the United States, she would be able to drink normally. This childish faith in geographical change is a classic delusion, which all alcoholics get at one time, or another. She was drunk all the way home on the boat. New York frightened her and

she drank to escape it. Her money ran out and she borrowed from friends. When the friends cut her, she hung around Third Avenue bars, cadging drinks from strangers. Up to this point she had diagnosed her trouble as a nervous breakdown. Not until she had committed herself to several sanitariums did she realize, through reading, that she was an alcoholic. On advice of a staff doctor, she got in touch with an Alcoholics Anonymous group. Today, she has another good job and spends many of her nights sitting on hysterical women drinkers to prevent them from diving out of windows. In her late thirties, Sarah Martin is an attractively serene woman. The Paris surgeons did handsomely by her.

Watkins is a shipping clerk in a factory. Injured in an elevator mishap in 1927, he was furloughed with pay by a company, which was thankful that he did not sue for damages. Having nothing to do during a long convalescence, Watkins loafed in speakeasies. Formerly a moderate drinker, he started to go on drunks lasting several months. His furniture went for debt, and his wife fled, taking their three children. In eleven years, Watkins was arrested twelve times and served eight workhouse sentences. Once, in an attack of delirium tremens, he circulated a rumor among the prisoners that the county was poisoning the food in order to reduce the workhouse population and save expenses. A mess-hall riot resulted. In another fit of D.T.'s, during which he thought the man in the cell above was trying to pour hot lead on him, Watkins slashed his own wrists and throat with a razor blade. While recuperating in an outside hospital, with eighty-six stitches, he swore never to drink again. He was drunk before the final bandages were removed. Two years ago, a former drinking companion got him to Alcoholics Anonymous, and he hasn't touched liquor since. His wife and children have returned, and the home has new furniture. Back at work, Watkins has paid off the major part of \$2,000 in debts and petty alcoholic thefts and has his eye on a new automobile.

(to be continued in the February District 13 Newsletter)

Newsletter Contributions are Welcome

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
Or Email us at:
newsletter@nhaa13.org

**Deadline For Next Issue —
January 9th 2008**

Dates To Remember

District 13 Function Committee
Tuesday Nights @
Good Shepherd Church
6-7pm

District 13 GSR Meeting
Wednesday January 16th
7pm @ the Merrimack YMCA

**District 13 is grateful
for the generous contributions
from AA groups.**

**If your group wants to donate please make checks
payable to:**

“NHAA District 13”

Be sure to include the Group
Name & Number on the check.

Checks can be sent to:

District 13
P.O. Box 3513

Bill Wilson's Christmas Message to Dr. Silkworth

NEW YORK 17, N.Y.
December 25, 1949

Dear Doctor:

As no other time does, Christmas reminds us of our friends. None come more quickly to recollection than you and your good wife. Surely great things have happened since that day fifteen years ago when you said "No, you're not hallucinating - you'd better hold onto what you have"! That saved my life and this is a letter of appreciation from Lois and me. What you have since meant to so many, no one can measure. You are among the first of those without whom A.A. could never have been.

Lois joins me in eternal gratitude.

Bill

Dr. William Silkworth, MD



Dr. William Duncan Silkworth gave deep understanding and great encouragement to AA in the days when a lack of understanding or a word of discouragement might easily have killed it. He freely risked his professional reputation to champion an unprecedented spiritual answer to the medical enigma and the human tragedy of alcoholism. Without his blessing, our faith might well have died in its birth. He was a luminous exception to the rule that only an alcoholic understands an alcoholic. He knew us better than we knew ourselves... better than we know each other. Many of us felt that his medical skill, great as that was, was not at all the full measure of his stature. Dr. Silkworth was something that it is difficult even to mention in these days. He was a saintly man. He stood in an unusual relationship to truth. He was able to see the truth of a man, when that truth was deeply hidden from the man himself and from everyone else. He was able to save lives that were otherwise beyond help of any kind.....

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District 13 Christmas Alcathon

**Noon Christmas Eve thru
9 pm Christmas Day**

Spartans Hall

73 Hollis Street, Nashua NH

