MARKINGS
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YOUR ARCHIVES INTERCHANGE
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I REMEMBER - A Thank You and Tribute to 'Old Timers.'

"Fifty-four years ago, in August of 1938, I learned about the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. I had cabbed from Dayton to Cincinnati to enter a treatment centre. Dressed in a white linen suit, I drained my bottle then dashed through a hedge to the centre. Unfortunately, it was raining and there were wires at the bottom of the hedge — so I literally 'skidded in' — covered in mud from head to foot! Apologizing for being late, I learned I was ten days late! Several days later, once somewhat sober, the nurse suggested: "You know George, you don't need to be like this anymore — there is something new — called A.A. My brother learned about it in Akron, Ohio. If you wish I will have him tell you about it." He did. I was impressed. Though I never met him it became my introduction to A.A.

Though there still wasn't a group in Dayton, I managed to stay 'dry' for about seven months. Then in 1939, Roy S. founded the first group in Dayton, Ohio. He listed my name as an active member in his correspondence with the early General Service Office.

That first group was very special — and among others included, Clarence A., Art B., Jim R., Dick R., Phil S., Jonathan W. Initially the group met in Roy's home and then we rotated to each others homes. Soon too, we attracted two women members Lola S. and Janet W.

To the best of my knowledge, with the exception of myself, most of this group never relapsed. Within months we attracted many new members necessitating a regular meeting place and eventually more groups. I suggested the need for a young peoples group, but was told by Roy, "I couldn't do that!" I called Bill and he told me, "Go ahead, if there aren't disagreements there will be no new groups."

Roy's notice in the daily newspaper, advertising his group added the warning — "For the only true A.A. call this number!" Has A.A. changed?

Though I had Reserved Officer's Training (R.O.T.C.) in Prep School and University I enlisted in the Air Force in January, 1941, where I advanced rapidly. On November 5, 1941, I met Bill and Lois in person for the first time. Held in the residence of Valentine W. (Jonathan's father), it had to be one of the first Open Meetings Bill had addressed anywhere.

1951 — Conference Literature Committee.

The recommendation that A.A. Textbook literature should have Conference approval was endorsed without too much negative discussion. However, I think it was Walter B. from New Jersey or Icki S. from Houston who questioned the right of A.A. to determine or even to suggest that A.A. members should or could not read outside literature. Conference approval implied that nothing else should be read — an opinion which still exists and which is rather far fetched.

I think it was Charlie B. from Vancouver who questioned: "What about the Bible?" I know I commented that both Bill and Bob had read many other publications and probably would continue to do so.

1952 — General Service Board

The recommendation that the matter of Congressional Incorporation of the General Service Board was, as I recall it, briefly discussed — considered serious enough to study and follow up — and left for later decision.

General Comments

A general consensus on each of the matters discussed seemed to be reached quite easily on most matters. Not too many items were debated really at great length — rather in 1951 and even in 1952, there was the unexpressed feeling of "Who are we to be judgemental or to make such serious decisions for A.A. as a whole?" As I am sure you have learned from the overall files and later comments, there were not quite as many 'hardy' souls at that time as perhaps there are now. No one was belligerent, we all wanted to reach a positive and unanimous consensus, the weight of our decisions was, I think considered by most of us to be a rather momentous responsibility. Though in no way rigid, we were not about, especially in 1951, to disagree with Bill.

Even Dr. Jack was sometimes restrained in attempting to achieve immediate or quite positive decisions.

Dr. Jack displayed the diplomacy he knew and practiced very capably. Bill was also much more controlled about most things and did curb any more positive or exuberant feelings that he may have felt. Bill did hope that one day A.A. could and would run all of it's own affairs. Though he was the first to commend and extend both gratitude and respect for the contributions of those early non-alcoholic Trustees — particularly, Bernard Smith, Jack Norris, and Austin McCormick.

Don't forget too, we had some wonderful office folks. Including Helen B., Al S., John D., Hank G., and Anne McF. and others.

Typically, Bill's individual position on everything was positive. He had thought out, planned and rehearsed in his own mind, so much of what A.A. could and should be that his

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GENERAL COMMENTS

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visions of the future was simply beyond the grasp of most of us there.

Dr. Jack on the other hand, along with Bernard Smith and I believe Leonard Strong were able, without ever seeming to blatantly disagree, to inject their considerations quietly, but positively and thus to influence major decisions.

Yes, at times the environment was rather emotionally charged—though in 1951 and 1952, not always voiced as emotionally as contrary opinions might currently be the case. Two points I should make are these: One, the matter of money — just as today, did of course raise it's own questionable head. The matter of royalties for Bill's writings; when raised as a means of providing an income for Bill and Lois's livelihood was quite disturbing to some attendees. I remember arguing the point of 'how they expected Bill and Lois to live'; and were they prepared to make separate donations for him and office staff — that afterall if A.A. was to progress and grow the road ahead would have to be financially supported.

I think too, that I made the original motion that a just and proper percentage of book royalties and of the income from any A.A. publications written by Bill should be returned to him as part of his renumeration — and that all his activity expenses must be reimbursed out of A.A. funds. There was some dissention about this but eventually a compromise was achieved.

The second point was a matter of personal issue and decision. I suggested that it would be unwise for me to serve on Committees or up front in as much as, I was a 'Two Hatter' already deeply involved in public level programming. As you may remember this was not too popular in those days! Of course, there were some who felt that no one active at the public level in treatment or other facilities should be active in A.A. circles at all.

Earl T. from Chicago, though initially one of those, in later years became active in a private Employment Assistance Program.

The last item that I can call to mind at the moment is that of area financial support for Delegates to attend the New York Conferences. Many of the folks at home still did not believe that their finances should be directed to supporting the travelling expenses of Delegates, Trustees or other A.A. trusted servants. Like most early Delegates, I went in the hole rather deeply in that regard. Getting around the state of Wisconsin and the Upper Michigan Peninsula was rather expensive too. I know that a friendly Manager of my bank — amazed at my sobriety — had to help me out through that period!

There is no doubt that the Delegates, Trustees and G S O Staff of those early years enjoyed and went through a very special period. Of course too, there were lighter moments and experiences which I treasure. Some of the special friendships I made and enjoyed in 1951 and 1952 are among the most precious and rewarding times I remember in all of my sobriety.

I remember special moments with Bill and Dr. Jack: An occasion at the Commodore Hotel when Bill, Dr. Jack and myself discussed ways and means of achieving recognition, respect and acceptance of alcoholics as ill people too. Bill's dreams were so vivid and his perception of the obstacles we would face working in the field, so real and true.

Dr. Jack and I attended the Lucky Strike Hour shows in New York together and other personal experiences.

I remember Hank G.'s telegram to come to New York and help to appease the difficult situation that existed between Bill and Dr. Jack. I was fishing in Northern B.C., when a message was delivered by jeep and forty-eight hours later, I was in New York seeing Dr. Jack at the Roosevelt and Bill at his favorite German restaurant.

I remember meetings with Bill in Dayton — where he and Lois attended an early, if not the first Open Meeting of members and special guests. It was held in the home of Valentine in their fourth floor ballroom. Arranged by Jonathan W., one of the first members of the Dayton, Ohio group.

I remember the occasion in Chicago, when on his return from California, trying to sell the idea of the General Service Conference, Bill was literally rejected and refused support for a GSO. The meeting in the old Labour Temple on Randolph Street, the setting and sight of the one big group meeting per week, saw a sad and dejected Bill W. — but he bounced right back and with a small group of us backstage — announced his intention to carry on at any cost.

I remember too, perhaps one of our closest and most meaningful occasions when Bill and Lois were having breakfast with us in Milwaukee. He was marching up and down playing the fiddle that 'Gib' K. had presented to him the day before in the Veteran's Hospital. — At the suggestion of a small committee — Ward G, Ray G. Sr., Jim F. and myself. Bill and Lois had come to Milwaukee to pay their last respects to 'Gib' K., the Dentist Founder of A.A. in Milwaukee who was dying of cancer. I sent a group picture to New York.

I had questioned Bill about entering full time into the development of services at the public level. Finally, after pleas from both Lois and Jane he stopped playing the fiddle, sat down to eat his breakfast, and announced I might as well get into the field with both feet just as had Marty M.!

Yes, all of these things come back, every time we try to remember 1951 and 1952. I firmly believe that much that A.A. represents today is totally due to the wisdom and direction which Bill and Dr. Jack, along with those early Trustees and Delegates gave to the Fellowship in molding together what we have today.

As you see, I have said little about Dr. Bob and contributions. His role was quiet, reserved and a conservative one. I think Bill did his best to share everything he considered, dreamed about or did with Dr. Bob each balanced the other to some degree. However, the Akron and New York world were quite apart. I did not know Bob well, I met him a very few times. Because I didn't have the opportunity or occasion to become close to Akron — but did become very close to New York and Bill, I naturally know little about Akron and Dr. Bob's early activities.

I do hope that you are successful in picking up these little stories from other members of that era who are still living. I think you know too, that as time and capabilities permit, I will help you all I can.

Cheers and God Bless. My personal best."

Sincerely,
J. George

COLLECTION OF GROUP BIRTH DATES

In late August it is planned to begin mailing the Group Information Sheets to all Area Delegates. This year for the first time those approximately 50,000 data forms will contain a new bit of information: **the date a group was first recorded at GSO.** For the vast majority of groups this will be their approximate *Birthdate.* For many, however, this date may be wildly off the mark for several reasons: 1) the group went unreported to GSO for a long period of time, perhaps years; 2) for almost 13,000 groups that date will appear as the initial computer conversion date in 1976 when GSO abandoned an archaic manual record system and launched into computer age, not without serious and well-founded reservations. As a result, those 13,000 dates will be in most cases wildly off.

Why Group Birthdates at all? For many members interest will be low. For those impassioned historians, when their group began is almost as important as when their own sobriety date.

Since its' inception, the trustees' Archives Committee has sought to foster an interest in and even a passion for the study of the History of our Fellowship. Just as an "owning" of our personal stories seems vital to our members to allow for a successful and contented sobriety, an in depth knowledge of our Society's history seems to stimulate appreciation for and an identification with the miracle and magic of A.A.

In 1978, Chairman, Mike R., Former Southwestern Trustee, helped formulate a policy of reproducing items for the collection for distribution to other archival centers and interested members. These included: The prepublication manuscript of Alcoholics Anonymous; a set of 10 Archival Photographs; "Voices of our Co-founders;" Markings on the Journey; the Archival Newsletter, *Markings;* Milton Maxwell's Washingtonian Paper; "A.A.s Roots in the Oxford Group;" "Don't Throw Me Away, I Belong To A.A." material; and the Archival Scrapbook, 1939-42. All these were prepared for the purpose of igniting interest in our past and its' relevancy to our lives today.

The notion that the collection of group histories would help stimulate such interest has been evident for some time. To facilitate the gathering of this information within the groups, GSO is prepared to provide the date a group was first listed at GSO. While the date within our Main Computer might not be the precise "Birthdate" of a group, it can be helpful starting point for the Area/District Archivist or Group Historian. Further research among early-timers might uncover an earlier date, in which case GSO would input that date. These dates, when arranged in a chronological order, would provide a pattern of growth within each delegate Area. Likewise Districts could obtain print-outs by these dates and have some idea of how A.A. grew in that particular district. Groups would have "their place in line." Groups that are unlisted at GSO might have an incentive to do so. . . to become a part of the "whole picture."

Additionally, a small synopsis of each group's history could be gathered from the Area Archivists and included in the regular group file. These could be made available on a scheduled basis to incoming GSRs. In that way, the group's history would be passed on to each succeeding set of officers, who would be encouraged to add to this information bank. It might be that this would lead to a fuller understanding of each group's place in the overall fabric of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Some of the benefits that might be obtained include:

1) the fostering of Unity as members graphically see their group as part of the whole world of A.A.

2) the involvement of many more members of each group in the significance of group history and a deepening appreciation of all our Traditions.

3) the melding of the relevance of the study of our History and Traditions into all our other exchanges both within individual groups and other A.A. matters thereby lessening intramural friction.

4) the recognition of our History as a guide to the creative solution to current problems; such as "addicts" taking over A.A. meetings; loss of older members; introduction of "outside" vocabulary; etc.

5) an increased yield of interesting and meaningful material for the preparation of exhibits for Forums, Assemblies, Conventions and

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GROUP INFORMATION SHEET

PLEASE REVISE/FILL IN ALL PERTINENT DATA **Delegate Area - 02 - Alaska**

GRP SERV #: 0-02-00220
GRP NAME: Sit with the Winners Group
GRP CITY: Fairbanks
GRP STATE: AK
MTG PLACE: Alano Club
ADDRESS 1: 830 6th Ave.
ADDRESS 2:
ZIP CODE:
COUNTRY:

DISTRICT: 01
RUN DATE: 7/23/93
LAST REVISED: 11/13/92
START DATE: 3/8/65

MTG DAYS: SUN MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT — 8:00 P
GRP TYPE: Regular AA Group
LIST IN DIR: Yes
LANGUAGE: English
MEMBERS: 0006

NO CONTRIBUTIONS WERE RECEIVED FROM YOUR GROUP SINCE JANUARY 1.

GEN SERVICE REP
NAME: Dawn C
ADDR 1: 1360 Airport Way #1A4
ADDR 2:
CITY: Fairbanks
ST/PROV: AK
ZIP: 99701
PHONE:
(PLEASE CHECK AREA CODE)

ADDITIONAL CONTACT
NAME: Rumar S.
ADDR 1: 312 5th Ave.
ADDR 2:
CITY: Fairbanks
ST/PROV: AK
ZIP: 99701
PHONE: 907-456-3608
(PLEASE CHECK AREA CODE)

PHONE CONTACT
NAME: Ruma S. PHONE: 907-456-3608

Kerry L.

Nebraska Panel 16 Delegate

"Asking a brain-damaged alcoholic to remember 27 years ago! I wish I could! I have only vague recollections of the Admissions and Conference Policy changes, approving a fourth delegate for the Province of Ontario and the ex-officio service of one year to outgoing committee members.

My most vivid recollection is the Restructuring of the Board of Trustees — primarily because of its importance on the future of A.A. I've told and retold my own personal account of that change over and over through the years, using it to try to impress upon others the importance of service and Tradition Two — hoping to stress that A.A. had, indeed, "come of age" and is responsible for its own future.

Though it will take a lot of words, bear with me. I'll tell it as I remember it...

At 32 years of age I was the youngest delegate, up to that time, to serve. With only seven years of sobriety A.A. election procedure cast me as Nebraska's delegate, having been drawn from the hat after several votes. I was rather unsure of myself and my responsibilites, despite having tried to read all the pre-conference literature mailed to me.

I knew the Restructuring of the Board of Trustees was to be a major item. Listening to others soon after my arrival at the Roosevelt Hotel, I was rather astonished when I heard from opponents to the change that Bill W. was trying to run the show... have things his own way...that he was greedy and continued to be self-centered. I was astonished to hear such talk! I idolized this man I was soon to meet for the first time. I soon sensed there were two factions on this restructuring issue.

All day long on opening day (Monday) of the Conference I heard conversations both for and against the proposed change. But it wasn't until the Delegates Only meeting Monday night that I realized the importance of the issue and heard, from the floor, definite opinions either way. As I recall, we discussed the issue late into the night before finally adjourning. And I seem to recall that during that first Monday afternoon session— before the Delegates Only meeting — Bill, himself, had addressed the Conference primarily to make a 'pitch' for the restructuring.

When I went to my room late that Monday night, my head was swimming. I had no idea how to vote nor how my State would want me to vote on this important issue. I recalled that we'd taken a straw vote before adjourning the Delegates Only session and the issue of restructuring had been turned down in an overwhelming vote. The Delegates wanted no change at this time, though that late-night vote was consensus only.

Unable to sleep and not wanting to keep my wife awake as I pondered the events of the day and the issues before me, I decided to step out into the hallway where I could pace back and forth and get my thoughts together, as well as doing a little praying and some asking for guidance from a Higher Power.

I was astonished to find when I left the room, that other Delegates, too, were outside their doors...some of them pacing and others simply sitting on the floor with their backs to the wall.

A Panel 16 Delegate I'd gotten acquainted with, earlier — Ken K. of Northern California — stood nearby. "Why are you out here?" I asked him. It was then I learned that he, too, was having the same problems I was having confronting this seemingly major issue of a restructuring change. Soon I learned the others in the hallway were trying to sort out their own thoughts.

It was 3:30 or 4 a.m. when I felt tired enough to get a short sleep. But morning came early, as it does for Conference Delegates, and I was up and back downstairs for breakfast.

As the Conference reconvened at 8 a.m. Tuesday morning, I remember the opening question was what we wanted to do first — given the choice of whatever was on the regular agenda or turning first to the issue at hand — the Restructuring of the Board of Trustees. The Conference chose to turn first to the Restructuring...getting that major issue out of the way!

Having seated myself near the front of the auditorium, I was situated near the blackboard and had my camera which I'd used to get numerous pictures for my personal use. I believe it was Midge M. staff member, who acted as counter.

Knowing the overpowering Delegate vote the previous night — only hours earlier — had denied any change and that the issue would fall, I was astonished as vote after vote was recorded after the "Yes!" What about the previous night? What happened to all those "No" votes?

I knew that something deep inside me had changed my own vote from a "no" the previous night to a "yes" that morning. But I wasn't the only one to have changed my mind! And there had been little, if any, discussion between delegates on this all-important change.

I feel, to this day, it was the guidance of a Higher Power. The issue passed, overwhelmingly.

We then went on to other issues. But I'll not forget that Restructuring change nor the look I saw on Bill W's face—almost as if to say, "A.A. has **indeed** Come of Age! I've done all I can do."

CORRECTION

The last issue of "Markings" reminded me of the inaccuracy of the speaker who stated there was no A.A. in San Diego in 1940. Ruth Hock's November 14, 1940 A.A. Bulletin states, "There are several 'working' A.A. members in each of the following cities where meetings are in a get together state" and San Diego is cited. Could a correction be run in the next issue of "Markings"? After all, I have my city's honor to defend!

Paul C., Delegate,
Oceanside, CA