

OKLAHOMA ARCHIVES COMMITTEE

EARL HUSBAND
3101 N.W. 35th
OKLA. CITY, OKLA. 73112
(405) 943 0746

May 1990

The following pages came from
the estate of Margaret Berger, A.A.
secretary from 2-42 thru 12-49
They may be of historical interest
to A.A. archivists. For further
information contact Oklahoma
Archives.

July 19, 1946

ALCOHOLIC FOUNDATION, INC.

RESOLUTION RE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees deems it desirable to create a committee of the Board of Trustees, to be known as the Administrative Committee, to which shall be delegated authority with respect to the business and affairs of Alcoholic Foundation, Inc., and of its General Headquarters office in New York City.

NOW, THEREFORE, it is

RESOLVED: That there be created and **Administrative Committee** of the Board of Trustees to whom there is hereby delegated the following power and authority during the interim between regular meetings of the Board of Trustees:

1. To conduct any of the business and affairs of the Corporation and to manage any of its property, real or personal, provided, however, that nothing in this resolution shall be deemed a delegation of power or authority which by law may not be delegated by the Board of Trustees;

2. To manage the investments and funds of the Corporation and to invest and reinvest the same;

3. To make appropriations of moneys of the Corporation,

including principal of such Capital Fund reserves as are not restricted to the use of income, and to approve expenditures;

4. To authorize the President, or other appropriate officers of the Corporation, to sign and execute instruments in the name of the Corporation and affix the corporate seal thereto; to assign to the President and other officers from time to time such duties as the Committee may determine;

5. To direct the Treasurer to deposit all corporate funds in the corporate name in such bank or banks, trust company or companies, as the Administrative Committee shall designate or approve; to designate persons or combinations of persons who may make disbursements from the moneys of the Corporation.

FURTHER RESOLVED: That the foregoing enumeration of specific powers delegated shall not be construed to limit in any way the general delegation of powers hereinabove provided for in the first section of the foregoing resolution; and it is

FURTHER RESOLVED: That the Board of Trustees shall have the right and power from time to time, without cause, to abolish the Administrative Committee, to terminate any or all of the memberships thereon, and to alter, amend or repeal the foregoing or following resolutions concerning such committee; and it is

FURTHER RESOLVED: That the membership and activities of the Administrative Committee shall be subject to the following rules and regulations:

1. The Administrative Committee shall consist of the President, the treasurer, and one or more additional Trustees, who shall be appointed annually by the Board of Trustees. Unless his membership on such committee shall have been terminated sooner, each such committee member shall serve until the next annual meeting of the Board of Trustees following his appointment and until his successor shall be appointed.

2. The President shall preside at all meetings of the Administrative Committee at which he shall be present. In the absence of the President, the Treasurer shall preside.

3. The Administrative Committee shall report actions taken by it and by its sub-committee to the Board of Trustees at each next succeeding meeting of the Board.

4. Vacancies occurring in the Administrative Committee may be filled by the Board of Trustees.

5. Any member of the Administrative Committee may resign his or her membership by notice in writing to the Secretary of the Corporation and resignations shall be effective upon receipt

of said notice by the Secretary.

6. Regular meeting of the Administrative Committee shall be held according to such schedule or on such dates as shall be fixed by the Committee. Special meetings of the Committee may be called at any time by the President.

7. Notice of meetings of the Administrative Committee shall be given to each member of the Administrative Committee by mail, telephone, or telegraph, not less than two days before the meeting. Any meeting of the Administrative Committee at which every member shall be present, although held without notice, or for which notice shall be duly waived, shall be valid for all actions taken while a quorum is present.

8. For the transaction of business by the Administrative Committee a majority of those present shall decide any question that may come before the meeting.

of said notice by the Secretary.

6. Regular meeting of the Administrative Committee shall be held according to such schedule or on such dates as shall be fixed by the Committee. Special meetings of the Committee may be called at any time by the President.

7. Notice of meetings of the Administrative Committee shall be given to each member of the Administrative Committee by mail, telephone, or telegraph, not less than two days before the meeting. Any meeting of the Administrative Committee at which every member shall be present, although held without notice, or for which notice shall be duly waived, shall be valid for all actions taken while a quorum is present.

8. For the transaction of business by the Administrative Committee a majority of those present shall decide any question that may come before the meeting.

July 23, 1946

A Statement by Leonard V. Harrison on Future
Organization and Responsibility of the Board of
Trustees of the Alcoholic Foundation

This statement is in the nature of a response to Bill Wilson's communication of July 10, 1946, to the Trustees of the Alcoholic Foundation.

I am in entire accord with Bill's ultimate aims. I cherish the spirit and tradition of the A.A. movement and desire to aid in the preservation of its integrity and effectiveness. Yet, I find that I completely disagree with the proposals which Bill makes regarding organizational structure and function, which are the proximate ends and means for reaching our ultimate objective. What he thinks would work better than do our present arrangements, I think would not work at all.

Quite aside from my interest *in* possible research of educational activities which might be regarded as collateral or supplementary to the A.A. movement and within the scope of our Charter, I believe that integration of the **trustee** function with the Group operating and periodical publishing function would deprive the Foundation of its present opportunity of **exercising** a sort of remote control on an advisory basis, would engulf us in every current question and passing storm, would place us in situations where we are not truly qualified to act, and would ultimately destroy such usefulness as we are now able to bring to

A.A.

It is a little difficult to reply to some of Bill's points without appearing to be negatively captious and critical, which appearance would not reflect the real spirit of my comments. Yet, in the interest of brevity I shall set down certain observations and comments without elaboration, and summarize my views at the end.

"Some of us think the Alcoholic Foundation ought to be at the exact center of the A.A. movement, serving A.A. only."

Comment: We are not qualified to be at the exact center of the A.A. movement.

"And so, of course, fully committed to the policies and Traditions of the A.A. Groups."

Comment: We are fully committed to the policies and traditions which the Groups develop but we do not determine Group policies or traditions.

". . . our A.A. Headquarters . . . should be informally democratic in feeling and democratic in structure;"

Comment: This would involve the Board of Trustees in all of the problems, "**politics**", and pressures, arising among the groups.

". . . both the Central Office and Grapevine were each going

concerns, and completely committed to A.A. for a considerable period before they ever became linked to the Alcoholic Foundation."

Comment: Exactly. And they should continue as going concerns, exclusively responsible for matters directly affecting the Group movement.

"If, for example, the Foundation began to endorse or finance other projects, if it began to accept large gifts with which to actively enter other fields, the Groups would almost surely hold the Trustees to be departing from well established Tradition. If the Trustees persisted, the Groups would, after a time, no doubt short circuit the Foundation, and send their funds direct to their Central Office. "

Comment: They do so now in reality. We merely put the money in the bank in a segregated account and disburse it for expenses of the Central Office.

"If Smith and I were then both gone, they would probably ask the Grapevine Editor and the General A.A. Secretary to suggest names for a new Foundation Board. Or they might convoke a convention of A.A. leaders for that purpose. Let us never say these things couldn't happen. "

Comment: These are the things that will happen, if we become a Board of Directors of the A.A. Group Movement and the Grapevine Publication. .

"Group experience is often turbulent. . . , Our non-alcoholic Trustees can have no possible conception of the terrific emotional storms that sometimes sweep the Groups."

Comment: We are now outside the path of these storms. If we assume the responsibilities proposed, we would be right in the direct path of every storm and I venture the prediction that a Democratic Board, responsible to ~~900~~ Groups, would undergo reorganization after reorganization.

"Here at Headquarters we cannot afford to make even one grave policy blunder. A single major mistake could touch off such an emotional chain explosion among the groups that it might make the Alcoholic Foundation look like Hiroshima, the day after . "

Comment: That is exactly what would happen, in my opinion, in the event that we enter the arena to participate in all of the future group struggles and difficulties.

"That. . . is the underlying reason why we have insisted on so many non-alcoholics at the Foundation. We shall always need them to counsel with us. Sometimes they will have to protect us from ourselves."

Comment: Yet we cannot offer the protective service unless we are removed to an off-center position.

"**SO**, on behalf of the A.A. Groups, I am ardently hoping the Foundation will soon "join **A.A.**"; that **it will irrevocably commit** itself to our **A.A** policy tradition; **thus** truly qualifying its Trustees to be the chief custodians of these, our very cherished possessions."

Comment: We can be custodians, as a sort of appellate body, **but** not as an Executive Authority responsive to **900** Groups.

"Yet I cannot believe that such a structure could possibly **meet** our need for the future. I believe that it would prove gravely defective; that it would always tend to drift away from vital A.A. Tradition because neither the Foundation nor the Headquarter's structure as a whole would be truly democratic."

Comment: **How** can non-alcoholic Trustees ever **be** truly democratic representatives of the membership of A.A. Groups?

"It may still be within our ability to forestall **such** calamities. We can now publicly commit the Alcoholic Foundation **to the** Alcoholics Anonymous **movement.**"

Comment: To do so would deprive the Foundation of its separate identity and **cause** the loss of some advantages.

"It cannot be denied that the Alcoholic Foundation of today is quite undemocratic, and not enough responsible to the A.A. movement which supports it and depends upon it.'"

Comment: Is it **ccrrect** to say that the Alcoholic Foundation

is being supported? We are in a true sense Trustees. All moneys derived from alcoholics, directly or indirectly, are expended for the A.A. movement or held in trust for such expenditures without a single penny's deduction.

"Therefore, the observations of this letter are not upon persons **but** rather upon possible latent and grave defects. . ."

Comment: Is it reasonable to prejudge the future adversely, by assuming that latent defects may **become** potent evils?

"**Make** the Grapevine Editor and the A.A. General Secretary voting members of the General Policy Committee. Invite the Assistant General Secretary to Policy Committee meetings to record its minutes and to train her in policy matters."

Comment: We should distinguish between general policy as applicable to the A.A. Groups, and policy governing the actions of the Trustees of the Foundation.

"**Such** simple arrangements, if they became traditional, could furnish a permanent soil in which the spirit of democracy and partnership might best survive and grow."

Comment: Presumably the suggestions relate to giving the Secretary and Editor status. In my opinion, their status derives from the A.A. movement, which is superior to anything the Trustees can give.

"There is a further reason for attempting democratic informality."

Comment: I see no need to employ "democratic informality" in signing leases for office space, setting salary schedules, authorizing audits, controlling funds, making contracts, and so on.

"Of course the Trustees must see to it that these two people (General Secretary and Grapevine Editor) never stray off on serious tangents. Yet it is bound to be true, in the long run, that the Trustees will not be able to treat them as subordinates or employees. "

Comment: There appears to be a degree of sensitivity embedded in the statement about the employer-employee relationship which must be straightened out. The Trustees have not elevated themselves to a position of superiority. I think that all of us very genuinely feel a sense of humility in comparing our simple and lusterless role to the "broad leadership" exercised by the principals at the Headquarters and Grapevine offices. Nevertheless, our trusteeship imposes a clear-cut responsibility and we must exercise specific authority commensurate with our responsibility in order to perform specific duties.

It happens that our authority lies in a relatively unimportant zone and that the General Secretary, for example, exercises her discretion and authority in an important zone when

she deals with individuals and *groups* of alcoholics. There is no issue of subordination or superiority, no question of being trusted or distrusted, that I can discover.

The Board of Trustees of Columbia University and the Board of Overseers of Harvard (it is the same with many others) appoint the President and heads of faculties, fix salary scales, authorize contracts for the construction of buildings and manage the Universities' fiscal affairs. The exercise of those functions does not derogate from the scholastic and executive status of the Deans of the Medical and Law Schools. They have a standing in their respective worlds far above that of the Trustees and Overseers who have an authoritative relation to phases of their worlds. The University Council at Columbia, for example, is composed of Deans and Professors - employees and subordinates if you wish to so label them. But as to the primary matters of the University's educational affairs, they are not subordinates 'in the ordinary meaning of that term. So it is with the General Secretary, the Grapevine Editor, and with the Trustees, whose anonymity can scarcely be matched by any of the A.A. leaders of the smallest Groups in the land.

I quite realize that one can work behind the *scenes* in splendid anonymity and yet exercise formidable power. We have not wielded power. We have entered into the sphere of administrative matters only when urged to do so. Who knows what future members of the Board will do? Let us hope that they will be flexible enough to do their work consistently with their

she deals with individuals and groups of alcoholics. There is no issue of subordination or superiority, no question of being trusted or distrusted, that I can discover.

The Board of Trustees of Columbia University and the Board of Overseers of Harvard (it is the same with many others) appoint the President and heads of faculties, fix salary scales, authorize contracts for the construction of buildings and manage the Universities' fiscal affairs. The exercise of those functions does not derogate from the scholastic and executive status of the Deans of the Medical and Law Schools. They have a standing in their respective worlds far above that of the Trustees and Overseers who have an authoritative relation to phases of their worlds. The University Council at Columbia, for example, is composed of Deans and Professors ~ employees and subordinates if you wish to so label them. But as to the primary matters of the University's educational affairs, they are not subordinates 'in the ordinary meaning of that term. So it is with the General Secretary, the Grapevine Editor, and with the Trustees, whose anonymity can scarcely be matched by any of the A.A. leaders of the smallest Groups in the land.

I quite realize that one can work behind the *scenes* in splendid anonymity and yet exercise formidable power. We have not wielded power. We have entered into the sphere of administrative matters only when urged to do so. Who knows what future members of the Board will do? Let us hope that they will be flexible enough to do their work consistently with their

trust. Let us not try now to forge any organizational bonds to guarantee that they will act in the future as we now would wish them to act.

In summary I would say that Bill is hoping for too much when he envisages the Foundations as a protecting, stabilizing authority standing Gibralterlike, yet directly involved in guiding A. A. Group affairs. Organized as we are at present and responsible as trustee-custodians of funds and not responsive to the democratic processes of the Groups, we find that we can, indeed, serve as a stabilizing force. If we were established as a tripartite head of the A.A. movement we would be pitched into the arena of controversy and would become the shining target of any group disagreeing with our governance. We non-alcoholics would be immediately disqualified by the easy retort, "Who are they to represent us anyway."

The trustees may become a target in any case, but at least we are not thrusting ourselves forward into a vulnerable position where we would be expected to "enforce" the spirit, tradition and purity of the early A.A. movement. Structure and organization cannot do that. Nor do I believe that a small group of individual trustees can do it.

The more humble role which I have in mind for the trustees does not, I think you will agree, foreshadow any inclination for us to enlarge the orbit of our power.

It is my solid conviction that Bills plan of organization

would lead to the very confusion and disintegration against which he seeks to safeguard the A.A. movement. My personal preference against which he seeks to safeguard the A.A. movement. My personal preference is to see Bill put his thought on creating the safeguards democratically arrived at, perhaps the organization of a General Council, within the A.A. Group movement itself, and to let us serve the CAUSE by standing to one side and looking after the chores of the sort which have heretofore occupied us.

Bill has looked to the weaker bulwark as a Preserver of the Faith.

THE GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE OF
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS
(North American Section)

Purpose, **Structure**, Scope and Principles :

I General Purpose

The General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous **ought to be** a representative cross section of the A.A. movement capable of guiding, perpetuating and making economically secure, our principal world services -- The Alcoholic Foundation, The A.A. General Service Committee, The A.A. Grapevine and the A.A. General Service Office in **New York**.

In all its affairs the Conference ought to feel bound by, and pledged to uphold the "12 Points of Alcoholics Anonymous Tradition".

Thus our conference will ever carry good news of **AA** to the world and so facilitate abundant 12th Step Work and the growth of new groups everywhere; it should guarantee sound **intergroup** and public relations thereby helping to insure our general effectiveness **and** unity as a movement. The Conference will always **be a body of special service**, never of government. **But it** ought to be able to publish its views with respect to any problem seriously affecting **A.A. as** a whole.

II General Responsibilities

(a) Meeting yearly, **or** specially if required, the Conference

ought to hear the reports of The Alcoholic Foundation, The A.A. General Service Committee, The A.A. Grapevine, **and** the A.A. General Service Office. Thereupon the Conference ought to publish to all the A.A. Groups its Annual Report covering the state of our General Services and Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole.

(b) After full discussion the Conference ought to pass any needed resolutions respecting the conduct of The Alcoholic Foundation, the General Service Committee, The Grapevine ~~OK~~ the General Office. On majority vote such resolutions would be suggestive only, but upon **a** two-thirds vote such resolutions ought to be considered traditionally binding upon all Conference members and may be published in the Conference Annual Report.

(c) While never a government, the Conference ought nevertheless feel free to discuss, pass and generally publish resolutions concerning any serious deviation from A.A. Tradition ~~OK~~ misapplication of the name "Alcoholics Anonymous". Provided however, that such resolutions **are not personal** ~~OK~~ punitive in their aim, and have been authorized by two thirds vote of the Conference members present. The Conference may also authorize the Foundation to **take** similar action if, in the judgment of the Trustees, an emergency warrants such a step.

III Special Warranties of the Conference,

(a) The Conference ought to **specially** warrant that A.A. shall never have **any** center of government; that the Conference shall devote itself only to those General Services which cannot

be performed locally or regionally; and that these services shall be of widespread benefit, vital in character, and as few in number as may be reasonably possible.

(b) The Conference ought very specially pledge that it will never become divided within itself or undertake any outside controversy with respect to religion, politics or reform; that it shall always hew to its single object -- world wide special service to the alcoholic who wishes to recover.

(c) The Conference ought specially guarantee that its Custodial Arm, The Alcoholic Foundation, never becomes a repository of perilous wealth for any reason; whether by bequest, large gift or commercial engagement; that the Foundation devote its funds to A.A. purposes exclusively. The A.A. movement, as such, should ever remain poor. Enough current operating monies, plus a safe reserve for all contingencies ought to be the financial principle of the Conference. But, at all levels, paid A.A. service workers should be well recompensed; substandards will surely prove costly in the end. Our A.A. service expenses are trifling per member; we can wisely afford to be generous.

(d) The Conference ought to take great care that no section, committee or persons, whether Group representatives, trustees, editors, secretaries of chairmen, ever be placed in a position of unqualified authority, one over the other; that no important decisions or difference of opinion ever be settled except upon discussion and vote. Alcoholics Anonymous is a democracy.

(e) The Conference will always be specially concerned that

none of its members acquire undue personal power within the Conference or among the A.A. Groups. Any striving for dangerous personal power will, however, be easily distinguished from the quiet reception of simple gratitude for services well rendered. **Now**, from A.A. as a whole, ought Conference members seek to remain too obscure. Continued success for the Conference will always rest squarely upon wide personal contact and warm personal confidence. There is no other way.

IV General Structure of the Conference

The General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous ought to be, in general principle, a rotating committee, derived of the whole A.A. movement, and containing within itself, as incorporated arms, The Alcoholic Foundation, The General Service Committee, The Grapevine, The General Office, and such other units of service as the Conference may feel it wise to create. At the heart of A.A. we shall ever need a democratic Center of Service corresponding in fundamental principle to the rotating committee of an A.A. group or intergroup.

V Conference Membership

The General Service Conference ought to consist of regional representatives of the A.A. Groups, trustees of the Alcoholic Foundation, senior editors of The Grapevine staff, senior secretaries of the General Office staff, and such others as the Conference may designate.

VI Designation of Conference Members

(a) The A.A. Group representatives ought to be the designees of their several appropriate regions. These members ought to constitute a substantial majority of the fully-developed Conference.

(b) The Special Service members will consist of the trustees of The Alcoholic Foundation, nine in number, plus three representatives each from The Grapevine and the General Office and the chairman of the A.A. General Service Committee, who ought to act as vice-chairman of the Conference.

(c) A Special Panel by Conference Invitation ought to include Groups representatives from regions not touched by the designation system hereinafter shown, foreign representatives, and such other persons of special usefulness as the Conference may wish to include.

VII Method of Rotation and Ultimate Size of the Conference

In addition to the special service members above described (custodians, editors, secretaries, etc.) it is thought the A.A. General Service Conference should be basically formed upon a plan of "Panels of Twelve", each panel serving four years.

Thus, in the first year of the Conference, 12 Group representatives would attend, the second year 24, the third year 36, and the fourth year 48.

Each year thereafter the Conference will release its oldest panel and receive a new one. At this point the Conference will

comprise 48 Group Representatives plus 16 special service members (more if later desirable) and a special representative of Akron Group Number one - a total Conference of 64.

On a two-thirds vote the Conference may, at the end of any four year cycle, increase its own membership by merely enlarging each Panel. Within reason the A.A. Groups should be as well represented as they wish. Yet, the Conference ought not become too expensive or unwieldy.

VIII Regional Origins of the Four Conference "Panels of 12"

The regions supplying Conference "Panels of 12" will be determined as follows:

(a) North America ought to be divided into four convenient areas, or quadrants, by using 40 degrees N. Latitude and 95 degrees W. Longitude. State and National boundaries are to be disregarded. A.A. ought not be a matter of geography or nationality.

(b) Panel One ought to be created by inviting each of the three largest Groups or Intergroups within each quadrant to name, at their regional assemblies, a Conference member for four years. These would total 12, three from each quadrant.

(c) Panel Two - This would be created exactly as panel one, by requesting the next three largest Groups or Intergroups within each quadrant to same Conference members for four-year terms.

(d) Panel Three - This panel ought to weigh each of the four quadrants as to A.A. population. Hence the next 12 largest

Groups or Intergroups regardless of Quadrant would be asked to supply Conference members. Thus quadrants having greater A.A. population would be more heavily represented on this, the third panel.

(e) Panel Four - By invitation of the Conference, Panel four will fill gaps in the Group representation and will allow foreign participation as needed.

Note -- It would be entirely desirable in connection with Panel One to invite a representative from Akron, Ohio as a special Conference member from A.A. Group Number One.

IX Methods of Regional Selection of Conference Members

Alcoholics Anonymous being autonomous, it will be strictly the affair of each region, how its Conference member shall be chosen.

But it is earnestly suggested that, while the process ought to be democratic, the selection of Conference members should be as free of political motivation as possible. All groups in a designated area ought to participate in the selection if they wish.

Where ~~several~~ equally desirable nominations are possible it may often be better to choose the Conference member and his alternates by lot rather than by straight election. No dissatisfied minority would then be created and the Conference member so chosen would attend the Conference more in a spirit of service, than in the role of a political victor. But in sections

quite free from rivalries, a regional committee may prefer to elect directly its Conference member.

X Structure and Responsibilities of the Service Arms of the Conference

(a) The Alcoholic Foundation: The Alcoholic Foundation is the Custodial Arm of the General Service Conference.

Its trustees, five non-alcoholics and four alcoholics, serving four year terms, are responsible for the general funds of the AA movement. They *own*, in trust for A.A., Works Publishing, Inc., (publisher of the book Alcoholics Anonymous) and all standard A.A. literature. They are authorized to make contracts and purchases on behalf of the General Service Conference. They own, in trust, the A.A. Grapevine, Inc., and are the repository for Group voluntary contributions allocated to the operation of the A. A. General Service Office.

The trustees are generally responsible for the integrity, and effectiveness of both A.A. Office and Grapevine, but their relation to these active services is usually custodial rather than directly managerial. The trustees are the overseers of the A.A. general public relations and if, in their opinion, a special Conference meeting is not necessary for the purpose, they may make general policy **decisions** of top importance in the absence of the Conference.

The trustees normally name their own successors, subject to Conference approval.

(b) The A.A. General Service Committee:

This Arm of the general Service Conference reports to the Alcoholic Foundation. It **will usually** consist of two trustees, the senior Grapevine editor and the senior General Office secretary. These four members choose a chairman, not necessarily a trustee.

The General Service Committee, under advice of the Conference, makes its yearly arrangements, and its Chairman normally acts as Vice-Chairman of the Conference. The General Service Committee chairman ought to be present at all meetings of the Board of Trustees.

The general service Committee **usually** decides all questions of A.A. policy arising at the General Office **or** the Grapevine, not important enough to warrant a meeting of the trustees.

The General Service Committee members also **act as** directors of Works Publishing, thereby issuing and managing our AA standard publications. The Chairman of the General Service Committee is President of Works Publishing; The General Off ice member is executive secretary.

The General Service Committee ordinarily attends to the normal business arrangements of the General Office, referring only large matters of expense or business policy to the Foundation.

But the trustees may, when necessary, take full jurisdiction of any question arising in the General Service Committee or in Works Publishing Inc.

(c) The A.A. Grapevine, *Inc.*, is the Editorial Arm of the Conference and the principal monthly journal of Alcoholics Anonymous. It mirrors current A.A. thought and feeling. It can lend itself to commercial use or to highly controversial issues.

The directorate of The A.A. Grapevine, *Enc.*, contains both trustees and editors, the latter **always** exceeding the former by one. These directors are the business management of The Grapevine.

The Grapevine editorial management consists of the senior editor **and** his volunteer staff. The senior editor is the final judge of **what** is printed, save when **serious** questions of AA policy are involved which ought to be resolved by the General Service Committee or the Foundation.

The senior editor of The Grapevine ought be available for consultation at all Foundation meetings.

The Grapevine staff members normally names their own successors, **subject to Foundation** approval.

(d) ~~The A.A. General Service Office.~~ o f t h e General Service Conference is the active agency of publication, public relations, propagation, mediation and information. To a considerable degree, the success of the Conference must depend on the morale, continuity and effectiveness of this arm of General Service.

Routine policy and business conduct of the General Office is the executive province of its senior secretary and staff. Above this level the General Office must report to the General Service

Committee.

The senior secretary ought to be available at all Foundation meetings save when the secretary's qualification or salary is under discussion. The compensation of the General Office secretarial staff must be fixed by the Trustees.

The General Office secretaries may name new secretarial associates, but always subject to careful review and approval by the General Service Committee and the Alcoholic Foundation.

IX Traditional Authorization of the Conference -

(a) While containing within itself several legally incorporated Units of Service, the Conference itself ought to remain unincorporated. The authorization of the Conference is traditional, not legal.

(b) Three quarters of the Conference members present ought to make a quorum for any resolution.

(c) The Conference may make suitable by-laws respecting its own meetings, procedure, officers, committees and proper provision for Conference expenses.

(d) Upon a resolution of two thirds of those present, the Conference may, if within the terms of the AA Tradition, alter its own structure to meet changing needs.

(e) Further, the Conference may, upon a vote of two thirds present, ask for the resignation or replacement of any editor, trustee, secretary or committeeman regardless of legal consideration. All service members of the Conference ought to

consider such an action to be traditionally binding upon them.

XII Finally, it ought forever be recalled that the North American General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous is not a political organization; it is a service structure only.

Linked to similar A.A. Service Conferences throughout the world, the North American Conference always ought to stand as a symbol to our indissoluble unity. May this Conference specially and deeply dedicate itself to "Carrying the AA Message to all who suffer alcoholism"; may it ever remember that the A.A. Movement, as such, ought never be organized. And may each Conference member well personify the Tradition of Alcoholics Anonymous: "For true leaders of A.A. are but trusted and experienced servants of the whole. They derive no real authority from their titles; they do not govern. Universal respect is the key to their usefulness. "

TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE ALCOHOLIC FOUNDATION

Bedford Hills
New York
April 6, 1947

Dear Friends:

Following our past year of deliberation on questions touching the A.A. Headquarters **policy** and structure, I have ventured to prepare the enclosed material under the title: The Alcoholic Foundation of Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow.

The first section, The Alcoholic Foundation of Yesterday, is purely historical. It is designed to show the evolution of our central structure since its small beginning in 1937. This section, published serially in the Grapevine, could help greatly to inform every **AA** about us and clear away a certain amount of misunderstanding that has quite naturally arisen for sheer lack of printed facts. May we have your consent to publication?

Section two, The Alcoholic Foundation of Today, is, to some degree, a misnomer, because it has been written as though the several suggested changes in structure and money policy still under consideration were already in effect. Doctor Bob and I wish to place this section before the Foundation Reorganization Committee for their study and recommendations.

Section three is an attempt to construct a central structure for AA of the future -- one which might stand a better chance of survival than our present incomplete design. This would involve changing the name of the Foundation and the creation of a yearly **Ccnference**. This too, is, of **course**, a matter first for the Reorganization Committee and then **for** the **Board** of Trustees.

Should we be able to agree on sections two and three, or some better modification of them, it might then prove desirable to incorporate all three sections into a pamphlet to be distributed to our whole membership.

Meanwhile it seems right to Dr. Bob and me that this material be placed before all the Trustees pending the study and report of the Reorganization Committee.

Appreciatively yours,

William G. Wilson

Re: Suggestions for "The General Service
Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous"

By Bill

Dear Friends:

For ~~our~~ new Trustees and for those already familiar with the matter outlined below, I hope this letter may prove timely and helpful.

We Trustees have long been faced with a most serious problem which, in my estimate, involves questions so grave that the propagation, security and essential unity of the Alcoholics Anonymous movement may finally and heavily depend on how we answer them.

I think the essence of the problem is this: Should the A.A. movement now be entrusted with the guidance of its principal overall services at New York, viz., The Foundation, Grapevine and A.A. General Office? Or, ought these vital A.A. services continue to be the exclusive function of a wholly independent Board of Trustees such as we of the Foundation are today?

More specifically: Should Alcoholics Anonymous, through suitable representation; now be given some degree of direct control over its own financial ~~assets~~, literature, general policy and top service people? And if so, then by what means and to what extent?

In this time when A.A. infarcy is passing and maturity is at hand, it is my sober belief that no more serious questions have ever confronted our Foundation Board. Time is flying; these issues affecting our destiny are squarely upon us.

Throughout A.A., whether at Group, Intergroup or Regional levels, the members of Alcoholics Anonymous choose those who manage their special services; and the Committees so chosen are directly accountable to Group or Delegate's meetings. The day of the old timers and their friends has gone; they no longer manage. Only one exception to this now universal A.A. Tradition of direct accountability remains. That is the Alcoholic Foundation. We Trustees are virtually unknown to the A.A. movement; our isolation from the Society whose vital affairs we have in charge increases every year.

It is now clear to many Trustees that this growing isolation of the Foundation may some day prove the undoing of A.A. Headquarters. We already see the symptoms of real trouble. Financial support from the A.A. Groups has fallen off. Quite alarmingly, too. The Foundation now receives but 60¢ a member per year, compared with a dollar a member not long ago. It is evident that the average A.A. nowadays has no means of learning directly through someone he personally knows what his Foundation does or who runs it. He doesn't feel he is a participant so he cares less and less. So his Group sends the Foundation little, if anything. Though there be other reasons, this, I feel, is the underlying cause of our drooping finances. Obviously, in this delicate situation, a movement problem too hot for the Trustees to handle, even a single public relations blunder, might collapse Foundation support over night. Once so lost, how could confidence be restored? Without any ability to act through its own chosen regional representatives, how then could the A A. movement ever reinstate its own Headquarters? Of course it could not. That would be disaster indeed.

To begin plugging this dangerous open end, our Foundation Chairman recently appointed a "Conference Committee" to study and report. At the April meeting, the Board directed the Committee to continue its deliberations, bringing in a definite recommendation in July if possible. Since I shall be absent in Europe during the Committee meetings, it seems proper that I supply the Committee and all Trustees alike with the foregoing background and with two brief papers which I attach hereto.

The first is titled, "Suggested Conference Proposals" which are six in number, each carrying 8 comment on its scope. These "Proposals" represent all possible courses which might be taken. As I personally favor "Proposal 6", I have amplified its principles in a second paper called "12 Suggestions for a 'General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous'", which might be the basis for a tentative agreement between the Trustees and the A.A. Groups.

Therein I have tried to apply the already accepted "Tradition of Alcoholic Anonymous" to our Headquarters problem, these "12 Suggestions" for the "General Service Conference" being the concrete result. Because such a Conference would be informal, and would have traditional powers only, I have stated its principles informally. So structured it would be far easier to secure Group understanding and approval if and when that might be desired.

You will note that this particular plan preserves all the legal prerogatives of the Trustees, yet would give the Groups a real basis for effective participation. These "12 Suggestions for a Conference" recapitulate my many years of experience in A.A. service matters as well as the closest and most anxious study of our Headquarters need.

As such, may I recommend them for your most earnest consideration?

As ever,

SUGGESTIONS FOR: THE GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE OF
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS (NORTH AMERICAN SECTION)

By: W.G.W.

1. The Conference ought to be composed of Regional (or State and Provincial) representatives, The Trustees of The Alcoholic Foundation, and members of the General Office and Grapevine Staffs.
2. The Conference ought to uphold the Tradition of Alcoholics Anonymous afford a reliable cross section of A.A. opinion, and be capable of guiding and perpetuating our principal world services, The Alcoholic Foundation, The A.A. Grapevine and The A.A. General Service Office. The Conference will be a service body only; never a government.
3. Meeting yearly, or specially if required, the Conference ought to hear the reports of its incorporated arms - Foundation, Grapevine and General Office, pass any needed resolutions respecting the conduct of these services; also any needed resolutions respecting serious deviations from A.A. Tradition or misapplication of the name Alcoholics Anonymous; and thereupon render a full report to the A.A. Groups concerning these proceedings and the state of Alcoholics Anonymous generally.
4. A resolution of the Conference passed by a two-thirds vote ought to be traditionally (although not legally) binding upon the Trustees of the Alcoholic Foundation and all Headquarters Services, but suggestive only to A.A. as a whole. A resolution by less than two-thirds vote will be suggestive in all cases; and no resolution ought ever be aggressive or personally punitive in its aim.
5. The Alcoholic Foundation is authorized by the Conference as its Custodial Agent with power to make contracts and conduct public relations in the name of Alcoholics Anonymous and to insure the financial and managerial integrity of the A.A. General Service Office and the A.A. Grapevine.
6. Ordinarily the Trustees will name their own successors, subject to advice and consent of the Conference. But upon a two-thirds vote, the Foundation and Headquarters Services ought to be traditionally amenable to reorganization.
7. The Conference ought to be rotating in character, the delegates serving in panels - none to be in office for more than four years. But the Conference may, on two-thirds vote, invite special representatives or panels not to exceed 25% of its regional membership.
8. The Regional Delegates will be chosen by their respective localities, States or Provinces by election from local assemblies, or by lot from suitable nominations thereof, whichever is desired.
9. A quorum for Conference business ought to require two-thirds of the membership in attendance.
10. The Conference ought to warrant that A.A. shall never have any center of government; that it shall always confine its services exclusively to Alcoholics Anonymous; and that these services be of widespread benefit and as few in number as reasonably possible.

11. The Conference ought specially warrant that its Custodial Agent, The Alcoholic Foundation, never becomes the repository of perilous wealth for any reason; that it refuse all contributions of any kind, save from the A.A. Groups themselves ; and that no more than sufficient operating monies plus prudent reserves be its guiding financial principle.

12. The Conference , as Service Successor to the Founders, shall always be concerned that none of its members acquire undue personal power; that no persons, whether Group representatives, Trustees, Chairmen, Editors or Secretaries shall, except for routine executive and editorial duties, ever be placed in a position of unqualified authority over the others; that all important differences or decisions be settled by discussion and vote. For, like the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous, the Conference ought ever remain democratic in principle.

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR QUARTERLY MEETING
of the
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
of
THE ALCOHOLIC FOUNDATION, INC.

July 25, 1949

The regular quarterly meeting of the Board of Trustees of The Alcoholic Foundation, Inc., was held at the Hotel New Weston, New York City, on **July 25, 1949.**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Harrison at **7:05 p.m.**

Roll **call found** all present with the **exception** of Mr. Bernard **Smith.**

The minutes were *read and Mr. Anderson* moved correction of the minutes to show that the resolution offered by Mr. Amos in reference to Mr. Richardson **made** at the meeting in April were seconded by Mr. Stanley and **carried.**

The Treasurer's report was read and placed on **file.**

It was moved, **seconded** and carried that the Treasurer be authorized to transfer *funds from* the General Account to the Group Account in an amount not to exceed \$10,000 and this to be repaid to the original account when the Group Account was solvent.

Mr. Stanley moved a special order of **business** to hear Mr. Henry **Grieme** report for the General Service **Committee.**

Mr. **Grieme** reported: that there had been a **Press Conference**; that *there* had been a rewording of the Steps of Tradition; and **recommended** a leave of absence **to Mrs. Margaret Burger with pay and medical expenses from** August 1st to January 1st.

The committee further reported consideration of Mrs. **Marion Mallet**, Mrs. Ruth **Breen**, and **Miss Polly Fordyce.**

Mr. Harrison commented on the report.

The President reported **a conference** with Mr. **Swenson** relative to translation of pamphlets into Norwegian and has **arranged** for that to be done subject *to* review by an Editorial **Committee.**

It was proposed that the pamphlets be published *here* and printed abroad.

Mr. Harrison asked that he be released as Resident of the Board of Trustees as of October **1949.**

He **requested** permission to appoint a Nominating **Committee**, such **committee** to consider method of selection of Trustees.

It **was** so moved **by Mr. Chipman**, seconded by Mr. **Kerr** and **carried.**

Communications were read from Mr. James Carey and Dr. Robert Smith.

The Finance Committee had no report.

The Grapevine Committee reported the publication to be nearly **self-sustaining**.

Mr. Stanley **moved** the nomination Of Dr. Robert Smith as **Trustee**.

Motion **was** seconded by Mr. **Birrell** and Dr. Smith **was** duly elected in accordance with Article V of the **By-Laws**.

Mr. Kerr **moved** the nomination of **Mr. Thomas Yutzy**.

The motion **was** seconded by Mr. Stanley and Mr. **Yutzy** was duly elected in accordance with Article V of the By-Laws.

The chair appointed **Messrs. Yutzy, Birrell, Chipman, Kerr and Wilson** as the Nominating **Committee**.

Mr. Stanley **moved** that Mr. Anderson be elected **to** succeed to the **post** left vacant on the Grapevine **Board**.

Motion **was** seconded by Mr. Birrell and carried.

It **was moved** by Mr. Stanley, seconded by **Mr. Amos** and carried that The Alcoholic Foundation recess and sit a6 **stockholders** of **Works** Publishing.

Mr. Harrison **offered** hi6 resignation a6 **President** and Director of the Works publishing **Company**.

It was moved by Mr. **Kerr**, seconded by Mr. **Anderson** and carried that Dr. Strong be elected **Director** of **Works** Publishing **Company**.

It was moved by Mr. Anderson, **seconded** by Mr. Kerr and carried that The Alcoholic **Foundation reconvene**.

It was moved by **Mr. Chipman**, **seconded** by Mr. Kerr and carried **that** the vote by **mail** after the **April** meeting On the acceptance Of gifts be **ratified**.

It **was** moved by Mr. Stanley and seconded by Mr. Birrell that **owing to** the illness of Mrs. Margaret Burger **that** her office 16 declared vacated and that **in appreciation** of her **valuable** services she be paid **50%** of one **year's salary** plus **medical expenses** incident to present illness not to exceed **\$2,000. to** be effective as of August **1, 1949**.

It **is** further understood **that** this sum is **to** be paid from Foundation **Funds**.

Motion was carried.

Mr. Wilson not voting.

It was **moved** by Mr. Amos, seconded by Mrs. **Birrell** that Mrs. **Marion** Mallet be offered the position of Senior General Secretary of General Service **Headquarters** at a salary of **\$400.** per month, effective August 1, 1949, and Mrs. Ruth Breen be offered the position of General Secretary at **\$400.** per month; both on a temporary basis for **six** months, to be continued if mutually agreeable.

Mrs. **Mallet** to be Senior Secretary for the period of one year, at which time the seniority till be rotated and so successively at yearly intervals, subject to change at the discretion of the General Service Committee.

Motion was carried.

Messrs. Harrison and **Kerr** voting **nay**.

It was moved by Mr. Amos, seconded by Mr. Stanley **that** as of August 1st the Secretarial Staff be composed of':

Ann Lohman	at a salary of	\$325.	per month
Virginia Trigg	"	300.	" "
Polly Fordyce	"	300.	" "
Lucy Pope	"	250.	" "

Motion was carried.

Mr. **Kerr** voting **nay**.

Meeting adjourned at **11:20** p.m.

Signed:


Secretary

EXCERPTS FROM LETTER WRITTEN BY BILL TO GOVERNOR DEWEY
OF NEW YORK STATE FOLLOWING AN INFORMAL CONFERENCE WITH
HIM ON "STATE LEGISLATION" RE ALCOHOLISM

1/19/49

Because I doubt we were altogether clear, it occurs that you might wish to file a recap of the points we attempted to make:

1. Chronic alcoholism is a lethal illness, rated by the U.S. Surgeon General's Office as our fourth largest health problem. Only cancer, syphilis and tuberculosis are more serious.
2. According to current (Yale) estimates there may be four million chronic alcoholics in the U.S. Doubtless New York State has its pro-rata share of these; probably 2% of its total population is seriously afflicted.
3. In some 28 states legislation has been proposed or enacted.
4. Thoughtful A.A. members believe that many of these proposals are unrealistic and dear; that if tried on a large scale they will create much legal and bureaucratic futility; very expensive and hard to dislodge.
5. It is the feeling among A.A.'s that over the years New York State could do much with its total alcoholic problem provided a careful initial investigation be made, pooling the opinion and experiences of all those who deal with the alcoholic first to find out what sinks and what swims. Such a method would create a vested interest in theories or guesses; it might lead to progressive and practical answers.
6. Alcoholics Anonymous has 80,000 members and we are adding

20,000 new ones yearly. Nearly all large cities and towns in New York State have fast growing A.A. Groups. These people have been inmates of every kind of institution, have experienced every known treatment -- or lack of treatment. Here is a vast pool of experience, very practical indeed, Neither A.A. as a whole, nor any recovered member wants a cent of subsidy. A.A. members are seldom indigent; our combined earning power ranges around \$300,000,000 annually. 

But all A.A. members would like to see the non-recovered alcoholic get an equal break with other sick people; adequate asylum care is insane; if not insane, but incurably irresponsible when in the community, then perhaps semi-confinement on a farm where he could partly earn his keep: for the curable alcoholic, access to public hospitals, and, most important, access to the community general hospital which today will not take alcoholics at any price. Unless a serious offense has been committed, let us substitute hospitals for jails. Provide alcohol education and permanent recovery suggestions to all hospitalized **curables** who are interested. Revise commitment procedures with great care.

This is the general line of A.A. thought on the total problem at present. How much of it is really feasible could be determined, of course, by actual comparison with other points of view and patient experimental tests.

7. We trust it is ever so clear that A.A. members would wish for but one thing should New York State decide to tackle its

problem of alcoholism. We would ask that a few of our representative members be permitted, without wide publicity, to register their opinidns and suggestions. That is all.

We who did visit you were certainly delighted when you offered to consult and communicate with us further. In this connection you must have wondered at my own reluctance to accept top responsibility. Please accept my apology and this explanation: Alcoholics Anonymous has a powerful tradition that, as a movement, it must never try to affect legislation or even to give the appearance of entering political activity. Because, to so many minds, I symbolize as a founder the whole of A.A., the stricture on me in a case of this sort is pretty severe.

But please be assured that I shall do all I can to place any you may designate in touch with reliable A.A. opinion and assistance. None, for example, could be better qualified by interest and experience than ----- who sat so quietly with us. I'm certain he would wish me to add that he seeks no paid appointment or public notice -- he simply desires to be helpful if possible.

As we left your office we marveled that, in the midst of all the distractions which must be yours, you could give us so much of courtesy and patience. Your example will long be remembered.

Sincerely yours,

SUGGESTED CONFERENCE PROPOSALS
(For "Pro" and "Con" Consideration)

PROPOSAL NO. 1

That the status quo of the Foundation be preserved -- that no action be taken:

The risk and expense involved much outweighs any possible advantage of enlarging the Board of Trustees, inviting Advisory Council or creating a representative A.A. General Service Conference.

PROPOSAL NO. 2

That ~~the~~ fifteen member Board of Trustees of The Alcoholic Foundation be considerably enlarged:

This proposal would partially satisfy the Group demand for Trustee representation in densely populated metropolitan *areas*. It would completely avoid any change in the fundamental relation of The Alcoholic Foundation to the A.A. movement.

PROPOSAL NO. 3

That an informal group of older A.A.s be invited to confer with the Trustees concerning the form an **Advisory Council** or a representative **Service** Conference might take:

Thus the proper **service** structure might eventually emerge out of experience and **discussion** with this Group.

PROPOSAL NO. 4

That by invitation, the Foundation create an **Advisory** Council of suitable **out-of-town** A.A. members:

This could better link the Foundation to the movement, somewhat satisfy the *need* for wider representation, afford the Trustees a cross section of A.A. opinion and leave the present prerogatives of the Foundation almost undisturbed.

PROPOSAL NO. 5

That an **Advisory Council** be created which would be composed of A.A. delegates chosen by the Groups themselves, either by region or by state and **Province**:

This plan **affords** wide and genuine A.A. **representation**. Because the out-of-town delegates would act as advisers only, present Foundation rights and duties would be little affected.

PROPOSAL NO. 6

That, *on a trial basis*, a General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous be organized, which would be **composed** of regional (or State and Provincial) delegates, the Board of Trustees, plus representatives of the Grapevine and General Office.

That such a conference be given limited traditional (but not legal) powers respecting the selection of Trustees and the conduct of the A.A. General Headquarters operation. For example: A **two-thirds** vote of such a Conference might be accepted as traditionally binding on Foundation, Grapevine and Office; but a **majority** vote, if less than two-thirds, would be advisory only. As a Service **Body** the Conference would not mandate or *govern* the A.A. Groups themselves.

This proposal **would** give the A.A. movement full representation, a sense that it actually participated in the conduct of its vital affairs, and would be a practical-mechanism for giving the Foundation direct backing on difficult decisions, also correction if in error. **There** would be, too, an implied Traditional privilege in the Conference to reorganize the Headquarters should that grave need arise; thus **averting** complete collapse.

WGW:app

February 11, 1950

WE COME OF AGE:
CLEVELAND JULY 28-30, 1950

By Bill

On AA's 15th Anniversary everybody knew that we had grown up. There couldn't be any doubt about it. Members, families and friends - seven thousand of them - spent three inspiring, almost awesome days with our good hosts at Cleveland.

The theme song of our Conference was gratitude; its keynote was the sure realization that we are now welded as one, the world over. As never before, we dedicated ourselves to the single purpose of carrying good **news** of A.A. to those millions who still don't know. And, as we affirmed the Tradition of Alcoholics Anonymous, we asked that we might remain in perfect unity under the Grace of God for so long as He may need us.

Just what did we do? Well, we had meetings, lots of them. The medical meeting, for instance. Our first and greatest friend Dr. Silkworth couldn't get there. But his associate at Knickerbocker Hospital, New York, Dr. Meyer Texon, most ably filled the gap, telling how best the general hospital could relate itself to us. He clinched his points by a careful description how, during the past four years at Knickerbocker, 5000 drunks had been sponsored, processed and turned loose in A.A. ; **and** this to the great satisfaction of everybody concerned, **including** the hospital, whose Board was delighted with the results and specially liked the fact that its modest charges were

invariably paid, money on the line. Who had ever heard of 5000 drunks who really paid their bills? Then Dr. Texon brought us up to the minute on the malady of alcoholism as they see it at Knickerbocker; he said it was a definite personality disorder hooked to a physical craving. That certainly made sense to most of us. Dr. Texon threw a heavy scare into prospective "slippees". It **was** that little matter of one's liver. This patient organ, he said, would surely develop hobnails or maybe galloping Cirrhosis, if more guzzling went on. He had a brand new one too, about salt water, claiming that every alcoholic on the loose had a big salt deficiency. Hence the crazy craving for more drinks. Fill the victim with salt water, he said, and you'd quiet him right down. Of course we thought, "Why not put all drunks on salt water instead of gin? Then the world alcohol problem might be solved overnight." But that **was** our idea, not Dr. **Texon's**. To him, many thanks.

About the industrial meeting: Jake H., U.S. Steel, and Dave M., Dupont, both **AAs**, led it. Mr. Louis Selser, Editor of the Cleveland Press, rounded out the session and brought down the house. **Jake**, as an officer of Steel, told what the company really thought about A.A. - and it **was** all good. Jake noted **AAs'** huge collective earning power - somewhere between 1/4 and 1/2 billions of dollars annually. Instead of being a nerve-wracking drag on society's collective pocket book, we were now, for the most **part**, **top grade employables who could** contribute a yearly average of \$4,808 apiece to **our** country's well being. Dave M.,

personnel man at Dupont who has a special eye to the company's alcohol problem, related what the "New Look" on serious drinking had meant to Dupont and its workers of all grades. According to Dave, his company believes mightily in A.A. By all odds the most stirring testimony at the industrial seminar was given by Editor Louis Selser. Mr. Selser spoke to us from the viewpoint of an employer, citizen and veteran newspaper man. It was about the most moving expression of utter confidence in Alcoholics Anonymous we had ever heard. It was almost too good; its implications brought us a little dismay. How could we fallible AAs ever measure up to Mr. Selser's high hope for our future? We began to wonder if the A.A. reputation wasn't getting far better than its actual character.

Next came that wonderful session on prisons. Our great friend, Warden Duffy, told the startling story of our original group at San Quentin. His account of A.A.'s 5-year history there had a moving prelude. We heard a recording, soon for radio release, that thrillingly dramatized an actual incident of A.A. life within the walls. An alcoholic prisoner reacts bitterly to his confinement and develops amazing ingenuity in finding and drinking alcohol. Soon he becomes too ingenious. In the prison paint shop he discovers a promising fluid which he shares with his fellow alcoholics. It was deadly poison. Harrowing hours followed, during which several of them died. The whole prison was tense as the fatalities continued to mount. Nothing but quick blood transfusions could save those still living. The San

Quentin A. A. Group volunteered instantly and spent the rest of that long night giving of themselves as they had never given before. A.A. hadn't been any too popular, but now prison morale hit an all time high and stayed there. Many of the survivors joined up. The first Prison Group had made its mark; A.A. had come to San Quentin to stay.

Warden Duffy then spoke. Apparently we folks on the outside know nothing of prison sales resistance. The skepticism of San Quentin prisoners and keepers alike had been tremendous. They thought A. A. must be a racket. Or maybe a crackpot religion. Then, objected the prison Board, why tempt Providence by freely mixing prisoners with outsiders, alcoholic women especially. Bedlam would be unloosed. But our friend the Warden, somehow deeply convinced, insisted on A.A. To this day, he said, not a single prison rule has ever been broken at an A.A. meeting though hundreds of gatherings have been attended by hundreds of prisoners with almost no watching at all. Hardly needed is that solitary, sympathetic guard who sits in the back row.

The Warden added that **most** prison authorities throughout the United States and Canada today share his views of Alcoholics Anonymous. Hitherto 80% of paroled alcoholic prisoners had to be scooped up and taken back to jail. Many institutions now report that this percentage has Propped to one-half, even one-third of what it used to be. Warden Duffy had traveled 2000 miles to be with us at Cleveland. We soon saw why. He came because he is a great human being. Once again, we **AAs** sat and wondered how far

our reputation had got ahead of our character,

Naturally we men folk couldn't go to the meeting of the alcoholic ladies. But we make no doubt they devised ways to combat the crushing stigma that still rests on those poor gals who hit the bottle. Perhaps, too, our ladies had debated how to keep the occasional big bad wolf at a respectful distance. But no, the AA sister transcribing this piece crisply assures me nothing of the sort was discussed. A wonderfully constructive meeting, she **says it was**. And **about 500** girls attended. Just think of-it, A.A. **was** four years old before we could sober up even one. Life for the **alcoholic** women is no sinecure.

Nor *were* other special sufferers overlooked, such as paid intergroup secretaries, plain everyday secretaries, our newspaper editqrs and the wives and husbands of alcoholics, sometimes known as our "forgotten people". I'm sure the secretaries concluded that though sometimes unappreciated, they still loved every moment. of their work. ~~What~~ the editors decided, I haven't learned. Judging from their telling efforts over the years, it is altogether probable they came up with many **an** ingenious idea.

Everybody agreed that the wives (and husbands) meeting was **an eye** opener. Some recalled how Anne S. in the Akron early **days**, had been boon companion and advisor to distraught wives. She clearly **saw alcoholism** as a family problem. Meanwhile we AAs went all out on the work of sobering up incoming alkies by the thousands. Our good wives seemed entirely lost in that prodigious shuffle. Lots of the newer localities held closed

meetings only, it looked like A.A. was going exclusive. But of late this trend has whipped about. More and more our partners have been taking the Twelve Steps into their own lives. As proof of this, witness' the 12th step work they're doing with the wives and husbands of newcomers, and note well those wives' meetings now springing up everywhere. At their Cleveland gathering they invited us alcoholics to listen. Many an AA skeptic left that session convinced that our "forgotten ones" really had something. As one alkie put it - "The deep understanding and spirituality I felt in that wives' meeting was something out of the world."

Far from it, the Cleveland Conference wasn't all meetings. Take that banquet, for example. Or should I say banquets? The original blueprint called for enough diners to fill the Rainbow Room of Hotel Carter. But the diners did much better. Gay banqueteers quickly overflowed the Ballroom. Finally the Carter Coffee Shop and Petit Cafe had to be cleared for the surging celebrants. Two orchestras were drafted and our fine entertainers found they had to play their acts twice, both upstairs and down. Though nobody turned up tight, you should have heard those **AAs** sing. Slap-happy, they were. And why not? Yet a serious undertone crept in as we toasted the absent ones. We were first reminded of the absent by that AA from the Marshall Islands who, though all alone out there, still claimed his group had three members, to wit: "God, the book 'Alcoholics Anonymous' and me." The first leg of his 7000 mile journey to Cleveland had finished at Hawaii whence with great care and

refrigeration he had brought in a cluster of floral tributes, those leis for which the Islands are famous. One of these was sent by the A.A. lepers at Molokai - those isolated AAs who will always be of us, yet never with us. **We** swallowed hard, too, when we thought of Dr. Bob, alone at home, gravely ill. Another toast of the evening was to that AA who, more than anything, wanted to be at Cleveland when we came of age. Unhappily he never got to the Tradition meeting, he had been carried off by a heart attack. His widow came in his place and she cheerfully sat out that great event with us. How well her quiet **courage** will be remembered. But at length gaiety took **over**; we danced till midnight. We knew the absent ones would want it that way.

Several thousand of us crowded into the Cleveland Music Hall for the Tradition meeting, which was thought by most AAs to be the high point of our Conference. Six old-time stalwarts, coming from places far flung as Boston and San Diego, beautifully reviewed the years of A.A. experience which had led to the writing of our Tradition. Then I was asked to sum up, which I did, saying:

“That, touching all matters affecting **A.A.** unity, our common welfare should come first; that **A.A.** has now human authority - only God as He may speak in our Group Conscience; that our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern; that any alcoholic may become and A.A. member if he says so - we exclude no one; that every **A.A.** Group may manage its own affairs as it likes,

provided surrounding groups *are* not harmed thereby; that we AAs have but a single aim - the carrying of our message to the alcoholic who still suffers; that in consequence we cannot finance, endorse or otherwise lend the name ' Alcohol ics Anonymous ' to any other enterprise, however worthy; that A.A., as such, ought to remain poor, lest problems of property, management and money divert us from our sole aim; that we ought to be self-supporting, gladly paying our small expenses ourselves; that A.A. should remain forever non-professional, ordinary 12th step work **never** to be paid for; that, as a Fellowship, we should never be organized but may nevertheless create responsible Service Boards or Committees to insure us better propagation and sponsorship and that these agencies may engage fulltime workers for special tasks; that our public relations ought to proceed upon the principle of attraction rather than promotion, it being **better** to let our friends recommend us; that personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and pictures ought to be strictly maintained as **our best** protection against the temptations of power or personal ambition; and finally, that anonymity before the general public is the spiritual key to all our traditions, ever reminding us we are always to place principles before personalities, that we are actually to practice a genuine humility.

This to the end that our great blessings may never spoil us; that we shall forever love in thankful contemplation of Him who presides over us all."

So summing up, I then inquired if those present had any objections to the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous as they stood. Hearing none, I offered our Tradition for adoption. Impressively unanimous, the crowd stood up. So ended that fine hour in which we of Alcoholics Anonymous took our Destiny by the hand.

On Sunday morning we listened to a panel of four AAs who portrayed the spiritual side of Alcoholics Anonymous - as they understood it. What with churchgoers and late-rising banqueteers, the Conference Committee had never guessed this would be a heavy duty session. But churchgoers had already returned from their devotions and hardly a soul stayed abed. Hotel Cleveland's ballroom was filled an hour before hand. People who have fear that A.A. is losing interest in things of the spirit should have been there.

A hush fell upon the crowd as we paused for a moment of silence. Then came the speakers, earnest and carefully prepared, all of them. I cannot recall an A.A. gathering where the attention was more complete, or the devotion deeper. Yet some thought that those truly excellent speakers had, in their enthusiasm, unintentionally created a bit of a problem. It was felt the meeting had gone ~~over~~far in the direction of religious comparison, philosophy and interpretation, when by firm long-

standing tradition we **AAs** had always left such questions strictly to the chosen faith of each individual. One member rose with a word of caution. As I heard him, I thought, "What a fortunate occurrence. How well we shall always remember that A.A. is never to be thought of as a religion. How firmly we shall insist that A.A. membership cannot depend upon any particular belief whatever; that our twelve Steps contain no article of religious faith except faith in God - as each of us understands Him. w carefully we shall thenceforth avoid any situation which could possibly lead us to debate matters of personal religious belief." It was, we felt, a great Sunday morning.

That afternoon we filed into the Cleveland Auditorium. The big event was the appearance of Dr. Bob. Earlier we thought he'd never make it, his illness had continued so **severe**. Seeing him once again was an experience we seven thousand shall always treasure. He spoke in a strong, sure voice for ten minutes, and he left us a great heritage, a heritage by which we **AAs** can surely grow. It was the legacy of one who had been sober since June 10, 1935, who saw our first Group to success, and one who, in the 15 years since, had given both medical help and vital A.A. to 4000 of our afflicted ones at good St. Thomas Hospital in Akron, the birthplace of Alcoholics Anonymous. Simplicity, devotion, steadfastness and loyalty; these, we remembered, were the hallmarks of that character which Dr. Bob had well implanted in so many of us. **I, too,** could gratefully recall that in all the years of our association there had never been an angry word

between us. Such were our thoughts as we looked at DK. Bob.

Then for an hour I tried to sum up. Yet how could one add much to what we had all seen, heard and felt in those three wonderful days? With relief and certainty we had seen that A.A. could never become exhibitionistic or big business; that its early humility and simplicity is very much with us, that we are still mindful our beloved Fellowship is really God's success - not ours. As evidence I shared a vision of A.A. as Lois and I saw it unfold on a distant beachhead in far Norway. The vision began with one AA who listened to a voice in his conscience, and then sold all he had.

George, a **Norwegian-American**, came to us at Greenwich, Connecticut, five years ago. His parents back home hadn't heard from him in twenty. He began to send letters telling them of his new freedom. Back came very disquieting news. The family reported his only brother in desperate condition, about to lose all through alcohol. What could be done? The **AA** from Greenwich had a long talk with his wife. Together they took a decision to sell their little restaurant, all they had. They would go to Norway to help the brother. A few weeks later an airliner landed them at Oslo. They hastened from field to town and thence 25 miles down the fjord where the ailing brother lived. He was in a bad state all right. Unfortunately, though, everybody saw it but him. He'd have no A.A., no American nonsense. He an alcoholic? Why certainly not! Of course the man from Greenwich had heard such objections before. But now this familiar argument was hard

to take. Maybe he had sold all he had for no profit to anybody. George persisted *every* bit he dared, but finally surmised it was no use. Determined to start an A.A. Group in **Norway** *anyhow*, he began a round of Oslo's clergy and physicians. Nothing happened, not one of them offered him a single prospect. Greatly cast down, he and his wife thought it high time they got back to Connecticut.

But Providence took a hand. The rebellious Norwegian obligingly tore off on one of his fantastic **periodics**. In the final anguish of his hangover he cried out to the **man** from Greenwich, "**T**ell me again of the 'Alcoholics Anonymous'. What, oh my brother, shall I **do**?" With perfect simplicity George retold the A.A. story. When he had done, he wrote out, in his all but forgotten Norwegian, a longhand translation of a little pamphlet published by the White Plains, N.Y. Group. It contained, of course, our Twelve Steps of recovery. The family from Connecticut then flew away home. The Norwegian brother, himself a typesetter, commenced to place tiny ads in the Oslo newspapers. He explained he **was a** recovered alcoholic who wished to help others. At last a prospect appeared. When the newcomer was told the story and shown the White Plains pamphlet, he, too, sobered instantly. The **founders** to be then placed more **ads**.---

Three years after, Lois and I alighted upon that same airfield. We then learned that Norway has hundreds of **AAs**. And good ones. The men of Oslo had already carried the life-giving news to other Norwegian cities and these beacons burned brightly.

.

It had all been just as simple, but just as mysterious as that.

In the final moments of our historic Conference it seemed fitting to read from the last chapter of Alcoholics Anonymous. These were the words we took home with us:

"Abandon yourself to God as you Understand God.
Admit your faults to Him and your fellows. Clear away
the wreckage of your past. Give freely of what you find,
and join us. We shall be with you, in the Fellowship of
The Spirit, and you will surely meet some of us as you
trudge the Road of Happy Destiny. May God bless you and
keep you -- until then."

YOUR THIRD LEGACY
WILL YOU ACCEPT IT?

By

Dr. Bob and Bill

October --- 1950

(NOTE: This is a proposal to form "The General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous" - a small body of State and Provisional A.A. Delegates meeting yearly, who could assume direct responsibility for the guidance of the A.A. General Service Headquarters at New York City - not to be confused with the 1950 Cleveland International Conference.)

We, who are old in A.A., bequeath to you who are younger, these three legacies - the "12 Steps of Recovery", the "12 Traditions" and now the "General Services of ~~Alcoholic~~ Alcoholics Anonymous". Two of these legacies have long been in your keeping. By the 12 Steps you have ~~recovered~~ from alcoholism; by the 12 Traditions you have achieved a superb unity.

We now wish to deliver the members of A.A. their third legacy. Since 1938 we and our friends have held it in **trust**. This legacy is the General Headquarters Services of Alcoholics Anonymous, the Alcoholic Foundation, the A.A. Book, the A.A. Grapevine and the A.A. General Office. These are the principal Service assets which have enabled our Society to function and to grow.

Dr. Bob and I ask that you - the members of A.A. - now take these assets, use them, and guard them well. The future growth, the very survival of Alcoholics Anonymous may heavily depend on how prudently you administer these Arms of Service in years to come.

May we share with you a fragment of history? Twelve years ago, warmly aided by great friends, Dr. Bob and I established a Headquarters for our then obscure

Fellowship. We named it The Alcoholic Foundation and it consisted of a simple Board of Trustees dedicated to serve our cause. The Board was formed of alcoholics and non-alcoholic friends, who today number fifteen. When in the Spring of 1938 our Foundation was born, A.A. was three years old. We had only 50 members. The book **Alcoholics Anonymous** was just an idea. None could then guess the magnificence of the gift which Providence had begun to bestow.

In the twelve years since, those 53 early members have spawned 120,000 more. A.A. stretches world-wide. Religion and medicine have approvingly raised us out of that No Man's Land where we once foundered between them. We have no enemies, our friends are beyond count. Like gleaming coral islands our thousands of Groups build themselves upward out of the alcohol sea. What a God-given, miraculous circumstance!

Through this glowing, feverish infancy, the Alcoholic Foundation Board, unseen by many, quietly played a great part in the formation and spread of our well-loved Society. Acting through our General Service Office, the book **Alcoholics Anonymous**, and latterly the Grapevine, the Foundation became directly responsible for half our growth and effectiveness - both in quality and quantity. There can be no question of that.

Suppose then, all these years, we had been without those fine Services. Where would we be today minus the A.A. Book and our standard literature which now pours out of **Headquarters** at the rate of three tons a month? Suppose our public relations had been left to thoughtless chance. Suppose no one had been assigned to encourage good publicity and kill the bad. Suppose no accurate information about A.A. had been available. Imagine our vital and delicate relations with medicine and religion left to pot luck. Then, too, where would thousands of AAs be today if the General Office hadn't answered

their frantic letters and referred them to help? (Our New York Office received and answered 23,000 letters of all kinds last year.) Or in what shape would hundreds of distant A.A. Groups now be if that Office hadn't started then by mail or directed travelers to then? How could we have managed without a world Group Directory? What about those foreign Groups in 28 countries clamoring for translations, proved experience and encouragement? Would we be publishing the A.A. Book at Oslo, Norway and London, England? What of those lone members on high seas or in far corners of the earth, those prisoners, those asylum inmates, those veterans in service or in hospitals? Where might we one day be if we never had the A.A. Grapevine, our mirror of A.A. life and principal forum of written expression? How grateful we are for those faithful Secretaries, those painstaking volunteer Editors and those able Trustees who have stood sentinel all these years over our principal affairs. Without all these things, where would we be? You must have guessed it. We'd be nowhere; that's sure.

So it is that by the "Steps" we have recovered, by the "Traditions" we have unified and by our Headquarters Services we have been able to function as a Society.

Yet some may still say - "Of course the Foundation should go on. Certainly we'll pay that small expense. But why can't we leave its conduct to Dr. Bob and Bill and their friends the Trustees? We always have. Why do they now bother us with such business? Let's keep A.A. simple." Good questions, these. But today the answers are quite different than they once were.

Let's face these facts:

First - Dr. Bob and Bill are perishable, they can't last forever.

Second - Their friends, the Trustees, are almost unknown to the A.A. Movement.

Third - In future years our Trustees couldn't possibly function without direct guidance from A.A. itself. Somebody must arise them. Somebody, or something, must take the place of Dr. Bob and Bill.

Fourth - Alcoholics Anonymous is out of its infancy. Grown up, adult now, it has full right and the plain duty to take direct responsibility for its own Headquarters.

Fifth - Clearly then, unless the Foundation is firmly anchored, through State and Provincial representatives, to the movement it serves, a Headquarters breakdown will someday be inevitable. When its old-timers vanish, an isolated Foundation couldn't survive one grave mistake or serious controversy. Any storm could blow it down. Its revival wouldn't be simple. Possibly it could never be revived. Still isolated, there would be no means of doing that. Like a fine car without gasoline, it would be helpless.

Sixth - Another serious flaw: As a whole, the A.A. movement has never faced a grave crisis. But someday it will have to. Human affairs being what they are, we can't expect to remain untouched by the hour of serious trouble. With direct support unavailable, with no reliable cross-section of A.A. opinion, how could our remote Trustees handle a hazardous emergency? This gaping "open end" in our present set-up could positively guarantee a debacle. Confidence in the Foundation would be lost. AAs would everywhere say: "By whose authority do the Trustees speak for us? And how do they know they are right?" With A.A.'s Service life-lines tangled and severed, what then might happen to the "million who don't know!". Thousands would continue to suffer on or die because we had taken no forethought, because we had forgotten the virtue of Prudence. This must not come to pass.

That is why the Trustees, Dr. Bob and I now propose the "General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous". That is why we urgently need your direct help. Our principal Services must go on living. We think the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous can be the agency to make that certain.

SECTION II
OUR PROPOSED PLAN

Here is our over-all plan: to start the General Service Conference, the Foundation Trustees will invite one Delegate from each State of the Union and one from each Province of Canada. States and Provinces having large A.A. populations will be asked to send additional Delegates. (Subject, of course, to A.A.'s willingness to finance full representation.)

These Delegates will serve in two rotating panels. Panel No. 1 will be formed by inviting representatives from the 28 States and Provinces having, by our Group Directory, the largest A.A. populations. Panel No. 2 (which will start in the second year) will be created by inviting Delegates from the remaining 23 States and Provinces plus additional representation from densely populated regions.

Delegates to the A.A. General Service Conference at New York are to be selected by Group representatives who will usually meet in the largest A.A. center of each State or Province, on dates to be set every two years by the Alcoholic Foundation working with appropriate State or Provincial Committees.

A non-controversial method has been devised for the selection of State Committees and Conference Delegates. It will be seen that this method carefully avoids our usual political troubles. No Delegate so chosen could possibly consider himself a political victor. He will feel himself a servant, but not a senator. (Details in Section III)

Each Delegate will serve a two-year term, will always be available for mail or phone consultation with A.A. Headquarters, and will twice attend the General Service Conference which will ordinarily be held in New York City to coincide with the regular April meeting of the Foundation. At this Conference,

these Delegates will sit with our Trustees, General Office Secretaries and Grapevine Staff Members. Thus, we shall constitute the "General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous".

Now what will our General Service Conference do?

A. It will hear the Annual Reports of the Foundation, General Office, Grapevine, and Works Publishing (the A.A. Book Company); also the report of our C.P.A.

B. It will fully discuss these reports, offering needed suggestions or resolutions respecting them.

C. The Trustees will present to the Conference all serious problems of policy or finance confronting A.A. Headquarters, or A.A. as a whole. Following discussions of these, the Conference will offer the Trustees appropriate advice and resolutions.

D. Special attention will be given to all violations of our Tradition liable to seriously affect A.A. as a whole. The Conference will, if it be deemed wise, publish suitable resolutions deploring such deviations.

E. Because Conference activities will extend over a three-day weekend, Delegates will be able to exchange views on every conceivable problem. They will become closely acquainted with each other and with our Headquarters people. They will visit the premises of the Foundation, Grapevine and General Office. This should engender mutual confidence. Guesswork and rumor are to be replaced by first-hand knowledge.

F. Before the conclusion of each year's Conference, a Committee will be named to render all A.A. members a written report upon the condition of their Headquarters and the state of A.A. generally.

On a Conference Delegate's return home, his State or Provincial Committee will, if practical, call a meeting of Group representatives and any others who

wish to hear his personal report. The Delegate will get this meeting's reaction to his report, and its suggestions respecting problems to be considered at future Conference Sessions. The Delegate ought to visit as many of his constituent Groups as possible. They should have direct knowledge of their A.A. Headquarters.

How best to finance our Conference expenses is a moot question. The General Service Conference will function for the benefit of A.A. as a whole. Its entire cost ought to be a charge against those "Group Contributions" now sent to New York for the support of the General Office. But this method is quite impossible now. Group Contributions are not meeting General Office expenses. Nor can the Foundation "Reserve" or the Foundation's A.A. "Book Income" carry the Conference.

We therefore propose that all A.A. Groups be asked for a gift of \$5. each, yearly, at Christmas. The Foundation Trustees would deposit these sums in a special account marked "Conference Funds".

If even one-half the A.A. Groups made this annual \$5. gift to the Foundation "for the benefit of the million who don't yet know", we estimate that the resulting income would absorb the total yearly Conference overhead, plus all Delegates' transportation to New York in excess of \$100. each. (See Section IV for details)

One more word about money. A.A. Headquarters recently sent out its semi-annual appeal for voluntary contributions, remarking that of late the Groups had donated much less than the traditional "\$1. per member a year". The present condition is only natural. The larger A.A. grows, the less the average Group is apt to know or care about the Foundation. It's not surprising that interest lags. But the General Service Conference should change all that. A brand new channel of participation and understanding will be wide

open. No doubt hundreds of Groups not now giving to the Foundation will commence to do so. Meanwhile, our great thanks go out to all those who have supported Headquarters in past years, especially to Groups whose gifts have far exceeded the traditional "\$1. per member" yardstick. Without them we'd never have got by; there would be no Foundation Office or Grapevine today. But it should be noted that foreign, institutional or quite new A.A. Groups need never feel obligated.

The A.A. General Service Conference will be an informal gathering. Resolutions passed by a simple majority will be **advisory** only. But the Trustees will traditionally favor all resolutions passed by a two-thirds vote. When Trustees of the Foundation retire, the remaining Board members will traditionally consult the Conference, or a Committee thereof, before naming their successors. Above all, it ought to be understood that the General Service Conference will never become a government for Alcoholics Anonymous. Though it may publish resolutions respecting deviations from **A.A.** Tradition, it is agreed ~~that~~ such acts will never be personal, punitive or **g**overnmental in their character.

So concludes our general outline of the General Service Conference plan.

The Trustees, Dr. Bob and I rest in sure confidence that this - your third legacy - will never be lost; that your new responsibility will be carried without faltering. By its complete willingness to serve God in all weather, may the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous ever merit the worthiness to endure.

SECTION III

A.A. STATE AND PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLIES: THEIR COMMITTEES AND DELEGATES , HOW CHOSEN

Without great expense or friction, how can States and Provinces select their General Service Conference Delegates and suitable State or Provincial Service Committees? This is the "\$100." question. But we believe there is an answer. On one of Bill's western trips, experiments were tried which proved it possible to do these things. The following concrete plan is the result. At this stage we urge the need to be definite to avoid confusion. Later on you may wish to amend the plan to suit local needs or iron out flaws. Here we are:

A. With Foundation help, meetings of A.A. Group representatives will be organized in each State and Province, these to be called Assemblies.

B. Each Assembly will cast separate written ballots for each of its State or Provincial Committeemen; three, five, seven, or more of them.

C. Committeemen so selected will be **automatically** placed in nomination as candidates for the post of **Delegate** to the General Service Conference for a two-year term.

D. If, on a trial ballot, no one of those Committeemen can be elected Delegate by a two-thirds vote, they **then** draw lots between **them** to name the Delegate.

E. Each **State** or **Provincial** Assembly naming a Delegate pays his plane or railroad fare to New York. But not to exceed \$100. yearly per Delegate. Money to defray this **expense** will be raised at the Assembly meeting where the Delegate is **chosen**. Two years, paid in advance, is preferable. For the benefit of distant regions, the Foundation "Conference Fund" will pay any

yearly transportation expense in excess of \$100. per Delegate (See Section IV)

For the clear guidance of those States and Provinces who send Delegates in 1951 and 1952, we urge this detailed procedure:

By January 1, 1951 the Foundation will ask the A.A. Group within each State and Province comprising Panel No. 1 how many of them wish to participate, as outlined above. Each Group expecting to help choose a Delegate will immediately select an experienced A.X. Representative. He (or she) will be ready to attend the State or Provincial Assembly. A date (not later than March 15th) will be announced. Much care ought to be given such selection. Any one of them may become Committeemen or the Delegate. Old-timers and former Group or Intergroup officers ought to be considered possibilities.

Assuming that a minimum of 13 Groups in each State and Province of Panel No. 1 has volunteered to participate, the Foundation, in cooperation with the Groups, (or Intergroups) of the largest local centers, will arrange suitable State or Provincial meetings. The Foundation will then advise all participating Groups of the places and dates of their respective Assemblies. (In following years State and Provincial Committees will of course assume this duty.)

By this process we shall create a series of State and Provincial Assembly meetings, the Panel No. 1 Assemblies to gather in early 1951.

Now a very important question. Just how will State or Provincial Assemblies be conducted? For these key meetings we urge this procedure:

Let's assume that the Foundation, cooperating with a Temporary Committee*

* The temporary "host committee" will only be needed for the very first meeting, after which State or Provincial Committees will take over.

appointed at a typical "host city", has already ~~named~~ the date, hour and address of a given Assembly meeting. Group Representatives, "out of town" and "in town" have arrived. What happens then?

1. Registration: Each Group Representative registers his, and his Group's name and address in the Registration Book provided. He has also brought a copy of this pamphlet so he can follow the Assembly procedure.
2. Registration Completed: Chairman of the Temporary Committee opens the Assenbly and reports the number present ~~from~~ the Registration Book. Those who have not registered do so.
3. Tellers appointed. Local expense covered. Temporary Chairman appoints one or more tellers. He ~~names~~ the sum spent by his Committee in ~~arrang-~~ing the Assembly meeting and asks the tellers to pass the hat to cover it.
4. First business - Determining size of State or Provincial Committee. The Temporary Chairman then determines the size of the Committee desired by asking ~~whether~~ Assembly will have three, five, seven or more Committee-men. He requests a show of hands on these figures in succession, until a majority names the proper number.
5. Election of State or Provincial Committee. Tellers pass blank ballots. The Temporary Chairman then point; out that all Committeemen ought to be experienced A's, well known in the ~~area~~, who would be willing to give close attention to Conference affairs for a two-year period. Temporary Chairman then ~~requests a written~~ ballot for Committeeman No. 1. Tellers count the ballots and report the high man. Unless he ~~declines~~ to serve, he becomes State Chairman at once and takes over the meeting. Similarly the next ballot produces a Treasurer, the next a Secretary, and further ballots the remainder of the Committee. If there are declinations, the

process continues until there is a full Committee elected for a two-year term. (Note that this method avoids personal nominations, hence personal controversy.)

6. Trial Attempt to Elect a Delegate by 2/3rds Vote. The Chairman reminds the Assembly, that according to plan, the election of the State (or Provincial) Committee has automatically placed all its members in nomination for the post of Delegate; also explains why, to assure unanimity, the election should be by two-thirds vote. Therefore the Chairman asks for a show of hands on this question - "Will this Assembly, on a single written ballot, attempt the choice of its Delegate by a two-thirds vote?" Should more than two-thirds of the meeting indicate a desire to try this two-thirds method, a ballot is cast. If one of the Committeemen receives two-thirds or more, he becomes the Delegate for two years. Otherwise the method of election is discarded.
7. Delegate Chosen by Lot. The tellers then place in a hat the names of each Committeeman willing to serve as Delegate. The first man (or lady!) out of the hat becomes State or Provincial Delegate for two years. The remaining Committeemen become alternates according to the order of their election. The State Secretary records the result together with the names and addresses of his Committee.
8. Duty of Treasurer. The Chairman then directs his Committee's Treasurer to name the sum required from each Group Representative present to cover the newly chosen Delegate's traveling expense for two years. (This is determined by dividing the number present into the total estimated expense, or \$200., whichever is lower.) The Chairman asks the Assembly for a show of hands whether it wishes to pay one year's traveling expense, or two, in advance. The Treasurer then receives the agreed payment from

each Group Representative and issues such Representative a receipt by which he may reimburse himself from his Group's treasury.

9. Secretary's Report. The Chairman instructs the Secretary to prepare a brief written report of the meeting, listing the names and addresses of Committeemen and Delegate, copy to the Alcoholic Foundation.
10. Final Business. The Chairman then throws the meeting open to discussion. Questions respecting the Conference, or instructions to be given thr new Delegate, may be brought to the floor. Finally, the Chairman announces the date of an Open Meeting to be held afte- the Delegate's return from NewYork. There the Delegate is to make his personal resort to all A A. members who wish to hear it. Adjournment is then in order.

Such is our concept of the typical State or Provincial Assembly. We hope it proves a successful model for future years. We can only try, and see.

Though it may prove desirable, it will not be absolutely necessary to hold Assembly meetings in "off-election years". But returning Delegates in those years ought to make their usual report to Open Meetings held in large centers and should visit as many of their constituent Groups as they can.

Should travel money be lacking for a Delegate in his second year, his State Chairman may circularize the constituent Groups, or his Committee may raise this sum as they deem wise.

When, in the judgment of a State or Provincial Committee, a Delegate becomes incapacitated through alcohol, or otherwise, the Chairman will attend the General Service Conference in his place. If the Chairman cannot attend, he will offer the post of Delegate to his fellow Committeemen in the order of their seniority as determined at the time of their election.

It is hoped, too, that State Chairmen will keep in close contact with the Alcoholic Foundation, addressing their correspondence to the A.A. General Office where one of its secretaries will be named to look after Conference matters.

A special word about Panel No. 2. To place the General Service Conference on a rotating basis, no Delegates can be invited from Panel No. 2 regions until 1952. These States and Provinces will then be approached in precisely the same manner as above described for Panel No. 1.

Since it is felt that Panel NG.2 may be more thinly represented, it seems right to invite additional delegates from those States or Provinces having an A.A. population of more than 2000 to round it out. On Panel List No. 2, attached, a number of cities which can act as "assembly" points for such additional representation are suggested. Provided "Conference Funds" prove adequate, additional cities in heavily populated regions may make application for representation.

Though no Panel No. 2 Delegates can be chosen until 1952, we hope that all States and Provinces will generously contribute to "Conference Funds" during 1951. For unless ample funds are in sight, we shall have to limit the total number of Delegates invited to the Conference. We much hope that won't happen as ultimate success for the Conference will depend upon wide-spread representation.

On the following list, each State, Province or special locality may discover the Panel in which it belongs. These selections were based upon the 1950 Group Directory. In suggesting cities for additional representation, we have been obliged to consider convenience as well as population.

Naturally these arrangements are tentative, experimental. Defects will show up. But we can mend these as we go. We shall begin thus:

PANEL NO. 1

TO BE INVITED IN 1951

<u>State or Province</u>	<u>Point of Assembly</u>	<u>State or Province</u>	<u>Point of Assembly</u>
California	Los Angeles	North Carolina	Charlotte
Ohio	Cleveland	Virginia	Richmond
New York	New York	Iowa	Des Moines
Illinois	Chicago	Missouri	Kansas City
Michigan	Detroit	Indiana	Indianapolis
Texas	Dallas-Ft. Worth	Utah	Salt Lake City
Pennsylvania	Philadelphia	West Virginia	Charleston
New Jersey	Newark	Alabama	Birmingham
Minnesota	Minneapolis	Washington	Seattle
Massachusetts	Boston	Oklahoma	Oklahoma City
Ontario	Toronto	Connecticut	Hartford
Florida	Miami	Louisiana	New Orleans
British Columbia	Vancouver	Colorado	Denver
Wisconsin	Milwaukee	Arkansas	Little Rock

PANEL NO. 2

TO BE INVITED IN 1952

Kansas	Topeka	Arizona	Phoenix
Georgia	Atlanta	Nebraska	Omaha
Maryland	Baltimore	New Mexico	Albuquerque
Maine	Bangor	Alberta	Calgary
Maritime Provinces	Moncton, N.B.	Manitoba	Winnipeg
Tennessee	Memphis	Delaware	Wilmington
South Carolina	Charleston	North Dakota	Fargo
Kentucky	Louisville	Rhode Island	Providence
District of Columbia		Montana	Billings
Vermont	Montpelier	Idaho	Boise
Mississippi	Jackson	New Hampshire	Manchester
South Dakota	Sioux Falls	Nevada	Reno
Oregon	Portland	Saskatchewan	Saskatoon
Quebec	Montreal	Wyoming	Sheridan

PANEL NO. 3

ADDITIONAL 1952 REPRESENTATION
FROM SPECIAL AREAS (SUGGESTED)

<u>California</u>	<u>New York</u>	<u>Michigan</u>	<u>Pennsylvania</u>	<u>Minnesota</u>
San Francisco	Buffalo	Grand Rapids	Pittsburg	St. Paul
San Diego	Rochester	Muskegon	Harrisburg	Massachusetts
<u>Ohio</u>	<u>Illinois</u>	<u>Texas</u>	New Jersey	Springfield
Columbus	Springfield	Houston	Trenton	<u>Ontario</u>
Cincinnati	Decatur	Austin		Ottawa

IMPORTANT - We hope and believe that we shall be able to invite Delegates from every locality listed above, but it might not work out that way at first. Should there be a limited response from all the A.A. Groups when asked for the \$5. Christmas contributions to the "Conference Fund", we would have to limit our invitations accordingly. We may have to start on a smaller basis than we anticipated. So please don't feel disturbed or disappointed should we have to limit representation at the start. We'll do the best we can.

NOTE - Where large centers are near state or national boundaries, there seem no good reason why Groups in adjoining areas may not cross these lines to elect Delegates. For example, at Detroit, Kansas City, Missouri, Buffalo, New York, etc.

SECTION IV

FINANCING THE GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE

How to finance our General Service Conference is a plain guess. We'll have to make the best estimate we can and try it out. There's no other way.

First, some background. Lacking close contact, the Foundation has grown remote from the Groups. They have lost the feeling that our Foundation is really theirs. A.A. General Office expenses have soared because of inflation, even though that office isn't half as big, in relation to A.A.'s size, as it used to be. For these reasons the A.A. Groups haven't been meeting their current Headquarters expenses; 2000 Groups who could well give a hand, still abstain. The entire burden falls on the remaining 1500 Groups; they carry the load. Nobody is specially to blame for this, it's simply a condition. One important Conference purpose is to stabilize and correct this very situation. When the A.A. Groups are given direct participation and know the score, they will handle the matter. We are sure of that. Then Conference expenses can be deducted from routine contributions; the difference will scarcely be felt. But that time hasn't arrived.

Therefore Groups who already contribute, plus those who may soon be interested, are the ones who will make our Conference a success.

Naturally we can't place the entire financial responsibility upon those Groups who happen to take part in choosing Delegates, either. Many Groups at long distances from State or Provincial "Assembly" points might not be able to help choose a Delegate. Nevertheless we're positive that hundreds of them, considering this new set-up, would like to make a direct contribution to its success.

Bear-in; these facts in mind, our tentative financial plan is this:

1. That we ask every A.A. Group in the United States and Canada to contribute \$5.annually, this special gift to be made the Foundation at Christmasfor the benefit of "the million who don't know". Since the Conference would insure the continuance of A.A. Headquarters, which is our principal lifeline to all those yet to come, this would be the thought.

Such a Christmas-time appeal should create an annual income somewhere between \$5,000. and \$10,000. for Conference purposes. If interest is small, we can invite but few delegates. If interest is large, we can invite all who are listed in Panels Nos. 1 and 2. This income will be deposited in a special Foundation account devoted to Conference purposes only and titled "Conference Funds".

Just how would these \$5.Christmas-time contributions be used?

Save one exception the Foundation would pay the total expenses of the General Service Conference, the year round. This would include:

- (a) Full hotel bills and meals for as many as 60 Delegates for three days.
- (b) The cost of a suitable meeting place.
- (c) The printing of an annual Conference report to be sent to all A.A. members.
- (d) The cost of secretarial help, correspondence and special mailings.
- (e) All round-trip plane and railroad fares exceeding \$100. in any one year to assist distant Groups with transport of their Delegates.
- (f) Organizationexpense - distribution of 100,000 copies of this plan, possible travel by Bill, etc.

2. Each Group Assembly sending a Delegate would pay his round-trip fare to New York not exceeding \$100. per year. Any excess would be chargeable

to the Foundation "Conference Fund". Eastern Groups would seemingly have an advantage - but it's not great. Because of their numbers, the Easterners would be the principal \$5. contributors to the "General Funds". Hence their's would be the lion's share of paying all Western fares over \$100. Therefore approximate justice would be done.

quite obviously, full representation at our General Service Conference is going to depend squarely upon the generosity of some 2000 Groups contributing \$5. each a year for this very special Conference purpose. It is a responsibility which you - the members of A.A. - will need to take if you are to receive and guard well your Third Legacy, The General Services of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Dr. Bob and I have the deepest faith that you are going to accept that responsibility.

SECTION V

TEMPORARY CHARTER FOR THE GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE

"12 SUGGESTED PRINCIPLES"

We here present a precise statement of "12 Principles" upon which the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous can be founded; principles upon which it may be experimentally assembled, financed and operated during a four-year trial period beginning, if possible, in April 1951.

If in four years the Conference proves its usefulness and has gained wide A.A. acceptance, it may then amend these principles according to the dictates of actual experience. But any such changes in the Conference Principles should, of course, conform to the Tradition of Alcoholics Anonymous. Meanwhile, we only commit ourselves to giving the Conference a thorough trial.

On this basis the Trustees, Dr. Bob and I offer you - the members of A.A. - this temporary "Charter" for your General Service Conference:

THE GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS (NORTH AMERICAN SECTION)

1. Purpose: The General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous is expected to become the basic guardian of our A.A. Tradition and world Services. It is specially hoped the Conference will lend guidance to, and perpetuate the Alcoholic Foundation and the A.A. General Headquarters at New York City. The Conference will be a service body only; never a government.

2. Composition: The Conference will be composed of A.A. State and Provincial Delegates, Trustees of the Alcoholic Foundation, and Staff members of the General Service Office and Grapevine.
3. Conference Relation to A.A.: The Conference will serve as a vehicle through which the A.A. Movement can effectively express its views upon all matters of vital A.A. policy and all hazardous deviations from A.A. Tradition, thus providing Alcoholics Anonymous with a reliable guide to right thought and wise action upon these serious subjects.
4. Conference Relation to A.A. General Headquarters: The Conference will also be expected to serve as a dependable guide for The Alcoholic Foundation, whose Trustees are the Custodians of A.A. general funds, the book "Alcoholics Anonymous", the General Service Office and the Grapevine. As such, the trustees can be expected to look with favor upon any Conference resolution relating to vital A.A. policy passed by a two-thirds vote of the Conference. In filling vacancies on the Foundation Board the Trustees should be empowered to consult the Conference or a Committee thereof. It must be remembered, however, that the Conference will be informal and unincorporated and that the Alcoholic Foundation is alone authorized to make contracts, + conduct public relations in the name of Alcoholics Anonymous, and insure the financial and managerial integrity of the A.A. General Headquarters. But if the Conference, following a reasonable trial period, becomes a vital and accepted Service of the A.A. movement it should then be entitled to shape and mould its own final form.
5. State and Provincial Delegates - Term of Office: State and Provincial Delegates will be chosen for terms of two years each.
6. Conference Rotation: This will be effected by two panels of State and Provincial Delegates. First year, Panel No. 1: To be composed by

inviting one Delegate from each of those ~~27~~ states or Provinces having the largest A.A. population. Second year, Panel No. 2: To be composed by inviting one Delegate each from the ~~28~~ remaining States and Provinces. Panel No. 2 will also invite extra representatives from those States and Provinces having an A.A. population of more than 2000.

(See Section III)

7. Conference Delegates - Points At Which Selected: Conference Delegates will be selected at the largest centers of A.A. population within their respective States or Provinces, But Panel No. 2 will ordinarily include delegates from the next larger centers of each State and Province having more than 2000 A.A. population. (See Section III)

8. State and Provincial Delegates - Methods of Selection: State and Provincial Conference Delegates will be chosen by Assemblies of A.A. Group Representatives meeting at such dates and places as may be jointly arranged by The Alcoholic Foundation and suitable State and Provincial Committees according to the principles of Point No. 7.

Delegates and alternates will be chosen by election or by lot, or by a combination of these methods. But if elected, a Delegate ought to be chosen by a majority of two-thirds because all Delegates should feel themselves servants of world A.A. rather than marginal victors of troublesome political contests. (See Section III for method of choosing Conference Delegates and State or Provincial Committees).

9. The General Service Conference - How Financed: General Service Conference total costs will be apportioned as follows:

- (a) Once yearly, each A.A. Group interested will be asked to make a \$5.00 contribution to the Alcoholic Foundation "Conference Fund".
- (b) Those Groups within each State or Province, who actually participate in naming Delegates, will pay their Delegates traveling

expense to and from **New** York City, not to exceed, however, \$100.00 a year each. It **is** estimated that any **excess** above this figure can be absorbed by the "Conference **Fund**". (See Section **IV** for detail)

10. Conference Meetings: The Conference ought to meet yearly at New York, or specially if there be an emergency. And two-thirds of the State, Provincial and A.A. Headquarters Delegates registered should constitute a quorum.
11. Ordinary Procedure: The Conference will hear the reports of The Foundation and its related Headquartera Services. The Conference will then advise with the Trustees and Headquarters Staff concerning pending and important matters of finance or general policy affecting the Headquarters or **A.A.** as a whole, making such **suggestions** or **passing** such resolutions as it may deem desirable. The Conference may also discuss and recommend appropriate action concerning serious deviations from A.A. Tradition, or harmful misuse of the **name** "**Alcoholics Anonymous**". The Conference **will** elect **its** own **officers** and **pass suitable** by-laws. Before adjournment the Conference will authorize a Committee to draft a full report on its proceedings and the state of **A.A.** generally, which **will** be furnished the Alcoholic8 Anonymous Groups throughout the world,
12. General Warranties of the Conference: In all Its proceedings the **General Service** Conference ought to **observe** the **spirit of our A.A. Tradition**, taking great care: ' that the Conference never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating **funds plus** ample **reserves** be its prudent financial principle; that none of the Conference **members** ever be placed in a **position** of unqualified authority over **the** others; that all important decisions be reached by discussion and vote;

that no Conference resolution ever be punitive in character or an incitement to public controversy; that the Conference never attempts to govern Alcoholics Anonymous, and that, like the society of Alcoholics Anonymous which it serves, the Conference ought always remain democratic in thought and action. Perhaps, now, certain questions are coming to mind. For instance:

Q. Why should our Trustees and Headquarters Staff be voting members of the Conference?

A. As the ones most experienced in the conduct of our overall Services, they are obviously entitled to full Conference participation.

Q. Why is a "Cross-section of A.A. opinion" so necessary?

A. Future Trustees must have sound advice and vigorous backing. Without that they never could speak for A.A. in years to come, A.A., too, must have a definite means of knowing its own mind. Otherwise serious issues of the future will certainly bring us endless controversy and confusion. A Society such as ours cannot permanently function on emotion, rumor or guesswork; it cannot be well advised by the clamors of small or self-appointed minorities,

Q. Why, on important matters, should a two-thirds vote of the Conference be needed?

A. Since the Conference will meet briefly, and but once a year, our Headquarters Staffs must be given some latitude for independent judgment. Hence they ought not be too firmly bound by a bare majority. To be binding, a Conference resolution ought to be reasonably unanimous.

Q. Why shouldn't the Conference elect, the Foundation Trustees?

A. This would introduce a difficult and unnecessary political problem.

it seems better that the Trustees continue to name their **own** successors, subject to consultation with the Conference or a Committee thereof. Should circumstances warrant, the **Trustees** would unquestionably look with favor on any advice offered by **two-thirds** of the Conference respecting the composition of the Foundation Board.

Q. What is meant by- "**two** year rotating panels"?

A. This means that only the Delegates described in panel No. 1 will attend the 1951 Conference. In 1953 the original Panel No. 1 will be replaced by a new Panel No. 1 chosen from the same areas. And so on, ad infinitum. This will make for continuity because only one-half of our out-of-town Delegates will have to be replaced each year. (See Part III, Selection of Delegates).

Q. Why shouldn't our Conference be a government for Alcoholics Anonymous?

A. Each A.A. Group is autonomous; our only "authority" is a Higher Power. Practically speaking, no A.A. Group will stand for a personal government anyhow; we're built that way. Though the Conference will guide A.A. Headquarters, It must never assume to govern A.A. as a whole. While it can publicly deplore misuse of the A.A. name or departures from Tradition, it ought never attempt punishment or legal restraint of non-conformists - in A.A. or out. That is the road to public controversy and internal disruption. The Conference will give us an example and a guide, but not a government. A personal government is something, God Filling, that Alcoholics Anonymous will never have. We shall authorize servants to act for us, but not rulers.

This is the basic structure of our Conference to be. Its framework has long been under study and consultation. We trust that it will commence to meet our evident need; that it will be regarded by all AAs as a safe and suitable beginning.

W. G. W.

BOX 453 GRAND CENTRAL ANNEX

NEW YORK 17, N. Y.

August 31, 1951

Dear Jim and Rosa,

Thanks greatly for your good letter, containing fine news of you, also the sad news concerning Earl Ryan, to whom I have just written.

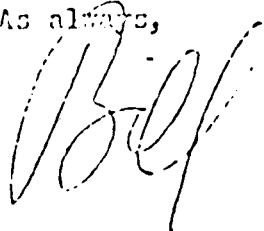
As you say, the Conference did come off very well. The result upon office finances has already been excellent. We have taken in enough money during the past seven months to finance the office for six. Meanwhile, the Grapevine deficit has dropped from one thousand a month to the break-even point. The books in Works Publishing are also doing much better. So we won't use up any more reserve for 1951, and if things continue this way, we may add ten thousand dollars to it at the year end.

Respecting a name for the Family Groups. Lois and Ann Bingham, a neighbor, have opened a Post Office Box for these Groups. Right now, they are corresponding with many of them, the question of the name still being up in the air. To date, their correspondence suggests that the name may turn out to be the Alanon Family Group or the Alanon Group. Only a few seem to like the word "Associate". This is because, I suppose, there is still a good deal of hostility toward them in some quarters. So they do not wish to use any word which would indicate an alliance with A.A.

As you may have heard, Alcoholics Anonymous is receiving the so-called Lasker Award for meritorious service in the public health, to be awarded at the San Francisco Opera House October 30th. I shall probably come to San Diego to see Mother prior to that time.

Meanwhile, best luck - and congratulations.

As always,



WGW/nst

Jim and Rosa Hurwell
4123 Georgia Street
San Diego 3, California

MEMORANDUM

The Lasker Award -- Should A.A. Accept it?

Alcoholics Anonymous is offered the Lasker Award for distinctive service in the field of public health.

This award, sponsored by the American Public Health Association, and given each year by the Lasker Foundation, is always followed by world-wide publicity -- press, radio, television and magazine. We are told that this honor rates with a Pulitzer Prize.

If we accept, the award will be made at the San Francisco Opera House in October with considerable ceremony and in the presence of a large audience including Public Health officials from many countries. Therefore, the immediate benefit to A.A., especially our struggling foreign Groups, seems beyond question.

The Lasker representative stated to members of our General Service Committee that the award could be made directly to "The Society of Alcoholics Anonymous" thus conforming to our tradition that no individual AA ought to receive personal honors. It appeared, too, that in receiving the award we would not be placed in a position of lending out the A.A. name as an endorsement or aid to financing either American Public Health or The Lasker Foundation. Conversely, we made it clear that traditionally A.A. couldn't take the cash prize sometimes given on these occasions.

Nevertheless, the question arises: should we take this award at all?

Because A.A. has always been glad of other forms of public recognition in order to spread our message, there would seem to be no reason, on principle or in Tradition, why we should reject this one. Though a little more pointed, perhaps more spectacular, the essence of this proposal is one more piece of public recognition -- nothing more.

Perhaps though, in these new circumstances, we may find hazards not encountered before. There may be practical reasons for declining. For example:

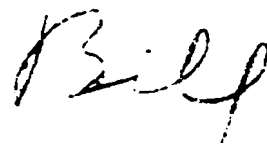
1. Some feel that if we accept this particular award, others will surely be offered us. Then we might find ourselves in the dilemma of choosing some but rejecting others which, for reasons of politics, religion, alcohol reform and the like, might tend to compromise our present neutrality in these matters.
2. The other objection concerns me. Having declined, for reasons of sound A.A. policy, several public honors proffered me in the past, would I not tend to weaken that sound policy stand by going to the San Francisco Opera House? Even though my anonymity were kept (which it might not be) wouldn't some of the acclaim be bound to brush off in my direction? That would surely be undesirable.

Naturally, the Lasker people **want** me at San Francisco and **have** said **so**. From their point of **view**, it would be ridiculous to present their award to an **empty** seat or to an "**unknown**" A.A.

Horn far, then, should **we** concede to the Lasker **view**? **Shall** me offer a **compromise** of some sort? Perhaps our Chairman, or one of **the** Trustees, ought to attend instead. Surely the **Lasker** Foundation would seem entitled to have its **award** received **by** someone having special status in our society.

Hence, gentlemen, your **advice is** sought.

As **ever**,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Bill".

CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

Special Report for the Groups

on the

FIRST GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE of A.A.

New York, N.Y. * April 20-22, 1951

WHAT THIS REPORT IS ABOUT

This is a report of the highlights of one of the most important developments in the history of A.A. It summarizes the FIRST GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE which met in New York City April 20-22, 1951. At the Conference representatives of A.A. as a whole assumed responsibility for the national and international services which have made it possible for the movement to survive and grow.

This report outlines the scope of those services. It shows realistically the need for increased financial support of the GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE if A.A. is to continue to offer hope and help to alcoholics here and abroad.

WHY THE CONFERENCE WAS ESTABLISHED

Since the founding of A.A. the many services and policy decisions required to "keep it going" at the national and international level have been handled by the founders and their friends through the Alcoholic Foundation. As A.A. has grown, the importance of sharing this responsibility with the membership has become increasingly clear. It has become clear that the "collective conscience" of A.A. should help insure the survival of the movement. The General Service Conference is the means whereby that "collective conscience" can be expressed and can guide the Trustees of the Foundation on matters of policy affecting A.A. today and tomorrow.

WHO ATTENDED THE CONFERENCE

A panel of 37 delegates, representing the most populous A.A. areas in the U.S. and Canada, constituted the voting segment of the Conference. Next year a second panel, representing less populous A.A. areas, will join the Conference. All delegates are elected for two years. Non-voting members of the Conference include Trustees of the Alcoholic Foundation and staff members of the General Service Office and "The A.A. Grapevine."

HOW DELEGATES WERE SELECTED

In each "Panel #1" area, Assemblies representing local A.A. groups, selected Conference delegates by either of two methods:

- (1) By a single, ballot on which one "available" A.A. received at least two-thirds of all votes cast.
- (2) By drawing the name of an "available" A.A. from a hat.

HOW THE CONFERENCE OPERATED

During the first two days, the Conference heard reports covering:

- (1) History of A.A. services
- (2) Scope of The Alcoholic Foundation
- (3) Activities of the General Service Office
- (4) "The A.A. Grapevine"
- (5) Financial reports on A.A.'s service agencies

Fullest possible discussion was encouraged following each report. Several committees were chosen by lot to review various policy matters and to make specific recommendations. These recommendations were submitted and acted upon at the final Conference session.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE HISTORY OF A.A. SERVICES

Bill W. pointed out that A.A.'s services have been developing since 1937, even before the movement had a name. In that year, Mr. John D. Rockefeller sent a representative to Akron, birthplace of the society. The report which followed recommended subsidizing the movement, purchase of a hospital and allocation of money for preparation of a book. Mr. Rockefeller, however, made a decision that "saved the destiny" of A.A. He recognized that money would spoil the movement. As Bill pointed out, "that decision saved us from professionalism."

Later a Rockefeller-sponsored dinner had two important results. It raised a sum of money that enabled Bill and Dr. Bob to go forward. And it gave the movement widespread favorable recognition.

Meantime the "Big Book" had been written and had become the property of the movement. An article in Liberty magazine produced about 800 inquiries and a small office, partially supported out of income from the book, was established.

The real turning point came in 1941 with publication of Jack Alexander's article in the Saturday Evening Post. Income from the book was no longer adequate to handle the flood of inquiries. Thus the first solicitation was sent to the groups, suggesting that \$1. per member per year be sent to the Foundation to underwrite its service activities, (Group contributions can be used only for group services).

Today three service agencies sponsored by The Alcoholic Foundation help to carry the A.A. message worldwide: (1) The General Service Office, (2) Works Publishing, Inc., publishers of the "Big Book," and (3) "The A.A. Grapevine," which the groups recognize as our "official" publication. Bill's income for services to the movement is derived exclusively from royalties as author of the "Big Book." He is also reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses incurred in behalf of A.A. The various Rockefeller loans have been repaid and the Foundation no longer accepts contributions from outside A.A.

HIGHLIGHTS ON THE ALCOHOLIC FOUNDATION

The Foundation is a non-profit membership corporation whose principal purpose has been described as the rehabilitation of alcoholics. It is composed of eight non-alcoholic and seven alcoholic Trustees. It serves as custodian of A.A. Traditions at the national and international level and also handles the voluntary contributions from the groups which make A.A.'s worldwide services possible.

With the consent of the groups, the Foundation has accepted responsibility for A.A.'s general public relations. The idea of the Conference itself was first proposed within the Foundation four years ago. Although there has never been complete unanimity on the subject, the Conference was finally established because, in the words of the Chairman, "we need you (the delegates), on behalf of the total membership, to tell us where we shall go and how we shall go."

HIGHLIGHTS ON ~~THE~~ GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE

The work of the General Service Office is fundamentally Twelfth Step work on a national and international scale. The need for this service multiplies unceasingly. In 1935 there were two members. Today there are an estimated 120,000. There were no groups in 1935. Today there are more than 4,000.

The General Service Office is supervised by a General Service Committee appointed by Trustees of the Foundation. Office operations are handled by five secretaries with specific assignments. All other staff members are non-alcoholics. G.S.O. services include the following:

1. Preparation of worldwide Directory, maintenance of accurate group data
2. Preparation of detailed Handbook for group secretaries
3. Issuance of Monthly News Letter to all groups
4. Handling of Publications, Recordings and Translations
5. Detailed arrangement⁶ for annual General Service Conference
6. Assistance to New Groups as they get under way
7. Service to "Special Groups" (Hospitals, Prisons, other institutions etc.)
8. Relaying experience to help solve group problems
9. Continuing correspondence with "lone A.A.s" abroad and at sea
10. Clarification of the Twelve Traditions of A.A.
11. Information for Doctors and Clergy
12. Information for Industry
13. Responsibility for A.A.'s Public Relations nationally
14. Handling of Speaking Assignments, upon request and when feasible
15. Assistance to Visitors to New York office

Delegate⁶ to the Conference were recorded as favoring the continuation of all these **services**---and the curtailment of none.

HIGHLIGHTS ON "~~THE~~ A.A. GRAPEVINE"

The "Grapevine" is A.A.'s reporter worldwide. It ~~is~~ an A.A. Forum. It help⁶ newcomers to the program. It is the **basis** for well-programmed meeting⁶ in many areas. And It supports the "**lone**" A.A.

Only one member in nine is a subscriber. About one member in four read⁶ the magazine fairly regularly. Circulation ha⁶ increased along with membership but additional revenue ha⁶ been "ploughed back" to give readers a better publication. The "Grapevine" operates at a deficit but it may no longer **be** prudent to continue to deplete the **Foundation's** reserve funds. If circulation doe⁶ not Increase by Fall, **it** may be necessary to raise the price of the magazine. Group secretaries could be helpful in bringing the "**Grapevine**" to the attention of member⁶ who may wish to subscribe.

HIGHLIGHTS OF FINANCIAL REPORTS

Because of a substantial increase **in** services, coupled with a "leveling off" of income, A.A.'s three service agencies shoved a net operating loss of \$20,000. last year. Reserve funds are being depleted. **Serious** problems **may lie** ahead.

Contributions from groups last year **totalled \$76,400---from** a total estimated membership (non-institutional) of more than 100,000.

Only about one-third of the groups contribute regularly. (This is an improvement over past **years!**)

During the last nine months of 1950, the "Grapevine" incurred a net operating **loss** of **\$8,500** which was underwritten by the Alcoholic Foundation. Over a period of years, approximately \$24,000 has been contributed from Foundation "general reserve" funds to sustain the General Service Office. Delegates agreed an effort should be made **to repay this item** from future Group Contribution Funds.

The General Service Office budget for 1951 is \$107,000. (Roughly the cost of two highballs per member!)

CONFERENCE ADVISORY ACTIONS

At the final Conference session the delegates approved unanimously the following proposals, which are presented here in condensed form:

1. Non-alcoholics should continue to serve on the Board of Trustees of the Alcoholic Foundation.
2. In future years A.A. textbook literature should have Conference approval.
3. There should be a fixed term of office for alcoholic members of the Board of Trustees of the Foundation.
4. Attendance at the 1952 Conference should be limited to Conference members only.
5. The subject of A.A. auxiliaries or family groups should be discussed further by the local groups and be considered at the 1952 Conference.
6. The temporary Conference charter, suggested in the "Third Legacy" pamphlet, is suitable for the coming three years and the general principles guiding A.A. Assemblies are also approved
7. It is suggested that each delegate report to his State or Provincial Committee a summary of the financial report.
8. It is suggested that each delegate advise his Committee of the visual (film strip) presentation, approved for general issue, **illustrating** the services of The "Grapevine" and the General Service Office.
9. Conference approval of services rendered by the "Grapevine" and the General Service Office should be conveyed to the groups and individual members.
10. All members should be informed of the projected 1951 General Service Office budget, which is \$107,000. It is suggested that those groups wishing to participate in contributing to the Alcoholic Foundation give a minimum of two dollars per member for the year 1951.
11. **It is** suggested to the Board of Directors of the "Grapevine" that some mild form of promotion for an increase in circulation be adopted.
12. If there is no considerable improvement in the financial condition of the "Grapevine" by October 1, 1951, an increase in price is **recommended** to avoid further depletion of the Alcoholic Foundation reserve fund.
13. Suggestions for new alcoholic Trustees of the Foundation may be submitted to any State or Provincial Committeeman, or sent direct to the Foundation.

The above "Advisory Actions," intended for the guidance of Trustees of the Foundation, represent a milestone in A.A. Through their adoption by the Conference, the **movement** as a whole **assumed** a participating responsibility in determining the future of A.A. not alone for those who are already sober but for "the million who still don't know."

(ADDITIONAL COPIES OF THIS REPORT AVAILABLE AT FIVE CENTS EACH)

The Alcoholic Foundation, 141 East 44th Street, N.Y.C.

THE GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE

FIRST PANEL

ROSTER OF DELEGATES

ALABAMA

Charles Abercrombie
21 LeBron Avenue
Montgomery

ARKANSAS

Kenneth Garrett
P.O. Box 233
Pine Bluff

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Charles Brown ✓
3239 W. 30th Ave.
Vancouver

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles Delegate

Clifford A. Walker
1163 Ocean View
Whittier

San Francisco Delegate

A. W. Micoson ✓
3040 Halcyon Court
Berkeley

COLORADO

Merton M. Robbins
32 S. Tejon Street
Colorado Springs

CONNECTICUT

Page Duke
183 Seaton Road
Stamford

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

H. S. Cole
1219 Clement Place
Silver Springs, Md.

FLORIDA

Jacksonville Delegate

Thomas A. Sharpe
P.O. Box 6121 ✓
Jacksonville

Miami Delegate

Clifford H. Slick
325 Albemarle Road
West Palm Beach

ILLINOIS

Chicago Delegate

Lewis Hunt
617 Grove
Evanston

Springfield Delegate

Ward Montgomery
1640 W. Laurel St.
Springfield

INDIANA

Robert White
3060 E. Kessler Blvd.
Indianapolis

Iowa

Ray Harrison ✓
320 Fleming Building
Des Moines

LOUISIANA

George Collamore
69 Gull Street
New Orleans

MASSACHUSETTS

Robert Goldsberry, Jr.
51 St. Stephen Street
Boston

MICHIGAN

Detroit Delegate

H. R. Eshleman
773 Trombly Road
Grosse Pointe

Grand Rapids Delegate

C. F. McIntosh
360 W. Muskegon Ave.
Muskegon

MINNESOTA

Pat Cronin ✓
2415 Harriet Ave.
Minneapolis

MISSOURI

David Miller
P.O. Box 411
Sedalia

NEW JERSEY

Walter Bohnfield
Columbia Road
Morristown

NEW YORK

Southeastern Delegate

Henry Zoeller ✓
87-10 Clover Hill Road
Hollis, L.I.

Rochester Area Delegate

Cecil Bassett ✓
Cazenovia

NORTH CAROLINA

John S. Ruggles
P.O. Box 1145
Southern Pines

OHIO

Cleveland Delegate

William I. Dotson
First National Tower
Akron

Columbus Delegate

Bert Paschall
1122 Atlas Bldg.
Columbus

OKLAHOMA

Roy Scovil
1722 N. Lindsay
Oklahoma City

ONTARIO

Adam C. Capeling
761 Bayview Ave.
Toronto

PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia Delegate

George Roberts
131 Greenwood Ave.
Jenkintown

Pittsburgh Delegate

W. G. Griffith
20 Shady Drive
W. Pittsburgh

TEXAS

Dallas Delegate

Clin Lancaster
4678 Fairfax
Dallas

Houston Delegate

E. D. Sheridan
5020 Griggs Road
Houston

UTAH

Clyde Gooderham
871 Westminster
Salt Lake City

VIRGINIA

Il. G. White
P.O. Box 5126
Richmond

WASHINGTON

Dale Anderson
5705 45th Ave. N.E.
Seattle

WEST VIRGINIA

James Hardin
2119 Highland Avenue
South Charleston

WISCONSIN

George Strachan
1521 N. Prospect Ave.
Milwaukee

OUR A.A. GENERAL SERVICE CENTER

THE ALCOHOLIC FOUNDATION
OF
YESTERDAY. TODAY AND TOMORROW

by Bill

April 8, 1947

PART ONE
THE ALCOHOLIC FOUNDATION OF YESTERDAY

Thousands of newer **A.A.'s** inquire "Just what is The Alcoholic Foundation, what is its place in A.A., who set it up, why do we send it funds?".

Most members, because of their Groups are in frequent contact with our Headquarters at **New York**, understand that place to be a sort of a general service to all A.A. Reading THE **A.A. GRAPEVINE** each month they know THE GRAPEVINE to be our **principal** monthly journal. But the history of The Alcoholic Foundation and its relation to these vital functions, and to **A.A.** as a whole, they scarcely understand at all.

Now for a bit of history. During its first years, Alcoholics Anonymous didn't even have that name. Anonymous, nameless indeed, we consisted by late 1937 of but three small clusters of alcoholics---Akron, Ohio, the first Group, New York City, the second, and a few members at Cleveland, our third Group to be. There were, I should guess, about fifty members in all three cities. The very early pioneering period had passed, Dr. Bob and I having first met at Akron in the spring of 1935. We were becoming sure we **had** something for those other thousands of alcoholics who didn't yet know any answer. How were we to let them **know**; just how could the good news **be** spread? That **was** the burning question.

Much discussion in a little meeting called by Dr. Bob and me

were put on paper, our principles and practices would soon be distorted. We might be ridiculed in the press. Besides, did we not owe at least a book to those alcoholics who couldn't get to our hospitals, or who, perchance, weren't reached right away by our advancing missionaries! As everybody knows, the A.A. book dream did come true -- the other dreams didn't.

But it surely looked, in 1937, as though we must have considerable money. Perhaps it was because I lived at New York, where there is supposed to be lots of it, that I was delegated to set about raising funds so our nameless movement might have its "field **workers**", hospitals and books. How simple it appeared. Did we not already have (in prideful imagination) the beginning of one of the greatest social, medical, and spiritual developments of all time? Weren't we drunks all salesmen? Hadn't I been a Wall Street man? How easy to raise money for such a cause as ours!

The awakening from that money dream was rude. It soon appeared that people with **money** had little interest in **drunks**. As for our grandiose scheme of banding alcoholics together in squads, platoons and regiments -- well, that was plainly fantastic, wasn't it? Drunks, people said, were difficult enough, one at a time. Why present each American community with an organized regiment of them. Hadn't the donors better put their money into something constructive -- like tuberculosis or cancer? Or, why shouldn't they invest in the prevention of alcoholism? One more attempt to salvage hopeless drunks couldn't

possibly succeed. Such were the answers to our plea for **money**.

Then, one day, in the midst of discouragement, something momentous happened. It was another of those critical turning points in A.A. of which we have seen so many that no man can call them coincidence. At the office of my physician brother-in-law, I was bemoaning, in typical alcoholic fashion, how little we poor drunks were appreciated, especially by men of means. I was telling my relative for the tenth time how we had to have money soon -- **or** else. Listening patiently he suddenly said, "**I've** got an idea. I used to know a man by the name of Dick R. He was somehow connected with the **Rockefellers**. But that was years ago. I wonder if he is still there. Let **me** call up and find **out**." On what little events our destinies sometimes turn! How could either of us know that a simple phone message was to open a new era in A.A.! That it was to inaugurate The Alcoholic Foundation, the book "Alcoholics Anonymous" and our A.A. Central Office.

Two days after my brother-in-law's call, we sat in the Rockefeller offices talking to "**Dick**" R. The **most lovable** of men, "Dick" was the first of that early *series* of non-alcoholic laymen who saw us through when the going was very hard; and without whose wisdom and devotion the Alcoholics Anonymous movement might never have been. When he had heard the story, our new friend showed instant-understanding. He immediately translated understanding into action. He suggested that **some** of our alcoholic brotherhood meet with several of his own friends and himself.

Shortly afterward, on a winters evening in 1937, this meeting took place at Rockefeller Center. Present were "Dick" R., a LeRoy C., since known as "Chip", Albert S., Frank A., and my brother-in-law, Leonard S. Dr Bob and Paul S. came down from Akron. The **New** York ex-topers were half a dozen. Of course WC alcoholics were delighted. Our money troubles, we thought, were over. If money was the answer, we had surely come to the right place!

Following introductions, each alcoholic told his own personal story, after which (with becoming reluctance!) we brought up the subject of money. As our hearers had seemed much impressed by our **recovery** stories, we made bold to expand on the urgent need for hospitals, "field workers" and a book. We also made it clear that this would take money -- quite a lot.

Then came one more turn in A.A. destiny. The Chairman of the meeting, Albert S., a man of large affairs, and profoundly spiritual in his nature said in substance, "I am deeply moved by what I have heard. I can see that your work, thus far, has been one of great good will -- one alcoholic personally helping another for the love of the thing. That is First Century Christianity in a beautiful form. But aren't you afraid that the introduction of hospitals and paid field workers might change all that? Shouldn't we be most careful not to do anything which might lead to a professional or propertied class within your ranks?"

These were great words for Alcoholics Anonymous. We

alcoholics admitted their weight. Disappointed that our hope of substantial money help seemed to be fading, we confessed, nevertheless, that we had often had such misgivings. But, we persisted, what are we going to do? It has taken us three years to form three groups. We know we have a new life for those who die or go mad by thousands each year. Must our story wait while it is passed around by word of mouth only, becoming hopelessly garbled meanwhile? Finally our friends agreed that something needed to be done. But they did continue to insist our movement ought never be professionalized. This struck the key note of *our* relation to these men of good will for all the years since. Rightly enough they have never secured us large sums of money. But each has *given* of himself to our cause, generously and continuously; how much, a few **A.A.'s** can ever know.

Seeing clearly that we must now spread the recovery message faster, they then suggested we might carefully experiment with a small rest home at Akron. This could be presided over by Dr Bob who was, after all, a physician. Whereupon Frank A., on his own time and expense, went to Akron to investigate. He returned most enthusiastic. He was inclined to the opinion that \$30,000 ought to be invested there in a center for alcoholics. Our friend Dick R. showed Franks's report to Mr. John D. Rockefeller Jr. who at once manifested a warm interest. But Mr Rockefeller also expressed anxiety about **professionalizing** us. Nevertheless he gave us a sum which turned out to be , however, about one-sixth of the amount Frank had suggested. His gift came in the Spring

of 1938 and its result was to help DK. Bob and me through that very trying year. We could not have actively continued without it. Yet, money wise, our budding movement of alcoholics was still left very much on its own -- just where it should have been left too, however difficult that seemed at the time. We still had no "field staff", no hospital and no book.

These were the events that led to the formation of The Alcoholic Foundation. The need for a volume describing our recovery experiences loomed larger than ever. Were such a book to appear a great flow of inquiries from alcoholics and their families might start. Thousands, maybe. These appeals would certainly have to be cleared through some sort of Central Office. That was most evident.

For these saner purposes, our friends suggested the formation of a Foundation to which givers might make tax free contributions. We alcoholics endlessly discussed this new project with them, consuming hours of their business time. Frank A. and a friendly attorney, Jeff. W., put much effort on the original Foundation Trust agreement. The lawyer had never seen anything like it. The new Foundation should, we insisted, have two classes of Trustees -- alcoholics and non-alcoholics. But, legally speaking, what was an alcoholic anyhow, he queried and if an alcoholic had stopped drinking, was he an alcoholic anymore? Then, why two classes of Trustees? That, said our attorney, was unheard of. We explained that we wanted our friends with us. And besides, we urged, suppose all of us alcoholics should get

drunk at once, who then would hang on to the money! Surmounting many such obstacles The Alcoholic Foundation was finally inaugurated. It had four non-alcoholics and three alcoholic Trustees. They could appoint their own successors. It was chartered to do everything under the sun except **lobby** for prohibition. So it had everything -- except money!

During the summer of 1938 we solicited the well-to-do for contributions to fill that grand new receptacle, our Alcoholic Foundation. Again we encountered a strange indifference to drunks. Nobody was interested. We didn't get a cent that I can remember. We *were* pretty discouraged; apparently Providence had deserted us. With the modest fund from Mr. Rockefeller running out, it looked like a lean winter ahead. There could be no **book**, no office. What good, we complained, was an Alcoholic Foundation without money!

By this time there had been roughed out what are now the first two chapters of the **book now** known as "Alcoholics Anonymous". Our friend Frank referred us to a well known publisher who suggested the possibility of advancing royalties to me so the **book** could **be** finished. That made us feel fine until it was realized that if I ate up a lot of royalties while doing the **book**, there could be no more payments for a long time afterward. We saw, too, that **my 10%** royalty would never carry the office expense of answering the pleas for help that would **surely** follow publication. Nor might a commercial publisher, anxious for sales, advertise it as we would like.

These reflections led us straight into a typical alcoholic fantasy! Why not publish the book ourselves? Though told by almost everybody who knew anything of publishing that amateurs seldom produced any but flops, we were not a whit dismayed. This time, we said, it would be different. We had discovered that the **bare** printing cost of a book is but a fraction of its retail price and a national magazine of huge circulation had offered to print an article about us when our book was finished. This was a clincher, How could we **miss**? We could see books selling hundreds of thousands -- money rolling in!

What a promotion it was! An A.A. friend and I hastily organized the Works Publishing Co. **My** friend, Hank P., then bought a pad of stock certificates at a stationary store. He and I started selling them to brother alcoholics and any who would **buy** at the bargain price of \$25.00 a share. **Sure** fire proposition, folks, you can't miss, we chanted. Our confidence must have been boundless. **Not** only were we selling common stock on a **book to** cure drunks -- the book itself hadn't yet been written. Amazingly enough, we did sell that stock, \$4,500 worth, to alcoholics in New York, New Jersey, and to their friends. No one of the original 49 subscribers put up over \$300.00. Almost everybody paid on monthly installments, being too broke to do otherwise; save, of course, **our** good friends at Rockefeller Center. They pitched in, several of them subscribing.

Our agreement with the Works **Publishing** subscribers was that **out** of the first book income they were to get their money back;

also that The Alcoholic Foundation was to receive the 10% royalty I might have had from a Publisher. As for the shares of the Works Publishing, the 49 cash subscribers were to have one third, my friend Hank one third, and I one third. We also obtained a loan of \$2,500 from Charles B.T., proprietor of a nationally known hospital for alcoholics. A friend indeed, he was to wait years to get his money back.

But, as anyone could then see, everything was all set -- everything, of course, **but** writing and selling the **book!** Hope ran high. Out of the new financing we could keep a small office going **at Newark, New Jersey.** There I began to dictate the text of "Alcoholics Anonymous" to Ruth H. (our first and adored National Secretary). Rosily we **saw** scads of money coming in, once the **book was** off the press. Still more, we expected the new **book** would turn right **about** and help finance **our** poverty stricken Foundation -- which, strangely enough, it really did years later.

Finally came April 1939. The book was done. Tales of recovery for its story section had been supplied by Dr. Bob and Akron brethren. Others were supplied by **New Yorkers**, and **New Jerseyites.** One **came** in from Cleveland and another from Maryland. Chapters had been read and discussed at meetings. I had thought myself the author of the text until I discovered I **was** just the umpire of the differences of opinion out of which it arose. After endless voting on a title for the new work we had decided to call it "The Way **Out**". But inquiry by **Fitz M.**, our Maryland alcoholic, at The Library of Congress disclosed the fact

that two live books already bore that title. Surely we couldn't **make** our **book the** thirteenth. So we named it "Alcoholics Anonymous" instead! Though we didn't know it , our movement then got it's name -- d name which because of the implication of humility and modesty has given us our treasured spiritual principle of anonymity.

Five thousand copies of "Alcoholics Anonymous" lay in the printer's warehouse, except the few we joyously passed around. Each stockholder and each *story* writer got one free. The NEW YORK TIMES did a good review. We hastened to the NATIONAL magazine to tell them we were ready for their promised article. We could see A.A. books going out in carload lots!

What a debacle. At the office of the great monthly periodical we *were* gently told they had entirely forgotten to let us know, nine months before, that they had decided to print nothing about us. The Editors had concluded we drunks were too controversial a subject! This stunning announcement left us in a daze. The whole Alcoholics Anonymous movement could buy less than a hundred books, as it had only one hundred members. Besides, we had given away 79 free ones! What were we to do with those other thousands of books? What could we say to the printer, whose bill wasn't half paid? What about that little **loan** of \$2,500 and those forty-nine subscribers who had invested \$4,500 in Works Publishing stock. How would we break the awful news to them? How could we tell them that since we had no publicity we could sell no books. Yes, that A.A. book venture

was, I fear, very alcoholic!

Thus **was** the good book "Alcoholics Anonymous" born into bankruptcy. Some of the creditors got restive; the **sheriff** ~~N~~ actually appeared at our Newark office. The promoters were very low -- financially and otherwise. The house in which my wife and I had lived at Brooklyn was taken *over* by the bank. We took up residence in a summer camp loaned us by an A.A. friend Horace C. and his family. My friend Hank fared no better. Things certainly looked bleak. Still only three active A.A. groups, we had acquired besides a bankrupt A.A. book, one unpaid but loyal secretary, a tiny Central Office that might have to close any day and an Alcoholic Foundation with no money in it. That was the *score* after four years of Alcoholics Anonymous.

How we ever got the book and our office through that summer of 1939 I shall never quite know. Had it not **been** for a truly sacrificial act on the part of Bert T., an early **New York** A.A., I 'm sure we couldn't have survived. Bert loaned the defunct Works Publishing Co. **\$1,000**. This he obtained by signing a note secured by his own business, then in a shaky condition. His act of faith was followed by two **more** pieces of good fortune which barely got us through the year. In the fall of 1939 LIBERTY magazine published a piece **about** us. This produced a flood of inquiries. Some of those writing in bought the A.A. book. Those few book receipts kept our articles in the CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER. This started a prodigious growth of A.A. out there and created a little more demand for the A.A. book which helped a

lot.

Nor were our friends at Rockefeller Center idle. One day, "Dick" R., greeted us at a Foundation meeting with the broadest of smiles. It was then February 1940. Dick hastened to say that Mr. John D. Rockefeller Jr. had been following our progress with intense interest; that he would like, for the inspiration of his guests and for the benefit of Alcoholics Anonymous, to give a dinner. Mr. Rockefeller proposed inviting several hundred people, including personal friends and associates. This was a ten strike.

In March, 1940, the dinner came off. Mr. R's friends turned out in force. An A.A. member was placed at each quest table. Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, who had superbly reviewed our book, spoke of A.A. from the spiritual viewpoint. Dr. Foster Kennedy, noted neurologist, **gave** his hearers the medical outlook. We alcoholics were asked to talk also. At the conclusion of the evening Mr. Nelson Rockefeller, explaining that his father had not been able to **come because**, of illness, went on to **say** that few things more deeply affecting or promising than Alcoholics Anonymous had ever touched his father's life; that he wished his friends to share this experience with him.

Though great wealth was present at the dinner meeting that night, little was said **touching** money. Hope was expressed that A.A. might soon become self-supporting. But the suggestion **was made**, however, that until such a stage was reached, a little financial help might be needed. Following the dinner meeting Mr.

Rockefeller wrote a fine personal letter to each guest, expressing his feeling about A.A., and concluding with the observation that he was making us a modest gift. Accompanying each letter was a reprint of the talks given at the dinner and a copy of the **book** "Alcoholics Anonymous". On receipt of Mr. Rockefeller's letter, many of his guests responded with donations to the Alcoholic Foundation.

This so-called "Rockefeller dinner list" has since been almost the whole source of "outside" money gifts to The Alcoholic Foundation. These donations **averaged around \$3,000 annually** and they were continued for about five years -- 1940 to 1945. This income The Foundation divided between Dr. Bob and me so helping us to give A.A. a good part of our time during that critical period. Not long since, The Foundation Trustees were **able to** write **the** original dinner contributors, with great thanks, that their help would no longer be needed; that the Alcoholic Foundation had become adequately supported by the A.A. Groups and **by** income from the book "Alcoholics Anonymous"; that the personal needs of Dr. Bob **and myself were being** met **out of book** royalties.

Back now, to **1940**. The significant thing about Mr. Rockefeller's dinner, of course, **was** not the money it raised. Here came an influential citizen wise enough to see that our great need was not money. What we did really **need was** favorable public **recognition**; we needed someone who would stand up and say what he thought and felt about Alcoholics Anonymous. Consider inq the **fact** that we were then few in number; that we were none too

sure of ourselves; that not long since society had known us as common drunkards, I think Mr. Rockefeller's wisdom and courage was great indeed.

The effect of that dinner meeting was instantaneous; the news wires all carried the story. Hundreds of alcoholics and their families rushed to buy the book "Alcoholics Anonymous". Our little Central Office was flooded with pleas for help. It soon had to be moved from Jersey to Vesey Street, New York. Ruth H. got her back pay and forthwith became our first National Secretary. Enough books were sold to keep the office going. so passed 1948. Alcoholics Anonymous had made its National debut.

Just a year later, the SATURDAY EVENING POST assigned Jack Alexander to do a story about us. Under the impetus of Mr. Rockefeller's dinner and CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER pieces, our membership had shot up to about 2,000. Our Clevelanders, had just proved that even a small group could, if it must, successfully absorb great numbers of newcomers in a hurry. They had exploded the myth that A.A. must always grow slowly. From the Akron-Cleveland area we had begun to spill over into other places, Chicago, Detroit, and the like. In the east, Philadelphia had taken fire. Washington and Baltimore were smoldering. Further west, Houston, Los Angeles and San Francisco were putting down roots. Growth continued at Akron and New York. We took special pride in Little Rock, Arkansas. It had sprung up with no A.A. help at all, except books and letters from the central Office. It was the first of the so-called "mail order"

Groups now commonplace all over the world. Even then, we had **stated** correspondence with many isolated alcoholics who were to form Groups later on.

Despite this good progress, the approaching SATURDAY EVENING POST piece set us aghast. While our Cleveland experience had given wonderful assurance that our few established groups would survive the impact of heavy publicity, what could we **possibly** do with the thousands of burning appeals that would now swamp our little New York office which, by the way, then consisted of but one small room where sat Ruth H., a typist and myself? What could we three people do with five, or maybe ten thousand, frantic inquiries? The A.A. book income had barely taken care of the two girls and the office rent. The POST article would bring more book sales, but not enough to handle this emergency. We had to have more office help -- and quickly.

We realized we simply must, for the first time, **ask** the A.A. groups for assistance. The Alcoholic Foundation still had no money save the \$3,088 a year "**dinner** fund" which was helping to keep Dr. Bob and me afloat. Besides, some of the creditors and cash subscribers of Works Publishing (the A.A. book company) were getting anxious again. When, they asked, were they going to get their money back? Then, too, I had made the disheartening discovery that "promoters" are not always popular in A.A. Fantastic stories circulated about our connection with Mr. Rockefeller and vast "personal profits" on the Works Publishing book stock. This, despite the fact that the tiny book income had

been spent to support the office, and the further fact that the so-called "promoter's book shares" had never been issued to us at all, but had, at our request, been transferred to The Alcoholic Foundation instead. By this time I had been thoroughly cured of the desire to "promote" anything! Yet our little Central Office simply had to have funds, else we must throw thousands of heartbreaking appeals into the **wastebasket**.

With some trepidation, two of the alcoholic members of our Foundation traveled **out among** the A.A. Groups to explain. They presented their listeners with these ideas: That **support** Of our **Central Off ice** was a definite necessary assistance to our "12th Step work"; that we **A.A.'s** ought to pay these office expenses **ourselves** and rely no further upon outside charity *or* insufficient book sales. The two **Trustees** also suggested that The Alcoholic Foundation be made a **regular** depository for Group funds; that the Foundation would **earmark** all Group monies for **Central Off ice expenses only**; that **each** month the Central Off ice would bill the Foundation for the straight A.A. expenses of the place; that all Group contributions ought to **be** entirely voluntary; that every A.A. Group would receive equal service from the **New York** office, whether it contributed or not. It was estimated that if **each** Group sent The Foundation a sum equal to **\$1.00** per member per year, this might eventually carry our office, without **other** assistance. Under this arrangement the office would **ask** the **Groups** twice yearly for funds and render, at the same time, a statement of its expenses for the previous

period.

Our two trustees, Horace C. and Bert T. did not come back empty handed. Now clearly understanding the situation, most Groups began contributing to The Alcoholic Foundation for Central Office expenses, and have continued to do so ever since. In this practice the AA tradition of self-support had a firm beginning. Thus we handled the SATURDAY EVENING POST article for which thousands of A.A.'s are today so grateful.

The enormous inpouring of fresh members quickly laid the foundation for hundreds of new A.A. Groups and they soon began to consult the Central Office about their growing pains, thus confronting our Service Headquarters with group problems as well as personal inquiries. The office then began to publish a list of all A.A. Groups and it furnished traveling A.A.'s with lists of prospects in cities which had none. Out-of-towners we had never seen before began to visit us, so starting what is today the huge network of personal contact between our General Office staff at New York and A.A. Groups throughout the world.

The year 1941 was a great one for the growing A.A. It was the beginning of the huge development to follow; our Central Office got solid group backing; we began to abandon the idea of outside charitable help in favor of self-support. Last, but not least, our Alcoholic Foundation really commenced to function. By this time linked to the A.A. Central Office because of its responsibility for the Group funds being spent there, and to Works Publishing (the book "Alcoholics Anonymous") by partial

ownership, the **trustees** of our Alcoholic Foundation had become, though they did not realize it, the Custodians of Alcoholics Anonymous -- both of money and of tradition, Alcoholics Anonymous had **become** a National institution.

Quietly, **but effectively**, the evolution of our Foundation has since continued. Several years ago the trustees had a certified audit made of the Alcoholic Foundation and Works Publishing from their very beginnings. A good bookkeeping system was installed and regular audits became an established custom,

About 1942 it became evident that the Foundation ought to complete its ownership of Works Publishing (the **book** "Alcoholics Anonymous"). So the Trustees invited the outstanding cash subscribers of Works to deposit their **stock** with the Foundation. Most of the original cash subscribers still needed their money, and had waited a long time for it. Several thousand dollars were obviously required. Of course Group funds could not be used for this purpose.

So the Trustees, spearheaded this time by our old friend "Chip", turned again to Mr. Rockefeller and his "dinner list". These original donors most gladly made the Foundation the necessary **loan**. This enabled the Foundation to acquire full ownership of our A.A. book (Works Publishing, Inc.). Meanwhile, Works Publishing, being now partly relieved of supporting the Central Office, had been able to pay its own creditors in full. Later on, when our A.A. book income the Trustees offered to pay off the Foundation debt, several of the lenders would take

only a part payment -- some none at all. At last we were in the clear. This event marked the end of our financial troubles. Let me again thank our non-alcoholic friends of the Board of Trustees.. Time after time, these busy men have personally attended to such vital but unexciting tasks as I have been describing. The few of us who fully realize what they have done and continue to do would like every A.A. to share our appreciation.

The last few years of A.A. have been so fantastically phenomenal that nearly everybody in America knows about us. Seemingly, the rest of the globe will soon learn. A.A. travelers are going abroad, our literature is being translated into other tongues. In this country we make the headlines daily. A full length moving picture is in prospect. New proposals for major publicity are weekly occurrences. Today our General Service Headquarters has a staff of twelve. Because of our prodigious growth and *our* continuous entry into more foreign countries, we shall presently need twenty. Popularly known to thousands as "Bobbie", *our* A. A. General Secretary now serves world A.A. On the Board of the Alcoholic Foundation three of our earlier friends remain. New faces are seen at quarterly meetings, each as anxious to serve as the original group. The A.A. GRAPEVINE, our principal monthly journal, made its appearance two years ago and is now taking its place among *our* General Headquarters' Services. Our acute money problems, praise be, have disappeared; the A.A. Groups support the General Office; THE A.A. GRAPEVINE is

almost paying its own way. Out of its Works Publishing (A.A. book) income the Foundation has accumulated a prudent financial reserve against a possible time of business depression and unemployment. That reserve now stands at more than a full year's Headquarters expense, which, by the way, still remains not much above the very low figure of \$1.00 an A.A. per year. Two years ago the Trustees set aside, out of A.A. book funds, a sum which enabled my wife and me to pay off the mortgage on our home and make some needed improvements. The Foundation also granted Dr. Bob and me each a royalty of 10% on the book "Alcoholics Anonymous". This, we wish to say, is now our only income from A. A. sources. We are both very comfortable and deeply grateful.

This account of our stewardship of Alcoholics Anonymous during its infancy has now reached down into present time -- the year 1947. So Dr. Bob, the Trustees and I now would like every member of Alcoholics Anonymous to see in more detail how our General Service Headquarters is structured at the present. We would like all to know just how the Foundations Trustees, as Custodians, the A.A. General Secretary and General Office Staff, as Service members, THE GRAPEVINE Editor and staff as Editorial members are related, one to the other, and to Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole.

Part two -- "The Alcoholic Foundation of Today", follows next.

PART TWO

OUR A.A. GENERAL SERVICE CENTER

THE ALCOHOLIC FOUNDATION

OF TODAY

In Part One of this Foundation story we **saw** how **an** informal group of early A.A. 's and their non-alcoholic friends banded together in 1938 to spread the A.A. **message as** best they could; how this group formed The Alcoholic Foundation, and how some of them became its first Trustees. We **saw** how the Foundation helped Dr. Bob and me through difficult years; how the book "Alcoholics Anonymous" and the A.A. Office came into being and how, later, the Foundation acquired ownership of the A.A. **book**. We observed that the Foundation **was** chosen by the Groups in 1941, as custodian of their voluntary contributions **for** the support of the A.A. General Service Office **at New York**. We also have learned that, more recently, the Foundation assumed a responsibility for effectiveness and integrity of THE A.A. GRAPEVINE and that some time ago the A.A. Groups designated the Foundation Trustees as the overseers of our general public relations. Then early last **year**, on publication of "**The** Alcoholics Anonymous Tradition --- Twelve Points to Assure Our Future" (see p), the Trustees of The Alcoholic Foundation were named the Custodians of these

traditions as well.

Such has been the gradual process of evolution and common consent by which the Foundation Trustees have come to be regarded, first nationally, and now internationally, as The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous Custodians of AA Tradition, General Policy and Headquarters Funds.

In the early A.A. years Dr. Bob and I performed many of these duties ourselves. Some A.A.'s seem to think we still perform all of them. But that is scarcely the case. From the beginning we never had anything to do with A.A. Group funds, though we have often urged the Groups to support their General Office at New York by contributions to the Foundation. Bob and I were once concerned with the preparation, financing and publication of the book, "Alcoholics Anonymous". But the Foundation now owns this book and oversees its printing and distribution. Likewise, we used to perform, in our small way, those services today rendered by the General Office. But these functions have been mostly transferred to the General Office staff. Hence the money and service functions of **our** A.A. Headquarters are already lodged in more permanent agencies than Dr. Bob and me. The same kind of transfer is still going on with respect to matters of general policy. In a few years more that, too, ought to be complete. The thought is that Dr. Bob and I would like to leave, at the very middle of A.A., a simple Center of **Service**. Within this Center the coming generations of Custodians, Secretaries and Editors will, we trust, be accepted

as our successors in such affairs,

Let us now consider the A.A. General Service Headquarters as it stands at present. The structure is simplicity itself. Mainly it consists of one principal committee and three related ones. Each, for permanence and business convenience, is incorporated.

The principal committee or Board is, of course, The Alcoholic Foundation. This is now manned by four older A.A. members and five non-alcoholic friends of the **A.A.** movement. As Board members (Trustees) they serve without compensation. Though there is no fixed term of office, the alcoholic members feel they should nominate their own successors about every three years. New non-alcoholic Trustees are elected by the whole Board. Unlike the Rotating Committee of a local A.A. Group, the Foundations Trustees cannot be personally known to everyone. Hence the presence of non-alcoholics on the Board has always inspired a confidence and assured a certain stability the Foundation, no doubt, would otherwise lack. Necessarily, the Board members have to **choose 'their** own successors; the election of Trustees by thousands of **A.A** Groups is obviously impossible. In addition to these, the A.A. General Secretary and THE GRAPEVINE editors are exofficio members of the Foundation and qualified to vote on **all questions** save their own compensation for special services.

The Foundation's non-alcoholic members are, at this **writing**: Willard R. and **A.** Leroy C. (remembered from Rockefeller Center

days as "Dick" and "Chip"), Leonard S., a physician; Bernard S., a lawyer and Leonard H., a social service authority. For alcoholics we have Horace C. and Tom K., early New York members; Dick S. formerly of Akron, Cleveland and Chicago, and Tom B., formerly of New York, now of Atlanta -- both early and experienced A.A.'s. The ex-officio members are Bobbie B., A.A. General Secretary and Tom Y., GRAPEVINE Editor -- each alcoholic of note, and hard workers. Dr. Bob and I know these as our close associates; we recommend them to you all.

The-Foundation's three related Committees are: The General Office Committee, The General Policy **and** Publications Committee and The Grapevine Committee. To give these Committees permanence and to enable them to transact business, each one, like the Foundation itself, is incorporated. The **General** Office Committee is incorporate as A.A General Services Inc.; The Central Policy and Publications Committee as Works Publishing, Inc.; and The **Grapevine Committee as The A.A. Grapevine, Inc.** The Foundation, of course, owns the entire beneficial interest in each of these small corporations **which** are only, it must be **emphasized**, mere business conveniences for their respective Committees.

To assure a close working relationship between our Headquarters people, The General Office Committee is composed of three Foundation Trustees. **and** two members of the Central Office staff; The Grapevine Committee is formed of two trustees, The Grapevine Editor, **and** two members of The Grapevine **Staff**. The General Policy **and Publications** Committee is serviced by three

Trustees, The Grapevine Editor and the A.A. General Secretary.

Our General Office Committee is responsible for the business policy and effectiveness of that place. The A.A. General Secretary is charged with its executive management. The Grapevine Committee is responsible for the business conduct of THE GRAPEVINE. The Grapevine Editor is chairman of this committee. The Grapevine Editor and his voluntary staff are responsible for the editorial policy of the journal, the Editor having the final choice of what is printed. In case of conflict between editorial policy and general A.A. policy or tradition the matter will be decided by the General Policy and Publications Committee or the Foundation staff.

The General Policy and Publications Committee has the duty of settling those new questions of Headquarters policy which The Grapevine editor or the General Secretary cannot well decide alone, but which, in the judgment of the Committee, need not warrant a special meeting of the Foundation. The General Policy and Publications Committee is also charged with editing, printing and distribution of all Headquarters books and pamphlets, new or old. This important Committee is intended to be a common Headquarters meeting ground where prompt action can be taken on policy questions of medium importance. But it is understood by everyone that any decision important enough to greatly affect A.A. as a whole must be taken at a special or regular quarterly meeting of The Alcoholic Foundation. At this level the Trustees have the final word.

So it is that our Custodians, Editors, and secretaries are a trinity of function welded into a unity of feeling and action. They are dedicated to one purpose only -- service of the A.A. Groups throughout the world.

This development of our internal structure has taken place slowly and always on the basis of experience and need. In like manner, our thinking about Foundation policies has undergone a gradual evolution. In fact it is a revolution, respecting the use of Foundation money and the status of outside enterprises like hospitalization, research, and alcohol education. Once we imagined we ought to fill the Foundation with huge sums financing, besides A.A., all sorts of outside projects. We thought in terms of money solicitation and money charity. The Foundation ~~was~~ formerly chartered to do all these things. But today, in common with most A.A. Groups, the Trustees have entirely abandoned such concepts. Never, do we think, should the Foundation finance or endorse any outside project, however worthy. Foundation money, we believe, should be spent for A.A. General Service purposes Only. These purposes should always be universal in character, never of local or minor benefit. For some years now The Foundation has solicited no outside funds, and unless there comes a dire **emergency**, it will not solicit again. This is because the A.A. *movement itself is becoming fully committed to the principle of self-support; we prefer to pay our own way. Neither should the Foundation become wealthy through large gifts; these will surely be declined. We hope A.A. Groups

will continue to support the General Office, The Grapevine subscribers, THE GRAPEVINE and we believe that Foundation income from the book "Alcohol ics Anonymous" will always provide us a prudent reserve against any foreseeable headquarters emergency. That is our money policy.

There must be few societies or organizations in the whole world whose General Service expenses are as modest as ours: One dollar a member a year of voluntary contributions. We therefore think that our necessary Headquarters Services should be the very best -- that our few full time workers should be paid, not by charity standards but by business standards; that since most of us, thanks to A.A., earn excellent livings at business, we should not ask our special workers to do with less.

The Alcoholic Foundation is no longer seen as an institution or a moneyed charity. It has become, instead, The General Service Board for Alcoholics Anonymous, a collective conscience of our A.-A. society. The Foundation's responsibility now extends well beyond that of handling our few dollars and services. As the principal Custodian of our tradition and policy it acts, usually through The Grapevine of General Office staffs, to inform the whole world of our A.A. message and point of view. THE GRAPEVINE, the "Voice of A.A. Experience" reaches out to A.A. members. The General Off ice, in cooperation with the General Policy Committee, conducts our public relations and is consulted in difficult intergroup situations. When serious questions arise, the Trustees may deal with them directly, making perhaps,

a public statement. But no action is ever taken in the spirit of discipline or authority. For our Headquarters is a service only -- not a government.

In the field of A.A. Tradition and overall policy, Dr. Bob and I still do function. We are frequently consulted on questions which arise. But we now feel that, while always glad to help, we should be less and less heard in A.A. councils. Only in this way can our Service Headquarters Custodians, Editors and Secretaries be accustomed to function, as they must one day, when we so-called "**founders**" are no more.

Meanwhile, our active arms of service have been developing their own methods and traditions. At the General Office the vast **outcome** of nine years exciting experience reposes in **our** files and in the heads of our two Secretaries. Because of their station at the heart of **A.A.** they are bound to have a broader view than most of us. Out of strenuous experience they have developed effective ways of handling the multitude of problems and situations that press for answers. They have an immense personal acquaintance that stretches all over the globe.' With them a "crisis a **day**" is routine. We are coming to see that a permanently successful operation of the General Office will depend on the preservation of these accumulated experiences and contacts. Lest these immense assets **be** someday lost, we shall always need several assistant secretaries in training. And may we always remember that these secretarial servants of **A.A.** have a most strenuous vocation. They are entitled to **our** fullest

appreciation and backing -- theirs is no sinecure.

Being the most active spot in A.A., the New York **General Office** Last year (1946) answered 15,000 pleas for help from alcoholics and their families; it shipped half a million pamphlets and 25,000 **A.A.** books; it had about 12,000 telephone calls; it prepared and shipped 3,000 Group Lists; got out a new printing of the A.A. book; arranged for a Spanish translation of the A.A. pamphlet; saw 2,000 visitors; registered and wrote to 500 new Groups; arranged much publicity, notably the MARCH OF TIME film and the READER'S DIGEST piece; discussed the preparation of a full length movie; wrote innumerable letters to Groups about their problems and still found time to help the development of **A.A.** Groups in foreign countries.

All this **was done** by a staff of twelve people -- three alcoholics and nine "nons". It cost the **A.A. Groups** about \$36,000, still averaging a dollar a member for 1946, a year of steeply rising expenses. **Some A.A.** Groups contributed much more than a dollar per **capita**, some much less. No A.A. dollars can be better spent than those sent the Foundation for General Office expenses. Dr. **Bob and I want to** thank the Groups for their loyal support. **May it never lessen!**

Our newest development, **THE A.A. GRAPEVINE**, has a like promise. It is one of the finest volunteer undertakings we have seen. Its 6,000 subscribers (1946) are to be found in every state of the Union and many foreign lands. Its Editor and volunteer staff burn oil many nights a month **at a** little room in

Greenwich Village. Here, during the day, two full time workers look after THE GRAPEVINE routine and correspond with the network of GRAPEVINE reporters at home and abroad.

Like the earlier people who assembled the Foundation, the A.A. book and the Central Office, THE A.A. GRAPEVINE began two years ago among several newspaper-minded A.A.'s who thought we needed a monthly periodical. They were willing to contribute a little money and boundless effort to make it a success. At the beginning, this group of A.A.'s had no special authorization from anyone. They just took off their coats and did a job, a job so well done that at the end of a year they found their paper in National distribution. There was no sponsoring nor much promoting. Like the A.A. book venture, the General Office, and the Foundation, THE A.A. GRAPEVINE became a part of A.A. life on its own effort and merit.

Arrived at this point, members of THE GRAPEVINE staff came to the Trustees to discuss the future of their publication. They also asked me to write some pieces and requested me to ascertain if the groups would like to have their periodical as the principal A.A. monthly journal. Hundreds of groups and individual subscribers came back with an enthusiastic "yes". There was scarce a dissent. So, THE A.A. GRAPEVINE was incorporated and its beneficial ownership transferred to the Foundation.

As one of the Grapeviners recently put it, "We think that THE A.A. GRAPEVINE ought to become the "Voice of Alcoholics

Anonymous" bringing us news of each other across great distances and always describing what can be freshly seen in that vast and lifegiving pool we call "A.A. experience". Never taking part in the controversial issues of religion, reform or politics, never **seeking** profit, never lending itself to commerce or propaganda, always mindful of our sole aim to carry the A.A. message to those who suffer from alcoholism -- such is **our** ideal for THE GRAPEVINE.

With these sentiments Dr. **Bob** and I heartily concur. We hope that A.A. 's everywhere will feel it to **be** their newspaper; that our able writers will contribute freely; that all Groups will send in news of their doings which may **be** of general interest; that THE GRAPEVINE will presently take its place in the minds of **all A.A.'s** as one of our essential general services close alongside the Foundation, the A.A. book and the General Office.

This concludes what I hope has proved a **welcome** account of our stewardship of your A.A. General Service Center at **New York** -- The Alcoholic Foundation of Today.

Now, what the future? What about The Alcoholic Foundation of Tomorrow?

On coming pages I shall **try** to tell you of our thoughts on that subject.

PART R E E

OUR A.A. GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE

THE ALCOHOLIC FOUNDATION OF TOMORROW

Knowing that we are not prophets, and that great decisions about our future ought to be taken in the meditations of many hearts rather than a few, the Trustees, Dr. Bob and I would like to share the following reflections and proposals with every A.A. member.

Alcoholics Anonymous, we think, will always need a world Center -- some point of reference on this globe where our few but important universal services can focus and then radiate to all who wish to be informed or helped. Such a place will ever be needed to look after our over-all public relations, answer inquiries, foster new Groups and distribute our standard books and publications. We shall also want a place of advice and mediation touching important questions of general policy or A.A. Tradition. We shall require, too, a safe repository for the modest funds we shall use to carry out these simple, but universal purposes.

Of course we must take care that our universal Center of service never attempt to discipline **or** govern. Conversely, we ought to protect our good servants working there from unreasonable demands or political pressures of any kind. No

personal power, no officials or resounding titles, no politics, no accumulation of money or property; none but vital universal services to Alcoholics Anonymous -- that is our ideal. To do without such a Center would be to invite confusion and disunity; to install there a centralized authority would be to encourage political strife and cleavage. Some little organization of our services, securely bound by tradition, we shall surely need -- just enough, and of such a character as to permanently forestall any more.

At the middle of A.A we now have the excellent body of custody and service described in Part Two of the narrative. There we saw how our Foundation Trustees have gradually come to symbolize the collective Conscience of A.A., how our General Office acts in the manner of a Heart which received problems through its veins and pumps out assistance through its myriad arteries, and how THE GRAPEVINE tries always to record the true Voice of Alcoholics Anonymous. Such is the happy state of our central affairs that we surely must take pains to preserve and project, we trust, into a long and useful future.

Therefore, our headquarter's problem of the future will, in all probability, consist in guarding and preserving, in its main outlines, what we already have. How then, shall we best keep intact our ideal of service; how shall we avoid national or international politics; how can we best devise against any possible breakdown of the present A.A. Service Headquarters and how shall we give each A.A. in the world a continual assurance

that all is well with it; that it continues to perform its task effectively, so meriting his warm support, moral and financial?

To these problems of tomorrow many are giving prayerful reflection. **AA's** are commencing to say "What, or who, is going to guarantee the operation of our General Headquarters when the oldtimers who inaugurated it are passed off the scene, especially very early ones like Dr. Bob and Bill. Known so well to us from the pioneering period of AA, these early ones still occupy a unique position. They command a wider confidence and still wield more **personal** influence than anyone else could again, or for that matter, ever should. Having helped set up our universal Service Center they asked the rest of us to have confidence in it. And we do have that confidence, not that we much know the present Trustees, but because we know Bob and Bill and the other oldsters. In the long future, when these oldsters can no longer assure us, who is going to take their place? Does it not seem clear that the A.A. movement **and** its Service **Center must** soon be drawn closer together? Though we know our General Office and our GRAPEVINE fairly well, shouldn't we somehow draw closer to our Trustees? Shouldn't we take steps to allay our feeling of remoteness while the **older ones** are still around, and there is still time to experiment?'" Such are the questions now being asked, and they are good ones.

Perhaps the best suggestion for closing the gap between OUL Alcoholic Foundation and the **A.A.** Groups is the idea of creating what we might call the General Service Conference of Alcoholics

Anonymous.

Though this might be the work of several years and the result of much experimental trial and error, I would now like to indicate what some of us now think such a Service Conference could be and how it might be started. This Conference, we think, ought to be composed of a fair number of good A.A. members meeting annually, at which time we would seat out present Headquarters down in their midst. Our Service Headquarter's people -- Trustees, general Office Staff and Grapeviners would be members of the Conference also. We might add our ex-trustees. The Conference would then hear the reports of each headquarter's department, making whatever recommendation it chose in that connection. The Conference would, at its conclusion, issue a full report of its proceedings to every A.A. in the world.

The General Service Conference, like the present Headquarters, would be no body of authority. It could recommend or suggest, it might approve or disapprove. But it would never command or direct, either the Headquarters people or A.A. as a whole. It ought never, we believe, have the slightest political complexion. Neither delegates nor headquarters people would consider themselves political representatives of any cause or locality. They would, instead, regard themselves as servants of world-wide A.A. charged with sitting at its yearly table to render all of us a few simple services.

It is thought, too, that our present Board of Trustees should retain the privilege of naming their successors, subject

however to **one** important modification. It is felt that the Trustees should submit names for their **successors** to the Conference for confirmation -- that the Conference might, if it **ever** seemed desirable, reject a nomination. This would permit the Conference to exercise, If it wished, a strong influence on the choice of Trustees, yet still avoid hasty or ill-considered election. At the same time, the obvious disadvantage of outright self-perpetuation without consultation would be avoided. We think the Conference should, in general, have a privilege of rejection, but not of election **or** direction. Should the Headquarters members of the Conference ever be tempted to run off on an unwise tangent, it is anticipated that the privilege of the Conference to disapprove, publicly if necessary, would act as a healthy restraint, sufficient for any contingency.

Yet it can be seen, in effect, that the creation of a yearly Conference would not radically alter the set-up of our present Service Headquarters. It would simply broaden its base to the point where it would always be sure to engage the complete confidence and support of AA everywhere. It would bring **our** Trustees into friendly contact with a representative cross section of **AA**; it would enable them to feel the pulse of the movement for themselves; it ~~would~~ securely link them to those they serve and ~~it would~~ permanently close that gap of remoteness in which Dr. Bob, I, and others, are still standing.

Now how shall we actually create the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous? Certainly neither Dr. Bob,

I, nor the trustees could hand pick its membership, That would be too personal. Nor could we throw AA international into a spasm of yearly elections. That would be too political. As no matter of government or authority is involved, we shall never need a big gathering -- just a few good A.A.'s - to see that our services are going well. That will be enough. But how can we assemble these on a non-political basis? That's the puzzle. Perhaps the answer is something like this:

Why not first go to our twelve largest Groups or areas asking each to designate our Conference one delegate, say every three years. The year following the appointment of this first "Panel of twelve" we could ask the twelve Groups next largest in size to select a second panel of twelve, and the third year we might repeat the process so deriving a third "panel of twelve". This would give the Conference a rotating membership of thirty-six delegates. Adding the Headquarters members we would then have about fifty in all. For any practical purpose this would seem large enough. It is possible, of course, that the Conference itself might wish to name a "special panel of twelve" which could include foreign delegates or fill in from sections containing many A.A.'s, but no large Groups. Under such a plan it would fall mostly to the lot of our large metropolitan areas to make the individual selections, much more of a headache perhaps, than an honor. Yet I'm sure it can be done. For the good of A.A. as a whole we think it must be done. But how?

The other day a friend came up with a proposal: Why, said

he, in areas having strong Central Committees, couldn't we ask these committees to make the Conference designations? Couldn't any personal feeling be avoided if a Central Committee were to make several suitable nominations and then draw lots to see which nominee would be the Service Conference delegate? And why not apply the same principle in cities having several Groups but no Central Committee? Each Group could vote its choice of a nominee. Then a drawing from among these Group nominees would determine the Conference delegate.

Such methods might not invariably produce the best possible choices but it would pretty well eliminate personal competition and would make each General Service Conference delegate realize that he had been, only by chance, chosen to do a duty rather than elected to enjoy an honor. While not perfection, this idea, or some variation of it, may have great merit for our special purpose. Of course each locality making a Conference designation must needs feel at liberty to choose its own methods. Perhaps it ought to be emphasized that Conference delegates would not necessarily have to be local leaders or super **A.A.'s**. We would only require a group of good members capable of sitting down once a year at the Headquarters to report on the state of our services and A.A. in general.

It ought to be noted that these remarks about the non-political character of our Service Conference have no special bearing on the desirability of local elections for local Group purposes. Election is the democratic way of doing things so I

firmly believe in that principle when at all practical. It is only because of the tremendous importance of maintaining the pure service character of our Headquarters and the manifest impossibility of electing trustees, Secretaries and Editors from among the thousands of A.A. Groups that I feel we should deviate, in this very special case, from the elective process. Neither would it seem proper or feasible to load our small, loosely knit and rotating Service Conference with full responsibility for such choices, though the Conference should most definitely participate in them, as already suggested.

One more point should be made clear here - while our non-alcoholic trustees perform a special function at our general Headquarters, it does not necessarily follow that non-alcoholics are needed on the average A.A. group rotating committee dealing with local problems only.

To complete our picture of The Alcoholic Foundation of Tomorrow we suggest one more alteration of the status quo. The suggestion is that we change the name of The Alcoholic Foundation to that of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous and we would incorporate the Board (for business transactions only), as Alcoholics Anonymous Inc. The present trustees would then become known as members of our A.A. General Service Board.

The reasons for these changes are abundantly clear. The words "Foundation**" and "Trustee" constantly suggest a moneyed institution engaged in a money charity; they also suggest formalism and authority. As these concepts no longer

characterize our Service headquarters, it is clear we ought to abandon such terms. Then, too, The Alcoholic Foundation has already, though unintentionally, set a precedent for the formation of several other "Foundations", sometimes incorporated under A.A. auspices and usually chartered to solicit funds for research hospitalization and education. As our own Foundation now has none of these aims, we see one more excellent reason to change its name.

So our next two steps would seem to be the Foundation name change and the formation of The General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous. Each is a simple idea. But the latter way requires a considerable period of years to perfect. And may we urge that none consider these suggestions final, or the best possible. While we are fairly sure of the general principles involved, this is not the time to declare, in detail, the precise form of our future Center of Service. Though our present convictions on these matters are quite firm, they may prove far from infallible. Only in the fullness of more time and experience can they be tested. This is the spirit in which they are offered.

In times of imaginative reflection, Alcoholics Anonymous seems to me as a cathedral of infinite dimensions in process of building. Like the cathedrals of graceful line and stone, our structure of truthful principles will never be quite finished. There will probably be, as we better apprehend the truth for us, certain additions, refinements and perhaps, who knows, marked

changes.

Yet to us thousands who now stand in peace on its vast floor, whereon is inscribed our twelve Points of recovery, and gaze at the great walls and vaulted roof, now so well buttressed by our A.A. tradition and seemingly so secure against the storms without and subtle perils within, we wonder that we have come so far without mishap.

But it is more to the beckoning spire that some of us now are looking. Its outlines seem clearly there; workmen are upon its scaffolds. We may not surely rest secure until we know that it is firmly anchored; that its symbolic finger points straight upward -- toward God.

SURRENDER AND
THE TWELVE STEPS OF AA

Some AA's say that the longer that they are in AA the less they know about it. I wonder if this is strictly true. I have found that the longer that I am in AA the more difficult it is for me to express what I feel about it, and to explain what I think I know about it. I am sure that this difficulty arises from the fact that I become increasingly aware that the AA program, to the extent that it is successful, works through our feelings and emotions. It is not primarily an intellectual program and, to the extent that it operates only on the conscious layers of the mind as an intellectual exercise, it is sterile and ineffective. That this is so, I proved to my own satisfaction several years ago and, unfortunately, there are other AA's who have had, or who are ~~having~~, the same difficulty. The program, to ~~work~~, must go down much deeper.

The problem, as I see it, is one of changing our emotional reactions to the world and to the people with whom we come in contact. The statement is often made in AA that our problem is primarily one of "right thinking" -- a problem of the intellect -- and that the more thoroughly we can rid ourselves of our emotions, the better. Such a position however, is not tenable. Even if it were desirable, we can no more stop feeling than we can stop breathing. Almost any situation in which we find

ourselves produces some feeling -- some emotional reaction. It is easy to understand, however, why many AA's instinctively are receptive to the other point of view. We, as alcoholics, have been so filled with negative, hostile emotions for so many years, perhaps for most of our pre-AA lives, that it is no wonder we are inclined to look askance at "emotions" per se. However, we must not forget, that the positive feelings of love, humility, faith, compassion, and charity are also emotions. These things, we are all agreed, we must feel. Our problem, therefore, is not to rid ourselves of emotions, but to become, to the extent we are able, the kind of persons who react to life and to reality with positive rather than negative emotions.

Negative emotions are tension-producing emotions, This will be obvious, I think, to anyone who compares the tense state of his angry or resentful moods with the quiet and peace of those moments when all is right with the world. Tensions, in anyone, produce compulsive action and, in the alcoholic, may, and often do, produce that disastrous compulsion -- the compulsion to take a drink.

If our problem, as alcoholics, therefore, is one of changing our emotional reactions to life, how do we go about it? We do it by following to the best of our ability the Twelve Steps of AA. How does following the twelve Steps contribute to this shift of emotional orientation? Let us look at a passage from our book

"Alcohol ics Anonymous" : "For alcoholics, we who have been trying to run our lives by 'self-propulsion', by self-will on an egocentric basis, it is important to note that this acceptance of ourselves as we are involves a giving-up -- a surrender". I suggest that a consideration of the meaning of "surrender" will *prove* enlightening. It involves a giving up, a surrender of our self-sufficient and egocentric method of meeting life and reality. It means a surrender of our self-will, which operates with little regard for, and often in defiance of reality and which, as a consequence, produces frustration, discontent, and a sense of failure if we don't have this, obtain that, or achieve something else.

In AA we say that we alcoholics must "hit bottom" before we are ready for, and can be helped by AA. Don't we mean by this that we must be ready, impelled by the misery and suffering inherent in the alcoholic situation in which we find ourselves, to take the First Step on the road to surrender; to admit that we are powerless over alcohol, and that our lives have become unmanageable? If this admission reflects a true inner surrender (if we have really given up the fight to solve our alcoholic problem by somehow acquiring the ability to "drink like gentlemen") and if it is not merely submission to the practical exigencies of the moment (if we have rid ourselves of the feeling lurking deep down inside that "there will come a day" when we can drink with impunity), then in taking this Step, in making this

admission, we have made a big stride on the road to recovery.

However, as we all know, this Step in itself is not enough. It is not enough, if for no other reason, because a state of surrender is not necessarily permanent. The other eleven Steps are all designed, as I see it, to help us maintain this initial surrender, limited as it often is to the single problem of alcohol, and to broaden the scope of our surrender until it encompasses all reality -- a reality of which our understanding deepens and which becomes more meaningful to us, as we progress in AA on the surrender path.

Now what are the implications of the word "surrender"? An army surrenders only to a superior force. I don't think that a human being goes far *on* the road to surrender without finding himself believing in a Higher Power to which he can and does eventually surrender. The mere act of surrender to reality, incomplete and limited in scope as this act may originally be, seems to break the ice as it were. For the first time in our lives, perhaps, we are **able** to admit to ourselves that there is something which we, by ourselves, cannot lick. This realization that we are not, and cannot be sole masters of our fate and captain of our souls seems, sooner or later, to bring us to an increasing awareness of a Power greater than ourselves as an important factor in our lives and in reality as we come to feel and understand it. Thus, we become ready for the Second Step and

so come to believe that a Power greater than **ourselves** can restore us to sanity.

Having come to this belief, having acquired faith in such a Power, we are ready to begin on the Third Step; to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, as we understand Him. This Step is designed to broaden our act of **surrender** to cover all aspects of our lives. It should be noted that this Step says that we "made a decision" to do this thing; it does not say that we have done it. A complete surrender of "our will and **our lives**" is a lifelong task which any one of us will be fortunate ever to realize to any considerable degree, and which few, if **any**, will wholly accomplish. To the extent, however, that we can do this, and continue in it, we find peace for ourselves -- a realm beyond craving -- and a contented sobriety.

Steps Six through Ten are designed to help us in this spiritual quest; to help us maintain that degree of surrender to which we have already attained and to increase it. The writings of the spiritual mystics of all ages bear witness to the fact that only as we abandon **our** self-centered attitudes toward life and only as we relinquish the primacy of "me", "my" and "mine" and thereby acquire humility are we able to enter into a conscious contact with God and merge our wills with His. Humility has been defined as being "naught else but a true knowing and feeling of a man's self as he is". As a start

towards acquiring humility, therefore, we must know ourselves; so, in the Fourth Step, we make a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. Then, after having honestly analyzed ourselves, in the Fifth Step, as a further lesson in humility, we admit to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

Now, having established to the best of our ability just what we are, and wherein we fall short of what we would like to be, we are, in the Sixth Step, "entirely willing to have God remove all these defects of character" and, in the Seventh, humbly **ask** Him "to **remove** our shortcomings". It should be noted that we do not do these things; we are ready for Him to do them. We are still trying to turn our will and our lives over to Him, recognizing that when we tried to operate on the basis of self-will, we failed. St Paul, referring to the days before his conversion, says: "**For** the good that I would, I do not; and the evil which I would not, that I **do**". We risk encountering the same difficulties, to the extent that we are not able to let God direct our wills.

There are, however, things that we can and must do for ourselves. We can turn our wills over to God, but we can't expect Him to run our errands for us. Therefore, with His help, in the Eighth Step, **we make** a list of all persons we have harmed and become willing to **make** amends to them all, and in the Ninth

Step, we make "direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others".

At this point, if we have been sincere and honest in taking the first Nine Steps, we have made a start at least in turning our will and our lives over to God, as we understand Him, and we have taken such measures as are within our power to make amends for past shortcomings. We have, however, the rest of our lives before us. The evidence, both within AA and outside of it, is overwhelming that he who does not go forward on the spiritual path is more liable than not to find that he has gone backwards. Too often, unfortunately, this discovery is made only after the state of surrender has passed and self-will has reasserted itself. When this has happened, a return to a state of surrender, with its lack of tension and its relative peace of mind, is difficult and sometimes appears to be impossible. If the positive state -- the state of surrender -- does not return, it is a real tragedy, for it is safe to say that sooner or later a slip -- a return to drink -- is inevitable.

Therefore, in order to insure so far as possible our continued growth in AA and a deepening of our state of surrender, we, in the Tenth Step, continue to take personal inventory and when we are wrong promptly admit it and, in the Eleventh Step, seek "through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understand Him, praying only for

knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out".

The Twelfth Step has two parts, both of which are designed to further our spiritual life. "Having had a spiritual awakening, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics'*. It is perhaps enough to **say** here that "**faith** without works is dead". However, one word of **caution** may be proper. The words "having had a spiritual experience" should not be overlooked. This does not mean, as I see it, that only old timers in AA are qualified to do Twelfth Step Work. "Surrender **may be** and often is a very sudden event and, **as** has been pointed out, may **be a** spiritual experience in a very real **sense**. The danger is that a person who is not in a state of surrender -- who has perhaps never made *even* a partial surrender, or who, having surrendered, has emerged from that state -- that such an AA, in **doing** Twelfth Step Work, will **not be** sufficiently conscious of his position **as** the agent of a Higher Power workin^g through AA, but on the contrary will ascribe both his failures and successes to his own abilities. 'Such a person may find his failures frustrating and his successes, probably without his bein^g aware of it, ego-building rather than the reverse and conducive of pride rather than humility. When "**successes**" have this result, Twelfth Step Work, instead of helping in the process of **surrender**, has the opposite effect and the takin^g of the Third Step -- the turnin^g of our will and our lives over to God -- becomes harder rather than easier.

In the second part of the Twelfth Step we try to "practice

these principles in all our affairs." About this, important as it is, little need be said as it merely ties up all the preceding Steps in a package for us to carry throughout our lives.

I have tried, in what has been said above, to relate the Twelve Steps of AA to the psychological fact of surrender. I have also tried to show not only that his state of surrender, for an alcoholic, is necessary to any continuing and contented state of sobriety, but also that his state of surrender inevitably, as its depth increases, is accompanied by an awareness of, and sense of contact with, a Higher Power. This equation also works in reverse in that a continuing and patient effort to maintain a conscious relationship with a Higher Power is of great assistance in maintaining a state of surrender, and thus in staying sober. Please note, however, the word **"patient."** A frantic effort on the part of anyone to hurry his progress in this direction is self-defeating. If humility involves accepting ourselves as we are, then we must accept, as of any given moment, the state of our relationship to God, although we should of course sincerely and patiently try to improve that relationship.

In conclusion I should like to point out that relatively few persons are so fortunate as to lead their lives, or any considerable portion of their lives, in a state of surrender with its accompanying lack of tension and peace of mind. Most persons, who are so fortunate, reach such a state through extreme

suffering or some emotional cataclysm. Religious writers have been accustomed to refer to such people as "twice---born men". Such are we in AA. I quote: "Happy are those persons, who at the crisis of their lives, suddenly **break** through some mysterious wall and find a storehouse of energy. The release of energy often comes as a result of a great surrender, for not seldom the surrender seems to **melt** away a middle wall of partition within, which was dividing the life in sunder, and lets the whole of our energy go out in a single direction".

Perhaps we alcoholics are not so unfortunate after all.

Nichols Hall

1723 G Street, N.W.

Washington, D.C.

December 1949

Inscription on desk plaque of Dr. Bob

THINK

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

HUMILITY is perpetual quietness of heart. It is to have no trouble. It is never to be fretted or vexed, irritable or sore; to wonder at nothing that is done to me, to feel nothing done against me. It is to be at rest when nobody praises me, and when I am blamed or despised, it is to have a blessed home in myself where I can go in and shut the door and kneel to my Father in secret and be at peace, as in a deep sea of calmness, when all around and about is seeming trouble.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

*The task ahead of us is never greater
than the POWER behind us.*

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Copies of this folder may be obtained by writing to 122 S. Chestnut St, Niles, Ohio.

Dedicated to the memory of our beloved
Dr. Bob, co-founder of
Alcoholics Anonymous



August 8, 1879 - November 16, 1950

Dr. Bob's Last Talk

SUNDAY, JULY 30, 1950

First International AA Conference
Cleveland, Ohio

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Northeastern Ohio Area
General Service Committee

“My good friends in AA and of AA. I feel I would be very remiss if I didn't take this opportunity to welcome you here to Cleveland-not only to this meeting, but those that have already transpired. I hope very much that the presence of so many people and the words that you have heard will prove an inspiration to you -not only to you, but may you be able to impart that inspiration to the boys and girls back home who were not fortunate enough to be able to come. In other words, we hope that your visit here has been both enjoyable and profitable.

“I get a big thrill out of looking over a vast sea of faces like this with a feeling that possibly some small thing that I did a number of years ago played an infinitely small part in making this meeting possible. I also get quite a thrill when I think that we all had the same problem. We all did the same things. We all get the same results in proportion to our zeal and enthusiasm and stick-to-itiveness.

“If you will pardon the injection of a personal note at this time, let me say that I have been in bed five of the last seven months and my strength hasn't returned as I would like, so my remarks of necessity will be very brief.

“But there are two or three things that flashed into my mind on which it would be fitting to lay a little emphasis ; one is the SIMPLICITY OF OUR PROGRAM. Let's not louse it all up with Freudian complexes and things that are interesting to the scientific mind, but have very little to do with our actual AA work. Our 12 Steps, when simmered down to the last, resolve themselves into the words LOVE AND SERVICE. We understand what love is and we understand what service is. So let's bear those two thing in mind.

“Let us also remember to guard that erring member-the tongue, and if we must use it, let's use it with kindness and consideration and tolerance.

“And one more thing ; none of us would be here today if somebody hadn't taken time to explain things to us, to give us a little pat on the back, to take us to a meeting or two, to have done numerous little kind and thoughtful acts in our behalf. So let us never get the degree of smug complacency so that we're not willing to extend, or attempt to, that help which has been so beneficial to us, to our less fortunate brothers. Thank you very much. ”