



MARKINGS

YOUR ARCHIVES INTERCHANGE

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REACHING EARLY TIMERS FOR LOCAL ARCHIVES

As befitting a Fellowship embarked on its "Second Fifty", a number of our members have been in Alcoholics Anonymous for some time. In fact, not a few are what we are calling "earlytimers", those whose experience with our Program dates from the formative years in a given local area. Thus they can be real ancients from the '40s or early '50s in some areas or they might be much more recent ancients in areas where A.A. developed in the '60s or even '70s. Whatever the dates, we're looking for more oral histories and historical material from the times when in the words of Dr. Harry Tiebout, "A.A. was in its miracle phase."

We know that we're still in "the miracle phase." We are also made aware daily that many of our pioneers have left us and sadly, more soon will. Too often with them passes an untold tale of ourselves and even some tangible evidence of that history in the forms of one of a kind documents, pamphlets, books and the like. Items that are irreplaceable and memories that are singular and fragile.



Akron Times — Press reporting Oxford Group visit in early 1933 on front page.

In an effort to arrest this loss, the Trustees Archives Committee offers this plan to focus the Service Structure on gathering these valuable documents for local archives before they are lost.

On the surface the issue seems quite simple: asking earlytimers to donate these items which are not infrequently packed away in cellars, attics and garages. But there are problems. One of them is identifying and locating earlytimers. Another is their reluctance to part with material, particularly if there is uncertainty as to where the item will be housed, who will have possession of it, and how it will be treated. Reaching these members and inviting them to participate are the goals of this plan.

The Archives Committee has available an Archives Handbook that covers many of the important considerations involved in creating an environment that encourages donations of valued collectables. A strategy is necessary. Like most other undertakings in A.A., it is best to begin with a rotating committee, viz., a committee whose membership includes some earlytimers seems to run well. They can furnish leads to others of their kind and are particularly invaluable in fostering fresh, detailed and lengthy oral histories because they "were there" too and can jog memories long dormant.

The committee seems to have more stamina, too, when connected to the area structure. This facilitates budget preparation and accountability as well as affording the strongest possible connection to the Fellowship. This connection assures that archival activity enhances not replaces other "message carrying" activity.

The committee has many other responsibilities: gathering, sorting, repairing, protecting, inventorying, organizing, developing finding aids to

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SERIALLY . . . THE ARCHIVAL HANDBOOK (Part II)

WHERE AND HOW TO HOUSE MATERIAL: Equipment needed (probably not at the beginning)

- a. Acid-free storage boxes (Hollinger for letters, papers, photos, pamphlets, newspaper and magazine articles, scrapbooks for clippings, etc.)
- b. Stack frames to hold boxed materials.
- c. File cabinets (fire-proof) for vertical files.
- d. A worktable and chairs, desk, typewriter (with a roller platen to hold catalog cards).
- e. A card catalog (2-shelves) and table.
- f. Display cabinet(s) to hold books, or other memorabilia.
- g. Framed photos of events and places and nonalcoholic friends who have been helpful to the group.
- h. A tape cabinet, a supply of tapes, and tape recorder.
- i. More furniture and items can be added as needed. To begin with, probably many of the above items won't be necessary.
- j. Available sound tape recorders would be in both reel-to-reel and cassette formats.

SECURITY OF PREMISES, FILES ETC.

The G.S.O. Archives has special security locks on the front door. The room which houses microfilm material, taping machines, microfilm reader, tape cabinets, etc., is also locked. File cabinets can be locked also. It is important to purchase cabinets that are fireproof. Become fa-

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“GOLDEN MOMENTS . . .” A Physician’s Point of View

Since Bill and Dr. Bob first met and carried the message to Bill D., A.A. has grown in wisdom and strength as A.A. members have shared their experience honestly, in love, as they have sought and found the group conscience according to Tradition Two. “The sole authority in A.A. is a loving God as He may express Himself in the group conscience.” And here we must be sure we have found the group conscience and not the opinion of one or two who are very persuasive.

There have been many times when A.A. could have taken another road than the one that was taken. For instance, Frank Amos, the secretary-treasurer of the Alcoholic Foundation (which became the General Service Board), went to Akron and saw Dr. Bob at work with alcoholic people in the hospital there. He recommended to Mr. Rockefeller that he purchase a hospital for A.A.. Mr. Richardson (Mr. Rockefeller’s advisor regarding his philanthropies) advised against this, saying that A.A. was a spiritual movement and that money and property would kill it. How fortunate we are that that advice was followed!

I am reminded of the meeting of the Committee on Problems of Alcohol of the Medical Society of the State of New York many years ago when few physicians would accept an alcoholic as a patient. One of the members of that committee had begun to use Miltown for his alcoholic patients and was enthusiastic about it. When he had finished his report, Dr. Potter, who was then Dean of the Downstate Medical College, said: “Let’s not forget, gentlemen, that when heroin was introduced, it was hailed as the answer to morphine addiction.” Over and over again, new medications follow that pattern. Rarely, some alcoholic people need something of the sort for the treatment of some condition other than and in addition to their alcoholism which has interfered with their recovering in A.A. The physician caring for these people must know alco-

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“GOLDEN MOMENTS OF REFLECTION” An Archivists View

At first sight, the title “Golden Moments of Reflection” seemed saccharine — a fine choice of a retirement community in South Florida. In an effort to change this attitude, I decided to look the individual words up in the dictionary. “Reflection” means “serious thought”; and “Golden” means “exceptionally valuable,” “advantageous,” or “fine.” That simple action begot an entirely different mood.

My mind then filled with all the names of people from our past: Rowland, Ebby, Bill, Lois, Henrietta, Tunks, Dr. Bob, Ann, Bill D. Each had a piece, a moment. *All* have a place. If a fire gets big enough, it creates its own draft. And so it was with this small band. Two cities — three! The world began to notice: *The Plain Dealer*, *Liberty Magazine* and then even a false start — *Readers Digest* — first a yes, then a no. Then *The Saturday Evening Post*, 8,000 members, and the fire raged and continues to burn brilliantly.

The last fifty years have unfolded in a manner beyond our wildest dreams — people appearing and leading us forward, just when needed (Sam Shoemaker and Fr. Dowling); publicity and encouragement at the most useful moments (“The Lost Weekend” and “The Days of Wine and Roses”)?

The miracle continues — undiminished. And why should this not be so? Surely we haven’t run out of prospective newcomers to serve, have we? Or those legions who have taken a token swipe at us in the past — and may need to be convinced to give us a real try today? Finally, there are the many formerly active A.A.’s, sober some years, but away, perhaps unhappy, who might need a refresher course in the Steps and spiritual force of service.

Carl Sandburg wrote: “Whenever a society or civilization perishes, one condition can always be found. They forgot where they came from.” Fortunately, from where I sit, we haven’t forgotten where we’ve come from. And, if anything, more and more

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help researchers and establishing policies of access and confidentiality. Just deciding what to keep and what not to keep is a grave responsibility of the committee. One man’s trash is another’s treasure. A nonrotating archivist can provide continuity for custodial care, developing finding aids, and generally overseeing the everyday management of the collection.

With such a team in place and a permanent, well equipped “home” for the collection, approaching prospective donors can begin in earnest. A personal phonecall or letter from the committee might be used to schedule a visit. A sample of such a letter has been prepared. At the visit an oral history might be taken along the lines outlined in the *Archival Handbook*. It is during this visit that historical material will be identified and discussed as being suitable for the local archives.

We have prepared some materials to help with this activity: the contact letter mentioned earlier; a descriptive folder outlining the reasons for our interest in these historical items and oral histories; some stickers to identify material that the donor wishes to keep, but wants to bequeath to the fellowship; and a bookmark to also identify items for the archives.

The Trustee Archives Committee urges all Service Structure members to broadcast news of this undertaking. Announcements might be considered at all area assemblies, forums, conferences and the like. Planning and organization by a dedicated band of archival workers is vital to the success of this effort. We must all participate if a truly successful development of local archives is to be made.

members and outsiders are fascinated at where we’ve come from and the whys and hows of our enormous growth as faith-filled participants in a worldwide spiritual network and as a force for good in God’s world. May our fire burn on!

SERIALLY . . . THE ARCHIVAL HANDBOOK (Part II)

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miliar with the fire security provisions of your building. Smoking on the premises should be prohibited.

CONTROL OF ARCHIVAL MATERIAL BY ARCHIVISTS: CONSIDER AVAILABILITY OF MATERIAL BUT MAINTAIN SECURITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

While we can assume that most A.A. members will be mindful of the confidentiality of A.A. records, and so probably would most serious non-alcoholic researchers, the archivist should nonetheless maintain strict rules about accessibility and have every researcher adhere to them.

This is an especially sensitive problem in dealing with A.A. material. A.A.'s Twelfth Tradition states that anonymity is the spiritual foundation of our Fellowship — in spirit as well as letter. All Archives Committees should be protective of the anonymity of living people, and even those who have passed on. Those administering the archives must also be scrupulous about anonymity breaks. This responsibility falls essentially on the shoulders of the archivist. A.A.'s anonymity tradition is one of its most priceless possessions.

Screening of Applicants: To relieve the archivist from sole responsibility, the Archives Committee might consider the request of each inquirer individually to determine the seriousness and appropriateness of his inquiry, giving or refusing research permission. The applicant, if possible, should always be familiar with A.A.'s Tradition of anonymity and how it is applied to writing A.A. history.

Information Packet for Researchers: Try to make information about the archives and its policies available for each researcher: an application form and a card listing the date of application, how long he/she intends to spend on the project at the archives, the exact needs of the material being used. The person should

also be given a statement of policy, informed about the classifications of privacy, and given a catalog of archival contents. In other words, try to provide all the information needed to clearly understand procedures and policies concerning the use of the archives.

WHAT MATERIAL CAN BE DUPLICATED FOR RESEARCHERS AND INQUIRERS?

Determine what you can make available in the way of photographs. For example, would you release a single picture or make it available in quantity? Decide if you want to make photocopies of documents or letters, either individually or more than one copy, and if you should charge for copying. (Most archives and libraries do!) Most important, attention should be paid to any anonymity problems connected with this kind of duplication service. (See above)

FAMILIARITY WITH COPYRIGHT LAWS, FAIR USAGE PRACTICES, FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT . . .

The archivist and assistant(s) ought to become familiar with the current interpretations of copyright regulations pertaining to fair use and privacy, and so should members of the Archives Committee. Perhaps one of the committee members could be a lawyer or a professional person in the academic field. (Here's an instance where a non-A.A. might be a useful committee member.)

Since the copyright laws were updated in 1978, it is important to pur-



Frank N.D. Buchman visits with Konrad Adenauer, chancellor of West Germany.

chase and read a book on copyright practices that carries this new material. A good book is *The Protection of Literary Property* (rev. ed. 1978) by Philip Wittenberg, published by The Writer, Inc., Boston. Also helpful is *Writers' and Artists' Rights* by Don Glassman, published by Writers Press, Washington, D.C. The definitive source of information, of course, is the Copyright Office, Washington, D.C. Should an A.A. member be a member of the Author's League, 32 West 34th Street, New York, NY 10036, excellent material on copyright laws and their application is available, free of charge.

BUILDING A RETRIEVAL SYSTEM: CATALOGING AND INDEXING

Usually archives are indexed by series or groups of headings, all related, instead of by conventional library methods, item by item in a card catalog. Many times, book calendars or registers serve better than cards, but this is for the local archivist to decide.

The inventory of material, set up at the beginning and maintained as the holdings accumulate, will be helpful in coding and keeping the records in an orderly fashion and will also serve as an index guide. (See end of listing for recommended books on this subject.)

DETERMINE WHAT TO MICROFILM: WHAT MATERIAL NEEDS TO BE PERMANENTLY PRESERVED

Obviously, some early letters, clippings, etc. — especially those about A.A. in the earlier years — will need special preservation attention. Perhaps early members have scrapbooks which they will donate to the archives. These ought to be permanently preserved by microfilming and/or restored by encapsulation or lamination. Both processes are expensive and would need to be discussed with the Archives Committee and provided for in the annual budget, if the decision is made to have the object treated by these preservation methods.

INFORMATION EXCHANGE

The California Northern Coastal Area (C.N.C.A.) Bill W. has obtained three "Big Red" Big Books: one was purchased, one from the Estate of Dean Kirkham and the most recent from Brian B. who donated his late father's book. Bill also found a 1943 edition of the Big Book bound in green material, which appears to be the original binding.

The Santa Cruz Archives donated a copy of the book, "Pass It On" to the committees holdings. Buzz is trying to trace the lineage of the first group formed in Santa Cruz as well as determine who started the first meeting in Watsonville.

In Santa Clara Dave brought in several interesting articles of A.A. memorabilia for their files. He has noted an increase in interest in the activities of Archives in his district.

Ginny in Alameda visits Mendocino (Dist. 14) monthly trying to work up some interest in Archives in that district.

(We welcome all Area Archives activity news, especially concerning new acquisitions and oral histories from Earlytimers, and how they were obtained. Just drop us a note. Ed.)

DON'T THROW ME AWAY, I BELONG TO A.A.

Please contact
Archives Committee

or A.A. World Services, Inc.
Box 459
Grand Central Station
N.Y., N.Y. 10163
(212) 686-1100

Donated by

"GOLDEN MOMENTS OF REFLECTION"

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holism and the hazards of all mood-changing chemicals.

Will there ever be a pill that will "cure" alcoholism? I don't think so. And why do I think that no pill will ever do the job? Without the working of the Steps, there is no relief from the soul sickness which is the burden of alcoholism. Without the love and service that Dr. Bob talked about, there is no joy. Unless we pass it on with joy, we lose it. We never get it by just being dry.

John L. Norris, M.D.,
Trustee Emeritus

MORE GOLDEN MOMENTS . . .

How fortunate we are that there is so much A.A. literature available. And basic to it all is the book "Alcoholics Anonymous." The "Big Book" can be read and reread and each reading gives one additional insight. My last rereading was not so much for content as it was an effort to absorb a feeling from these pioneers. The feeling was there and two impressions emerged with overwhelming strength: one is the spiritual nature of the recovery program of A.A.; and the other is the impression that these alcoholics were alcoholics from the time they took their first drink.

In reading these case histories one becomes aware that alcohol meant something very special to the alcoholic long before the symptoms of uncontrolled drinking occurred. The aberrant behavior that we have come to define as alcoholism developed quickly in some and slowly in others. But they all liked what alcohol did for them from the very first.

One can go to A.A. meetings regularly and go a long time between references to the "things of the spirit." Frequently if one does hear it mentioned, too often the reference is "the spiritual part of the program." Is not the entire A.A. Program spiritual,



DON'T THROW ME AWAY, I BELONG TO A.A.

This book has been promised to the Archives of Alcoholics Anonymous. Please call the telephone number listed below and an Archives Committee person will be happy to drop by and collect this item. It will become part of the living history of A.A. and will be shared by many members in this area.

Thanking you for helping to preserve our past.

Telephone

or write Archives
Committee

or Box 459,
Grand Central Station,
N.Y., N.Y. 10163
(212) 686-1100

not just "part" of it? One can go through the Twelve Steps deleting the references to alcohol, and they are altered very little. But try deleting the references to "things of the spirit". You will find there is very little left.

An observation for those who would help the suffering alcoholic: There is a clue for early identification — a basic problem in treatment . . . the practicing alcoholic is not seeking a way to quit drinking, he is seeking a way to continue.

Homer W., Maine