



MARKINGS

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I REMEMBER - A Thank You and Tribute to 'Old Timers.'

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

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

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

To the best of my knowledge, with the exception of myself, most of this group never relapsed. Within months we attracted many new members necessitating a regular meeting place and eventually more groups. I suggested the need for a young peoples group, but was told by Roy, "I couldn't

do that!" I called Bill and he told me, "Go ahead, if there aren't disagreements there will be no new groups."

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

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

1951 — Conference Literature Committee.

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

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

1952 — General Service Board

The recommendation that the matter of Congressional Incorporation of the General Service Board was, as I recall it, briefly discussed — con-

sidered serious enough to study and follow up — and left for later decision.

General Comments

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

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

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

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

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

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