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THE  
OPEN  
DOOR  
NEWSLETTER

vol 5-1



ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS IS A FELLOWSHIP OF MEN  
AND WOMEN WHO SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCE,  
STRENGTH AND HOPE WITH EACH OTHER THAT THEY  
MAY SOLVE THEIR COMMON PROBLEM AND  
HELP OTHERS TO RECOVER FROM ALCOHOLISM.

THE ONLY REQUIREMENT FOR MEMBERSHIP IS A  
DESIRE TO STOP DRINKING. THERE ARE NO DUES OR  
FEES FOR AA MEMBERSHIP; WE ARE SELF-  
SUPPORTING THROUGH OUR OWN CONTRIBUTIONS.  
AA IS NOT ALLIED WITH ANY SECT, DENOMINATION,  
POLITICS, ORGANIZATION OR INSTITUTION;  
DOES NOT WISH TO ENGAGE IN ANY CONTROVERSY,  
NEITHER ENDORSES NOR OPPOSES ANY CAUSES.  
OUR PRIMARY PURPOSE IS TO STAY SOBER AND  
HELP OTHER ALCOHOLICS TO ACHIEVE SOBRIETY.

## The TWELVE STEPS

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol . . . that our lives had become unmanagable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons who had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practise these principles in all our affairs.

# CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

Hello Friends! My name is Robbie W., and I am the Chairman of the Open Door Group. I must say that this group has given my life one Big Lift.

What I'm really trying to say is that the A.A. Program has made me face the truth about myself. I have no one to blame but myself for my downfall.

One thing I have come to believe in: "I must help my fellow alcoholic in this A.A. Program. Before, I was doing all the taking and it certainly never kept me sober. I fell in heart by giving nothing.

I am quite sure my understanding and assistance will pay off.. for me..and others.

I have been in the A.A. Program for eleven months now and I want it to be this way for the rest of my life.

Thanking you all for the A.A. Program,

Robbie



OPEN DOOR EXECUTIVE:

Chairman.....Robbie W.  
 Secretary..... Pat D.  
 Steering Committee..... Robbie W.  
    Pat D.  
    Bob S.  
    Ken L.  
    Marcel D.  
 Editor.....Bob W.

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Open Door Meetings held each week; every Wednesday 2:30 p.m.

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WE LOVE TRUTH WHEN IT REVEALS ITSELF

BUT HATE IT WHEN IT REVEALS OURSELVES.....

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THE OPEN DOOR GROUP  
 P.O. BOX 150  
 NEW WESTMINSTER, B.C.

# EDITORS PAGE

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by Bob W.

A young man working outside the walls on the front grounds of the pen noticed how worn the marble steps had become. Mentioning it to an old-timer working with him brought this response: "Kid, those steps have been ground down by thousands and thousands of Mothers' loving footsteps." It doesn't take much of an imagination to picture Mom trudging up that stairway but can you imagine the feelings that must have been experienced on those stairs? Imprisonment is the cause of heartbreak and human misery which is almost unimagineable. NOT to the guy behind the walls however but to those that are left behind. The loved and the lovers, the mothers, fathers, wives, sweethearts and most of all the children.

Another form of imprisonment which has caused unparalleled degradation and human suffering is alcoholism. Here again, the guy imprisoned within his or her unmanageable habit, might suffer some physical discomforts but the real punishment is dished up to the rear and dear of the alcoholic. They are the ones that have to endure the broken promises, broken homes, broken dreams and the occasional broken nose that an alcoholic given enough time and enough booze can be counted on to deliver.

How many wives and children have been deprived of a decent standard of living because of an alcoholic father who needs the supply of money for his supply of grapes? How many families stumble along without a mother because she's down where the sauce is being served. How many mothers have been placed on the steps leading to a prison visiting area by alcoholic children?

It is depressing to spend a lot of time thinking about this kind of thing yet I wonder if any of us were to give a moments thought to what we do to others would it allow us to resist the urge to have a drink? Ask yourself now and more importantly, the next time you feel you have to or just plain want to have a drink, ask yourself....."WHAT ABOUT THEM?"

**EDITORIAL: THIS ARTICLE IS REPRINTED FROM THE PROVINCE.**

**AT THE TOP OF THE ALCOHOLISM LEAGUE . . .**

Although Canadians since the late 1940's have regarded alcoholism as a disease rather than a moral curse, we are still making a pretty poor job of dealing with it.

That's the conclusion of the LeDain Commission after an exhaustive study. We may consider ourselves "sophisticated" enough not to be shocked by alcoholism. But no amount of sophistication can shield us from the shocking statistics about the extent of alcoholism in Canada.

The World Health Organization says the prevalence of dependence on alcohol in Canada and the U.S. is 100 times greater than the dependence of drugs. We become indignant about heroin and marijuana and what they're doing to the younger generation. But somehow we have "accepted" alcoholism and regard those who suffer from it as unfortunates worthy of our sympathy but not our help in any truly organized way.

We dare not hide the statistics any longer. In 1951 and estimated 1,250 out of every 100,000 Canadians over 20 were alcoholics. Today the estimate is 2,800. Only one in seven of the alcoholics are on Skid Row. The majority are middle-aged men with families and the rate among women is catching up.

Three times as many high school students drink as smoke marijuana.

But statistics only show the effects, not the causes of alcoholism. Admittedly, to deal with the causes is infinitely more complex than treating the effects. Yet the commission's conclusion is that we're only treating effects in Canada, even though the various agencies are doing it with the best will in the world.

There are almost no facilities providing comprehensive long-term care, including follow-up treatment. That kind of treatment should involve a wide range of disciplines, medical and psychiatric, the kind of attack now being pressed against cancer and heart disease.

Obviously it will cost a great deal. But medicare undertook to provide universal coverage and it can't do that if alcoholism is not regarded in practical terms as the scourge it is.

It's our number one drug-dependence problem and on the international alcoholism scale we are among the worst.

It's not enough to show a child a dead worm in a glass of whisky. The statistics show he isn't listening to that message any longer.

MAY MY GAINS HELP YOU TO UNDERSTAND ME AND THE A.A. PROGRAM

by Pat D.

I, as an alcoholic am very grateful for the help you members have given me in learning to know myself better and understand my problems. I've learned mostly from you who have similar problems. I am also very thankful for the understanding it has given me to the Indian People of our country who I have always admired. I understand better many of our native people and how they are so hateful and resentful towards the white society who have used and abused a very proud race of people. The damage that alcohol has done to them and the hearts that have been broken..I feel is hard for them to bear. But I am thankful they are such proud people and have the courage to rise above this problem. I'm very happy to see many more of these people who join Alcoholics Anonymous as many of them need it as we do.

About myself, it's much the same story as a lot of you have to tell or have heard before. I come from a well respected family and now realize that I hoed my own path to where I am. For a long time, I blamed everybody else but the one I should have blamed was only ME. I found that I have to be honest with myself and face reality. I had to loose everything I had including a wonderful wife and children as well as my freedom in order to learn that I cannot control my drinking. For me the only way I can do this is through this wonderful fellowship of A.A. and God as I understand Him.

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WHO ME?

My name is Ed, I'm 27 years of age and an alcoholic. I still find this hard to admit to anyone including myself. Who likes to admit that alcohol controls your body, mind and soul? But this is nothing to be ashamed of; many people are afflicted with greater burdens during their lifetimes. First, one must admit it to ones self and then to others who may ask.

I was an only child raised in a middle-class family where alcohol was a common day commodity. I found out at the age of 12 or there about that alcohol really turned me "on." Or did it? Now I realize that it turned me "off" to a normal life. Because of a few too many drinks I wound up in jail at the age of 18. Then after I used alcohol as an excuse and gradually slid down the ladder of social adeptability. Oh, I was working etc., during this time but everyone has their own "rock bottom." Mine wasn't on skid row but might as well have been. I cared less and less about my family but in my alcoholic stupor I couldn't comprehend this. As long as I was doing fine so was everyone else. What a fool I was! I've met selfish people in my life-time, but I guess I took the cake. Finally, I landed at the B.C.P. again because of alcohol but I'd only admit this to myself.

I've had time to think things over and I've reached my "bottom" so with the help of A.A. and faith in myself I can once again become a human being. I realize A.A. can't stop me drinking, this I have got to do myself but they sure can do a lot to help. So with faith in myself, God and A.A., I'll make it to the land of the living once again.

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# OUR GUESTS

THE FOLLOWING LIST ARE THOSE PERSONS WHO HAVE BEEN GUESTS AT THE  
OPEN DOOR GROUP FROM JANUARY 1972 - APRIL 1972.

Calvin Greene	Carol Birmingham
Marnie & Dick Patteson	Don Harrison
Vera & Bent Bingaman	George Slater
Vic Taylor	John O Connol
Tom & Barb Whittaker	Mr. & Mrs. Jack Lynch
John Smith	Rose OBrian
Betty Campo	Ray Steve
Elanor Boulier	Bob & Sharon Katzel
Fred Saucier	John & Margart Corrins
Steve & Fran Mills	Elestath Gronleech
Frank & Mary Malloway	Glen Nasson
Alax James	L.D. Gordon
Charlie Hall	Victor McInnes
Marg Brewer	Jackie Clark
Helen McLennan	Audrey Hunter
Jim Linkletter	Louise BoJan
Joseph O Boulker	Violet Phillips
R. Graves	Leslie Renats

# HELP

by Doug A.

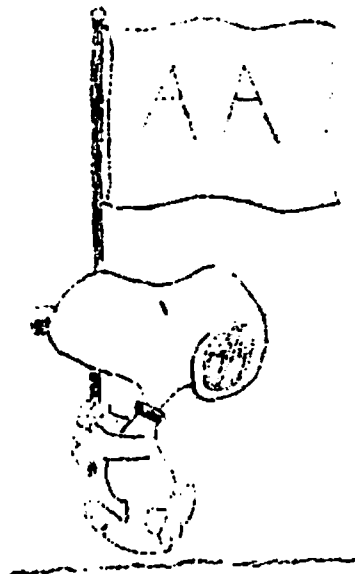
This is a call to alcoholics! 'I' want your help and in order to get that help, I am asking that you read this and get in touch with us here at Box 150, New Westminster, B.C. Address all your mail to the A.A. Chairman.

I need your story! ,Isn't that what A.A. is all about? The more I hear, the more I learn; the more I learn, the more help I can receive. Also my friends, you can receive our help. How many of you have said, "but for the Grace of God, there go I," and have ended up in here or in places like it? Some of us, for that first drink which we could not handle. We are paying for that slip, fall or whatever you choose to call it.

There are many individuals here who you can certainly identify with. Some of us, I know this writer does, wishes to identify with you.

Another aspect of this plea is if you have never been in jail and have wondered what it is all about, here is your chance. Discover for yourself what it is like, for a couple of hours. Then, when you return to your home, stop and think about what you felt and saw during your visit at the Pen.

This has to be where it is at!!!!



## \*\*\* T I M E \*\*\*

Time is  
A clock stirs  
And yawns its boredom with the silent strands  
Of minutes going by.

The measured tread  
Of endless hours seems  
To tie earth to the stars,  
The drifting moments fall  
In piles like dust,  
Soft, impenetrable,  
Choking all life.

It sometimes seems  
As if a hand should clutch  
The many eons and,  
With frantic, childlike  
Grip, Reduce them down  
To one hard compact ball  
To toss away  
and start afresh..  
A better..cleaner way.

submitted by Rueben M.

# WE ASK . . . .

by Ron R.

## "WE ASK, CAN WE DRINK AGAIN?"

In the past, we have seen many examples and most of us have tried to drink moderately again.

We still see friends, members and our families severely intoxicated. We pass it off as "only a drunk," without worrying about the dangers of alcohol. Every day of the year, large numbers of our population carry this death rate. The cause.. ALCOHOL!

Yet, the alcoholic keeps on drinking and relatively shows no concern at all. It is very difficult to tell people who are suffering from this illness.

As a member of Alcoholics Anonymous, I can only tell my story and say what alcohol has done to my life. Also to say how I found a new way to live from my A.A. Fellowship..without alcohol. Only by admitting I am an alcoholic and having the desire to stop drinking.

"One day at a time" has given me hope. For without the fellowship of A.A., I couldn't do it by myself.

Thank God for A.A. and thanks to A.A. for a better way of Life.

..... ALIVE .....

by Marcel L.

I feel completely different than I did three months ago about a lot of things. I had done a lot less thinking than I do now. Today people say, "But three months ago, you said ..... ." Yes I did. So what? I've changed my mind. I've changed everything. I am still being born and you really haven't seen the real me.

# Day to Day

I try to be good just for today,  
Though evil thoughts sometimes come my way.  
These I have to force out of my mind,  
And not to be bitter, instead be kind.  
This I can do with the help of A.A.

I know I can make it, all I have to do is try,  
And look for this power that is greater than I.  
To me I know A.A. must be first,  
Although I may have a craving thirst.  
For to me this is more important than anything money can buy.

I'll be an alcoholic for the rest of my life,  
And the pain this can cause can be worse than a knife.  
So there's not too much else I can say,  
Just to live from day to day.  
And easy does it, with A.A.

Pat D.

# EDITORIAL .....by Bob W.

At just about every meeting I have noticed that at least one of the guys speaking will drop a statement like, "some of you guys are here only to make a parole, not to make A.A. work for you." Or something like, "some of you guys just come for coffee." They usually go on to say why they are there and what A.A. is doing for them.

Talking about yourself, what you are, what you were and what you want to be is great - that's what A.A. meetings are all about. Sharing our experiences and desires for the future helps to illustrate to each of us that we're not alone in our battle of the bottle. This common ground is the foundation of the fellowship that makes A.A. the successful program that it is.

But I don't agree with any member questioning the motives of the other members or guests. It serves no useful purpose but can be instrumental in driving away someone who may have helped himself through A.A. You don't make yourself bigger or better at anything in this world by putting someone else down. Some people are almost incapable of getting up in front of a group of people and speaking but listening to and learning from others is also participation. This can be very meaningful participation.

Carrying the message, an integral purpose of A.A., does not mean running around preaching the gospel of abstinence to anybody you can buttonhole. It means discussing it with anyone interested enough to ask or to come to a meeting and see for themselves. Hence the name... "OPEN DOOR GROUP"! A.A.'s want to share but each person must come to terms with his or her problem at their own speed. This could take weeks, months or even years, but the door should always be open. To succeed through A.A. you first have to admit failure - failure to be able to handle alcohol. This isn't an easy thing to do but then nobody can say that A.A. was easy. It isn't easy to accept failure and facing the prospect of completely changing your way of life is not a step to be lightly made, however necessary.

Exposure to A.A. in action by sitting in at a meeting is the best way we have of carrying the message to non-members, as well as members.

The point is that anybody who comes to participate or to listen should be made welcome. Never mind why he is there - you know why you are there - share it!!

PRISON IS A BAD SCENE

.....by Joe P.

Why is A.A. in Prison? When a man can stay sober for two years or more, where alcohol is hard to get and a man can get three meals a day, a room to sleep in with no real worries until he gets out. I used to ask this question before I joined A.A. and this is what I found.

If a man like me who drank heavy in his teenage years and early twenties thinks that he can quit, he is only fooling himself. He can't! Alcohol is addictive over a long period of time. Some can get wired in a very short time while for others it takes a little longer. Once hooked, there is no cure - so it does not matter whether you stay in jail one year or twenty years. You still have the same problem when you get out.

However, if you join A.A. and find out what alcohol is really all about and if you really want to quit drinking, you can through the A.A. program....arrest the problem of drinking for a day at a time.

A.A. is a funny program and really quite simple. It's just another way of living providing you follow the rules. A.A. does not tell you to stop drinking. This is up to you. It works mostly on the last half of the first step or rule if you want to call it that, and that is.... "Your life is unmanageable." To find that out just look where you are standing.

We have 12 Steps or suggested rules to follow in A.A. Only in the first step is alcohol mentioned. The rest of these steps apply to a man's make-up. All we ask you to be is a nice guy. To do this we help train you. Otherwise, you will remain (mostly) your little self.

Now, most guys figure there is nothing wrong with me. I just drink too much. Ask yourself "How did you get to jail?" They don't throw you in the pen for getting drunk. So right away a man can see that something is wrong besides drinking.

In a nutshell, A.A. works on your fears, greed, mostly temper and lust. Your illness will effect every one in general.

So after awhile, you can see that all your unmanageable life is all your fault. You can do something about it and your life can start to look good. Oh yes! There is one thing that can really help. You have to get rid of your crooked friends. Starting with yourself!!!

Everything starts there. You come into this world alone and that is how you will go out. But you can have a lot of fun in between if you want to.....but there is no fun in jail.



## \* \* \* \* \* OUR WORLD AROUND US \* \* \* \* \*

All about us we see evidence of a great intelligence at work. To the sensitive mind, faith brings an evergrowing conviction that God is, that He is and Absolute, and Ultimate Standard against which must be judges, the Good, the True and the Beautiful.

Man-made boundries have been drawn and re-drawn; separating the human race into many nations. But across these unnatural divisions, there has been an intercourse in art, science, commerce and religion; evidence of mans universal brotherhood - proof that man himself, not his own territorial divisions, is of basic worth.

Yet, if the human race is to endure, some reliable device must soon be found to impose the majesty of law upon the sovereignty of nations; thus to preserve the brotherhood of man in dignity and freedom.

Looking back over the ages we see certain milestones of progress as man climbed toward the summit of the good life. Where economic improvement has been greatest, man has been free to follow his dream of making a personal fortune by doing something never done before, or by doing it better. Many men have ventured and lost. But it seems to be the only progress capable of bringing forth that spark of creative genius which makes maximum progress possible. This foundation of individual initiative is the basis of our present high standard of living and the hope for future progress.

In free society the fundamental law is derived from the people. It is they who hold the final authority. Their law is established in a constitution as the foundation upon which Government rests and only they can change it.

Our countries, or I should say, Our World will survive if we perfect our government of laws, through work, study and civic service, resisting the glittering promises of power-hungry men.

Actually, true value lies not in the machine itself nor in the product but in the use to which it is put for the satisfaction of human need!

submitted by Brian B.