

# OUR DISTILLED EXPERIENCE

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF DISTRICT 12  
EAST CENTRAL ILLINOIS ARCHIVES

## CHARLESTON'S A.A. #1 LOOKS FOR PROSPECTS

### 58 DAYS AFTER THE FIRST GROUP STARTED

Some people view history as a boring and unimportant subject, but one of the most important reasons to study the history of A.A. is that it will make you a better person. Why, you may ask? Because you will have a better understanding of what the people before us did in order to shape the A.A. we have today.

I am not sure who J.E. N. is yet, but he wrote to the Alcoholic Foundation on March 28, 1947 with the following:

*"I wrote you some time ago in regards to the principals [sic] of the A.A. and I received some literature from you which I have been reading and I have been practicing the ways of the A.A.'s and I find they are very beneficial to me.*

*I wrote you at the time in regard to starting a group here in our community and you referred me to the Decatur group. I have contacted them and they offer assistance but my main trouble seems to be "new prospects" to work on. As we live in a small town of 9,000 it is hard to find out who is interested or not. At the time you sent me the literature you wrote me a letter stating you would list me as contact man from this vicinity. I think that would help me in finding someone interested to work on so you may send me inquired from this area if you wish."*

Isn't this what the Big Book tells us, "when all other measures fail, work with another alcoholic will save the day." So don't forget that the history of A.A. was founded with the sole purpose to help others. There were no step requirements or sober time requirements, there actually still aren't, so don't be afraid to help, it will probably just keep you sober. That's what knowing A.A. history has told me.

## INSIDE THIS EDITION

### PAGE TWO

FIRST A.A. RADIO  
BROADCAST ON WWJ

### PAGE THREE

ALCOHOLICS  
ANONYMOUS DOING  
GREAT JOB IN ITS NEW  
TIMES SQ. CLUBHOUSE

### PAGE FOUR

OUR FUTURE WILL  
SOON BE OUR PAST

# FIRST A.A. RADIO BROADCAST ON WWJ

REPRINTED FROM TIME  
MAGAZINE, MARCH 5, 1945

One of Detroit's citizens stepped up to the microphone one night last week and told how he had "hit bottom" as an alcoholic. To underline his confession, some of the more melodramatic and sordid aspects of his past were dramatized. Then he told of his regeneration. Summed up the Announcer: "Alcoholism is a disease...an obsession...an allergy..."

The man who "hit bottom" was the first in a parade of anonymous Detroiters who will describe their alcoholic pasts over WWJ every Saturday (11:15-11:30 p.m. E.W.T.). The series is the first sustained air flight of the famed organization called "Alcoholics Anonymous" (Time, Oct.23, 1944).

Detroit AA's give credit for the broadcast project to a 62-year-old William Edmund Scripps, big boss of the Detroit News and WWJ. He was so impressed by AA's reformation of a drunkard friend that he decided to do what he could to boost the organization's Detroit membership (now nearly 400).



## MARCH 4TH 1891

*Bill W's wife,  
Lois Burnham was born.*

## MARCH 7TH 1941

*Boston newspaper reported  
that any drunk who wanted to  
get well was more than  
welcome at the AA meeting at  
115 Newbury St., at 8 PM  
Wednesdays.*

## MARCH 11TH 1949

*The Calix Society, an association  
of Roman Catholic alcoholics  
who are maintaining their  
sobriety through participation in  
Alcoholics Anonymous, was  
formed in Minneapolis by five  
Catholic AA members.*

## MARCH 21ST 1881

*Dr. Bob's wife,  
AnneSmith , was born.*

# ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS DOING GREAT JOB IN ITS NEW TIMES SQ. CLUBHOUSE

REPRINTED FROM THE MAGAZINE

'VARIETY", MARCH 28, 1945

Alcoholics Anonymous has come to Broadway. The organization that has helped life 12,000 drunks onto the waterwagon, many of them straight from the gutter, is now established in a new clubhouse on West 41st street, a few minutes from Times Sq.

It's the old Knox Memorial, Collegiate Chapel, Reformed Church of America. Inside, church pews are lined up, and the Christ looks out over the audience benevolently from a stained glass window. But here the church similarity ends. Men and women sit around, waiting for the services to open, smoking. You look around and see the faces of people you know – some of them famous people, some of whom have been on Broadway, in the amusement world in general, for years.

The reporter's training urges taking notes, but you discard that notion, knowing that you must respect their anonymity. Here is a great actress. If you as much as hinted at the play in which she had been famous, almost everyone would know her as well as if you printed the name in boldface caps. A man behind you speaks in a voice you'd heard before. Sure enough, he is the famous – rather, once famous – radio personality. And that man who just walked in, the one in the Navy officer's uniform – you find out later that he is a lieutenant commander, just back from two years in the Pacific – he is an old friend, an old newspaper colleague: you had stood at the bar together many times in the "old days."

But here, they are all fellow members of AA. Among themselves, they sometimes drop their anonymity, as your newspaper friend did when he got up to address the audience a little later. You know the history of his drinking very well and wonder how much of it he'll tell. But he tells it all. And you say to yourself: if they're all as honest as he, they're honest indeed.

This matter of depending on some outside power – that gets some of them down; that sounds like religious evangelism. But it isn't anything of that kind. These are not religious fanatics or zealots. These are sensible men

and women of the world for the greater part, some of whom had been much too blasé. They know the score. They're hep. They don't try to tell you what God to worship, or how – they don't really care whether you worship any.

Proving the latter point is a guy from Bridgeport who gets up to tell his story. "I never knew anything about this God business," he says, "and I don't now." And in his own, quite ungrammatical way, he tells how he finally caught on to the waterwagon and how he's fought to stay on it.

There isn't anybody around the joint sprouting wings. The "testimonials" that are given are intended only to add point to the AA program, to show that it really works. And there is no doubt that it does.

Social workers speak highly of the AA movement. The section on neurology and psychiatry of the New York State Medical Society has run articles in its official journal about the work of AA. Prominent psychiatrists have given it their endorsement. And of course religious leaders have blessed it. All have agreed that AA is the McCoy.

There are more than 300 branches all over the country, about 30 in the N.Y. metropolitan area alone, and a h.q. in Hollywood too. At the 41st street clubhouse there are billiard rooms and card rooms, a library and a writing room where members can relax, good fellowship and all the appurtenances of any good club – except a bar. For one thing is insisted upon by AA – don't come to the club drunk or with liquor on your breath. AA knows that some of the members slip some times; these are helped to get back to dryness again. But they can't come to the club until they had actually stopped drinking – no matter how recently. The steward of the new clubhouse, elected to office only last Sunday, is an engineer, a man well known in his profession, who had recently slipped back into drunkenness. But he has decided to give the AA program another trial; and the organization, in turn, accepted him for his deserved trial again.

That's strange talk for a church. But then this isn't really a church, not in the ordinary sense. For 12,000 former drunks, who won't even shy at that word anymore, this has been something higher than a church.

# OUR FUTURE WILL SOON BE OUR PAST

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**Back To The Basics** FREE WORKSHOP!!

TAKE ALL 12 STEPS  
IN 4 ONE HOUR  
SESSIONS

HOSTED BY  
**MARK G & ANTONIA D**

AFTER SWAT ON THE FOLLOWING SUNDAYS  
FROM 1:30-2:30PM  
MARCH 10TH, 17TH, 24TH AND 31ST

8 HENSON PLACE  
CHAMPAIGN, IL

FOR QUESTIONS CALL 217-377-3161

MARCH 3RD 2019  
12:00PM  
JESSICA W. SPEAKING

**S.W.A.T  
LUCK**

Hickory River provided but  
please bring a dish to  
share!

**CARL G.**

*Tolono Closed  
Group*

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

**03.19.19 // 8PM**

104 VINE ST. TOLONO, IL

*Wednesday Night  
Literature Meeting*

Will be reading  
"Drop the Rock: Removing Character Defects"  
by Bill P., Todd W. and Sara S. starting  
April 4th 2019 at 8:00pm

*Good Shephard Lutheran Church*  
2101 S. Prospect Ave. Champaign, IL

Call-in available 8pm CST: 605-472-5617  
Access Code: 297268

"Non-Conference Approved Literature" does not imply Conference disapproval of other material about AA. A great deal of literature helpful to alcoholics is published by others, and AA. does not try to tell any individual member what he or she may or may not read." - GSO of AA.

## FEBRUARY 2019 ANNIVERSARIES

- Amy F. February 2nd - 15 years
- Toni M. February 3rd - 6 years
- Cathy G. February 6th - 23 years
- John T. February 9th - 22 years
- Libby H. February 9th - 29 years
- Scott W. February 11th - 8 years
- Nancy P. February 12th - 10 years
- Bill G. February 17th - 22 years
- Josh Q. February 18th - 19 years
- Lisa R. February 20th - 19 years
- Ron O. February 22nd - 35 years
- Pete S. February 23rd - 21 years
- Doug B. February 23rd - 4 years
- Stan H. February 24th - 32 years
- Curtis B. February 25th - 3 years
- Mark B. February 26th - 28 years
- Stephen P. February 26th - 4 years

## 300 YEARS OF SOBRIETY!!

PLEASE SEND YOUR  
ANNIVERSARIES TO  
ARCHIVES@AA-ECI.ORG