

# Our Distilled Experience

District 12 Newsletter  
March 2018

**STEP THREE: "MADE A DECISION TO TURN OUR WILL AND OUR LIVES OVER TO THE CARE OF GOD AS WE UNDERSTOOD HIM"**

**TRADITION THREE: "THE ONLY REQUIREMENT FOR A.A. MEMBERSHIP IS A DESIRE TO STOP DRINKING."**

**CONCEPT THREE: "AS A TRADITIONAL MEANS OF CREATING AND MAINTAINING A CLEARLY DEFINED WORKING RELATION BETWEEN THE GROUP, THE CONFERENCE, THE A.A. GENERAL SERVICE BOARD AND ITS SEVERAL COMMITTEES AND EXECUTIVES, AND OF THUS INSURING THEIR EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP, IT IS HERE SUGGESTED THAT WE ENDOW EACH OF THESE ELEMENTS OF WORLD SERVICE WITH A TRADITIONAL "RIGHT OF DECISION."**

God, Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot Change; the courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference

## *Tuscola, IL Group forms....*

A group from Tuscola, Illinois first contacted the Alcoholic Foundation via a letter dated April 3, 1948\*. The letter from Arthur B. M. reads:

*"This is to advise you that on \*March 29, 1948 we organized the Tuscola Group of A.A. and the undersigned was chosen secretary until July 1st.*

*There are eight members. We have been meeting with the Decatur (Ill.) Group and it was suggested that we could, no doubt, accomplish more as a separate group. We however, intent to continue meeting with the Decatur Group in addition to our own Monday night meetings until such time when our full time is required here.*

*We would like to have a list of the literature available and prices; also price of the Big A.A. book for one or more.*

*Four of us are definitely going to St. Louis April 24th and 25th and one or more others may be able to arrange their affairs to attend. We understand that only delegates will be admitted to the 10:30 am closed meeting on April 25th and therefor and without presumption ask whether or not we may send one of our members as a delegate to this meeting. We are aware that as a group we are only a few days old. However, the daddy of our group is now 2 years 7 months and 10 days and he has missed very few meetings in Decatur during that time. He is one who has made reservations for both days at St. Louis.*

*Might add that the others of our group are as follows: two- one year; one 8 mo.; one 10 mo.; one 6 mo.; one 4 mo.; and one 1 mo."*

**\*Although the group wrote in on March 29, 1948; meetings in Tuscola actually started on April 6, 1946 which makes the Tuscola meeting 72 years old this coming April.**

### *May she rest in peace...*

*Mona H. - July 10, 1938-January 16, 2018*

Like others in the rooms, Mona H. saw real tragedies, and with the support of her fellows, was able to work through it and remain sober. Mona was born on July 10, 1938 in Mattoon the daughter of Ed and Evlyn. She married Thomas on December 12, 1970. He preceded her in death on November 21, 2014.

Survivors include her children, grandchildren and Great Grandchildren; she was preceded in death by her parents, husband and brother. Mona was a member of First Christian Church in Mattoon. She was past Vice President of The Rebekah Assembly of Illinois and a member of the Ladies of the Moose. Mona worked for many years as the Administrator for a Halfway House in Chicago. She loved horses and enjoyed her needlework, spending time with her many friends and family and especially doting on her grandchildren who knew her as Nana. She will be greatly missed by all those who knew and loved her.

Mona was a friend of Bill W. for over 50 years. She was District 12's Past District Committee Member and was involved with Southern Illinois Area 21. Her home group was Shoulder to Shoulder that meets on Saturdays at 5:00pm at the First Christian Church in Mattoon, IL.

As sad as any persons death may be, Mona lived a long life with an inspiring message sent about the gifts that sobriety can bring when you are honesty, open-minded, and willing to recover.

*If you or someone you know has personal keepsakes or memento's linked to Mona H. and would like District 12 to preserve, protect and display, please contact us at [archives@aa-eci.org](mailto:archives@aa-eci.org)*



*Nell Wing at the offices of the G.S.O. In 1966, where her initiative saved early A.A. material from the dustbin.*

Nine years after the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous began in Akron, Ohio, the Grapevine magazine published its first issue in June 1944. Three years after that, Nell Wing arrived in New York. A young woman in her late twenties, Nell had decided to go to Mexico to pursue a career in sculpture. In the meantime, she wanted a temporary job to earn a little more money for the journey. The agency where she applied for a temporary job told her about an opening at the headquarters office of Alcoholics Anonymous. Nell knew about AA, having read Morris Markey's article "Alcoholics and God" in the September 1939 Liberty magazine, and through other magazine articles in the early forties, as well.

In 1947, she started working in the office of the Alcoholic Foundation (now the General Service Office), and in 1950 became Bill W.'s secretary. Within a few years, she became close friends with Bill and his wife, Lois, and on weekends she regularly went up to Stepping Stones, their home in Bedford Hills, New York, to help Bill with correspondence or research, or just to keep him and Lois company.

After Bill died in 1971, Nell continued her close association with the General Service Office and with Lois. She organized the AA Archives, and in 1993 published a memoir called Grateful to Have Been There.

Nell never got to Mexico, but she worked for AA for thirty-six years.

## The story behind the Jack Alexander article on Alcoholics Anonymous

On March 1, 1941, The Saturday Evening Post published an article titled “Alcoholics Anonymous: Freed Slaves of Drink, Now They Free Others” written by Jack Alexander. The article became a major turning point in Alcoholics Anonymous’ history.

The story behind the article begins when the owner of The Saturday Evening Post, Judge Curtis Bok, learned of A.A. from two friends. He was interested in having the Post tell the story of the organization and called upon well-known journalist of The Saturday Evening Post, Jack Alexander, to do so.

Bill W., co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous, eager to publicize the A.A. message, met with Alexander. He gave Alexander access to records, a tour of significant A.A. sights, and set up interviews with both nonalcoholic trustees of the General Service Board and A.A.s.

Correspondence between Jack Alexander and Bill W. from early 1941 shows the excitement felt in anticipation of the article’s release. On January 4, 1941, Alexander wrote to Bill W. and enclosed a manuscript of the article for Bill to read. On January 6 Bill replied and from his response the eagerness for the article’s release is apparent. Bill wrote:

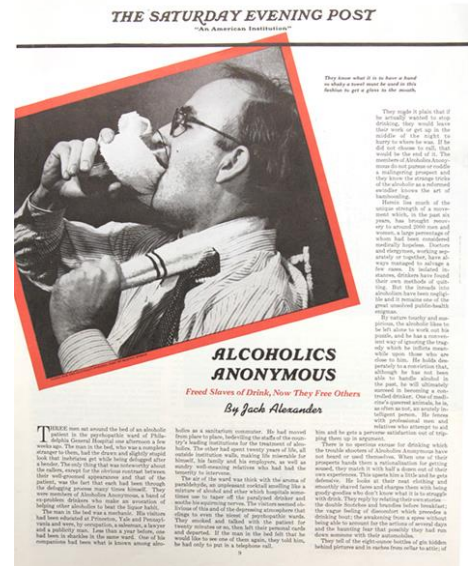
*“I wish I could adequately convey to you the sense of gratitude that one of us feels towards you and the Saturday Post for what is about to take place. You cannot possibly conceive the direct alleviation of so much misery as will be brought to an end through your pen and your good publishers.”*

Following the March 1, 1941 release of the article, inquiries began to flood in, leaving the small staff of the “A.A. Headquarters,” the precursor to the General Service Office, busy. On March 12, 1941 Ruth Hock, first non-alcoholic secretary of A.A., wrote to Dr. Bob, A.A. co-founder, to update him on what was going on in New York. She said that the office had become swamped, 918 inquiries in 12 days\* as a direct response to the article.

The offices of The Saturday Evening Post also received a large number of inquiries. A March 26, 1941, bulletin by the Post relays the power behind the article.

*“Following the publication of “Alcoholics Anonymous” by Jack Alexander, the Post floor received an unusually large mail from readers, much of it asking how contact could be established with groups who are doing this work in various cities. There were several instances of calls on our branch offices for information on local organizations of this unusual group.”*

**\*Our Membership jumped from 2,000 to 8,000 by the year’s end, due to publication of this article.**



“Alcoholics Anonymous Freed Slaves of Drink, Now they Free others, “



Cover of the Saturday Evening Post, March 1, 1941

Note: [A.A. World Services publishes the 1941 article in pamphlet format and sells approximately 22,000 a year.]

*District 12 Anniversaries from February*

- Josh B. February 1, 2015 - 3 years
- Amy F. - February 2, 2004 - 14 years
- Toni M. February 3, 2013 - 5 years
- Cathy G. - February 6, 1996 - 22 years
- Libby H. - February 9, 1990 - 28 years
- Lisa R. February 20, 2000 - 18 years
- Stephen P. - February 26, 2015 - 3 years
- Ron O. - February 22, 1984 - 34 years
- Stan H. - February 24, 1987 - 31 years
- Huey R. February 28, 2003 - 15 years

*District 12 Speaker Meeting*

- S.W.A.T - Champaign; Mar. 3rd at 12pm - Jim A.
- Friday Night Fellowship - Champaign; Mar. 9th at 7pm
- Attitude of Gratitude - Charleston; Mar. 9th at 10am
- As Bill See's it - Champaign; Mar. 10th at 8pm
- Shipwrecked - Champaign; Mar. 11th at 6pm - Adam M.
- Cellar Dwellers - Urbana; Mar. 12th at 8pm - Andy C.
- We Do Recover - Rantoul; Mar. 17th at 6:30pm - Bill A.
- Nuts and Bolts - Danville; Mar. 21st at 7:30pm
- Tolono Closed Group - Tolono; Mar. 20th at 8pm
- Women's Step Study - Champaign; Mar. 20th at 7:30pm
- WWO - Champaign; Mar. 24th at 6pm - Tara M.
- Ages of Miracles - Mattoon; Mar. 26th at 7pm
- HOW - Urbana; Thursday, Mar. 22th at 7pm - Donnie J.
- Friday Night Group - Charleston; March 30th at 8pm
- Common Journey - Mattoon; Mar. 29th at 7pm - Jeff M.
- Sunday Meeting - Charleston; Mar. 25th at 8pm
- Grapevine Group - Champaign; Mar. 25th at 8pm - Matthew J.

**District 12 Business Meeting**  
**March 18<sup>th</sup> 2018 from 2-3pm**  
**1400 W. Park St. Urbana, IL Auditorium B**

