

Newspaper Article-1942

The Dr. Bob and Anne Smith Archives was transferred from the attic of Dr. Bob's daughter, Sue Smith Windows, in Akron, Ohio to a permanent repository at the Brown University Center for Alcohol and Addiction Studies in Providence, Rhode Island. It joined several other collections already housed at Brown including the Kirk Collection (15,000 items pertaining to the temperance movement and early A.A.), the Clarence Snyder Collection (books, pamphlets, letters and ephemera retained by "The Home Brewmeister" from 1938 to 1983), and the Ernie Kurtz Collection (research material used to write Not God). The archive contains numerous newspaper articles from the 1940's. This one, titled, "Co-Founder of Alcoholics Anonymous Is Speaker" provides an early portrayal of the events that led to the founding of A.A. and a description of A.A. Group activity in the Cleveland, OH area in 1942. The article states that there are 7,000 members of A.A. and 2,000 of them reside in the Cleveland area. Cleveland A.A.'s were certainly doing something right!!!

Cleveland Plain Dealer--1942 (undated)

Co-Founder of Alcoholics Anonymous Is Speaker

An Akron physician, co-founder of an organization which in the seven years of its existence has restored thousands of hopeless alcoholics to normal living, spoke in Berea last Friday night. The organization is Alcoholics Anonymous and the occasion was a "round-table" discussion sponsored by the Berea Group of the fellowship. Since anonymity is observed names cannot be published. The co-founder was one of three men participating in the special program. Another was a leader of the movement in Cuyahoga County and the third, a man who was one of the first five members of the fellowship.

100 Attend

Open only to members, the program on Friday night was attended by more than 100, including visitors from various of the 22 groups in Cuyahoga County.

The basis for the fellowship was discovered by a New York stock broker more than seven years ago. Confined to a sanitarium as a hopeless drunk, he underwent a spiritual experience which revealed a way to sobriety. Months later, and still sober, he was in Akron on a business deal of great personal importance. The deal fell through and filled with disappointment he realized that unless he did something about it, he would return to the hell of his drinking days.

Movement Born

Consulting a directory of Akron churches he picked one at random and phoning the pastor asked him if any member of his congregation was afflicted with a drinking problem. Through this phone call the broker and the physician met and Alcoholics Anonymous was born.

For several years development was slow, with small groups in Akron and New York. Later an Alcoholics Foundation was founded in New York and a book "Alcoholics Anonymous" was published. Since then Liberty, Saturday Evening Post and various newspapers have carried articles about the fellowship. It is estimated that there are now more than 7,000 members in the United States. Most rapid growth has been in the Cleveland area where membership is now near the 2,000 mark. The Berea Group has been in existence for a year and a half.

Not Reformers

Not at all concerned with liquor as a social evil or a moral problem, AA members are not reformers in any sense of the word. In fact, they respect the man who is what they term a "social" drinker. But realizing that alcoholism is an affliction as deadly as cancer these ex-drunks have banded together to help another in molding a new way of life. Effects achieved have astounded medical authorities.

The fellowship has no doctrines of sectarianism, and does not require members to take pledges of any sort. It costs nothing to join and there are no dues. In the groups will be found members of all

religious faiths and those who have religious affiliations. Lawyers, doctors, salesmen, carpenters, mechanics meet on the same plane.

Requirements

Requirements are that a man or woman admits a drinking problem and honestly desires to do something about it. Spiritually, new members must believe only in a power greater than themselves, and their personal conception of this power does not enter into the picture. Members make no effort to "sell" the plan, but will go to any lengths to help an alcoholic once he seeks their aid.

The fellowship, however, does endeavor to make itself accessible to those who desire to learn more of the movement. For this purpose a post office box is maintained in Cleveland and communications can be addressed to Alcoholics Anonymous, P.O. Box 1688, Station C, Cleveland, Ohio.

Letter to Dr. Bob about a "Big Book" Story

This is one of the earliest letters in the Dr. Bob and Anne Smith Archives pertaining to the writing of the Big Book.

**To: Dr. R. H. Smith
Orville, Ohio
Akron, Ohio
3-11-39, Saturday p.m.**

Dear Doctor:

I am terribly sorry that it is has been necessary to delay the enclosed manuscript concerning some of the facts in Z----'s life, (Note: Harry Z's story in the first edition of the Big Book is titled, "A Close Shave") but it just couldn't be helped. He and I were not able to get together the day I thought we would and then too I had a certain amount of detail work that just had to be done. I sat down to my typewriter just after dinner and hurriedly jotted down some of the facts that Z---- had given to me. I am not certain as to just what all you wanted in this sketch so I'm very much in the dark as to how and what to write. I am sorry I was not in town the day you were here.

However, rather than to hold up the works until I can find out what you want, I am sending you this rambling collection of hurried thoughts, hoping that you will see fit to cut and slash it, also doctor it in any way you care to. You saw Z---- in this nervous state and it would be a fine thing if you could or would add a paragraph. Feel free to doctor the rest of it so as to make it serve the purpose for which you want it. You know the necessary phraseology that I do not.

We are counting on having at least twelve men present on Wednesday night (Note: Oxford Group Meeting at T Henry and Clarace Williams House). We will see you then.

Most Sincerely,
D.E. Nickersen

P.S. You will do me a favor Wed nite if you drop the title and refer to me as just plain "Don" Nickersen. If you would call me Reverend, my men will not know who you are referring to. Thanks! I understood this chapter on Z---- was to be anonymous(sp). That explains the fictitious names.