

ARENA

ISSUE 2009.4

FREELY PASSED ON

EXTRAS!

Welcome to 'ArenA Extras!' – the simple-format edition of ArenA, issue 2009.4 Winter. Here ArenA provides all the text of this issue, and the bits there wasn't room to print in the full-color edition, for those wanting an easier file size for emailing. To download the fully-formatted graphic edition visit www.aa-europe.net/literature.htm.

EDITOR'S yAddA yAddA yAddA

Right off the bat, you may have noticed a new format to ArenA and it's only our second issue. You asked for it and we are working to make the full-color edition easier to print and read. For instance, this issue will print on separate A4 pages, and the font size is slightly larger. ArenA is limited in size (and budget) so compromises are necessary, but keep the feedback coming.

A special thanks to ArenA's Asst. Editor, Pelle J., who is the artist responsible for the graphic design of our gorgeous newsletter!

Be sure to visit www.aa-europe.net/literature.htm and download 'ArenA Extras!' to get the full personal stories and the extra bits there wasn't room to print. 'ArenA Extras!' is a simple-edition, text-only ArenA that makes for easier emailing.

We are proud to tell you ArenA has been noticed all over the world! We have received mail from Australia, North and South Americas, and ArenA is mentioned in upcoming Mexico AA Spanish magazine and the AA Grapevine.

The translated personal stories from local-language European Big Books – part of the Neighborhood Spotlight – are a personal joy of mine. This issue I am overjoyed because we have a special update from the authors from Denmark and Sweden, just for our ArenA readers!

Our centerfold this issue is dedicated to the many great English-speaking conventions and events sponsored by groups all across Europe.

Thanks to everyone who contributed to this issue – it's a group effort!

We want updates, news from your city, stories, announcements, ideas, feedback... basically we want you to participate in ArenA.

Write now!

-Jay G., ArenA Editor, arena@aa-europe.net

7TH THANKS

CER thanks the following for their 7th Tradition contributions in the past quarter: Lorgnes AA Group (France), Berlin Intergroup (Germany), AA Riviera Intergroup (France, Monaco), Hamburg English Thursday Group (Germany), Rheinland-Pfalz Intergroup (Germany), Milan English Speaking Group (Italy), Cataluña English Intergroup (Spain), and the Stockholm Fellowship (Sweden) for the in-kind donation toward publication of ArenA. Also, Individuals have made anonymous contributions, and CER is grateful for this generosity.

Reminder: Bank transfers to the CER account need to contain the German phrase "Spende für Anonyme Alkoholiker CER" in the remarks of the transfer document. Contributions without this German phrase may be returned for clarification. (FYI, the phrase translated into English means "Donation to Alcoholics Anonymous CER.")

Contact the CER Treasurer at aa-treasurer@aa-europe.net for details on making a contribution to the Continental European Region.

ELECTION ANNOUNCEMENTS: READY TO BE OF SERVICE?

At the February 2010 business meeting, to be held in Milan, Italy, the position of YOUNG PEOPLE'S CONTACT ("YPC") will be up for election. AA's interested in this position should email the CER Secretary (aa-secretary@aa-europe.net). In consideration of the financial burden that travel to the CER meeting may impose, candidates are encouraged, but not required, to attend the meeting at which the election will take place.

ArenA makes every effort to announce elections to be held at the next business meeting. The positions of PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER ("PIO") and TELEPHONE LIAISON OFFICER ("TLO"), which had originally been announced for last September's business meeting in Milan, Italy, will instead be elected at the December business meeting in Stockholm, Sweden. In addition to the PIO and TLO, elections will be held for the positions of CER CHAIR, DELEGATE COMMITTEE 5, and ALTERNATE DELEGATE COMMITTEE 2.

The Chair, Delegate, PIO, and YPC are service positions in which CER reimburses for the cost of travel to the business meetings. As of last June's meeting in Madrid, Alt Delegates are only reimbursed if their local group/intergroup does not pay their travel. As of last September's business meeting in Milan, the TLO is no longer a travel reimbursable position.

Groups are welcome, and encouraged, to have a CER Group Service Representative (GSR) take part in Continental European Region service. If your group or intergroup would like information on how your CER GSR can take part, email aa-secretary@aa-europe.net.

Everyone doing service with CER are volunteers.

CONFERENCE COMING – USE YOUR DELEGATES

The 45th General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain – of which the Continental European Region is the 15th Region of service – will be held 16-18 April 2010. This is when the Delegates and Trustees of the 16 regions throughout the AA GB service structure meet to discuss the approved questions regarding Alcoholics Anonymous.

The 2009 Conference included discussion on the definition of "open" and "closed" AA meetings, use of AA money in carrying the message, uploading audio recordings of Conference sessions, and reviewing a number of changes to AA service guidelines.

At the time of ArenA being printed the 2010 questions had not yet been published, but they should be available by year's end. Email aa-delegates@aa-europe.net to get the list of questions for 2010 and to send your group's conscience to your CER Delegates to carry it to Conference.

NO ENGLISH-SPEAKING AA?

Our understanding at this time is that there are no English-speaking AA meetings in Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Liechtenstein, Macedonia, Montenegro, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, or Vatican City. If you know of an English-speaking meeting or contact person in any of these countries, please email arena@aa-europe.net.

EURYPAA 2010

Münchenbryggeriet is a centuries old beer factory that was saved from demolition in the 70's and lovingly transformed into Stockholm, Sweden's greatest event location. EURYPAA 2010 – the 1st Annual All-EUROPE Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous conference, which is being organized in a joint effort by the English & Swedish speaking groups in Stockholm, as well as hardworking volunteers across Europe – is thrilled to be at this historic location, and relishing the metaphor!

More information at www.EURYPAA.org.

SAVE THE DATES! CER BUSINESS MEETINGS IN 2010

13-14 February, Milan, Italy

12-13 June, tbd

9-10 October, tbd

iHOLA ARENA!

If you can read Spanish, visit the Mexican AA magazine “Dimensión AA” site (www.aa.org.mx/revista/port.html) to catch a mention of ArenA!

ON THE ROAD AGAIN

Travelling around the world, has always been an important part of my job. And I used to enjoy it. I used to spend 4-5 months per year in hotels.

Being “off the leash” meant freedom from all the problems at home and in the office. It also gave me the opportunity to drink, without my wife nagging me.

At the very beginning, it was the usual after-work beer at the hotel bar, followed by a dinner with some wine in a local restaurant together with my colleagues. For me, it was very important to be together with them. So I followed them and kept drinking. Over the years, this pattern changed almost unnoticed. I needed the first drink earlier than them and I stayed at the bar one drink longer than the rest. After dinner, I kept drinking until late and quite often continued in my room. Then, the day came, when I did not leave the bar at all anymore after work, followed by drinking secretly in my room, occasionally resulting in no-show for work the next morning.

In treatment, I made the decision to do no more duty travels. I was supported by my supervisor, whom I told about my illness and I could avoid it for the first three years of my sobriety. But I got a new boss some time ago, and he is not as supportive. So, travelling is again part of my job, but by far not as excessive as before. Additionally, I am in the lucky position to be able to choose between destinations. And I always choose places where AA is available. When planning the actual trip, it is part of my checklist to get on the internet and download the local meeting list. And I try to make as many meetings as possible. That does keep me away from my drinking colleagues and the hotel bar. I have had wonderful experiences doing that. A meeting with Aborigines in Australia was one of the highlights in the efforts to stay away from bars and maintain my sobriety.

Today, I am sitting in Anchorage, Alaska. A city with a tremendous amount of meetings. Yesterday evening, I attended one meeting, which was located in a kitchen! Just wonderful.

Without AA, I would be lost on those journeys. But, with AA, it is no longer a problem to be on the road again.

-Ralf, Uebach-Palenberg, Germany

FEEL THE HOSPITALITY AT AA'S 75TH ANNIVERSARY INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

ArenA will have a Hospitality Suite at AA's International Convention in San Antonio. (This is at no expense to CER; it is provided by the convention.) We will be making our summer issue with a full-spread map of all the English-speaking AA meetings in Europe available to the tens of thousands of AAs attending. (The issue will also include a contact list of all city@aa-europe.net email addresses; another reason to be sure to request one for your city right away!)

What to help us? Anyone available to do service at the table for an hour or two during the convention, let us know at arena@aa-europe.net.

In addition to the ArenA newsletter, we would like to make space available for convention and event information from English-speaking AA groups throughout Europe. If your group would like information to be made available at the International Convention, email us. The groups themselves will need to be responsible for providing enough materials and support.

This opportunity is only once every five years... don't miss it!

GIVE A TOAST TO AA

Ring in the New Year sober and celebrate by toasting AA!

Make an extra contribution – like what you used to spend on a flute of champagne or your favorite cocktail – to your AA homegroup, local AA office, and/or Continental European Region.

EMAIL AN IMMEDIATE SUCCESS

Editor's Note: In the last issue of ArenA we told you how every city with an English-speaking AA meeting can have an @aa-europe.net email address that will forward, automatically, to whomever are your contact persons. Since that story over 75 cities have requested and received their email address, a free service of CER. One contact person wrote to ArenA to tell us about it.

Our group recently (in September 2009) got an email address for our city: dusseldorf@aa-europe.net.

People who write to this anonymous email address, their email is forwarded to members of our group who as a service are willing to answer emails. So far we have four responders from our group.

Even though we have this address only for a couple of weeks it has been a lot of fun to have this new tool!

One morning at 8:00 o'clock I checked my email and an AA had written that his plane was leaving at 11:00 and he would like someone to talk to him before he get's on it. I called him up at the hotel and we talked for an hour before he had to check in. It was a great experience to be able to help someone on short notice.

Other people have asked for meeting information and gotten a couple of responses from us instead of only one answer. They told us it made them feel like they were welcome.

So if you haven't requested one yet, get an address for your city! It's fun and a great service.

-Nicola K., Düsseldorf, Germany

GRATITUDE SUITCASE: BUNNIES!

"I was looking for the meeting but couldn't see it. There was no light indicating the way, and I was praying to God that I might find the meeting. Suddenly I noticed rabbits jumping around and the thought came to mind: follow the rabbits... And here I am! They led me towards the door. When I tell my sponsor, I followed the rabbit (like Alice down the rabbit hole) to find AA, she will get a kick out of it!"

-Anonymous, visiting from California

CHECK YOUR MEETING'S LISTING!

As ArenA has been contacting meetings and groups across Europe to get material for this newsletter, we have learned of meetings needing to have their listing in the online meeting directory updated. If you email ArenA about a meeting change/update or a new-started group, we will always immediately forward it to the Electronic Communications Committee (ECC).

Contact the Web Committee/ECC directly at ecc-committee@aa-europe.net and you save us from being the middleman. Event and convention listings should also go to the ECC.

Be sure to go back and check that the update was made (usually within a week). Some things are some times missed.

SISTERS ARE DOING IT FOR THEMSELVES

During the CER group inventory session during the September business meeting, a lot of Representatives talked about CER being an opportunity for English-speaking AA groups to help each other. Together, we can share our experience, strength and hope to help alcoholics find recovery.

The "Sister-City Committee" was an idea to put well-established groups together with brand new groups, or groups that may need some TLC to be strong again.

If your group has strength in members, resources or ideas, you could help new-starting groups get a solid foundation. Perhaps you can provide meeting formats, ideas on Public Information and reaching suffering alcoholics, or some literature so they can have a book study.

If you or your group can give help – or needs help – email us here at arena@aa-europe.net. We are also looking for a service-motivated AA who would like to take the lead in building the Sister City Committee. Email us.

SAMPLE LETTER FOR PUBLIC INFORMATION OUTREACH TO COMPANIES

Editor's Note: The sample letter below, edited by ArenA, was provided by the Triborders Intergroup to share a way they inform companies about the availability of English-speaking AA.

Human Resources Director
COMPANY
ADDRESS
CITY & POST CODE

Dear Sir/Madam:

If you have English-speaking employees who are having problems at work because of problems with alcohol, we thought you might be interested to know that there are English-speaking meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) near you.

We are members of English-speaking A.A. from _____ (city name). We are here to give support and help those suffering with problems of alcohol. As you may know, A.A. is a confidential (anonymous) self-help program that accepts no outside financial contributions. We exist solely to recover from the problems we each have had with alcohol and to freely help others who are having similar problems that may impact their job performance and/or family life. We come from all walks of life including professional, executive, laborer, military, and diplomatic.

There are confidential English-speaking meetings near your company that anyone can attend. Enclosed you will find the meeting list for _____ (city). We have also included a selection of pamphlets that explain in further detail the aims and purpose of A.A.

Sincerely,
John D., A.A. (city)

A.A. (city) Information
Telephone number:
Email:

YOUNG PEOPLE TECH-CONNECT

Young people across Europe hoping to connect with other young people to find a solution to their drinking problems are routinely using the technology of their generation.

CER's Young People Contact utilizes email to connect young AAs to meetings and other online resources. A free telephone-via-the-internet service is being used for a weekly YPAA conference call meeting for young people who don't yet have English-speaking YPAA meeting in their city.

For details on joining in, or how you can help young people in AA, email young.people@aa-europe.net.

COMING IN THE NEXT ARENA – DE-MYSTIFYING C.E.R.!

ArenA answers the questions we hear the most: What is C.E.R.? Who is in C.E.R.? What is the service structure of C.E.R. to York? What is the cost of doing A.A. service?

And, beginning next issue, we plan to bring you a Meeting Recap after each C.E.R. business meeting with: Where and when the meeting took place, and the cost; How many people attended, voting and observers; How many new C.E.R. participants attended; Summary of business discussed; Items for groups' input.

Send us your questions. What do you want to know about C.E.R.? Email arena@aa-europe.net.

SOBERING THOUGHT

195,000 Europeans die annually of alcohol abuse (source European Union study on alcohol consumption, 2007)

CENTERFOLD: A YEAR OF ENGLISH-SPEAKING AA EVENTS

ArenA lists a year's worth of English-speaking AA events in our Region. Many events are held annually but the details for 2010 had not been confirmed by the time ArenA needed to go to print; those that knew their upcoming dates are listed in 2010.

Upcoming events co-sponsored by groups in C.E.R., and details on how to list your group's events, are posted online at www.aa-europe.net/events.htm.

Events are listed here in the order they appear in the centerfold. Contact information that preserves individual anonymity is listed, for all others email arena@aa-europe.net and we will forward your email.

30-31 Jan '09 – International Group Workshop, Stockholm, SWEDEN. Email: stockholmfellowship@gmail.com

26-29 Apr '09 – Rheinland-Pfalz Roundup, GERMANY.

30 Apr-3 May '09 – AA Croatia, CROATIA. Email: aazagreb@yahoo.com

9 May '09 – Zurich Intergroup Workshop, Zurich, SWITZERLAND. Email: aazurichintergroup@gmail.com

10-12 Jul '09 – Roundup in the Mountains, Franconia Roundup, Bavaria, GERMANY.

18 Jul '09 – Gratitude Day, Stuttgart, GERMANY.

17-19 Jul '09 – North Germany Summer Sobriety, Bremen, GERMANY.

24-26 Jul '09 – Playing in the Woods with Fire, Rheinland-Pfalz, GERMANY.

7-9 Aug '09 – Netherlands Roundup, THE NETHERLANDS. Email: convention-registrations@aa-netherlands.org

4-6 Sep '09 – Recovery in the Sun, Costa Blanca, SPAIN. Email: aaevent@gmail.com

19 Sep '09 – Zurich Summer Roundup, Zurich, SWITZERLAND. Email: aazurichintergroup@gmail.com

14-18 Oct '09 – Head for the Med, Costa Brava, SPAIN. Email: aaspain@gmail.com

30 Oct-1 Nov '09 – Unity Roundup, Frankfurt, GERMANY. Email: unityroundup2009@yahoo.com

6-8 Nov '09 – Malta International Convention, MALTA. Email: 121287@onvol.net

6-8 Nov '09 – Riviera Convention, Nice, FRANCE. Email: info@aa-riviera.org

4-6 Dec '09 – Sunlight of the Spirit, Costa del Sol, SPAIN.

30-31 Jan '10 – AA Lanzarote, Canary Islands, SPAIN.

5-7 Feb '10 – North Sea Convention, Ostend, BELGIUM. Email: northseaconvention@yahoo.com

19-21 Feb '10 – AA Romania, Timisoara, ROMANIA. Email: gsoromania@alcooliciianonimi.ro

27-28 Mar '10 – Paphos Gathering, Paphos, CYPRUS. Email: paphosaa@cytanet.com.cy

13-16 May '10 – AA Greece, Ermioni, Peloponese, GREECE. Email: panpan9@otenet.gr

4-6 Jun '10 – Miracles in Progress Roundup, Würzburg, GERMANY.

23-25 Jul '10 – EURYPAA, Stockholm, SWEDEN. Email: info@eurypaa.org

27-29 Aug '10 – Berlin Convention, Berlin, GERMANY. Email: info@berlinaa-convention.org

C.E.R. CONTACT EMAILS:

Chair: aa-chair@aa-europe.net

Treasurer: aa-treasurer@aa-europe.net

Secretary: aa-secretary@aa-europe.net

Delegates: aa-delegates@aa-europe.net

Archivist: cerhistory@aa-europe.net

ArenA Editor: arena@aa-europe.net

Hospitality Committee: cer-hospitality-committee@aa-europe.net

Web Committee: ecc-committee@aa-europe.net

Young People's Rep: young.people@aa-europe.net

NEWS FROM ACROSS EUROPE:

Wanna share the news from your city? Email arena@aa-europe.net. Please try to stay brief; submissions may be edited when necessary.

DENMARK

Copenhagen@aa.europe.net. People are very interested in “European” activities, and we have a lot of interest in the leaflet “the Pot” and “ArenA”. We have also shown the movie to young people in AA. From 4-10 May AA Denmark was for the first time ever on national radio with information spots about AA. It was a tremendous success! -*Jens*

ESTONIA

Tallinn@aa-europe.net. International Kodu group meets Sundays, 1:00pm, near the central market place in the center of Tallinn. The Kodu group uses English, Finnish and Estonian in our meetings. -*Kari*

GERMANY

Dusseldorf@aa-europe.net. Düsseldorf has managed to keep their second meeting going by finding someone to open up on a monthly basis, rather than a six-month commitment, and has invited CER for the October 2010 business meeting. -*Nicola*

GREECE

Crete. Hello from sunny Crete, just to let you know that the Rethymno group now meets at 3pm on Mondays instead of 7.30pm. We love having visitors and have met 72 of you this year alone, thank you. -*Christina*

ICELAND

Reykjavik@aa-europe.net. Reykjavik is home to five English-speaking meetings a week, all at Tjarnagata 20, a beautiful A.A. clubhouse overlooking a lake in downtown Reykjavik. Our meetings have members from all over the world, with long time members from throughout Europe and Scandinavia. We are always thrilled to get guests! Reykjavik has invited CER to hold the business meeting there in June 2010. -*Glenn*

ITALY

Rome@aa-europe.net. English Speaking AA Intergroup held its first official intergroup meeting in October! Members attending decided to form a Committee for the purpose of creating the Rome Intergroup. Volunteers stepped up to provide service for the website, meeting list, email and telephone responders. Intergroup business meetings will be held monthly on the last Saturday of each month. All AA members may attend. Other highlights from Rome include the Annual Gratitude Dinner followed by a candlelight meeting held in November. This is a potluck dinner where members from all groups bring their favorite dish and share stories of gratitude (and thanksgiving)! -*Evyvan*

Vicenza@aa-europe.net. Hello, I am writing to you to rely about what has been going on in our area in reference to AA. In Vicenza, Italy, we have been having regular meeting for years. They are 3 times a week (mon, wed, fri, at 5:30 pm). We regularly take small trips to Venice for the meetings out there. We have a few regulars, our longest sobriety is 11 years. We are mostly military, since the meetings are on an Army base, however we are always happy to have visitors (and we do get a lot of people passing through). We are very small meeting with only a few returning members, but our group is very intimate and powerful. We really have to be close, since most of us are also combat soldiers serving in the same units. -*Larry*

LUXEMBOURG

Luxembourg@aa-europe.net. The Luxembourg Monday Night Group successfully hosted the September TriBorders Intergroup meeting and much fun was had by all. (Really!) The Monday Night Group has moved to a new space: 10 Rue Auguste Letellier, L-1929 Luxembourg -- only a couple of blocks from the old one. Meanwhile the Wednesday Night Group, an As Bill Sees It meeting, got off to a strong start in September at 4 Rue J B Gellé. Meetings continue at 100 Rue de Hollerich on Tuesday and Thursday evenings and Sunday mornings, making a total of FIVE English-language meetings a week in the capital. -*Erik*

MALTA

Bugibba@aa-europe.net. The 4th Annual Malta AA Convention was a wonderful event, with many AAs coming from Ireland, England, Sweden, Canada and the United States. -*J*

ROMANIA

Timisoara@aa-europe.net. Romania welcomes Timisoara as the newest city with English-speaking AA, Tuesdays and Fridays, 7:00-8:00pm, Str. 1 Decembrie, No. 1, 300231 Timisoara Romania. -*Claudiu*

SERBIA

Belgrade. My name is Predrag – nickname Kole – and I am an alcoholic from Belgrade, Serbia. At October the 7th I celebrated 3 years of SOBRIETY, Humbly Grateful to God and all AA friends around the world. Here in Belgrade we have one English-speaking group of AA "Hope" (started 2001)(three meetings a week) and one Serbian-speaking group of AA "Bridge" (started in Nov. 2006)(meetings two times a week); with 4-12 persons present. We also have one Al-Anon group with one meeting a week. We invite all friends to come and celebrate with us... -*Kole*

SPAIN

Torreveja@aa-europe.net. It was recently decided to hold a third consecutive annual convention in Torreveja (Costa Blanca, Spain) next year: "Recovery in the Sun" Convention, Cabo Cervera Hotel, 3-5 September, 2010. Info: aaevent@gmail.com. -*Ron*

SWEDEN

Gothenburg@aa-europe.net. The Thursday English-speaking group hosted a wonderful speaker evening with Bramble C. of Cardiff, Wales, with many people from the Swedish AA fellowship attending. -*Richard*

SWITZERLAND

Zurich. We have recently launched our Zurich website: www.aazurich.org and are preparing our first issue of a local newsletter "Reaching out". Specifically, we are happy that more and more meetings join our IG activities and that fellows get increasingly involved into service work: In January 2009, we had 2 GSRs out of 9 Meetings in Zurich, in autumn, we now have 8 GSRs. Finally, our main efforts in the coming month will be centered around PI work and reaching out to the still suffering alcoholics. -*Martin*

IRAQ

Baghdad. As far as news from the International Zone of Baghdad, Iraq is concerned... we have a meeting. It's not a BIG meeting. It's a 'twice a week mostly' meeting, but we are getting by. What the few of us here have to go through to get together is nothing compared to what we used to go through to get a drink. Through it all we help keep each other sober and going [the order is important]. -*Dave J, "Sands of Recovery" Group POC*

Don't see your country listed? Then you didn't write to us! Email your News From Across Europe to arena@aa-europe.net.

WHEN BILL KNEW AA WOULD GO GLOBAL

In *Language of the Heart: The Grapevine Writings of Bill W.* AA's co-founder reveals the special significance of Scandinavia to realizing AA's global impact. He wrote that by 1950 – after our book *Alcoholics Anonymous* has been printed and hundreds of groups had sprouted across America and thousands of alcoholics were recovering through AA's twelve steps – the one remaining question was if AA could work internationally. Bill wondered, “What about the Norwegians, the Swedes, the Danes and the Finns?” to name but a few. He and Lois decided to head to Europe to see for themselves.

It was in Norway, their first stop overseas, where they knew instantly that AA would “go everywhere.” Despite not understanding any Norwegian, the feeling of oneness in the fellowship was immediate. He said there they discovered the language of the heart, from one alcoholic to another, and were at home.

Bill wrote, “Lois and I then knew that AA could circle the globe--and it has.”

NEIGHBORHOOD SPOTLIGHT: SCANDINAVIA

Our book *Alcoholics Anonymous* is the same around the world... except for the personal stories of recovery. Every country printing the big book in their own language has permission to take out the personal stories of the English version (except for Dr. Bob's story) and use local stories, if they choose. In this issue, *ArenA* presents excerpts from three different stories. Read “*ArenA Extras!*” for the entire story (online at www.aa-europe.net/literature.htm).

“EIGHT YEAR WAR”

From the 2nd edition Icelandic big book, *AA bókin*

For eight years he was a trusted servant of alcohol. That service ended in an insane asylum with delirium tremens that lasted for seven days. Since then sixteen years have passed without a drop of alcohol passing his lips – thanks to Alcoholics Anonymous.

This is a story of the years where I had a lot of problems due to my drinking. If it can change the mindset of but one of the persons that battle alcoholism the purpose is served as far as I'm concerned.

For sixteen years I have been free from the clutches of alcoholism – sixteen happy years! For it was sixteen years ago that I quit drinking. At that time I was in an insane asylum, seriously ill from alcoholism, had been suffering from delirium tremens and thanked my higher power that I escaped that terror alive. When a drunk has been drinking for a long time, quits drinking and is not able to sleep because of the state of his nervous system, he risks getting “delirium tremens” two to three days after he quits. The brain needs nourishment like other organs. First you hear music and then you start battling all kinds of wild animals. Some of this might be comical to those who watch but horrible to the one fighting the fight. This causes a great strain on the heart, and can cause brain damage or nerve damage afterwards. It takes a long time to recover from such an experience I came to after this ordeal surrounded by mental patients. They were not there at their own fault but I on the other hand was well on my way to insanity due to my excessive drinking. I said to myself that I would do everything in my power to quit drinking. I was treated there for a few days but then I went to a halfway house called “Bláa Bandið” at Flókagata in Reykjavík and stayed there for a few months. This was in the spring of 1960.

At the halfway house I learned about Alcoholics Anonymous, they had AA-meetings there once a week with the patients. One of the things I liked most of the things that the AA people said was to take things one day at a time when it comes to dealing with alcoholism. I decided to try this and a few other things that Alcoholics Anonymous point out. This turned out to be one of the most wonderful summers I have experienced. I was grateful for escaping the torments of alcoholism and determined to try the AA way towards a new life, listen to others that had been in the same situation I had and find out for myself how they had recovered from alcoholism.

Even if my financial status was in crumbles I was happy and determined to take my time getting to my feet again because I had slipped up before. I was going to build myself up mentally and physically and take my time in doing so. Of course this was hard to begin with. I craved alcohol almost daily but by reminding myself of my last drunk and the aftermath that followed I got even more determined to succeed. I had also started to follow the AA program and everything went well. I had been a shop-assistant but decided to take more time to recover both mentally and physically before returning to that trade. That fall I started working for the national telephone company out in the country and I was happy about that because I felt out of place in the city.

I had been engaged to a nice girl but that had failed like so many other things. My parents had passed away so I was on my own. It is obvious that I had laid a heavy burden on my siblings through my drinking and without their help it would have been much worse. My sister's help was especially important to me because she had nursed me through my worst times.

I got myself a manual labor job to build myself up physically, financially and to strengthen my nervous system and I felt good in my intentions to start a new life without alcohol. In Alcoholics Anonymous I had learned to thank my lord at night for each day I lived sober and I was truly blessed. Many members of Alcoholics Anonymous had said and it worked for them. So why not try it? What could I lose?

I had not been many months in recovery when I felt that I was fully fit. I held my head up high, not ashamed for my disease and was determined to do some good in the world. I met a nice woman, we got married, moved in together and had a son. It was hard at first but I was happy and things were going well. I had been a good shop-assistant so when the word got out that I was not drinking anymore I was offered a well paying job by the local shop-keepers. I worked hard to deserve the trust I had been show. Our family became bigger and we had a daughter. Work was good and life was wonderful.

I have sometimes been asked how long it took for me to become such a long gone alcoholic. It was no more than eight years. That's how vicious a master alcohol can be. It started out for me, like so many others, that a few of us bought a bottle of alcohol on a Saturday night and it didn't bother me the following day in the beginning. Then later I also drank on the Sunday and I know now that this was the beginning of my alcoholism. Later I also added Monday and finally I was a so-called "binge drinker" but that is a man who drinks for many days in a row. Soon I had to resign my store manager position because that way I could avoid being fired. In truth I was relieved to be free because then I could devote myself to drinking and I did.

After this I worked for a day here and a day there for the next two years but finally I reached a point where I could not get sober so I was drunk every day for more than a year, until I finally woke up in the insane asylum, in the spring of 1960, a long gone alcoholic as I have said previously.

If you, dear reader, have a problem with alcoholism I want to tell you the following: Stay sober and try the Alcoholics Anonymous way, because there is much to gain and nothing to lose. I cannot point out a better way. Don't postpone it, do it now because the longer you wait the harder it will be. Unfortunately I cannot give you an absolute rule for this. You must take matters into your own hands and as soon as you do that the recovery starts. You can be certain that you will succeed in the end!

When a person survives such and ordeal it is like they are reborn. They start to see the wonders of life in a new light and become happy. It is hard to put this into words but it is my sincere wish that you, who still suffer, will be so fortunate to become one of those people. It will be difficult in the beginning but try the Alcoholics Anonymous way, take life one day at a time, because days turn into weeks, weeks turn into months, months turn into years and before you know it you will be free.

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“THE HOUSEWIFE – SHE DRANK AT HOME!”

From the 1994 edition Danish big book, Anonyme Alkoholikere

Foreword by the author, Kate M., October 2009:

Dear friends, it is a humble privilege to share with you, from my last drink in 1987 – I have tried to work the program to the best of my abilities, and one day at a time life has become happy, joyous and free. Still following the line "I am willing to go to any length to get it..."

God bless you all!

The Lady with Husband, children, house, garden, car and much more!

I didn't understand it, and I still don't! – But I have accepted the fact that I'm an Alcoholic! I must have been born that way. It took 20 years before I surrendered to the program. Pride mixed with guilt and shame was my enemy, and stood in my way to recovery.

I was an only child, vintage 1946. My childhood was safe and my parents were surfing on the 1960's wave. High school was without any problems. In my papers they said: Cheerful, open and positive. As an only child I didn't have to try to hard, my father fixed it for me. The only thing I was taking care of myself, was my alcoholism.

I was taught to drink like a lady by my parents, which seemed reasonable. Nobody knew I liked the taste and effect instantly! From that moment, when I was sixteen, I never said "no thanks" to a drink. It was the circumstances and the shame that kept it going on for so many years before I finally meet my personal bottom of the abyss.

I became an airline stewardess at the age of twenty-one. At that time the dream of most girls. Prior to that, I was abroad to learn languages – and France was my favourite country. The wine was floating and we were talking philosophy to the early hours. It was magic to me. I was used to a middle of the road life, and I noticed the more I drank the better French I was talking.

Most Frenchmen drink wine and water on a one-to-one ratio, but I stuck to the wine. I never had a hangover, and could be ready again after a short rest. Alcohol was absolutely my best friend! In these days there was no talk about alcoholism. Those who dared to comment on my drinking never saw me again! I wanted no interference. Frankly I was proud... I could drink like a man!

As a stewardess my dream came true: Lots of cheap booze all over the world; celebrity parties with my colleagues, drinking the popular brands. I first met my husband in Stockholm, and I was bringing along all the booze I could carry when we were together, and we sure had a ball! Already, at that time, I could drink more alcohol than my husband, but nobody noticed back then. Concerning alcohol, the Swedes always had been a little strange. At age twenty-four, I married the man I loved (even though he was a Swede) and we moved to Malmö.

Now life became difficult, not because of my husband, but because I had to travel by hydrofoil boat to work in the airport in Copenhagen. The boats were crowded with drunken people; I couldn't stand drunken people. But now I was surrounded by drunken people at work, and on my way to and from work. Some of our passengers in these years were so drunk that they couldn't enter the plane or they were thrown off in Spain. I began to feel these people were disgusting, which isn't very smart in a service job, so no wonder I needed a drink!

From time to time I had to have a little rest at parties, and sometimes I couldn't remember with whom or what we were talking, but it didn't bother me. I wasn't surrounding myself with coffee drinkers. And parties where I knew there wouldn't be enough booze I would bring my own bottle in my handbag.

After five years in the air, I got a part-time job in a Malmö travel agency. My husband and I had two wonderful kids, before we moved to Denmark in 1975. Even in my pregnancy I was drinking "normally" – thanks to my higher power I got healthy and sound children – I didn't intend to stop drinking or smoking, I wanted to live like I used to. Rather irresponsible but: "Life is great, what a party!"

Now, at the age of thirty, I was living in a northern city with children, house, dog and a hardworking ambitious husband. What happened to my life? 'Hopelessness' and 'meaninglessness'

became my follower. But alcohol was my friend and how I would try escaping from myself. If there is a Hell, I've been there. I bought the ticket myself at the grocery store.

My husband and my parents began to notice my drinking, and the only way out was to hide better. I've got the championship medal in drinking behind doors, hiding bottles, changing bottles, filling them with water etc. Even though I was a master in alcoholism, I constantly was caught, having humiliating lessons from my family and arguments. It never crossed my mind to stop drinking! Nope, I had to become a better actor and practice harder.

The madness became wilder and wilder. When I fell out of the chair at the hairdresser, I didn't think to quit alcohol – I quit the hairdresser! My only great stress was when I knew I had booze in the house but couldn't remember where I'd hidden it.

At that time I just couldn't be together with other people or talk without a drink. I still disdained drunken people and alcoholics, but it wasn't my reason for drinking. I just wanted to be comfortable in my own skin, and if people just could leave me alone, everything was fine. But it wasn't fine at all; I just couldn't see it. I wasn't living, I merely existed.

Against my will I got Antabus. My husband got them from the pharmacy and controlled my taking them. It was so embarrassing! The only bright point was when my husband forgot to check me. By then there was padlock on the bar, and the credit card was taken away. I got an allowance for food to the family and spent it on booze for me. The booze won again!

My family was moaning about my drinking, so I contacted a psychiatrist. They couldn't find the reason for my drinking, because I only told them what I wanted them to know. So I stopped consulting psychiatrists.

I couldn't see that booze caused my trouble, and pride kept me maintaining my problems.

I drank against my will because I needed it and couldn't live without it. If I was able to promise myself not to drink today, I was so happy about it that I had to have a drink! Pure madness, I was drinking around the clock. I was always intoxicated, using all my energy not to look or talk like a drunk. I wasn't very successful, everybody knew except me.

At that time, in 1986, there was more open writing and talking about alcoholism. I succeeded in avoiding seeing or hearing any of it. I didn't want to face it. It wasn't until an old and dear colleague of mine told me about her own problem, and that there was a solution, that I felt a bit of hope for me.

By then, I was throwing up blood in the mornings; the first drink wouldn't stay in me. I could take a lot of pain and unpleasantness to force the booze to stay in my stomach so I could feel good. Until the end, I took a pride in appearing perfect. Most of all I didn't want to turn into a drinking alcoholic. I hated myself.

I came into treatment in October 1986, at the first treatment center in Denmark using the twelve-step program of recovery. First I was on the waiting list, and it nearly cost my life. I was drinking and sleeping around the clock. It was recommended I go to Alcoholics Anonymous. Didn't they know I was a lady? They want me to show up and expose that I had a problem? Never! I had no idea that others were suffering from the same problem. I was so special.

My family held guard on me to keep me from putting an end to it all by drinking myself to death. It was the only way out I knew.

I started treatment. To be together with other alcoholics was a radical change. Even the therapists were alcoholics too, and they were looking joyful. They claimed that alcoholism was the best thing happened to them. Totally incomprehensible!

I felt superior to the others as I never had trouble with the authorities or the police. I just wanted to learn to drink normally again.

Who needed a personal inventory when others caused my troubles? I had a hard time getting the AA message. Their way of thinking was new to me.

What really took me was the fact that I was a sick person, and I could recover just by not picking up the first drink! I'm not stupid – wasn't aware of the fact that I was more mentally ill than I knew – as long I stayed away from the first drink, and went to meetings everything would be fine.

Today I know that reading and understanding the program is not enough. It takes a new lifestyle and it has to come from the bottom of your heart. In this matter, intelligence and money is more an

obstacle because I was analysing the program instead of living it. I stayed sober a couple of months, tried to help the still suffering alcoholic but forgot about myself.

I woke up at a psychiatric hospital, having no idea of what happened. Here I had the spiritual awakening, that this program is a self-supporting program. Until I had learned to be honest with myself, no recovery was possible!

I had to go into my second treatment. I was so disappointed of myself it nearly killed me. The easy part is to stop drinking; the challenge was not to start again. I was a slave to my bad habits for so many years.

Now I've been sober for four years and so much have changed. I still have my family, and I'm so thankful they made it through. The promises as they are given in the program "if we work it" has come true.

It took some time. What I wanted was ten years of sobriety, instantly. I had to learn serenity. And I had to remember my alcoholism didn't start overnight, so patience was the answer. Today, I'm responsible for my life and my shortcomings have been turned into an inner strength. I've had to swallow a lot of pride; especially the spiritual part took some time.

"Who are you, to say there is no God," the Big Book asks. That sentence struck me. Was everybody else wrong, and was only I right? I have always claimed that God was for the old and sick. I'm sick and had to surrender to a power greater than myself. Today I don't fight against religion or God. It took too much of my life fighting against things I didn't understand. Acceptance is the answer.

The only thing I can change is me. My higher power is a dear source that gives me strength and hope, all I have to do is pray. It's so easy, yet I made it so difficult.

Today I don't go to AA... I'm a part of AA. In our program we are "walking the talking." It's a program of action, and positive thinking reflects my actions. Before the action is the thinking, so I have to change the thinking. If I don't remember my last slip, I might not have had it yet.

AA gave me a life philosophy that makes my life a joyful challenge. The only thing I can take with me, when my days are done, is wisdom and love – and that's what AA is full of!

Thank you to all of you in AA because you are there and made it possible!

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"HE WAS A MISUNDERSTOOD GENIUS"

From the 5th edition Swedish big book, Anonyma Alkoholister

A so-called "old timer" who found a brand new life in AA.

I had a bottle of Bacardi rum with me in bed. I was totally knocked out. I lay there for a week, sweaty, shaking, afraid. On Sunday night, my wife told me that she had discovered something called AA and had a phone number. I got angry at first – she had no right to interfere with my problems. But finally I called. An encouraging lady answered but asked me to call another member because she had a house full of visitors. A guy called Frank answered at the second number. He understood right away. He laughed in recognition when I described my problems as an excuse for my drinking. "We'll come and get you on Tuesday at 7 o'clock to go to a meeting."

I drank almost nothing on the following day, but by early Tuesday afternoon I got too nervous and downed two big rum-and-colas a few hours before I was due to be picked up. Frank arrived. In his car was a very elegant lady, Angelina. Frank was English, Angelina was Mexican and I was a very sick, unhappy, scared and not completely sober Swede. We were on our way to the English-speaking AA group in Mexico City.

Before I continue, I'll go back a few years in time.

The eldest of four children, I had a good upbringing in a middle-class family in southern Sweden. I graduated from high school, did a couple of years of work experience, a bit of study in Lund and military service. I wasn't special in any way, apart from maybe being the one who most

often got drunk at parties. I got into university in Gothenburg and started a very active and fun student life. Circumstances and a lack of money meant that I didn't drink so often, but when I think back I remember that I was most often the drunkest at parties. At least on one occasion, I drank before an unpleasant (i.e. I was badly prepared) exam and instead had to take the exam at a later date. I married in my last year at university, although not for money, so my drinking was still relatively moderate under the circumstances.

Straight after graduation (with very average grades), I started working within a large industry in Stockholm. We managed to get an apartment and moved. We still didn't have much money, but I was genuinely interested in the technology I started working with and drinking was confined to weekends and the odd company party. Just over a year later I was asked to travel to Helsinki to assist with some measurements. The visit stretched out to over half a year when I was charged with identifying and resolving some system faults in the newly delivered equipment.

With competent assistance from the local staff, the problem was resolved. The result was that the customer paid the outstanding invoice and I gained an unearned reputation with my bosses that I was extremely rich. In retrospect I realize that it was in Helsinki that I crossed the line into active alcoholism, helped along by a decent travel allowance, loneliness and a corporate representative account. During the last months there, the shaking in the mornings became painful and my embarrassment for my shaky hands was an important motivator in my continued drinking. The fun of drinking alcohol had definitely passed.

The company offered me a job in Mexico the following year. My wife and I were very interested and we immediately accepted. We had our first child, cleared out our apartment and were on our way.

Mexico was a wonderful country. My brother said that I moved there to avoid the Swedish wine and spirits rationing scheme. Not to mention that the alcohol, at least that which was locally produced, was cheap. Rum quickly became a favorite; beer also tasted good on quieter occasions. And we had more money to spend. It took about three years until I reached the point of the car ride with Frank and Angelina; three increasingly difficult years.

It's difficult for me to summarize exactly what happened during those years. Naturally, I had sober periods when I would compensate for everything I had neglected during the most recent drinking bout – family, friends and an increasingly smaller social circle. Typically I would escape, usually in my car and most often alone, to a simple bar and my bartender friend, who always welcomed me warmly and took my money. I remember some of my escapades quite clearly and blush with shame when I think about them. The sobering process got harder with each episode. Sedatives came on the scene.

I lived mainly in a fantasy world. I was a misunderstood genius; nobody understood me; I had ended up in the wrong environment, and so on. In early autumn that year I started getting warning signs from both my wife and boss. The fact that my boss hadn't already taken matters into his own hands was probably due to his inability to take initiative. It wasn't long until the episode which led to my first AA meeting.

I remember that meeting vaguely. There were about 15 men and women. Two members shared their stories. I could identify right from the start – a lot of what they said applied to me. It struck me that these were happy people; those listening laughed happily at all the silly situations that were described.

After the meeting, a man started talking to me. His name was Jack. We went out to a café to talk more. I had a thousand questions, and since he couldn't answer all of them in one evening, we agreed to meet the next day. Jack would eventually become my sponsor.

The next day I went to a doctor that Jack knew and he immediately checked me into a hospital for detoxification. Jack dropped by that evening, we talked and he left a copy of the Big Book on my bedside table. I started to read it without understanding much of the beginning. But when I got to the personal stories I became more and more interested. I cried for myself; I felt a lot of self-pity, but at the same time I also felt relief when I could identify with the people in AA and before long began to understand that I was probably also one of them.

That Saturday night, the doctor released me from hospital with the instructions, "I have done what I could for you; the rest is up to you." I met up with Jack and his family several times that

weekend; my next step would be to go back to work on Monday morning after a two-week absence. I was very scared, but the first thing I did was to go in to the manager, tell him what had happened and what I was now trying to do. He seemed mostly embarrassed and quickly ended the conversation. I returned to my drawing table, where I no longer needed a ruler to draw straight lines.

I went to an AA meeting the following evening; my second; this time I was sober. The meetings became fixtures in my life. In the beginning I didn't think I had much to say; I was shy and uncomfortable for a long time – and even if I identified with my AA fellows and strongly believed early on that AA was the solution for an alcoholic, I was lacking faith in myself in the beginning. I didn't doubt that AA worked but I doubted my own ability to work the twelve steps.

A few weeks after my first meeting I got a call from Jack who suggested that I should go along with him on a visit to a member who was visiting from USA and was lying "snowed in" at a hotel after a relapse. I tried to get out of it by saying that I was too new and didn't have anything to offer, but Jack managed to convince me. I sat next to him and listened to them talking; Jack's calm conviction and the tourist's regret and anxiety. It struck me that I had been sober four weeks that day; sober without coercion or willpower. I have to say that was a miracle for me. I realized after our visit that it was actually me that had gained something very important from that conversation at the hotel. To be honest, I don't remember what happened with that tourist.

A lot happened over the following years. My family life improved, I regained a certain respect at work, received more assignments and stayed active within AA – we started up a new group in a neighboring town, I got involved in a discussion group, we did a lot of 12th Step visits and I remember above all the joy when someone would return – "come home" - from a relapse, done up and with a new glow in their eyes. My family's and my social circle consisted mainly of AA friends.

It was eventually time to move back to Sweden and I became nervous. I didn't know anything about AA in Sweden apart from some addresses in the international catalogue. But during a business trip to Stockholm I called one of the telephone numbers in the international catalogue. A gentleman called Axel answered. I explained my situation and that I needed to find out if AA existed in Sweden and if it worked in the way I was used to. Axel asked me which hotel I was staying at and said, "We're on our way". He turned up that evening with Ulf; a few days later I also got to know Gustaf – and even if there weren't any meetings during the summertime in those days I felt comfortable about moving back home. Which happened the following year.

All this took place many years ago. I can't say that life as a sober alcoholic has been a perfectly straight journey. I have been through many things, some not so positive, as an AA member. For reasons still unknown to me, I happened to have a crisis at the end of the 1960s and was affected by a long-term depression. By the time I was able to get the help I needed in the troublesome healthcare system, I had ended up with a pill addiction. Unfortunately it's a common scenario – a visit to a doctor, a request to get something to reduce anxiety, the doctor looks it up in his big book about drugs and prescribes "non-addictive" pills. They work well, the dose increases, repeat visits to the doctor etc. What the doctor doesn't know is that it isn't the tablets that are addictive – it's me; it's a part of my, the alcoholic, physical and mental constitution. It took a few years for me to understand and accept that and find freedom. My recovery improved a great deal when I intensified my AA involvement.

There followed many years of more sporadic activity in AA. I travelled a lot, worked overseas for a while and attended meetings in different countries. I had a few friends in the fellowship – I was living in the program, but a bit distantly. A few years ago I got new stimulus from old and new AA friends and realized before long where I belonged. My closest social circle today, apart from my many grandchildren, is made up mostly of AA friends and I have once again become a fairly regular participant in meetings.

A long life in AA doesn't guarantee a problem-free existence. There are what I call the external problems against which I can't protect myself – illness, job situations, hair loss, troublesome cars, taxes and everything else. The internal problems are those that I can still cause myself and I am completely conscious of the fact that I can make things difficult for myself; that I sometimes do or say or think things that I regret – or even do things that I think I ought to regret. Becoming a mature

person is obviously a life-long process for me which I sometimes still resist. I use the Serenity Prayer on a daily basis. But many years have passed since that car trip with Angelina and Frank; sober years; and the most important experience I want to pass on from this long time is that AA works.

Epilog by the author, John M., October 2009:

About ten years have passed since I wrote the above. Some years ago my wife suffered a stroke and she is now in a home, I visit her a couple of times a day. And I live alone. I continue active in AA with two or three meetings a week and with a group of AA friends I go to conventions in other parts of the country. But there are times, say a dark and frosty night in November, when I feel my age, when I realize I can't quite keep up with all the activities of the young. And I often look back.

I like to recall the miracle that happened to me over fifty years ago, and my heart is full of gratitude. To Jack, my first sponsor and others who have helped and supported me, to my several sponsees and to my many friends in AA.

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NOT A GLUM MEETING

The autonomy in our traditions affords every group in AA to have their own sense of style: Big Book study, suit and ties, beach drum circle, with or without prayers... it's totally up to the group.

Stockholm's Swenglish Group's Rock 'n Roll Young People's meeting was started by AA members absolutely insisting on enjoying life. This bilingual, two-speaker and sharing meeting states they "take our sobriety seriously, but not ourselves." After the one-hour meeting a DJ rocks a dance or karaoke for two more hours, until midnight.

A common text, Chapter 3 'More About Alcoholism', at this meeting is given a 'Rocky Horror' treatment with shout-outs peppering the reading. ArenA has obtained a transcript for your amusement:

Chapter 3, 'More About Alcoholism' [**shout-outs in bold**]:

"Most of us have been unwilling to admit we were real alcoholics. No person likes to think he is bodily and mentally different from his fellows. Therefore, it is not surprising that our drinking careers have been characterized by countless [**62*!**] vain attempts to prove we could drink like other people. The idea that somehow, someday he will control and enjoy his drinking is the great obsession [**Not the only one!**] of every abnormal drinker. The persistence of this illusion is astonishing. [**I'm astonished!**] Many pursue it into the gates of insanity or death.

We learned that we had to fully concede to our innermost selves that we were alcoholics. [**I'm an alcoholic!**] This is the first step in recovery. [**Step one!**] The delusion that we are like other people, or presently may be, has to be smashed. [**stomp foot**]

We alcoholics are men and women who have lost [**Everything!**] the ability to control our drinking. We know that no real alcoholic ever recovers control. All of us felt at times that we were regaining control [**Go, control!**], but such intervals – usually brief – were inevitably followed by still less control [**Damn!**], which led in time to pitiful and incomprehensible demoralization. We are convinced to a man

[**And woman!**] that alcoholics of our type are in the grip of a progressive illness. Over any considerable period we get worse, never better.

We are like men who have lost their legs [**(calling a dog) Here, Legs!**]; they never grow new ones. Neither does there appear to be any kind of treatment which will make alcoholics of our kind like other men. We have tried every imaginable remedy. [**What happened?!**] In some instances there has been brief recovery [**Go, recovery!**], followed always by a still worse relapse. [**Damn!!**] Physicians who are familiar with alcoholism agree there is no such thing as [**Santa Claus!**] making a normal drinker out of an alcoholic. Science may one day accomplish this [**Go, science!**], but it hasn't done so yet. [**Damn!!!**]

Despite all we can say, many who are real alcoholics are not going to believe they are in that class. By every form of self-deception and experimentation, they will try to prove themselves

exceptions to the rule [**Special!**], therefore nonalcoholic. If anyone who is showing inability to control his drinking can do the right-about-face [(like in the military) **Atten-tion!**] and drink like a gentleman, our hats are off to him. [**Does anyone still wear a hat?**] Heaven knows, we have tried hard enough and long enough to drink like other people! [**Yeah, other alcoholics!**]

Here are some of the methods we have tried: [**While the published list is read, everyone randomly shouts out their own experiences in attempts to control drinking, or checks off the list against their own methods.**] Drinking beer only, limiting the number of drinks, never drinking alone, never drinking in the morning, drinking only at home, never having it in the house, never drinking during business hours, drinking only at parties, switching from scotch to brandy, drinking only natural wines, agreeing to resign if ever drunk on the job, taking a trip, not taking a trip, swearing off forever (with and without a solemn oath), taking more physical exercise, reading inspirational books, going to health farms and sanitariums, accepting voluntary commitment to asylums [**in unison**] – we could increase the list ad infinitum.”

*As in Rule 62: Don't take yourself too damn seriously!