

PRINT CULTURE IN THE AA FELLOWSHIP

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The oral culture of Alcoholics Anonymous, long cited by sociologists and anthropologists as one of the unique features of that organization, has recently received theoretically nuanced and interesting treatment from scholars of narrative theory.¹ In thoughtful and sophisticated works that scrutinize the storytelling practices of AA, Edmund O'Reilly, George Jensen, and Robyn Warhol and Helena Michie, among others, have explored the deep structures of AA stories, the reciprocal relationships between AA speakers and their audiences, and the tensions between performativity and authenticity at work within the AA community.² Their work presents a compelling depiction of a culture unified in part by a sort of archaic *logos*, or the power of presence. For instance, Jensen notes, "we cannot understand AA and its tradition of storytelling by reading and analyzing printed texts." Quite the contrary, in fact; he argues that the complexity of AA culture is available only to "rhetorical analysis . . . that accounts for the *transactions* of author, audience, and text."³ As a result, despite – or perhaps because of – its richness, by asserting the primacy of AA's oral culture this recent scholarship falls into a rather antique trap. Its insistence on the power of the spoken story recapitulates a hierarchical split between writing and voice, perpetuating what philosopher Jacques Derrida has defined as a central misunderstanding of post-Enlightenment metaphysics, namely the belief that spoken language is originary, truthful, and authentic, while "writing itself, in its non-phonetic moment, betrays . . . life [and] menaces at once the breath, the spirit, the

history as [it menaces] the spirit's relationship with itself." ⁴ Rather than seeing AA's considerable literature as somehow ancillary to a living and embodied narrative tradition that we perceive as somehow more real and more virtuous, we need to learn the contours and the nuances of its print culture.

This privileging of orality is ironic, for in their exploration of narrative, these recent works can't help but touch on the complex and long-lived print culture of Alcoholics Anonymous. Printed matter has played an important role in the history of AA, and deserves scrutiny for much the same reasons that storytelling does. In the first place, the various forms of AA literature, as well as its content, comprise a material record of the myriad ways in which AAs understand and work the program. Secondly, the variety among the publications reveals the ways – and the degrees to which – individuals and AA groups regard and disregard the “official” culture of AA, as embodied by the New York-based General Service Office. And finally, AA's printed matter functions as a discernable, stable, and locatable archive of “AA culture,” a historical record from which generalizations might be made. As such, it solves important methodological problems that historians of AA face when confronted by the fellowship's rhizomatic organizational structure and what insiders often refer to as its culture of “cheerful anarchy.”

Some scholars of AA history have explored the role of books and reading in the fellowship. In their treatments of AA's origins, Bill Pittman, Mel B., and Dick B. have noted the reading habits – both wide and deep – of AA co-founders Bill Wilson and Robert (“Dr. Bob”) Smith.⁵ These habits stemmed in part from both men's immersion in evangelical Protestantism and the New Thought movement, both of which produced floods of literature in the early twentieth century.⁶ And Pittman points out as well that Richard Peabody, author of *The Common Sense of Drinking* and in many ways a precursor of AA, “believed in the importance of home reading for his patients.” Peabody set the stage for AA reading practices by recommending “books . . . that would

influence the patient in a constructive manner” and suggesting that “excerpts that appealed to [him] should be copied into a notebook.”⁷

In addition to this historical work, considerable scholarly attention has been given to the AA “Big Book,” as *Alcoholics Anonymous* is familiarly called. AA scholars like Pittman, Mel B., Charles Bishop, and Mitchell Klein have written extensively about the writing, editing, financing, and distribution of the Big Book, as have journalist Nan Robertson and the many biographers of co-founder Bill Wilson.⁸ A clear consensus exists among observers of AA that “the Bible of AA” deserves its nickname.

Research into the history of the Big Book and the texts that influenced AA’s philosophy and practice, then, has begun to suggest the importance of books and reading to the AA fellowship. Equally important, however, is AA’s more ephemeral print culture—the books and booklets, pamphlets and newsletters produced, distributed, and read by truly “anonymous” individuals. These locally produced documents should be seen as “amateur” in the root sense of the Latin *amare*—which is to say that they spring from, and are made with, love. They comprise a durable record of AA’s philosophies, folkways, and practice, an archive that captures AA’s culture for scholarly scrutiny, but does not in any way flatten or reify it. On the contrary, attention to the print culture of AA reveals the complexity and diversity of thought inherent within the fellowship as it is lived by its affiliates.

The problem of assessing such a local, non-professional print culture is its ephemerality. Brown University’s 1995 acquisition of the Kirk Collection on Alcohol and Alcoholics Anonymous begins to address this problem. The Kirk Collection includes the inventory of Charles Bishop, known as the Bishop of Books, an AA scholar and a collector and dealer in AA and alcoholism literature located in Wheeling, West Virginia, since 1976. Bishop’s inventory is catholic in the extreme: it includes nineteenth century temperance materials, mid-century alcohol studies literature, and late 1980s anti-drug propaganda. At the center of his collection,

however, is an abundance of AA's "official" and local print culture—some isolated publications, and some extended runs of serials. Parts of the collection date back to the very beginning days of the AA fellowship, but the bulk of it is from the mid-1980s, the years of Bishop's most active collecting and also a period of heightened historical consciousness within Alcoholics Anonymous: the mid-1980s commemorated the fellowship's fiftieth anniversary, and saw as well the explosion of the addiction treatment industry, which flooded AA with new members and provided an occasion for serious self-scrutiny.

This article explores the contours of AA's print culture through the considerable resources of the Kirk collection. I want to state at the outset that while I am confident about the overall shape and scope of my argument, I am also aware that, at this time, it must be somewhat provisional. Bishop's collection of printed materials is probably representative, but it is far from complete; materials from the 1960s and 1970s are noticeably absent, for instance.⁹ Brown's commitment to expanding the Kirk Collection through additional purchases means that an excellent opportunity exists to develop a substantial archive of AA's print culture, one that will accurately represent its variety and evolution. Such a repository will allow more thorough, and more nuanced scholarship of Alcoholics Anonymous than has heretofore been common—scholarship that explores AA as an organization, a way of life, and, not incidentally, a literary field. I hope that this essay will only be the first of many that explores this rich and complex culture.

The first edition of *Alcoholics Anonymous* appeared in 1939, and in the years immediately following, AA groups and individuals produced and used a variety of literatures.¹⁰ This written culture has persisted, with slight modifications, into contemporary times. Largely local/regional and almost completely non-professional, this print culture can generally be divided into two types of material, which I call service and sobriety literatures. The primary mission of the former is to provide information, whereas the latter seeks to provoke reflection. I describe the two categories in more

detail in what follows, and illuminate them through examples. It should be noted, however, that while I distinguish here between service and sobriety literatures, such a distinction cannot be hard and fast. Almost all service literature, for example, includes brief testimonials, aphorisms, quotations, or “thought[s] for the day” intended to prompt a moment of meditation, serenity, or gratitude. The saturation of even the most mundane of informational documents with this spiritual discourse is one of the things that make the print culture of AA so interesting.

Before turning to a discussion of local AA publications, I want briefly to discuss what I call the “official” literature of AA, by which I mean not merely the Big Book and other bound volumes and pamphlets, but also the vast array of serials and newsletters that AA’s “headquarters,” the General Service Office in New York, produces and distributes. The first of these might easily be considered a letter signed by secretary Ruth Hock, dated 14 November 1940 and headed “AA Bulletin #1.”¹¹ The bulletin’s purpose, Hock explained, was to “develop a mutual idea exchange sheet to establish a closer feeling of friendship between AA groups from the east coast to the west.” She provided readers with lists of twenty-two cities that had established regular meetings, five that were in the midst of putting groups together, and sixteen that lacked groups but were home to individual AAs available for fellowship. The letter also included news on the growth of the fellowship (from 100 members in April of 1939 to a current tally of around 1400) and brief mention of the work of the central office, which included individual responses to each of the 2000 letters received in the last year.

Hock’s simple two-page letter has transmogrified in modern times. Its direct successor is the newsletter *Box 4-5-9*, which publishes “news and notes of the GSO of AA.” But the spirit of Hock’s original missive persists as well in the “AA Guidelines,” a set of pamphlets “compiled from the experience of AA members in various service areas [that] reflect guidance given through the Twelve Traditions and the General Service Conference.”¹² The

“Guidelines” advise the AA volunteers who staff the local Area or Intergroup offices and serve on the many committees devoted to Public Information, Professional Community relations, Court Programs, Finance, etc. The GSO publishes dozens of such publications, addressing every service role in the fellowship. Such administrative literature aims to demystify the workings of the New York office and the international service structure of AA; just as important, it seeks to demonstrate the kinds of services that the financial support of the far-flung groups makes possible.¹³

I use the term “official” to describe this literature. The word “official” denotes its origin within the professional General Service Office, but the quotation marks around it acknowledge that, in keeping with the Second Tradition, the authority of that office over individual or Group practice is always provisional.¹⁴ Despite the power of that Tradition, it would be a mistake, I think, to treat the “official” GSO literature as no different from, and no more powerful than, publications produced at the local level. The New York office did not set out to become a model of cultural industrial production, and perhaps it still does not see itself as such. But it is nevertheless a large, professionally staffed, fully automated, and well-funded operation, and one with the intention and the capacity of reaching millions through its publications. While the GSO’s discursive dominance of the AA fellowship is far from complete, the ideas about philosophy and practice that it suggests in its literature nevertheless form the center of AA culture.

Sharing that conceptual center with GSO publications is the monthly magazine called the *AA Grapevine*. In its original 1944 incarnation, the *Grapevine* mixed New York-area AA information (meeting times and places, publications, contact information) with reflections on sobriety and service, news and perspectives on alcoholism, and a variety of “lifestyle” features, including book reviews. When Bill Wilson began taking a more active role in the magazine in 1945, however, it became both less newsy and less local, and it has continued to evolve in that direction.

Wilson treated the magazine as an arena in which to work out the philosophical and practical considerations of expanding the AA fellowship. Responding to inquiries he received by mail and when traveling, he used the pages of the *Grapevine* between 1946 and 1949 to forge the Twelve Traditions, AA's guidelines for self-governance.

Throughout much of its history, the *Grapevine* served as a place for the exchange of views and information on issues of alcoholism science, treatment, and policy-making. Early on, it regularly featured the writings of non-alcoholics on alcoholism and AA; such features are occasional today. Another regular feature beginning in 1966 was the "gray pages," which reported "alcoholism information, research, and treatment." Acknowledging that "many of these items are contrary to AA philosophy," the *Grapevine* neither "endorse[d] [n]or approve[d] of them [but] offered [them] solely for your information." As of 1991, however, Gray Pages were eliminated, on the grounds that the increasing availability of information about alcoholism had rendered them somewhat superfluous and that moreover, they implied affiliation between AA and the institutions on which they reported.¹⁵

The bulk of the *Grapevine*, however, has remained unchanged since the late 1940s and consists of various reader contributions—frequently personal stories of recovery, but also philosophical and practical discussions of individual and group life, tips for newcomers and old-timers, meditations on the Steps and Traditions, etc. Beginning in 1950 the editors included questions for closed-meeting discussions the drew on articles within the *Grapevine*; the custom continues into the present, prompting readers to think of the magazine not only as a personal sobriety aid, but as a part of the AA group's life and culture.

The rhetorical posture of the *Grapevine* is that it is by and for members, or, as the title of one GSO flyer expressed it, "Who Writes the *Grapevine*? YOU Do!"¹⁶ A comparison of the *Grapevine* to locally produced sobriety literature shows that it

clearly served as a model – and in many cases, a source – for smaller publications. Unlike its small-scale cousins, however, the *Grapevine* has always had to fit into the professional service structure of the GSO. While never a commercial magazine, and not burdened by having to deliver a subscriber base to advertisers, it has at times struggled to justify the substantial cash outlays it receives.¹⁷ In addition, as AA historian Ernest Kurtz has suggested, the *Grapevine's* editorial staff has worked (at least sometimes) to advance “official” GSO attitudes, rather than merely to reflect the diverse opinions of the fellowship.¹⁸ Further studies of the content of the magazine, as well as more detailed research into how it was incorporated into the lives of individual AAs and AA groups, is necessary if scholars are to understand the way this publication both shaped and reflected the lives of its readers.

In its earliest incarnation as a New York-area newsletter, the *Grapevine* tried to strike a balance between inspiration and information. Service literature before and since then has aimed to achieve a similar mixture. Particularly in the early days of AA, before the program was widely known and reachable by telephone, basic contact information, along with meeting times and places, was a key element of the service publication. According to an article in *Box 4-5-9* from the mid-1980s, most service publications originate with Intergroup, District, or Area offices, the workings of which they dutifully report.¹⁹ Telephone contact information, announcements of local anniversaries, dances or parties, and visiting speakers are also standard components, and many service publications feature a short paragraph of news from each group within the Intergroup or District. In the mid-1980s, a tally of group contributions, both incremental and year-to-date, became another regular feature. Calls for service, at the level of groups, Intergroups, Districts, or Areas, are not uncommon, and occasionally a newsletter will feature an advertisement for a paid staff position within an Intergroup/Area office. All of these features serve the primary purpose of informing AA members about doings within the

local or regional community, and invite – sometimes explicitly, sometimes tacitly – increased participation and service to the fellowship at that level.

Some newsletters also take on the responsibility of informing readers about more remote AA events, both social and structural. They may include delegate reports on regional and national conferences, news about upcoming area and regional meetings, etc. In addition, newsletters authored or edited by individuals closely allied with the national structure of AA may serve to disseminate information verbatim from the GSO. The *Box 4-5-9* article on newsletters mentioned above, for example, was reprinted in its entirety in “Concepts,” the Northern Illinois Area Service Newsletter published in Zion, Illinois. In the next issue, “Concepts” featured a *Box 4-5-9* reprint on how and why to loan or donate old copies of the *Grapevine*.²⁰ Similarly, in 1985, when a renegade publishing group called “Carry the Message” began to publish and advertise twenty-five dollar “replicas” of the first edition of the Big Book, the GSO disseminated strong warnings about their activities.²¹ The “Java Journal,” of Kenniwick, Washington, Billings’s “South Central Montana Intergroup Newsletter,” and the Fargo, North Dakota “Silver Dollar” all carried the warning verbatim.²²

But while they may foreground information, service publications have never been limited to it. Even the most straightforward contemporary newsletters—the Pittsburgh-area “Paco Pourri,” for instance, typically include some kind of decorative illustration, either hand-drawn or cut and pasted into the copy. In the case of “Paco Pourri,” a small line drawing of an urban skyline captioned “Pittsburgh” adorns the flag, as the banner that includes a newspaper’s title is known. At the other end of the spectrum, the “New Reporter” of Washington, D.C., features an elaborate multi-colored photo of downtown D.C. as the background for its title. More typical is the Houston, Texas “Silent Rostrum,” decorated with incidental figures depending on the season and, probably, on the time and energy of the editor.

Like illustrations, inspirational quotations or excerpts from other AA literature (usually from the Big Book, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, or *As Bill Sees It*) are often scattered within the text, sometimes set off by decorative borders or boxes. These excerpts, appropriately, emphasize the importance of service and of “carrying the message” of the AA fellowship.

While service literature serves primarily to disseminate information, what I’ve chosen to call “sobriety aids” focus instead on sharing, in a variety of guises, the “experience, strength, and hope” of the AA fellowship. The category of sobriety aid is expansive, and reflects both the varieties of AA experience and the capaciousness of the idea of service within the organization. Far more than service literature, which even at its most eclectic reflects the logistical and conceptual schema of the GSO, sobriety aids are inflected by the local cultures within which they originate and by the personalities of their authors/editors.

Service literature, in general, addresses the social dimension – local/regional and national – of AA life, while sobriety aids (although they reflect the sociability of AA) are chiefly for use in the private life of the individual. In this way, they continue the tradition of two AA forerunners: the Emmanuel Movement, which championed reading for edification and uplift, and Frank Buchman’s Oxford Group, with its traditions of devotional and self-improving reading. Whether explicitly religious or argumentative, humorous or lyrical, sobriety aids aim to deepen the reader’s understanding and appreciation of the AA program, and to prompt the humility, gratitude, and empathy at its center.

One of Frank Buchman’s many aphorisms was “Study men, not books,” but the Oxford Group nevertheless enjoyed a thriving print culture, and its form and substance strongly influenced readers and writers in AA.²³ While the importance of the book-length works popular among Oxford Groupers – works like A. J. Russell’s *For Sinners Only*, V. S. Kitchen’s *I Was a Pagan*, and Harold Begbie’s *[More] Twice-Born Men* – is well known, the Group’s fondness for pamphlet literature has gone unremarked.²⁴

These devotional aids, similar to those found throughout turn-of-the-century evangelical culture, were sold at Oxford Group churches and at the group's retreats or "house parties." Short pamphlets and booklets with titles like "The Surrendered Life," "The Guidance of God," and "Sharing" were used for study and reflection as well as for enhancing the daily "Quiet Time" central to Oxford Group worship. AA co-founder Dr. Robert Smith and his wife Anne were avid readers of Oxford pamphlet literature; among Smith's collected effects (also in the Brown University collection) are Oxford Group publications like Howard Walter's "Soul Surgery," Rev. H.J. Rose's "The Quiet Time," and Rev. Sam Shoemaker's "What If I Had But One Sermon to Preach?" and "The Three Levels of Life." These, along with Smith's inspirational and meditative New Thought pamphlets and wallet cards from the Theosophical Society, the College of Divine Science, and a variety of Unity Church presses, should be seen as models for early AA devotional literature.²⁵

It should come as no surprise, then, that many of the early sobriety aids from the Midwest reflected the philosophy as well as the material form of Oxford Group publications. The elaborate art deco-style flag of the Cleveland Central Committee's *Bulletin* featured the Oxford Four Absolutes – Unselfishness, Honesty, Purity, and Love – in its design, and Cleveland also published a short leaflet entitled "The Four Absolutes."²⁶ Similarly, the pamphlet "A Manual for Alcoholics Anonymous," probably written in the 1940s by "members of Alcoholics Anonymous Akron Group #1, popularly known as the King School Group," concluded with a short discussion of the Four Absolutes.²⁷ Items that did not express the Oxford Group philosophy nevertheless continued the Group's legacy of cheap, portable devotional literature. Wallet cards, often featuring AA contact information, inspirational poetry and maxims and, later, the Serenity Prayer, circulated in the Midwest and as far away as California.²⁸ As it had done for nineteenth- and early twentieth-century evangelicals, pamphlet literature provided opportunities for both meditation

and wholesome sociability, both new habits that were necessary to successfully incorporate AA's philosophical principles into daily life.

Despite the strong Oxford tradition in the Midwest, not all early sobriety aids were explicitly spiritual. Frequently, they were the ruminations of one person (or a collective, anonymous author) on an element of AA's philosophy, its pragmatic workings, or the lived experience of the fellowship. Sometimes called "can openers" (because they opened the can of AA for the newcomer²⁹), pamphlets from the 1940s and 1950s like "AA is a Tender Trap," "Alcoholics Anonymous: The Long Haul," and "Out of the Fog," (all Chicago), "A Way of Life" (Birmingham, AL), "Second Reader for Alcoholics Anonymous" (Akron), "Alcoholics Anonymous: The Program of Recovery from Alcoholism" (Des Moines, Iowa), and "Introduction to AA" (New York area), were both informational and inspirational, stressing the importance of life within the fellowship more than any recognizably religious sentiment.³⁰ Also common in this period was another sort of publication that touched on and no doubt led to enriched spirituality, but did not address it exclusively: the pamphlet or booklet devoted to an explication of the Twelve Steps. "Alcoholics Anonymous: An Interpretation of Our Twelve Steps" (Washington, D.C.), "Highroad to Happiness" (Waterloo, Iowa), and "Thirteen Steps to Alcoholism, Twelve Steps to Recovery" (n.p.) and similar booklets laid out the Steps, the rationale behind them, and, when necessary, the mechanics of how to take them.³¹ These publications frequently drew explicitly on the language of the Big Book, but added further illustrations, examples, and rhetorical questions to make the thrust of the Steps clear to skeptical or drink-addled readers. This sort of expository literature served a dual function: it prompted the AA member to reflect on and deepen his commitment to the group while simultaneously introducing the newcomer to its tenets and inviting him to try them on.

With the goal of persuading the newcomer in mind, some publications began, in the mid-1940s, to incorporate into their explanations of AA some aspects of the disease model of alcoholism currently being developed by organizations like the Yale Center of Alcohol Studies and the National Committee for Education on Alcoholism. As Ernest Kurtz has argued, despite the Big Book's use of words like "sick," "ill," and "disease," AA as an entity has declined to take a position on whether or not alcoholism is a disease in the medically recognized sense of that word.³² During the 1940s and 1950s, however, many individuals who became sober in AA and then worked to promote its insights were not so careful to observe these fine distinctions. Historian William L. White cites Marty Mann, the first editor of the *Grapevine* and then the Director of the NCEA, as well as philanthropist Brinkley Smithers and Mann's successor, Yvelin Gardner, as AAs emblematic of the "modern alcoholism movement." Within that movement, White argues, the "metaphorical utility" of the disease concept overrode its dubious "scientific validity," with the result that its "ascendance was more one of declaration than of scientific conclusion."³³ The work of these alcoholism activists contributed directly to the popular equation between AA and the disease concept of addiction—an equation that, in many quarters, still holds today.

White's list of alcohol activists expands greatly if we stretch it to include the anonymous authors of pamphlets that invoked the disease model of alcoholism and cited AA as its "cure." "A Way of Life," a 1945 pamphlet compiled by the Five Points Group of Birmingham, Alabama, reminded readers that alcoholics were "in the grip of an underlying illness that expresses itself in insane thinking and abnormal drinking." Similarly, Waterloo, Iowa's "Highroad to Happiness" explained, "diabetes, like alcoholism, is an incurable disease, yet by the use of insulin and proper diet a diabetic can live a long and normal life. The patient is not cured, but the disease is arrested. So it is with alcoholism. The Alcoholics Anonymous [sic] furnishes the tools by which the alcoholic can

arrest the disease and lead a normal life by total and permanent abstinence.” The Salt Lake City booklet “Who, Me?” extended the comparison to recognized diseases, and did so in a fashion that showed the influence not only of alcohol activism but of contemporary advertising trends. The cover used a bold graphic layout to equate alcoholism to other diseases:

Heart Disease . . .
Tuberculosis . . .
ALCOHOLISM . . .
Diphtheria . . .
Pneumonia . . .
Syphilis . . .

YOU'RE WRONG MISTER

It Does
Belong
On This List!

Few publications were as dramatic as “Who, Me?” in their invocations of disease, but many strongly implied an allegiance to the disease concept by using diagnostic tools devised by alcoholism researchers in medicine and social science. “Thirteen Steps to Alcoholism” and “Alcoholics Anonymous: The Program for Recovery from Alcoholism,” for instance, used thirteen questions E. M. Jellinek, of the Yale Center of Alcohol Studies, had developed to measure the “progressive” nature of alcohol addiction, while “Birds of a Feather” (n.p., ca. 1950-1951) and “Alcoholics Anonymous: An Interpretation of Our Twelve Steps,” along with countless others featured a thirty-five item questionnaire created by Dr. Robert Seliger of Johns Hopkins Hospital.³⁵ Many publications that reprinted Seliger’s roster followed it with the caveat that “the Test Questions are not AA Questions but are the guide used by the Johns Hopkins University

Hospital . . . we in AA would ask even more questions” (5). Affirmative answers to the questions posed in the pamphlets proved, as they did in the clinical setting, the existence of the “progressive disease” of alcoholism and, consequently, the drinker’s need for AA. The institutional prestige and scientific objectivity of the researchers – every publication that used the Jellinek or the Seliger questions mentioned the illustrious names of the universities where they were developed – conferred legitimacy on AA and, not incidentally, bound the fellowship by association to the work of the professional alcohol studies movement.

The sobriety aids I have discussed thus far were generally short, focused, and, with the exception of the wallet cards, written in expository prose. While it is impossible to tell much about their authorship, the consistent voice within each publication suggests that they were written (or at least closely edited) by individual authors; their habitual description of men’s lives, combined with their explicit address to male readers, suggest male authorship.³⁶ Not all sobriety aids, however, were so traditional. Within the Kirk Collection are numerous examples of eclectic, communally-authored, idiosyncratic and genre-defying sobriety aids; it may simply be the vagaries of Charles Bishop’s collecting, but such publications seem to become increasingly common as AA matures. Such growth and change seem logical: the passing of time meant not only a larger total pool of potential authors as the fellowship increased in size, but also improved access to inexpensive duplication and distribution technology, and, most important, a mandate to reflect on the nature and purpose of the AA program as alcoholism treatment became industrialized and professionalized after 1970. All of these factors no doubt contributed to a broadening of AA’s print culture.

There are numerous examples within the Kirk Collection of what I have chosen to call commonplace books—compendia of personal stories and thoughts, inspirational quotations, poetry, news items, and, sometimes, illustrations. Commonplace

books were sometimes the work of a single author, sometimes the product of collective endeavor; some were intended to be circulated free to a circle of friends or a group, while others were sold by mail order for a nominal fee. A few were elaborate, handsomely laid out glossies, and others were humble, stapled booklets of mimeographed pages. Together they reflect the diversity of AA, and exemplify the variety of forms that the program's ideals of love and service could take.

A publication like *What Will I Talk About Tonight?*, a full-sized forty-page booklet edited by Clark R. of the Auxiliary Group of Greater St. Louis (ca. 1947) consisted of "thoughts, excerpts, and miscellaneous writings about AA by AAs and Others" (cover).³⁷ A sequel to Clark R.'s earlier volume, *The Other Fellow's Viewpoint*, it included primarily articles on alcohol, alcoholism, and AA from the mainstream press, as well as four contributions by individual AAs, and two cartoons from *The Grapevine*. A two-page center spread with the banner "How Many Did You and 'They' Try?" featured a collage of ads for alcohol "cures," including the White Cross Hospital Treatment and the Silver Star Secret Liquor Cure: "odorless, colorless, tasteless . . . \$1.10 per box, 30 complete treatments . . . makes him into a man among men" (20-21). The publication could be used for personal, solitary pleasure and edification, but also, the editor claimed, "might prove helpful to us when that moment comes to decide—"What Will I Talk About Tonight?" (3). Clearly in this instance, the reading life of the AA was meant to enhance and deepen the collective life of the meeting, and the meeting was a place for conversation and discussion—not merely of personal sobriety, but also of public perceptions of alcohol and alcoholics. Clark R. advocated reading as an important part of AA life: on the final page he provided a list of locally produced AA publications from around the country to which his readers might subscribe.³⁸

Not quite as handsomely laid out as *Tonight*, but equally impressive in its own right was the weekly "Chit Chat," produced between 1952 and 1975 by Richard Caron, the founder of the

detox hospital and treatment center Chit Chat Farms.³⁹ His weekly 8.5 x 11 double-sided broadside featured news, notes, editorials, reports on alcohol studies and policy, cartoons, jokes, poetry, prayers, Step Study aids, reprints from local and GSO publications, inspirational aphorisms, letters from old-timers, and the occasional puzzle. “Chit Chat” was free, but its flag proclaimed what Caron called the “Chit Chat Bulletin policy”: “our only requirement . . . an occasional letter” (ellipsis in original). This policy was reinforced with spasmodic text breaks proclaiming “No letter, no Chit Chat!!!!!!!!!!!!”, and Caron was not above letting his readers know that “it does cost money to publish Chit Chat and if you wish to relieve yourself of writing an occasional letter, there is an easy way out . . . Mail your contribution of \$10 bucks or more (why not make it more??)” (2 June 1972).

Caron had some help getting out the newsletter, especially towards the end of his life when illness enfeebled him (10 Jan. 1975). But it remained a highly personal document (at least one issue was devoted in its entirety to his daughter’s wedding) and its appeal rested on precisely that fact. The flag featured the title flanked by two slogans, “Easy Does It,” and “Attend Meetings”; beneath them appeared a disclaimer that

the opinions expressed in this bulletin are either mine, or those of the writer whose article has been reprinted.
CHIT CHAT IS NOT AN OFFICIAL AA PUBLICATION
. . . AND WE DO NOT REPRESENT OUR GENERAL
SERVICE HEADQUARTERS IN ANY WAY, nor do my
opinions necessarily agree with theirs.

Although it reflected early AA’s class and gender biases, in many ways “Chit Chat” was remarkably progressive. Perhaps because of Caron’s Catholicism, the newsletter avoided the sometimes pious, teetotaling stance of some AA publications, presenting instead a culturalist understanding of alcohol addiction. In a report on a National Institute of Mental Health conference, Caron pointed

out that “personal and social attitudes are much more important in deciding if a drug is ‘good’ or ‘bad’ for you than how strong it is or how often you use it” (23 November 1973). On the subject of teenage drinking, he argued, “the use of alcohol has its place and purpose, which vary with social customs When young people understand this and are equipped with a healthy attitude toward alcohol, they will . . . be able to decide intelligently for themselves whether or not” to use it (18 August 1972). Despite the fact that Chit Chat Farms, Caron’s treatment facility, was profoundly affected by changes in national alcohol policy, “Chit Chat’s” coverage of such issues (including DWI statistics and penalties, statutes on public drunkenness and underage drinking, research into dual addictions, etc.) was only a small part of its content; the bulk of the weekly newsletter was devoted to more conventional inspirational writings. But, like the “gray pages” of the *Grapevine* and the sobriety literature that cited prestigious institutions, Caron’s regular commentaries on developments in the field no doubt fed the perception of a conscious alliance between AA and the alcohol studies movement.

Though each made use of previously published writings, both *What Will I Talk About Tonight?* and “Chit Chat” were the product of one editor’s vision. Anthologies produced in prisons, another important kind of AA commonplace book, appear to have been more collaborative. Publications like the Indiana State Prison’s “BAR-Less,” which began in 1944 and was still appearing ten years later, sought “to further our study by expressing in words and deed our interpretations of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions . . . to acquaint our friends with our group therapy activities as prescribed by AA . . . [and] to carry the message to our fellow inmates” (July-August 1954, 1).⁴⁰ The forty-plus page, digest-sized journal, which was professionally typeset and printed in the Indiana State Prison Print Shop, “carried the message” with poems, personal stories of alcoholism and recovery, and reports on prison AA groups’ activities, all authored by inmates. These appeared alongside articles by non-AAs on how AA functioned

in a penal environment, and endorsements of the AA program by high-ranking prison administrators. Incidental illustrations, along with dedications to and photos of the Wardens of Indiana State Prison and the Joliet-Stateville Penitentiary completed the professional-looking publication.

Like the early “can openers” published in the Midwest, “BAR-Less” had a distinctly respectable, solid air about it, a feeling of legitimacy that came in part, but only in part, from its impressive production values and mid-western, mid-century origins. “BAR-Less” articles were generally about the same length, and were written in standard English without slang, probably by white men whose backgrounds seem to have been middle- to working-class.⁴¹ In all these respects it differed sharply from prison journals like “Our Guiding Star,” produced in 1969 at the (Marysville) Ohio Reformatory for Women, “Heathmen AA Group,” published at the West Virginia State Penitentiary in Moundsville in 1981, and other prison journals.⁴² These were simply compiled typescripts, with pencil illustrations and stapled bindings. The mimeographed, digest-sized “Guiding Star” featured a construction paper cover, while “Heathmen” was full-sized, with a colorful map of West Virginia on its front cover and photocopied pages. Their contents, too, varied sharply from “BAR-Less.” The personal stories, written in non-standard English and sprinkled with spelling and typographical errors, detail multiple addictions across generations, domestic violence, and repeated contact with child welfare services and psychiatric facilities. The intensity of the stories, along with the low-tech production, gives the volumes a sense of intimacy and urgency that the polished “BAR-Less” cannot match. This urgency is particularly marked in the “Heathmen” volume, which its editors note is meant:

to reach out in the homes and get the alcoholic and drug addict teenagers before they go to the end of the line look at all the loved one’s you are hurting, your Father, Mother, Sister, Brother,

Husband, Wife or your Children and all your Friends. They can't help you but you are breaking their hearts. Go ahead and cry in self pity, because no one loves you and you can't help anyone. But remember, in A.A. we have love and compassion for you and need your knowledge and experience. Remember the life you could have saved. It could have been your son or daughters. ([sic] 4)

The "Heathmen's" direct address to its readers was mirrored in its few full-page illustrations, one of which featured the disastrous effects of a drunk-driving accident, and another of which urged readers to share the volume with others (Figure 1).

The prison journals, like most other AA commonplace books, were miscellanies, mingling genres, sources, and authors under a common theme. An important exception to this rule, however, was the sobriety aid devoted solely to aphorisms. Volumes like Bright Star Press's "Handles and Hodge Podge" (n.d.), "Handles for Sobriety" (1967), and "Stinkin' Thinkin' (Thoughts For)" (n.d.), "Grateful Thoughts Favorites" (Fredericksburg, MD, n.d.), and "My Favorite Alcoholic" (Norwalk, Ohio, 1986) resembled *Poor Richard's Almanacs* for alcoholics.⁴³ These compendia sometimes contained quotations from official AA literature, but they more often drew from a wide range of sources, including the Bible, popular Protestant devotional materials, advice and conduct manuals, poetry, history, and fiction. The bulk of their contents, however, came from meetings themselves, or from what compiler John Cunningham called "the wit and wisdom of the group as heard and remembered by the author distilled from 43 years of drinking coffee and eating donuts."⁴⁴ The purpose of such volumes was clear: "These sayings have been compiled into this booklet," wrote one anonymous compiler, "with the hope that they may serve our members old and new as Handles To Hang On To Our Sobriety."⁴⁵

These small booklets display various degrees of design sophistication. The three Bright Star Press volumes feature

"WE NEED YOU"

To help us reach out to the Alcoholic, Drug Addict, and teenager that in the homes, The Mother is to Ashamed Humiliated broken hearted to let people know her son is a Alcoholic not knowing that its a disease the wife that makes all the excuses for her husband no one to turn to for help, the teenager that is hooked and no one understands that she is sick trying to find the courage to live and face life you are the people we are writing the news letter for there is no better way for us to rehabilrtite these boys then to have them help us they have there wives Children and love ones out there to, We are talking about men that has come to the END OF THE LINE and are willing to share there Mistakes and Heart breaks with Society Hoping to help others not to make them and end up where they are they have the love Compassion, and understanding of the Alcoholic, Drug Addict, and teenagers Hoping to get this program state wide.

Any questions you want answered by these boys! WRITE.



HEATHMEN GROUP
ATTN: Charles W. Leasure Coordinator
606 McMechen St
Benwood, W.Va. 26031

Figure 1. Image from the "Heathmen" "can-opener," a sobriety aid, published in 1981 at the West Virginia State Penitentiary in Moundsville.

running headers and footers with bold-face maxims ("A journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step," "Dignity cannot be preserved in alcohol," "When your head begins to swell, your mind stops growing") of one or two lines on each page and longer poems, sayings, and sketches in between. The modest "Grateful

Thoughts Favorites,” simply presents a list of aphorisms that fill each page, while “My Favorite Alcoholic” places one or two sayings on each page, sometimes with a clip-art style illustration. As is the case with much folk-wisdom, some of the sayings in these aphoristic volumes are old chestnuts: “AA is a simple program for complicated people,” “Act like a good AA and the first thing you know you will be one,” “The time to attend a meeting is when you least feel like going,” etc. Such standards reappear across all these publications, along with sayings drawn from the American vernacular that recapitulate the themes of humility and cooperation at the center of the AA program: “Don’t look down on another person unless you are bending over to help him,” “When looking for faults, use a mirror, not a telescope.”

John T. Cunningham’s “My Favorite Alcoholic” varies the formula slightly, including more quotations from clearly literary sources, like Herman Melville’s “Better sleep with a sober cannibal than a drunken Christian” and several of Ambrose Bierce’s drink-related definitions from *The Devil’s Dictionary*. In addition, it downplays the philosophical in favor of the humorous, featuring more original and more sardonic examples of AA “wit and wisdom.” Quips taken from meetings, like “He believed in abstinence—in moderation,” “If there is a big enough audience I’ll speak on humility,” and “If supper’s not ready I’m going to raise hell, and if it is, I’m not going to eat a bite,” reflect an appreciation for the role self-ironizing has come to play in recovery. This appreciation for humor, particularly ironic humor, is not always present in “Grateful Thoughts” and the Bright Star compendia, which were probably written earlier in the century.

With its eclectic contents, divergent authorial/editorial voices, and varied interpretations of AA, alcoholism, and sobriety, the print culture of Alcoholics Anonymous in many ways resists generalization. What is remarkably consistent across the printed forms—of both service and sobriety literatures—is their function as “hupomnemata,” scrapbooks of verse, history, and popular wisdom assembled and read for moral instruction in the first

two centuries after Christ. In her Foucaultian investigation into the history of alcoholism, Marianna Valverde has described the hupomnematic quality of AA's slogans ("easy does it," "live and let live," etc.) noting that "the admittedly inane, even vacuous slogans posted around AA meeting rooms . . . are not so vacuous. They have little semantic content, but as crystallizations of AA's homegrown collective wisdom they are full of practical meaning and power . . . Perhaps precisely because they have so little inherent content, they play a very important role in the practical management of people's lives."⁴⁶ The publishing practices of Alcoholics Anonymous demonstrates the degree to which such hupomnematic knowledge – straddling the boundaries between past history and present experience, and between oral and print culture – has been central to sustaining both individual sobriety and the AA fellowship as a collective entity.

This preliminary investigation has, I hope, suggested the importance of print culture within AA, and begun to gesture to its range. Before in-depth scholarship of this ephemeral literature can take place, however, there is much to be done to find and preserve it, and to make its forms and content known to scholars. Possible avenues of inquiry that could be sustained by a substantial and well-organized archive of this material might include: bibliographical detailing of local publications; studies of the poetics of AA poetry and prose (the former, with its persistent Victorianism, seems particularly interesting); analyses of the workings of local and regional publication and distribution networks, as well as of their relationships with the New York GSO and the many for-profit producers of recovery literature that proliferated in the 1980s and 1990s; and, perhaps most tantalizingly, investigation into the way that readers incorporated published materials into their daily lives. Such research would shed necessary light on the history and culture of AA, and on sober life in the "wet" culture of the twentieth-century United States. More important, however, it would contribute to our understanding of the day-to-day lives of average Americans, the

ostensible subjects of social and cultural history. Because the lives of such contemporary subjects are still messy works in progress, they are too seldom dignified by the attentions of historians. But like bluegrass and blues musicians, Labor activists and Beat poets, zoot suit wearers and fans of *Star Trek*, the men and women who crafted and disseminated AA literature offer historians an important window into what philosopher Michel de Certeau has called “the practice of everyday life.”⁴⁷ Unlike so many of their equally fascinating contemporaries, these actors left a rich and varied printed record. That evidence awaits our scrutiny.

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NOTES

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1. For examples of classic scholarship on AA that note its oral culture, see Paul Antze, “Symbolic Action in Alcoholics Anonymous,” in *Constructive Drinking: Perspectives on Drink from Anthropology*, ed. Mary Douglas (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Norman Denzin, *The Recovering Alcoholic* (Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1987) esp. 155-193; Robin Room, “Alcoholics Anonymous as a Social Movement,” in *Research on Alcoholics Anonymous: Opportunities and Alternatives*, ed. Barbara S. McGrady and William R. Miller (New Brunswick: Rutgers Center of Alcohol Studies, 1993).
2. O’Reilly, *Sobering Tales: Narratives of Alcohol and Recovery* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997); Jensen, *Storytelling in Alcoholics Anonymous: A Rhetorical Analysis* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2000); Warhol and Michie, “Twelve-Step Teleology: Narratives of Recovery/Recovery as Narrative” in *Getting a Life: Everyday Uses of*

Autobiography, Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, eds. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

3. Viii-ix, my emphasis.

4. *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), 25.

5. Dick B., *Dr. Bob's Library: Books for Twelve Step Growth* (Kihei: Paradise Research Publications, 1996); Mel B., *New Wine: The Spiritual Roots of the Twelve Step Miracle* (Center City: Hazelden Foundation, 1991); Bill Pittman, *AA the Way It Began* (Seattle, WA: Glen Abbey Books, 1988).

6. On Protestant print ephemera, see Colleen McDannell, *Material Christianity: Religion and Popular Culture in America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995). On New Thought ephemera, see Beryl Satter, *Each Mind a Kingdom: American Women, Sexual Purity, and the New Thought Movement, 1875-1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

7. Pittman, 106.

8. Charles Bishop, "What Price AA?" in *Culture, Alcohol, and Society Quarterly* 1/3 (Spring, 2003), 17-27; Mitchell K., *How It Worked: The Story of Clarence Snyder and the Early Days of Alcoholics Anonymous in Cleveland, Ohio*, (Washingtonville: Big Book Study Group, 1991); Nan Robertson, *Getting Better: Inside Alcoholics Anonymous* (New York: William Morrow, 1988). The first biography of Bill Wilson was Robert Thomsen's *Bill W.* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975 [reprint Hazelden, 1999]); the most balanced and thoughtful of the biographies is Matthew P. Raphael's, *Bill W. and Mr. Wilson* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000).

9. In addition, the sprawling Kirk collection has not been fully processed or accessioned, and it is therefore possible that it contains material I have not seen.

10. The editorial history of the Big Book is itself a fascinating topic. Description of the writing, editing, and distribution of the first edition appears in Pittman, *op cit.*, and in the anonymously authored *Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age* (New York: Alcoholics Anonymous Publishing, 1957) and *Pass It On: The Story of Bill Wilson and How the AA Message Reached the World* (New York: Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, 1984). Revised editions of the Big Book appeared in 1955, 1976, and 2001.

11. New Box 1. The paper materials within the Kirk Collection have not been completely sorted or catalogued. As a result, there is not one inclusive numbering or storage system for the various containers of Kirk materials. As of this writing, Kirk paper materials are held in three different locations; two with discrete sets of numbers, the third un-numbered. The Kirk boxes in Brown's remote storage facility I refer to simply by box number; those held in the storeroom of the Hay Library I refer to as "New Box [numeral]." The unnumbered boxes held in the Hay storage closet I refer to by their container label description, i.e., "Hazelden Pamphlets."

12. New Box 1, ca. late 1980s. I have tried wherever possible to discern original publication dates and locations for the printed materials that this article describes. When it has proven impossible to determine original publication dates (as is frequently the case, due to the AA custom of reprinting) I have estimated dates in two ways. Dates given as "circa [ca.]" mean that some aspect of the text—for example, a mention of how long AA has been in existence, or a statement about the number of AA members—provides a concrete method for assessing with some accuracy when a work was written. Dates given as "approximately [approx.]" indicate that I have guessed about the original date based on the content, rhetorical style and tone of the writing, and/or the layout, typeface or other physical evidence. When I have been truly unclear about the dating of a publication, I have indicated as much with "no date [n.d.]" Places of publication are also difficult to ascertain. Many of the pamphlets in the Kirk collection list the AA offices of Chicago, Akron, and Cleveland as their places of origin; another common publisher is Street Printing Co., of Birmingham, Alabama. At this point, however, it is difficult to know where the materials that bear these imprints actually originated.

13. AA charges no dues or fees, nor does it accept contributions or bequests in excess of \$2000. The General Service Office is supported by the voluntary contributions of the local and regional affiliates. When these contributions fall short of the mark (as they often do), the shortfall is covered by funds transferred from the publishing arm of AA, currently called AA World Services, Inc.

14. The Second Tradition states "For our group purpose these is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern."

15. Marsha Levine, associate editor, *AA Grapevine*. Personal communication, 2 July 2003.

16. New Box 1, n.d.

17. *The Grapevine's* fluctuating costs, as well as ways to improve readership, have been the subjects of frequent discussions at the annual meetings of AA's General Service Board.

18. "Alcoholics Anonymous and the Disease Concept of Alcoholism," *Alcoholism Treatment Quarterly* 20/3,4: 5-40.

19. "Area and Intergroup Newsletters," reprinted in "Concepts" (North Illinois Area Service Letter, Zion, Winter 1985, 9-10.) "Intergroup" offices (also called "Central" offices) are clearinghouses of information and organization for loose confederations of groups, usually in cities. They serve as an intermediate level of organization between the individual groups and the Districts; Districts (in the U.S. and Canada) in turn are grouped into 92 Areas, which together make up the General Service Conference.

20. Winter 1985, Spring 1986, Box 102.

21. 36th Annual General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous, *Final Report*, 1986. Box 102.

22. "Java," "Montana," Box 102, "Silver Dollar," Box 22.

23. Walter H. Clark, *The Oxford Group: Its History and Significance* (New York: Bookman Associates, 1951), 109.

24. See Clark; also Pittman, Mel B., and Dick B., op cit.

25. Dr. Bob Box. All references to this collection are from the same container, cited hereafter as "Dr. Bob Box."

26. Approx. 1940s. Dr. Bob Box.

27. New Box 2.

28. "Our Charge," Cleveland, New Box 6; Untitled wallet card, San Diego, Dr. Bob Box. Both, approx. late 1940s-1950s.

29. My thanks to Bill Pittman for clarifying this term for me.

30. "Trap," New Box 1; "Haul," "Fog," "Way," "Second," New Box 2; "Program," New Box 6, and "Introduction," Dr. Bob Box.
31. "Interpretation," New Box 1, "Highroad," Dr. Bob Box 2; "Thirteen Steps," New Box 7.
32. Kurtz, *op cit*. As evidence, he cites Bill Wilson's 1960 address to the National Catholic Clergy Conference on Alcoholism, in which he declared, "we did not wish to get in wrong with the medical profession by pronouncing alcoholism a disease entity. Therefore we always called it an illness, or a malady—a far safer term for us to use" (7).
33. *Slaying the Dragon: The History of Addiction Treatment and Recovery in America* (Bloomington: Chestnut Health Systems, 1998), 198.
34. "Way of Life" and "Who, Me?" New Box 2; "High Road," Dr. Bob Box.
35. "Birds," New Box 1.
36. Several recently reprinted pamphlets include notes explaining that the gendered language within is emblematic of the period at which they were written, not of a conscious and exclusive focus on men. This is in keeping with the increased sensitivity to gender shown in post-1970s literature from the AA GSO as well.
37. Dr. Bob Box. In 1950, Clark R. wrote a letter to Bill Wilson concerning rumors "that HQ frowns on my publishing." In it he referred to having put out four annual volumes, of which *Tonight* would have been the second. Clark R. to BW, 17 May 1950; GSO Archives, Box 26.
38. These included, along with the *Grapevine*: "Beacon" (Victoria, British Columbia), "The Boomerang," (Boone, Iowa), "The Brighter Side," (Waterloo, Iowa), "Camel Club Chronicle," (Marshalltown, Iowa), "Cleveland Central Bulletin," "Chicago Group Bulletin," "Derelict Schooner," (Jacksonville, Florida), "Dubuque Alanews," "Empty Jug," (Chattanooga, Tennessee), "The Eye Opener," (Los Angeles, California), "Hi and Dri," (Minneapolis, Minnesota), "Jefferson City Weekly," (Jefferson City, Missouri), "New Life," (Youngstown, Ohio), "The Paradox," (Kansas City, Missouri), "The Rope Yarn," (New York, New York), "The Sahara," (Birmingham, Alabama), "The Screwball," (Nacogdoches, Texas), "The Stew," (Steubenville, Ohio), "Thought Starter," (Minneapolis, Minnesota), "The Toss Pot," (Charleston, West Virginia), "Tribune," (Des Moines, Iowa), "The Twelfth Step," (Benton

Harbor, Michigan), "Twelve Stepper," (Omaha, Nebraska), "Weekly Aridity Review," (Spencer, Iowa), and "Weekly Bulletin," (Amarillo, Texas).

39. All citations to "Chit Chat" in Chit Chat Farms Box.

40. Box 20.

41. While I am just guessing as to the race and class of the authors, nothing is present in the pages of "BAR-Less" to indicate that any other demographic group participated in making the journal.

42. "Guiding Star," New Box 2; "Heathmen," New Box 1. Other prison journals in Bishop's collection include "A New Way of Life—It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell," (Parchman, Miss. 1986), and "Today's AA Group Newspaper," (Somers, Connecticut, 1975), both, New Box 2; and "WYNOT?" (Huntsville, TX 1984), Box 15.

43. The Bright Star Press volumes were most likely compiled by Bright Star founder Walter S., probably during the 1960s and 1970s, when he lived in East Moline, Indiana and Sedalia, Missouri. "Grateful Thoughts Favorites" was compiled by Mose Yoder of Fredericksburg, Ohio, over the course of several decades beginning in 1949. My thanks to Kyle, of the Bright Star Press, and to Danny Shetler of Fredericksburg, for their help with this history. "Grateful," "Hodge Podge," and "For Sobriety," New Box 1; "My Favorite" and "Stinkin' Thinkin'" New Box 2.

44. "My Favorite Alcoholic," frontispiece.

45. "Handles for Sobriety," 1.

46. *Diseases of the Will: Alcoholism and the Dilemmas of Freedom*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 136. See also the text that Valverde draws on, Michel Foucault's "Writing the Self" trans. Ann Hobart in *Foucault and His Interlocutors*, Arnold I. Davidson, ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 234-247.

47. *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

Appendix

LIST OF U.S. SERVICE LITERATURE AND SOBRIETY AIDS WITHIN THE KIRK COLLECTION, SORTED BY TYPE

Service Literature

Entry includes place of origin, authorial entity, number of issues present, and date (or volume number) of earliest issue in collection. Where available, I have also included volume and issue numbers, though these terms are not used consistently across all publications, so they cannot reliably indicate a publication's longevity. Unless otherwise specified, publications are monthly, fall within the years 1985-1994, and are roughly consecutive (not missing more than a few issues).

- "Area 53 Service Letter," Columbus, Ohio. Second quarter, 1995; 1 issue. [New Box 4]
- "Between Us," Greater Milwaukee Central Office. September 1985, 1 issue. [Box 102]
- "The Bird Word," Birds of a Feather International. [Organization of Airline Employees in Alcoholics Anonymous.] Spring 1990, vol 90-2-15 (fd. 1981); 15 issues, quarterly. [Box 20]
- "Boomerang," Bangor, Maine. December 1985, vol 27; 3 issues. [Box 102]
- "Coastal Bender," Coastal Intergroup Association, Corpus Christi, TX. December 1985, vol VII; 5 issues. [Box 102]
- "Concepts," Northern Illinois Area Service Letter, Zion, Illinois. Winter 1985, vol IV; 2 issues, quarterly. [Box 102]
- "Daily Reprieve," Omaha Area Intergroup. April 1985, vol 5; 6 issues. [Box 102]
- "Dry Run," Boston Central Service. December 1983, vol 9, #12; 1 issue. [Box 102]

- “Fresno Pipeline,” Central Service Office, Fresno, California. Vol 18, #11, 1985; 4 issues. [Box 102]
- “Frontiersman,” Buffalo, New York. March 1986; 1 issue. [Box 102]
- “Good News,” Northern California Council of AA, Modesto, California. September-October 1985, “established 1948”; 3 issues, bi-monthly. [Box 102]
- “Gratitude Gazette,” Eastern Missouri. Spring 1986; 2 issues, quarterly. [Box 102]
- “Here’s How,” Chicago Area Service Office. April/May 1993, vol 111; 1 issue, bi-monthly. [Box 19]
- “High and Dry,” Greater Seattle Area Intergroup Association. September 1990, vol 43; 14 issues. [Box 20]
- “ILAA [International Lawyers in Alcoholics Anonymous] Newsletter,” Van Nuys, California and Las Vegas, Nevada. February 1989, bi-monthly; 12 issues. [New Box 2]
- Issue of Feb ’98 in Box 102. “Intergroup Concerns,” Peoria, Illinois. Winter 1985; 2 issues, quarterly. [Box 102]
- “The Integrouper,” Central Florida Area Intergroup, Winter Park, Florida. September 1985, vol XIV; 4 issues. [Box 102]
- “Interviews,” Publication of Counties of Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia. Aug 1985; 7 issues. [Box 102].
- “Java Journal,” Greater Tri-City Area Central Office Association, Kennewick, WA. February 1979; 3 issues. [Box 102]
- “The Junction,” Brooklyn General Service Newsletter. Vol 1989, #4; 1 issue. [New Box 2]
- “Kentuckiana News,” Area 26, Danville, KY. March-April 1990; 12 issues, bi-monthly. [Box 20]
- “Lifeline,” Tri-County Area, Southern Maryland Intergroup Association, Hughesville, Maryland. October 1985, vol 9; 6 issues. [Box 102]
- “Mirus,” Minneapolis Area Intergroup Association. Nov ’85; 5 issues. [Box 102]. May 1993, vol 12; 1 issue. [Box 22]

- “New Reporter,” Washington D.C. Area Intergroup. September 1985, vol 22; 6 issues. [Box 22]
- “News From Trolley Square,” Northern Delaware Intergroup, Wilmington, Delaware. September 1985, vol VI; 3 issues. [Box 102]
- “Newsletter,” Central Ohio Group Fellowship, Columbus, Missouri. February 1976; 8 issues. [New Box 6]
- “Nightcap,” Central Service Office, San Antonio, Texas. August 1985, vol VI; 6 issues. [Box 102]
- “Newsletter,” Area Central Office, Kansas City, Missouri. November 1985, vol 16; 4 issues. [Box 102]
- “Paco Pourri,” Pittsburgh Area Central Office. March-April 1991; dozens of issues, bi-monthly. [Box “Conferences”]
- “Secretary’s Newsletter,” Alcoholics Anonymous Intercounty Fellowship, San Francisco. Nov 1985, 4 issues. [Box 102]
- “Serenity Press,” Central Office of Southwest Missouri, Springfield, Missouri. Jan 1996, vol 2; 1 issue. [Box 22]
- “Silent Rostrum,” Houston, Texas. March 1987, (issue of Nov 1987 marks thirtieth anniversary); 7 issues. [Box 20]
- “Silver Dollar,” Fargo, North Dakota. Sept 1985, 7 issues. [Box 22]
- “South Central Montana Intergroup Newsletter,” Billings, Montana. June 1985; 3 issues. [Box 102]
- “The Stepping Stones Club,” Alexandria, Virginia. Feb 1994, vol 1 #4; 1 issue. [Dr. Bob Box]
- “Unity Lifeline,” Northern Virginia Intergroup, Falls Church, Virginia. Aug 1985, vol X; 6 issues. [Box 102]
- “Unity,” Central Service Office, Dayton, OH. Aug 1985, vol 10; 10 issues. [Box 22] Issue of April 1996 in New Box 2.
- “Central Bulletin,” Cleveland, Ohio. Nov. 1943, vol 2 #2; 8 issues, scattered through 1940s and 1950s. [Dr. Bob Box]
- Washington Area Newsletter, Tacoma, Washington. Oct 1985; 7 issues. [Box 20]

Sobriety Aids

Entry includes, when possible, originating author or authority, and original place and date of publication. If the text is a reprint, I try to indicate the date and place of reprinting, either in addition to, or in place of, the original publication.

- “AA is a Tender Trap.” (Chicago Area Service Office: n.d., ca. 1940s). [New Box 1]
- “AA: You May Be Asking These Questions about Alcoholics Anonymous.” (Birmingham, Alabama: Street Publishing, ca. 1950s). [New Box 1]
- “AA—A Simple Program, Simply Explained.” (n.p., ca. 1948). [New Box 1]
- “Alcoholics Anonymous.” (n.p., but cites Indianapolis, Indiana: ca. 1947). [New Box 1]
- “Alcoholics Anonymous.” [reprints of Robert A. Erwin articles from *Evening Star* and *Sunday Star* papers, ca. 1940] (Washington, D.C., ca. 1940s). [Dr. Bob Box]
- “Alcoholics Anonymous: An Interpretation of Our Twelve Steps.” (Washington, D.C., 1944). [New Box 1]
- “Alcoholics Anonymous: the Long Haul.” (Chicago Area Service Office, ca. 1940s-50s). [New Box 2]
- “Alcoholics Anonymous: the Program of Recovery from Alcoholism.” (Des Moines, Iowa, ca. late 1950s). [New Box 6]
- “Alcoholism and the AA Program.” A Doctor in Chicago (Chicago Area Service Office, approx. 1940s). [New Box 1]
- “BAR-Less.” Indiana State Prison Group (Joliet and Stateville, Indiana: September-October 1952) Annual, 4 issues, vol 2 #1 through 1954. [Box 20]
- “Birds of a Feather.” (Furlong Printing, St. Louis, Missouri, ca. 1950). [New Box 1]
- “A Day in Marin: Spiritual Roots of Alcoholics Anonymous.” Steps to Solutions Group (Mill Valley, California: 1992). [New Box 7].

“The Devil and AA.” (Chicago Area Service Office, ca. 1948).

[New Box 1]

“The Four Absolutes.” Cleveland Central Committee (Cleveland, Ohio, approx. early 1940s). [Dr. Bob]

Grateful Thoughts Favorites. Dan M. Shelter (Fredericksburg, Ohio, n.d.) [New Box 1]

“A Guide to the 12 Steps of AA.” (Akron, Ohio, approx. 1940s)

[New Box 7].

Handles and Hodgepodge. A member of Alcoholics Anonymous. (Drain, Oregon: Bright Star Press, reprint approx. 1980s, orig. pub. date unknown.) [New Box 1]

Handles for Sobriety. A member of Alcoholics Anonymous.

(Drain, Oregon: Bright Star Press, reprint approx. 1980s, orig. pub. date 1967) [New Box 1]

“Heathmen Group.” (Benwood, West Virginia, 1981). [New Box 1]

“Impressions of AA.” (Chicago Area Service Office, ca. 1940s).

[Dr. Bob Box]

“Introduction to AA.” (New York Area, ca. 1941). [Dr. Bob Box]

“A Manual for Alcoholics Anonymous,” King School Group, Akron, Ohio, ca. 1940s. [Dr. Bob Box]

My Favorite Alcoholic. John T. Cunningham (Norwalk, Ohio: Thornwood Press, 1986). [New Box 1]

“The New Way of Life.” [reprints of Elrick Davis articles from *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 1939] (Cleveland Central Group, approx. early 1940s). [New Box 1]

“A New Way of Life: Alcoholics Anonymous: It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell.” Alcoholics Anonymous in Mississippi Correctional Facilities (Parchman, Mississippi: 1986). [New Box 2]

One Day. C.L. Estil (Charleston, West Virginia: 1988). [New Box 1]

“Our Charge.” (Cleveland Central Committee, approx 1940s).

[New Box 6]

“Our Guiding Star.” Ohio Reformatory for Women (Marysville, Ohio: 1969). [New Box 2]

“Out of the Fog.” (Chicago Area Service Committee, 1943). [New Box 2]

- “Second Reader for Alcoholics Anonymous.” (Akron, Ohio, approx. 1940s). [New Box 2]
- Serenity Card, San Diego No Date, ca. late 1940s. [Dr. Bob Box]
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