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A.A. HISTORY - Part 2

Bob and Anne, Bill and Lois

BY J. S. RUDOLF

Bill Wilson was a chip off the old block. His father, Gilman (Gilly to almost everyone), who managed a marble quarry in East Dorset, Vermont, was a drunk. His mother put up with it, until the day she discovered that he had been unfaithful to her, at which point she threw him out.

This was the first of three major crises in young Bill's life. He was nine years old in 1905 and felt, like most youngsters when their family splits apart, that he was somehow the guilty party.

He, his sister, Dottie, and his mother went to live with his maternal grandparents, Fayette and Ella Griffith. No one was unkind. In fact, Fayette tried to give the boy a sense of accomplishment; he slyly let drop the fact that only Australian aborigines could make a working boomerang. Bill rose to the challenge and spent the next six months

working on the concept. The final product was made out of a piece of wood Bill had sawn from the headboard of his bed, and the boomerang nearly killed them both when Bill threw it and it came zooming back at them, but his grandfather overlooked those little details and announced that Bill was "number-one man," an honor that Bill never forgot.

Meanwhile, Bill and Dottie had also been "deserted" by their mother, a second blow to young children. Emily Wilson was a strong-willed, intelligent woman who saw that she needed to be financially independent and set out to become so by enrolling in the Boston Academy of Osteopathy.

Adolescent Years

The empty spaces in Bill's life might have been filled by companionship at the Burr and Burton Academy, where he went to

(Continued on Page 2)

I AM RESPONSIBLE

Where were they when I needed them? They were there. Where were they when I felt like crying? They were there. Where were they when I felt like getting drunk in the middle of the night and needed someone to talk to? They were there. Where were they for a meeting when we needed to hear their stories (though they were probably tired of telling them)? They were there.

And where was I?

Recently, I have been complaining, along with many other old-timers, that the meetings are boring: I am tired of hearing the same stories; I am tired of talking; I am getting nothing from the meetings; I feel like going on to something that I can get my teeth into--something for me.

Now, where would I have been when I was a new-timer if the old-timers had felt that way and had not been willing to give me what they had gotten? I know where I would be. Instead of feeling the serenity that I feel today, I would be going out of my mind, drinking to es-

(Continued on Page 4)

A.A. HISTORY (con't)

high school, but he tended to get close to no one, although he was friendly with many. He forever seemed to need to prove himself to the world. If he sensed a slight to his abilities in any area--baseball, singing, violin--his response was a gritted-teeth effort to "show them all."

Then he met Bertha Banford, a 16-year-old soulmate who returned his love. He could talk to her; he felt at home with her family; life became very good indeed. Bertha and her family went off for a short trip to New York City. Several days later, Bill walked (late) into chapel in time to hear the headmaster read the telegram that explained Bertha Banford's death after surgery in a New York hospital.

Bill did not recover from this third blow for years. His school performance plummeted so severely that he had to drop out and go to Boston to live with his mother. Eventually, he made up the missed classes and enrolled in Norwich University, but he made no more close friends and was plagued by a sense of not belonging. He began to have panic seizures, characterized by collapsing knees, heart palpitations and shortness of breath.

Enter Lois

Salvation appeared in the shape of Lois Burnham, a vivacious and capable young woman from a stable family. Bill was still attending Norwich Academy, but their courtship progressed in letters and short visits.

Up to this time, Bill had not done much drinking; the shadow of his father kept him leery of alcohol. Meanwhile, World War I was creeping up on the United States. Bill enlisted in a R.O.T.C. unit and signed up for an assignment to "coast artillery."

Military officers are always welcome party guests. (Bill was a second lieutenant). At a party, Bill made a wonderful discovery; a drink (or two or six) took away that sense of awkwardness, of not belonging. Bill could feel himself not only a part of life, but the center of attention. The only odd thing was

that Bill seemed to lack the internal censor that warned other drinkers when they had had enough.

Bill Wilson and Lois Burnham married in Brooklyn on January 24, 1918. The parties and the drinking continued, but they were basically very happy together. Bill's artillery unit was sent to England, then to France. There were pubs, and French wines and brandies. However, Bill never had frontline battle duty, and some months after Armistice Day, he came home safely.

Unfortunately, jobs were not easy to come by; Bill had never finished college. He started law school at night. Then he discovered the excitement, the drama, of Wall Street. He began working for U.S. Fidelity & Guaranty Co.

This should have been the beginning of a vital career and marriage, but it seemed more as though life started unraveling. Bill began not only drinking with law buddies after school, but drinking alone in seedy joints. His beloved grandfather Griffith died. Lois had a series of miscarriages.

In their Bible at Christmas in 1923, Bill wrote, "Thank you for your love and help this terrible year. For your Christmas I make you this present: No liquor will pass my lips for one year." This was the first in

DEADLINES FOR MATERIAL

Date	Issue
Dec 10	Jan-Feb
Feb 10	Mar-Apr
April 10	May-June
June 10	July-Aug
Aug 10	Sept-Oct
Oct 10	Nov-Dec

a long line of empty promises.

To be continued next month.

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MATHEMATICAL MIRACLE

Some years ago, I heard a story which has been making the rounds in Midwest A.A. circles for years.

A man in a small Wisconsin city had been on the program for about three years and had enjoyed contented sobriety through that period. Then bad luck began to hit him in bunches. Job gone; wife seriously ill and insurance had expired.

At this point he cracked, and decided to go on an all-out binge. He went to Chicago, checked in at a North Side hotel, and set forth on his project. It was a Friday night, and the bars were filled with a swinging crowd. He was in no mood for swinging--he just wanted to get quietly, miserably drunk.

Finally, he found a basement bar stool and ordered a double bourbon on the rocks. The bartender said: "yes, sir, " and reached for a bottle.

Then the bartender stopped in his tracks, took a long, hard look at the customer, leaned over the

bar, and said in a low tone, "I was in Milwaukee about four months ago, and one night I attended an open meeting. You were on the speaking platform, and you gave one of the finest A.A. talks I ever heard." The bartender turned and walked to the end of the bar.

For a few minutes, the customer sat there--probably in a state of shock. Then he picked his money off the bar with trembling hands and walked out, all desire for a drink drained out of him.

It is estimated that there are about 8,000 saloons in Chicago, employing some 25,000 bartenders. This man had entered the one saloon in 8,000 where he would encounter the one man in 25,000 who knew that he was a member of A.A. and didn't belong there.

Reprinted from the Fresno Pipeline Chicago, IL., from Came to Believe

Hi there alxies, it's me again. I just wanted you to know that Alcoholics Anonymous is alive and well in Roseville USA. If you don't know where Roseville is, it's easy to find. Sacramento is a suburb of Roseville to the south. Besides it's the town with all those bars on every

corner . . . you know the one.

Well anyway, I've got proof of my first statement about Roseville AA. The other weekend some 85 male adults and about 10 alatots and teens got together, and a minor miracle happened; that's right folks, 85 sober alxies for 3 days!--fishing and playing horseshoes and carrying on--why Saturday night's AA meeting lasted until sometime Sunday morning because it's a tradition at the camp-out, for 10 years now, that everyone gets to speak. You know, with all those fish stories I heard I was beginning to question my own rigorous honesty.

The miracle, oh yeah. Well it wasn't that French Meadows Res. saw a whole bunch of sober good ole boys from the Friday night Roseville stag meeting having fun, and it wasn't that a few newcomers found that AA doesn't have to be boring, etc. What the miracle was, was that not one of us gol darned drunks fell in the fire. By the grace of God...that is.

Love in Fellowship,

Fletch

TWO DRUNKS STAGGERED OUT OF A BAR AT THE SAME TIME ONE SAID TO THE OTHER "IS THAT THE SUN OR THE MOON?" "I DON'T KNOW" HE REPLIED "I DON'T LIVE AROUND HERE."

I AM RESPONSIBLE (con't)

cape my problems, real or unreal. I would still be hurting, asking why, and not understanding. And I would be getting drunk and not understanding why.

So where am I? I have had to take a new look at myself and my willingness to carry the program to the new-comer who is still hurting. I have to look at myself and be willing to go to any length if I want to keep what I have. What I have is a gift from God, and I can keep it only when I give it away.

So, Lord, forgive me for not doing all that I should do for other alcoholics. Please help me to be willing when I don't feel willing. Please help me to have a new interest in the lives and feelings of others. Thank you for your many blessings. I do want to keep what I have, for it is the most valuable thing in the world. It is all that I want out of life. All of the material things in the world could not replace the serenity that I feel when I trust my life to you and work the beautiful program for living that you have given.

Thank you for causing me to stop and take another look at myself.

J. B., Salem Oreg.
January 1984
Grapevine, Inc.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT - AS OF 6/30/88

Balance of Hand - 1/1/88		\$ 8,929.3
Income:		
Monterey	\$13,815.00	
San Jose	11,141.15	
Stockton	95.32	
Monterey	27.04	
Committee Meetings	29.00	
Balance of Advance/C. TeNyenhuis	<u>51.63</u>	
TOTAL INCOME		\$25,159.14
Expenses:		
Monterey	\$ 8,311.70	
San Jose	13,462.19	
Deposit for Redding	200.00	
Good News	150.00	
T. Docherty Expense for 1 year	2,875.59	
C. teNyenhuis Expense	1,107.24	
Asst. Secretary Expense	532.69	
Treasurer's Expense	214.21	
Filing Fees (Federal and State)	310.00	
Notary Fee	<u>5.00</u>	
TOTAL EXPENSE		27,168.6
BALANCE ON HAND - 6/30/88		\$ 6,919.8

— 1988 Events —

- OCT 7- 9 41ST ANNUAL FALL CONFERENCE OF NCCAA, Redding Civic Auditorium, Redding, CA
- OCT 20-23 27TH ANNUAL HAWAII AA CONF. Sheraton Waikiki Hotel Honolulu, HA Registration: \$65 (Advance Payment is Required)
- OCT 28-30 9TH ANNUAL C.C.Y.P.A.A. Conference By The Sea Monterey Conference Center Monterey
- NOV 11-13 5TH ANNUAL YOSEMITE A.A. SUMMIT CONF., Curry Village
- NOV 12 9 A.M. FALL ELECTION ASSY. OF CA CNCA OF AA, Antioch, CA

THANK YOU

I would like to take this opportunity to publicly acknowledge all the people who help bring the Good News to you.

Dianne and Ron J.

-Dianne who so graciously volunteers her time before the workday begins, lunch hours, breaks, and evenings to type and proof all of our material. Ron for the excellent job he does with the paste-up, and both of them for help with the folding, stamping, and final preparations for mailing. Jennifer W. for maintaining the mailing list and providing the labels.

John H. and Andy F. for the finish work and printing of the Good News.

John and Andy also volunteer extra hours at their place of employment to bring us the finished product. Also, Lightning Printing for allowing them to do so.

Also, all of the people who write articles for the GOOD NEWS and help keep it interesting, as well as those of you who send me articles that you have found.

So, to all of you I want to say Thank You! I greatly appreciate your hard work, time, and commitment which keeps the GOOD NEWS alive.

As an added bonus,

because of all the help I receive the GOOD NEWS is brought to you for just the cost of the paper it is printed on and the stamps.

So, thanks again,

Paula D.

Dear God, help me to be a sport in this game of life. I don't ask for any easy place in the line-up; play me anywhere You need me. I only ask for the stuff to give You 100 per cent of what I've got. If all the hard drives seem to come my way, I thank You for the compliment.

Help me to remember that you won't ever let anything come my way that You and I together can't handle. And help me to take the bad breaks as part of the game.

Help me to understand that the game is full of knots and knocks and trouble and make me thankful for them. Help me to get so the harder they come the better I like it.

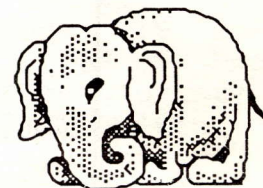
And, O God, help me to always play on the square. No matter what other players do, help me to come clean. Help me to study the Book so that I'll know the rules, and to study great players. If they found out that the best part of the game was helping other guys who were out of luck, help me

to find it out too. Help me to be a regular fellow with the other players.

Finally, O God, if fate seems to uppercut me with both hands and I'm laid on the shelf or something, help me to take that as part of the game too. Help me not to whimper or squeal that the game was a frame-up or that I had a raw deal.

When in the falling dusk, I get the final bell, I do ask for no lying complimentary stones, I'd only like to know that You feel that I've been a good, game guy. Amen

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AN ENCOURAGING WORD

After getting up and going to the bathroom for the third time that night, the man remarked, to his wife, "I don't know which is worse, ruining your liver with booze or your kidneys with A.A. coffee." To that his wife replied, "You're improving honey. At least now you get up."

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