

# Alcoholics Anonymous Aid Sincere Among Drunkards

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One of Indiana's most successful and popular advertising executives sat across the table from us, explaining the personal philosophy that pulled him from what he called "the depths of the gutter" to the responsible position he now holds.

The 60-year-old gentleman with the sparkling eyes and the crisp sense of humor was the secretary of the largest of Indiana's 25 chapters of Alcoholics Anonymous.

At the dinner table he explained that Indiana's underground force of more than 1,500 A.A. members number almost as many women as it does men.

**"THERE ISN'T A** member of Alcoholics Anonymous in Indiana or anywhere else in America who at one time or another hasn't lost almost complete control of his life," he said. "But there are thousands who have regained their self-control, self-respect and the respect of their families and communities merely by applying our simple form of psychology."

Indiana's A.A.s operate on the theory that once a person realizes that he has a number of friends pulling for him and giving him the courage he needs to throw off chronic alcoholism, he will think twice before letting them down.

Later we met and talked with some 40 former chronic alcoholics who said they now live normal, happy lives. Many said they no longer have any desire for liquor. Others were fighting.

A silver-haired motherly old lady was in charge of a club party and hayride. A pretty, but nervous, young woman was chairman. She said she was driven to drink by a lack of self-confidence.

**"DRINKING GAVE** me a false sense of courage," the attractive brunette said. "I joined Alcoholics Anonymous a few months ago to get back on my feet the fighting way. They made me chairman to help me regain poise and self-control before a crowd of people."

A pretty, young blond, who had taken her last drink seven months

ago, said she desperately wanted a tall, cool bourbon and coke.

"But I don't dare," she said. "That's the way I got started the last time. My program calls for giving up one drink every day—the first one."

"Here you see what A.A. is fighting for," our host said. "Our only weapon is will power. Drugs and sanitariums are out of our line."

Members who have maintained a strict record of sobriety over long periods of time remain with the club. They sponsor new members, taking them in hand as personal friends.

"It takes an alcoholic to understand an alcoholic," the Indianapolis secretary said. "In a year or so maybe the shaky newcomer will earn a sponsor's medal and with it the responsibility of helping others like him to a higher level."

**INDIANAPOLIS** has four such A.A. clubs, one of them with 350 members. Fort Wayne has three chapters; Warsaw has two.

In seven years new clubs have mushroomed in Muncie, Columbus, Edinburg, Gary, La Porte, Logansport, Plymouth, South Bend, Terre Haute, Marion and many other cities and towns.

"Alcoholism is a disease of the mind and has to be treated by the mind," said the personable advertising executive. "It can't be overcome unless the alcoholic first frankly admits to himself and to others that he's a drunk."

"We don't go out after him. If he's sincere, he'll come to us. Whatever he does up to the time he joins A.A. is his business. After that, it's ours."

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