

1951

In late March of this year, the house of Tom and Thelma Ross was in a turmoil. Alcohol was the invader. Tom's sister, Louise, was a county health nurse. She knew our troubles. Her home was in New Paris, Ohio, and she called Richmond, Indiana, searching for some help. She found Alcoholics Anonymous listed in the Richmons Telephone. She called and talked to Bill M. about how to contact Tom. Bill did not want to come to talk to Tom because Tom did not make the call for help. But, after much discussion, Bill agreed to come to the Ross House. Bill and Gertrude came and Tom talked to them but Thelma was sent to the kitchen. This was called a "Cold Turkey" call.

There was to be a special breakfast in a few days and they asked Tom if he would attend. He agreed to go but Louise and Jess, his father, were to go with him. Bob M. got his one-year token that day. Tom was very impressed because he could not understand how a man could stay sober one year.

The group in Richmond was the only group around this part of the country. The group held their meetings on Sunday and Wednesday in the upstairs of the Craighead Building on East Main Street in Richmond, Indiana. Tom had been going to meetings but he could not stay sober between meetings. This went on until November.

The first Tuesday in November was election day. Tom's cousin was running for mayor of Greenville. Wednesday morning Tom went to Greenville to find out how the election came out. His cousin won! He had to celebrate and he started drinking beer at the local taverns. He was there all day. About 4 o'clock that afternoon he came home very drunk with the news. He took a nap. Got up and said he was going to go to the meeting in Richmond. He left, too drunk to be on the road but he was going. He did not return until until the next morning about noon. Tom was a beer drinker. The AA's thought that no one could be an alcoholic and just drink beer. But when he staggered into the meeting that evening, they all became believers. They let him stay for the meeting, but they all watched him as he left. He could not find his car and wondered around. They called the cops and had him arrested for public intoxication. About 4 o'clock in the morning Tom accepted the first three steps of AA. He acknowledged that his life had been unmanageable. He never took another drink of alcohol after that.

November 7, 1951