104 Cleveland #1,942

THE A.A. ROCK TUMBLER

Let the Rock Tumbler do its Work.

By Rick R.

I started drinking at the age of 13 and never once was I considered being a normal drinker. I drank for oblivion every day from the start. At first, I was what they referred to as a" lamp shade drunk". As time went by and *my tolerance level improved,* I got better at it. There were times that I could drink from 6am till I closed the bar at 2am the next night and you couldn't tell I was drinking unless you smelled the alcohol on my breath. At that time, I thought I had reached the pinnacle, and everything was right with the world, then things started going wrong. I couldn't remember what happened past midnight, then 10 pm. Then people started telling me what I did last night in a blackout, and it wasn't very flattering. My wife took my son and left me. I drank for 2 more years before I reached bottom. On Oct. 15,1969 I entered A.A. and have been sober and have never wanted a drink since. I was very fortunate in my early days of sobriety; to be counseled by several men in that group that understood how to get *a better perspective* for living through taking the 12 steps. They explained that *each step has a specific objective* and that they were put in order for a purpose, and that I should take the steps in the *spirit that they were intended* to be taken and that *I should not modify them to suit my own selfish interests***.** I also learned that they were not a *punishment or a penance***,** but they were the *answer to all the things that plagued me* and that if I want to find peace***,** I should not look for loopholes*. I took their guiding principles with me and, being in the U.S. Navy at the time, duty called, and I had to leave the safety of that wonderful group. To carry on with the things that they had taught me, I concluded that if I were planning to attend X number of meetings per week, then one of them would be an A.A*. step study meeting*, and I have been attending one, weekly, ever since. That amounts to reviewing the 12 steps 4 times per year for over 45 years. One might think that it would get boring after a while, but every time we review each step it seems that we are at *a different level of understanding,* and we see something that "we never noticed before" and we can measure the progress we have made. We hear that at every meeting. It's like the rocks in a *rock tumbler*. They go rough and craggy, and as they go through cycle after cycle, the rough edges erode away very gradually, and with time they get closer and closer to the shape that we had envisioned. I believe that, if a person goes through this process in the *spirit that it was intended*, the steps will unfold and guide a person to a life of *peace and happiness*. At least that's what I have found. It amounts to "*the maintenance of my spiritual condition".* That sack of rocks (which turns out to be a few big rocks and a million pebbles} gets lighter and lighter, and one pebble at a time I rid myself of those things that bother me. With that in mind, I ask myself, *why wouldn't I do it*, after all, I only live once. *Am I willing to live my life unhappy*? I don't want to look back on my life and regret having wasted this precious gift. I must summon the courage to *take the risk and not let fear stop me from letting the ROCK TUMBLER do its work. One Step Study meeting a week. It's as simple as tha*t.