

# MARKINGS

YOUR ARCHIVES INTERCHANGE

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c/o G.S.O., 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10115

## We need your help: Dave S, Archivist from Alaska shares

The Washingtonians were put together by six men in Baltimore, on April 2nd, 1840. 1000 alcoholics stopped drinking the first year. Abraham Lincoln addressed their second anniversary. Within a few more years it was reported, that 500,000 had found sobriety through the Washingtonians. By 1850 completely disbanded! The six men who started the Washingtonians were: Jason Mcurley, Archibald Campbell, William Mitchell, John Hawkins, John T. Hoss, and David Anderson. For the past several years I have been searching for information on these men. Where and what happened to them?

*Please forward your responses to Dave to Markings directly*

## Tim C. shares from Glens Falls, NY

I have been doing the archives for a year now and I have enjoyed it. I have learn so much, how rich we are in history. I have displayed the archives at a couple of group anniversaries and the interest was fulfilling.

When I started talking to some of the more senior members in Glens Falls I found out that the Glens Falls Original group was founded on June 9, 1939.

They rented a room over a cigar store for several years before moving to where they are now. This meeting is one of the oldest one in upstate New York, and was started long before there was any meeting in Albany, NY where Ebby T. was born and raised. It is about 60 miles south of Glens Falls, NY.

## History of Noon Group in Aberdeen, WA

Helen N., the first GSR started to record the group's history. She shared the following: "I joined A.A. in June, 1972. The attendance at the Alano Club kept growing during the day. I noticed A.A. members were there at noon, who couldn't attend nights meetings unless it was a weekend, on account of working. So this problem was discussed, and the solution was a noon meeting. The first meeting was held at 11:30 on a Wednesday, April 4, 1973 with six A.A. members and one Al-Anon. It wasn't long before they wanted one on Monday, then on Friday and then to the way it is now—Monday through Friday from Noon to 1:30 PM. I was elected secretary, treasurer, and GSR. I believe we had four members who claimed it as their home group. The meeting kept getting larger.

Then in the summer we had a slump, I was so discouraged because I had to keep writing "no meeting" in my record book. I was ready to throw in my towel but my sponsor, Ken. B. , told me to hang in there. From those few brave members, who started in April, 1973., the meeting have grown as many as 25 and 30 in attendance. We have around fifteen who call this their home group. Attendance is generally Mercurial- up and down—but seldom, if ever under ten now."

Ed K. came into A.A. in 1974, through the New Aberdeen Group, but attended Noon meetings almost daily on his lunch hour. He felt a need to support Helen N., who was carrying the load of GSR, treasurer, and secretary. In March 1977 he became secretary, and treasurer by mutual agreement. Helen N. remained GSR until 1979, when Ed K. became GSR and June K. became secretary-treasurer.

In some ways, the New Aberdeen Group sponsored the Noon Group, letting in share expenses for the newspaper ad, literature and monthly birthday cake until we could do it on our own.



*First Edition Twelfth Printing Alcoholics Anonymous 1948, also displayed coffee pot used in 1955. District 16 Archives Area 86.*

## Anne L. from Windsor, Ontario reports

This past year has been very exciting and quite productive in acquiring historical artifacts for our archival reposi-

tory. We received a First Edition, 12th printing of the Big Book and a First Edition 12 & 12 hardcover book which we have displayed in glass cases. We also received a bronze cast mold of the  
*(continue on page 5)*

We started out paying 65% of total donation, then 75% for a while, now 70% to the Alano Club for rent for our meeting place. We feel that nowhere else could we have the stability of meetings five days a week. It also includes our coffee. We are grateful to both the New Aberdeen Group and the Alano Club.

One Big Book Study fizzled out, but we began another July 14, 1978 which is still going strong. We try to see, that every newcomer receive a Big Book.

We try not to get tangled up in too "much organization", reading at meeting, or too many "don'ts." We did have some old-timer speaker meetings the past year, which were well attended, informative, and enjoyed by all.

Our founder Helen N. passed on. Her sponsor, Ken B., has poor health, but makes an occasional meeting.

## Ramona B. shares from Montesano, WA

"Recently, I was asked to put together the history of Alcoholics Anonymous in Grays Harbor County, Washington State. As an active A.A. member and an avid amateur writer I readily agreed. I was given local old-timer tapes from which to glean my information—and it was fairly easy to put things together in chronological order. The old-timers deemed the article a good representation of how it all started around our county circa, 1948, now District 21.

I, for one, am always interested in hearing "what it was like" so I can compare it to "what it is like now." it's quite an eye-opener and fills me with gratitude."

## The history of Grays Harbor County

It rains a lot in Grays County! What a perfect excuse to drink! But after a while one gets tired of the drink; the effects of the alcohol on our bodies and spirits is out of control. Some of us desperately wanted to stop drinking but we didn't know how.

**Put those early timers to work! Pass It On! Compile your group's history!**

Then, one day a good friend approached us with the same problem and the same desire to stop drinking and we began earnest discussions. In our talks around someone's kitchen table or someone's front room, we began to realize the solution to our problem. This was sometime in 1950 and the institution of Alcoholics Anonymous was only 15 years old and still in the fledgling stage. It was very slow to "catch on" and the word didn't travel rapidly because of the social stigma attached to the then undefined disease, alcoholism.

But an honest effort was effected and a local chapter of Alcoholics Anonymous was begun with just a few friends and their spouses in attendance. Those first charter members (some of whom were Slim, Chuck, Frank, Virginia, Gordon, Bob, Joe, Vern, and Lois) met at the Emerson Hotel in Hoquiam. Shortly after, they moved into a worn-out abandoned store on Ontario Street and met two nights a week. The group decided to call themselves the Grays Harbor Group. Those first meetings were held in drafty, sparsely furnished quarters with the members huddled around potbelly stoves. Anyone interested in getting sober and staying that way was welcome to attend. But it seemed the most vital, interesting meetings were still those impromptu sessions held in the homes of friends. There was no Alanon in those days and the spouses, wives mostly, would attend with their mates and get a genuine insight into the disease of alcoholism. Lee, Jim, and Lorraine were some more of those first member who were to benefit from A.A. and remain sober. All these people were a very close-knit group and found comfort in sticking together and in frequent visiting between homes.

A group in Aberdeen met in the Washington Hotel but were more and more visited by Hoquiam members as there was a real need for more meetings. This "merged" group was first called Aberdeen Grays Harbor Group; but amid heated debates, this name was finally changed to the Aberdeen Group and the Hoquiam group more or less evaporated at that time.

This Aberdeen Group would host an annual event such as a clam-chowder feed and a dance. There really were many good times intermingled with the bad!

Aberdeen A.A.s next group home was a room upstairs in the Zelasko Building where their rent was \$25.00 a month. In

this particular shady part of town, the then named Hume Street. The meetings shared those dubious accommodations with the rooms of ladies of the night, once even having their door assailed by boisterous loggers looking a for "a good time." An A.A. wife was said to have been propositioned in the hall, much to her chagrin. But then considering the circumstances and the hard times, these episodes were understandable and tolerated. It was worth all the hassles and inconvenience just to be able to have those organized A.A. meetings and to share kinships with like fellows.

The early days were extremely trying and A.A. was a solo operation as there were, at that time, no detox shelters, treatment centers, or halfway houses and hospitals wanted nothing to do with the care and treatment of a common drunk. However, time and perseverance on behalf of the charter A.A. members led to at last a decent care approach from local doctors and hospitals. A.A. members often sat with the suffering alcoholics through those first trying days of DT's and took every opportunity to discuss A.A. methods. The 12 steps and promises of better life.

By 1961, meetings were being held in the failure Building. Charlie L. joined the group on June 26 of that year. He had no idea what to expect and was greatly surprised to find clean, well-dressed, intelligent, sober members in attendance. As is usually the case with the newcomer, a disorganized group of sloppy skid-row bums was that was expected. Charlie sat in the corner and listened to the drunk-alouges' and was impressed when he was invited to come back.

Shortly thereafter, the meetings were moved to a new location on First Street.

At that time, farther up country in eastern Grays Harbor County, the town of Elma started its own A.A. group.

Hoquiam also began again on its own with a very shaky membership—at first sometimes only four or five people. The group would meet three nights a week, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, in the Presbyterian Church. In those days, the group's secretary would open up the hall and make coffee and if no one at all showed up the coffee would go down the drain and the door would be re-locked. It used to be like that a lot in the old days of A.A. The Hoquiam Group had a very sporadic beginning but finally settled down into a workable unit.

Then in 1972, the Aberdeen Group moved to its present location on Heron Street. Remodeling was begun after the structure was found to be inadequate for the group's needs. A wall was removed, another bathroom installed, and a back room was added on. A little later, a pool table and a television set were purchased after the proper discussion and a poll of the group conscience. The pioneers of Grays Harbor County's various A.A. groups stuck with the program with boundless determination and they made it work. Today, there are many off-shoot groups formed from the first - parent organization. These A.A. groups all combined make up District 21 which includes all of Grays Harbor County with some slight overflow into surrounding counties. Alcoholics Anonymous now has members who are court-ordered, while some are from our new local treatment facility. There are still many Oldtimers around and quite a few promising young people. We are from all age, ethnic, professional, and non-professional brackets and are assured and reassured that Alcoholics Anonymous will always be available to anyone, any time, anywhere as long as there is the honest desire to join that ranks of the recovering.

This we promise.

## The Writing of the Book, Alcoholics Anonymous

Jack D. shares from Orlando, FL

"It was written, in a stilted and awkward style, by a less-than-successful stockbroker with no writing credentials. The writer had less than four years experience with, and virtually no academic knowledge of, the subject matter. Draft copies were typed by a secretary in the office of a friend, because the author could afford neither. The prepublication manuscript was reviewed and debated by a handful of friends, who did not let their lack of knowledge of the subject matter lessen the intensity of their many diverse opinions. \$500 was borrowed as a deposit for the first printing, and, only after each copy was paid for, would the printer release the books.

Yet it may one day be determined to be one of the most influential documents ever written. Few other documents in the history of man exceed the scope of its impact on society worldwide, its effect on the lives of individu-

als everywhere. With more than a million copies now sold each year, (with translations in 30 languages) it is a "best seller" by any literary standard. It was solely responsible for generating the funds used to retire the start-up debt of the new movement, and for establishing the viability of its key principle of self-sufficiency. Today, over fifty years later, it is still a major contributor to the financial stability of that organization.

It has given its name to a Fellowship that now functions in over 140 countries, worldwide. It describes a human condition and defines a program of recovery for a disease that had frustrated eminent medical, psychiatric, sociological and religious professionals for centuries. Yet the beginnings of this document, the book Alcoholics Anonymous, were tenuous at best.

It was November of 1937, Bill was on a business trip and stopped to visit Dr. Bob in Akron. Counting recoveries to date, "All told figured that upwards of 40 alcoholics were staying bone dry. Dr. Bob and Bill realized a 'chain reaction' had started, and 'Conceivably it could one day circle the world... We actually wept for joy,' Bill said, 'and Bob and Anne and I bowed our heads in silent thanks.' "(Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers, page 123.)

Up until that time prospects had come to the founders in either New York or Akron. Was this to be the only path to recovery? Or was it possible to reach distant alcoholics, for the Fellowship to grow without the direct involvement of the founders? Bill, ever the promoter, thought of "setting up a chain of profit-making hospitals, of raising money, of subsidizing missionaries, and of writing a book of experiences that would carry the message of recovery to other cities and other countries." (Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers, page 123.)

Dr. Bob agreed with Bill on the need for a book, but was frankly dubious about the other ideas. He suggested they discuss the options with the Akron group. The members raised strenuous objections to all the options believing the basis of the program was free service, with no cost or obligation, also believing the fellowship should shun pub-

licity. In a long, hard-fought session, Bill and Bob persuaded a bare majority of the 18 A.A.'s gathered at T. Henry Williams home to accept Bill's plans.

"Of all the plans Bill and Dr. Bob discussed in 1937, the proposal to publish a book was the most realistic. By setting forth a clear statement of the recovery program, a book could prevent distortion of the message. It could be sent or carried to alcoholics in distant cities; it could help publicize the movement among nonalcoholics, It might even make money—which could be used to establish an office to handle inquires, publicity, etc." (Pass it on, page 190.)

In 1937, Dr. Silkworth had put Bill in touch with a prospect named Hank P., who was, perhaps, even a bigger promoter than Bill. (Chapter 10, To Employers," is attributed to Hank; the only chapter that Bill didn't write.) Hank's entrepreneurial venture in 1938 was a company called Honor Dealers, a cooperative buying venture aimed at organizing gasoline retailers in Northern New Jersey. It provided Bill with an address, 17 William Street, Newark; a small office and a secretary, Ruth Hock. The office was Bill's "headquarters" until 1939.

The actual writing of the book began in the spring of 1939. "Ruth, who typed the manuscript, remembered that he would arrive at the office with yellow scratch sheets of notes outlining each chapter. 'My understanding,' she recollected, 'was that those notes were the result of long thought, after hours of discussion pro and con with everybody who might be interested. That is the way I remember first seeing an outline of the Twelve Steps.'"

"Bill would stand behind Ruth and dictate the material while she typed. He would dictate a section and then look back over the typed pages while his thoughts were still working in that vein. The work went slowly, said Ruth, because Bill was ready to drop it any time anybody came into the office wanting to talk." (Pass It on, page 193)

"The first two chapters were completed by June, 1938 when Bill sent Bob a letter asking 'What would you think about the formation of a charitable organization called, say, Alcoholics Anonymous?'

"In the same letter, Bill suggested that Anne have a chapter in the book to herself. 'My feeling' said Bill, 'is that Anne

***Won't you share your group's history with us? Each group history we receive is added to that group's file.***

should do the one portraying the wife.’ Her modesty— her inclination toward staying in the background—may have been the reason she did not write it.”

“Lois did not write the chapter either; she wasn’t asked. When she suggested that she do so, Bill said, ‘Oh, no. It should be in the same style as the book.’” (Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers, page 152.)

The first two chapters were Multilithed immediately to be used in a money-raising campaign in the summer of 1938. (Bill and the Trustees of the Alcoholic Foundation still believed that contributions from the wealthy would be forthcoming as soon as the significance of the new movement was fully understood.)

Through Frank Amos (of the Rockefeller organization) Bill was put in touch with Eugene Exman, the religious editor of Harper & Brothers. Exman read the two chapters, sounded Bill out on his ability to complete the book, and then offered to publish it, with a \$1,500 advance against royalties.

Despite his elation at the offer, Bill had second thoughts. The trustees, however, urged him to accept the offer. Hank convinced Bill to bypass the trustees and sell shares in their own company to publish the book. His next action was to buy a pad of blank stock certificates, type the name, “Works Publishing, Inc.,” at the top of each certificate, and sign his name, with the title “President,” at the bottom. “When I protested these irregularities,” Bill recalled, “Hank said there was no time to waste; why be concerned with small details?” (Pass It On, page 195.)

Hank then went out to sell shares in the newly formed publishing company, while Bill continued to work on the text. It became evident to him that, in addition to defining the basics of the program, something else was needed. There would have to be a story or case history section. “We would have to produce evidence in the form of living proof, written testimonials of our membership itself. It was felt also that the story section could identify us with the distant reader in a way the text itself might not” (Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age, page 164.)

Here Akron played a vital role, since the group was larger and had more case history material. Dr. Bob called on the assistance of Jim S., a former newspaperman who ended up on skid row be-

cause of his alcoholism. Now recovered and healthy, Jim interviewed the prospects and wrote their stories for them. Jim produced 18 of the original 28 stories (in addition to those of Bill and Dr. Bob, who wrote their own) that appeared in the first edition of the book. Two of those stories came from Clevelanders, and one of the stories, “An Alcoholic’s Wife,” concerned Marie B., the nonalcoholic wife of an Akron alcoholic. It is interesting to note that, of the 28 early members whose stories appeared in the first edition, 14 maintained their sobriety; of the 14 who relapsed, seven returned to the program at a later date, and seven never regained sobriety.

The 10 stories from New York members were much more difficult to produce, since there was no one there with Jim’s qualifications. When Bill and Hank attempted to edit the stories, they were met with great resistance. “Who were we,” said the writers, “to edit their stories?” “That was a good question, but still we did edit them. The cries of the anguished edited storytellers finally subsided and the story section of the book was finally complete in the latter part of January, 1939.” (Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age, page 164.)

Concerned that the manuscript might contain medical errors (he had imposed on his friend, Dr. Silkworth, to write an introductory, “Doctor’s Opinion) or material that would offend religious leaders, Bill, as a precautionary measure, had 400 copies of the final draft of the manuscript Multilithed and sent to “try the book out on our own membership and on every kind and class of person that has anything to do with drunks.

While waiting for the reviews to come in two controversies developed. Even though Bill had titled the review drafts of the manuscript, Alcoholics Anonymous, that title was unacceptable to many people. The New York and Akron groups had been voting for months on possible titles. While many titles (more than 100) were considered, Akron members favored, The Way Out, while New Yorkers opted for Alcoholics Anonymous. When the members of both groups voted, The Way Out was favored by a bare majority. A check at the Library of Congress revealed that there were already 12 books in print with the title, The Way Out. “We said to ourselves we sure aren’t going to make this book the thirteenth ‘Way Out’.” “We left the title

Alcoholics Anonymous in the copy that went to the printer. That is how we got the title for our book, and that is how our society got its name.” (Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age, page 166.)

The second event has, perhaps, most profoundly affected the eventual acceptance of the Alcoholics Anonymous program of recovery. Throughout the text, and particularly in the Twelve Steps, Bill consistently used the word “God,” and in one place the expression “on our knees” was used. The concept of praying, particularly on one’s knees, was offensive to many early members, particularly to Hank P. and Jim B. Bill refused to budge on the wording of the steps. Hank argued, begged and even threatened.

He was certain the wording of the Twelve Steps would scare off alcoholics by the thousands. Finally, his reasoning prevailed, and compromises were made. “In Step Two we decided to describe God as a ‘Power greater than ourselves.’ In Steps Three and Eleven we inserted the words ‘God as we understood Him.’ From Step Seven we deleted the expression ‘on our knees.’ And, as a lead-in sentence to all the steps we wrote these words: ‘Here are the steps we took which are suggested as a Program of Recovery.’

Commenting on the final changes, Bill said, “God was certainly there in our Steps, but He was now expressed in terms that anybody—anybody at all—could accept and try. Countless A.A.’s have since testified that without this great evidence of liberality they never could have set foot on any path of spiritual progress or even approached us in the first place. It was another one of those providential ten-strikes” (Alcoholics Anonymous, Comes if Age, page 167.)

The first printing of the first edition, 5,000 copies, completed in April, 1939.

**G.S.O. Archives  
welcomes  
comments, notes,  
correspondence,  
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In the Foreword to the first edition Bill states the purpose of his effort with eloquent clarity, "We, of Alcoholics Anonymous, are more than one hundred men and women who have recovered from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body. To show other alcoholics precisely how we have recovered is the main purpose of this book."

It has well served its intended purpose.

## History of Tinker, Fellowship And Old Homestead Groups, Midwest City, Oklahoma

### Ottis D. shares from Midwest City, OK

About

1960: Tinker A.A. was meeting on Tinker Air Base, in a Warehouse across from the base chapel. Family members were included, open meeting. Members were not given keys. On more than one occasion they found themselves locked out. The group moved to a cottage owned by Wickline Methodist Church, at 501 W. Lockheed. In December 1960, the group voted to have separate closed A.A. and Al-Anon meetings. Some members wanted to continue open meetings So a group broke off and began meeting at Fran O.'s house on the same night of the week, Wednesday at 8:00pm, named themselves "The Fellowship Group." Tried to register with NY. as a "Combined Group," told there was no such thing, either open or closed meetings. Tinker Group Moved to 503 W. Lockheed, to cottage with two meeting rooms, had first meeting Dec. 19, 1960. About 1965, Tinker Group voted to change their meeting night to Saturday, so members could go to Wednesday Fellowship too.

1966: Fran became ill so the Fellowship Group moved temporarily to 503, eventually voting to stay there and combine to become "Tinker Fellowship Groups."

1967: Another Al-Anon Group formed Jan. 24, Sunshine Group, Tues. 1:00pm

1969: Tranquility Al-anon Formed (Year Of Tranquility Moon Base) met on Monday at 8:00pm An A.A. Group

started same night, a few months later, making three meetings a week. Within a year they were meeting 7 nights a week, plus Saturday & Sunday morning. We out grew the cottage within the next 5-6 Years.

1980: Scouting for larger meeting place, visited 2909 N Westminster, south end of the building, brick portion, but did not have enough money for first and last month's rent. April 3, Ottis D. and Norma P. signed a lease for a building at 7016 S.E. 15th, Dr. B., Ger. Jack L. located the building, \$200 per month for 3 months. Then \$300 for 7 months to Jan of 1981 bills paid. Increased \$50 voluntarily to help with air conditioning in the Summer Group retired meeting room for Al-Anon, painted walls and ceilings, installed lighted exit sign and battery operated emergency spotlight,

per fire regulations. Dr. B. put in fire extinguishes. First meeting April 5, 1980. In November, learned Dr. was dropping lease, started looking for a new home.

1980: Dec. 17, Charles M. and Ottis D. signed lease for building at 2909 N. Westminster, \$300 per month plus utilities for 2 years to February 1983, with option to renew and negotiate price, owner Leon M. was to maintain outside, group inside. At about same time some local members decided to go back to 503 and began meeting as "Old Homestead Group".

- Charles M., Ottis D., Doug S. and Howard L. put in sheetrock, mudded and taped, and finished walls and ceiling in Al-Anon room. Charles donated 12 sheets of sheetrock. First meeting



*Display Board of founding members, friends, places of early A.A. District 16 Archives, Area 86.*

### Anne L. from Windsor, Ontario reports

*(continued from page 1)*

A.A. symbol, that today's medallions are based on., donated by Bill B., an oldtimer, this was created by a very early member of A.A., Wilf W., who is remembered for establishing some of the first meetings in Essex County and surrounding areas. His sobriety date was October 22, 1943 and he had much contact with Bill Wilson in the early days. Wilf was also an engineer and created this mold that has the slo-

gans and the A.A. letters on.

From Bill B. we also received an old fashioned coffee pot that member used at meetings in 1955.

We also have a book donated many years ago by a long time member. This book, given to Stan R., in 1953 on his 15th year of sobriety, has many autographs of A.A. members who have signed it over the years. In fact, it has become a tradition at our convention to do this. I am enclosing several pictures of the display from our 1996 Convention (*see illustration*).

in new building was Jan. 31, 1981, Howard L. chaired, after a large group of volunteers moved all equipment in the rain, and set up building. The Monday Night Tranquility Al-Anon disbanded and did not make the move. Many special meetings were tried at 2909. Some lasted, some did not. Charles M. started a Beginner's Group on Tuesday nights, April 1983. Later it moved to Wednesday night. Still going.

- Sandy P. started a women's meeting at 5:30pm Wednesdays. Julie started a Big Book Study Meeting Thursday nights, still active. In November of 1982 the group began studying the pos-

sibility of purchasing a building for a clubhouse, using proceeds from a pop machine as seed money. Considered a building fund to buy or build.

- Started a tape meeting of Joe & Charley Big Book tapes on Mondays at 5:30pm.

- November of 1983, purchased present coffee machine.

- April 1984, some members formed a band for Saturday night dances, but disbanded due to landlady's complaints about midnight noise. May 1984, voted to make one person key person for each day, responsible for opening, closing,

etc. Worked well, eventually changed from day to each meeting.

- On December (12th) 1992 moved into church building at 4112 Chester in Spencer. Kenny L. negotiated transaction. Had Christmas dinner there Dec. 20, 1992. Each year we have an anniversary dinner in December as near to the 20th as possible, combined as a Christmas dinner. Some of the early known members of these groups were: Carl S., Woody W., Art F.

- Officer, Al T., George S., Bob N. (eski mo), Bill P., Paul B., Bob N., Jim W., Ottis D.

The world is too big for us, too much is going on, too many crimes, too much violence and excitement. Try as you will, you get behind in the race in spite of yourself. It's a constant strain to keep pace. . . and still, you lose ground. Science empties its discoveries on you so fast that you stagger beneath them in hopeless bewilderment. The political world is news seen rapidly, you're out of breath trying to keep pace with who's in and who's out. Everything is high pressure. Human nature can't endure much more.

*Atlantic Journal*  
*June 16, 1883*  
*Dave S. 6/97*