

# THE TRUDGE

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aaHG's OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

"CARRYING THE MESSAGE"

Issue 3 • March 2024

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## We're Back!



### **We're back and here to stay!**

We heard you loud and clear... You want more of the Trudge, more often. So, we're making changes to how this newsletter is created so that we can meet your needs! The newsletters may be a little shorter in length, but they will be long on content.

In this issue, we will share some personal stories, book recommendations, AA Slogans, and a killer flan recipe... along with some regular features: Step/Tradition/Concept study, Ask an Elder Statesmen, and AA Bookshelf. And no newsletter would be complete without recognizing our 1st Year Sobriety Birthdays.

Our mission is to share the diverse, global journeys our members are having on the road to happiness. We also want to strengthen the bonds that keep us together by sharing our experiences, providing strength, and inspiring hope. We want to highlight the unique, digital world that we live and AA in. And, most importantly, WE want to make sure that you know that no matter where you are, no matter how long you have been with us, you are – and will forever be – part of the aaHG family.

Yours in Service,  
*aaHG Steering Committee*

# AA Step, Tradition & Concept Spotlight

by Anonymous

A.A.’s Twelve Steps are principles for personal recovery. The Twelve Traditions ensure the Unity of the Fellowship. Finally, the Twelve Concepts provide guidance for service in the AA fellowship.

	MAIN IDEA	PRINCIPLE
<b>Step 3:</b> Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.	<i>Real Action Starts With a Decision</i>	Faith
<b>Tradition 3:</b> The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking.	<i>Desire Is All You Need</i>	Membership
<b>Concept 3:</b> To ensure effective leadership, we should endow each element of A.A.—the Conference, the General Service Board and its service corporations, staffs, committees, and executives—with a traditional “Right of Decision.”	<i>Trusted Servants Have a Right of Decision</i>	Trust

## Reflection on the Third Step

When I first put down the drink I was desperate for relief from all the uncomfortable feelings I had in early sobriety. I was finally ready to take suggestions and go through with the steps but I wasn't yet feeling very serene. Having made a decision, I took the The Third Step with my sponsor and it wasn't the spiritual experience I hear some of my fellows talk about. At first I just said the prayer because I was willing to take advice and follow the program as presented in the Big Book. It has since become one of the most important steps in my recovery.

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## 3 AA Slogans to Know & Love

by Liz P., NY

A slogan is a catchy or memorable phrase that captures a key message in just a few words, often using humor, emotion, and personality to emphasize its point. AA is famous for its slogans – having one for practically every occasion!

Here are 3 AA slogans to keep in mind in challenging times:

### Death is not the worst thing, it's just the last thing.

This slogan reminds us of the potential consequences of alcoholism, reminding us of the preciousness of life and encouraging us to seek help before it's too late.

### Don't drink, don't think, and go to meetings.

Instead of returning to the behavior or mental justifications for relapsing, this slogan emphasizes practical steps like attending meetings and being in the recovery community.

### First things first.

This slogan reminds us that we need to handle things in order... and reminds us that everything is secondary to staying sober.

## “A Note”

### A Poem of Higher Powers Dedicated to aaHomegroup by George, SF

*Gazing about the screen to see  
So many present here with me  
Fellowship and camaraderie  
We learn and share the need to be.*

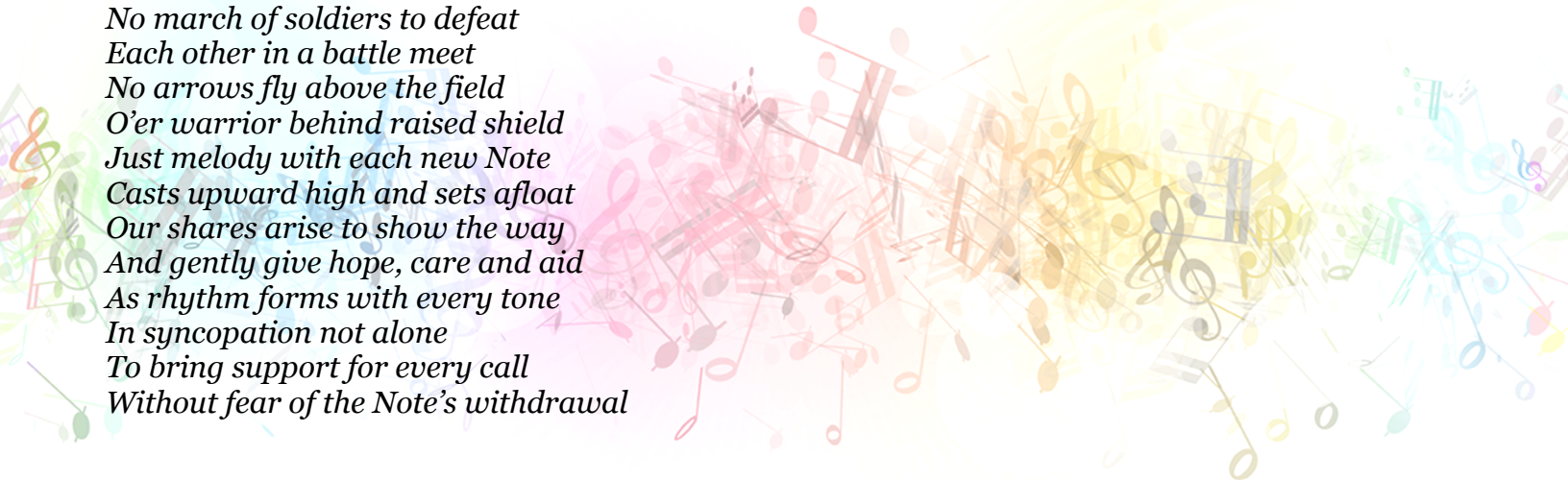
*Whence do we come, what was the choice,  
Why does each contribute a voice  
Giving a call from one to all?  
Community forged not of false  
Kinship nor through family ties  
Together we escape our lies  
With honesty as our command  
A truth to self not by demand  
Search for meaning is neither quest  
Nor victor's race beyond the rest  
We run the course but not alone  
Once having sat up on a throne  
Without bearing absent support  
Behind the ramparts of a fort  
With cannon raised and bridge withdrawn  
From moat to isolate with scorn  
When from that fortress to the sky  
A cry was raised questioning why  
Walls offered up no solace now  
Nor peace to ease a troubled brow*

*A Note of music there does rise  
To sever sorrow's lonely cries  
As yet more tones begin to play  
Becoming a chord's gentle sway  
No march of soldiers to defeat  
Each other in a battle meet  
No arrows fly above the field  
O'er warrior behind raised shield  
Just melody with each new Note  
Casts upward high and sets afloat  
Our shares arise to show the way  
And gently give hope, care and aid  
As rhythm forms with every tone  
In syncopation not alone  
To bring support for every call  
Without fear of the Note's withdrawal*

*So as this song still growing builds  
Faith does embrace against our ills  
What was our single Note now sounds  
As orchestration without bounds*

*Each castle left behind us lies  
With empty walls as we do rise  
With sun above and moon at night  
Each sharing a most tender light  
Illuminating all to be  
Surrounded by this melody  
From the horizon fellows stride  
To tell their tales without vain pride  
Each parted from a lonely fort  
And set sail from a darkened port  
Having now heard that single Note  
Which guided on the steady boat  
From each shore armed without sword  
Each bringing one Note to share forward  
And join the song for all to hear  
With mind and heart becoming clear  
So to all here I bring my Note  
Set on high through the air to float  
And guide past any troubled time  
Ensuring peace be most sublime*

*My Note eternity does see  
And such vision shares with me -  
Each year, each day, and Each New Hour  
My Note is My Higher Power.*





# Ask an Elder Statesperson

by a Member of the Steering Committee

Welcome to the Trudge's new Q&A column! This will be a regular feature and we'd love to answer your burning questions. Please email them to [communications@aahomegroup.org](mailto:communications@aahomegroup.org).

This month, our Elder answers what it means to put principles before personalities.

I am writing this for The Trudge as a reminder to myself...

## What does “principles before personalities” mean to me?

These words are often quoted in Alcoholics Anonymous. They come from the twelfth of our Twelve Traditions:

12. And finally, we of Alcoholics Anonymous believe that the principle of anonymity has an immense spiritual significance. It reminds us that ***we are to place principles before personalities***; that we are actually to practice a genuine humility. This to the end that our great blessings may never spoil us; that we shall forever live in thankful contemplation of Him who presides over us all.

These are words that we repeat again and again. They can lose their meaning if we don't examine them deeply. These words serve both individuals and elected bodies in A.A. These words offer a profound spiritual protection of our common mission to “pass it on.”

“Anonymity” means that we are genuinely humble, that we do not seek fame or power or prestige from our service to A.A. It means that our own personality must get subdued, turned down, and minimized. The anonymity keeps our own ego in check (which protects our sobriety) and it protects A.A. from being used as someone's stepping stone to prominence or financial gain.

What does “principles before personalities” really mean? It means that we should be living the life of a person who practices honesty, compassion, true tolerance, and patience with everyone, whether we like them or not. Putting “principles before personalities” demands that we treat everyone equally. Our Twelfth Step asks us to apply **A.A. principles** in all our affairs; our Twelfth Tradition demands that we apply the **A.A. principles** to our relations with everyone.

## What is an “elder statesperson?”

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, an elder statesperson is “a respected older member of a group or organization; any influential member of a company, group, etc., whose advice is respected.”

In AA, “(t)he elder statesman is the one who sees the wisdom of the group's decision, who holds no resentment over his reduced status, whose judgment, fortified by considerable experience, is sound, and who is willing to sit quietly on the sidelines patiently awaiting developments... Theirs is the quiet opinion, the sure knowledge and humble example that resolve a crisis. When sorely perplexed, the group inevitably turns to them for advice. They become the voice of the group conscience; in fact, these are the true voice of Alcoholics Anonymous. They do not drive by mandate; they lead by example.” – Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, pg. 135.

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Success in life means that we “walk the talk”, that we are honest, sincere and fair in all we do. Practicing **A.A. principles** doesn’t stop with just our friends or when we leave a meeting. It’s for every day, for everyone . . . in all areas of our lives. We should listen to our conscience and do what is right, with a focus on “living” the principles, no matter what situation we are in.

These principles must guide our actions, for everyone in our life. So, in my experience, it always comes down to this: **“We listen to our conscience and do what’s right, no matter who’s involved.”**

Doing what is right gets easier the more we strive to put these principles into our lives. If we do that, aren’t we really changing our own personality? Won’t we be reflecting these divine and noble qualities we seek? What exactly are these qualities?

1) Honesty, 2) Hope, 3) Faith, 4) Courage, 5) Integrity, 6) Willingness, 7) Humility, 8) Love, 9) Discipline, 10) Patience/Perseverance, 11) Awareness, and 12) Service.

Sounds just like our Twelve Steps, doesn’t it? These are the principles that we need to practice in all our affairs, not just as newcomers to A.A. If we sincerely strive to reflect these principles in our own lives, we will automatically stay on our own side of the street. We will avoid anything that could create disunity or distraction from our primary mission.

To me, personally, it all revolves around humility. I desire to be humble and grateful for the gift that was given to me. This gratitude allows me to welcome and cherish anonymity. We are all called upon to “practice a genuine humility,” that we may never be spoiled. We must never take the supreme gifts of sobriety and serenity we have been given, for granted. Let’s read this 12th tradition one more time:

*12. And finally, we of Alcoholics Anonymous believe that the principle of anonymity has an immense spiritual significance. It reminds us that **we are to place principles before personalities**; that we are actually to practice a genuine humility. This to the end that our great blessings may never spoil us; that we shall forever live in thankful contemplation of Him who presides over us all.*



*“Most of us have been unwilling to admit we were real alcoholics”*  
B.B. Ch. 3

# What Can You Do Using the Word Called “Sobriety?”

*by Robert F., DE*

I knew a man who wanted sobriety, but only got ‘slowbriety.’ Sure, he did NOT drink at all, but in his quest for respectability, the poor man got hooked on trying to grab for too much respect too soon. This man did NOT consider the adage of which one of my own sponsors told me of — which is: “Always consider the E.G.O.”, with E.G.O. meaning “Easing God Out.” There are times in 12-step meetings when some speakers [“Me Too!”] want to end up “testing” their knowledge by speaking with so much authority in various ways that others just do not want to listen.

I have been guilty of this “wanting to sound good,” and for the most part it “slows down my own ‘slowbriety’ to a pace where I need a nudge to get back to my true good trudge.” Only when I get my ego out of the way will I truly listen and care to ‘fit in’ graciously. It becomes easy to nudge a higher power out of my life. May the gods forbid!!

It does us little good to go to meetings and not listen to others. Should one even engage

in conversation at all if we are going to only have one-half of a conversation? To do otherwise would just insult others, not to mention put us in a position of not learning anything at all. Why would I listen to someone else at all if I do so only because I am thinking up what I am going to say next? My object should not be one where I have the say-all and be-all, but one where each participant can add bricks to the mortar of mutual communication.

Someone, somewhere — (Could it have been as basic as my mother?) — told me once that ‘conversation is an art’ and that it was like having a circle of people gratefully and graciously passing and handing off a ball to each other each gaining something from the interchange. One can see this on a pitcher’s mound in baseball, in a huddle in football, in a knitting circle, or even at, as Bill Wilson of AA has written, at the international conference table. All people need to have their say at some point. I have also, through the use of the twelve steps, have learned that even after the last vote, the minority in question

has the right to again make their statement. This entire concept of again listening to the ‘minority opinion’ after the last vote sets forth the concept of ‘restorative justice,’ enabling us all to see just where others are when they make their stand.

In the case of 12-step meetings, jointly valued concepts like ‘sobriety’ are considered and discussed with everyone’s input. We all are therefore pitchers and catchers, sometimes intergroup representatives, coffee makers, and even now and then a general service representative. Centers, quarterbacks, halfbacks, guards, tackles, and fullbacks are used too. But what would you do with a HIGHLY jumping TIGHT end? Get him sober I recommend! (Unless the ‘SLOT’ end has a gambling problem). [‘SOT’ end]?

I have no idea of what to do if ANYONE on your team is drinking or using, but to prevent people from falling down and never getting up again it seems necessary to have a cohesion beyond just the ‘winning’ of some sort of game.

*(continued on page 7)*

## AA Step, Tradition & Concept Spotlight

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

The Third Step might sound like something that's done once and for all but I maintain my commitment to recovery by taking this step throughout each and every day. Starting in the morning with the Third Step Prayer, I make a decision to live the AA way of life. The prayer is a kind of pledge that leads me to follow through with the program. I use the prayer throughout each day to recommit and help me continue on the AA path. When I find myself slipping back into negative thinking or behavior, I use the prayer to reset.

One of the greatest blessings in recovery is to be relieved of selfishness and self-centeredness. The Third Step helps me get back on the beam anytime I find myself falling away from AA principles. It's become habit for me to say this prayer first thing in the morning and throughout the day... "God, I offer myself to Thee--to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of life. May I do Thy will always!

## What Can You Do Using the Word Called "Sobriety?"

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6)

Together as a team, we look towards helping individuals find ways within themselves to connect outwardly with their insides to values which help THEM. Others then may also value the constantly rewarding 'UPWARD TRUDGE,' that we all seek! May you sincerely have a light in the dark like the Greek man, Diogenes, who constantly would seek an honest man while he traveled in the dark with his lantern!

So ends this dimly witted illumination!

**I SAVED  
A BUNCH  
OF MONEY BY  
SWITCHING  
TO SOBRIETY**

"Anyone else?"



### NEWCOMER RESOURCES

- New to AA: [https://www.aa.org/assets/en\\_US/p-36\\_isAAforMe.pdf](https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/p-36_isAAforMe.pdf)
- A Newcomer Asks: [https://www.aa.org/assets/en\\_US/p-24\\_anewcomerask.pdf](https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/p-24_anewcomerask.pdf)
- Big Book: <https://www.aa.org/the-big-book>
- Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions: <https://www.aa.org/twelve-steps-twelve-traditions>
- Sponsorship: [https://www.aa.org/assets/en\\_US/p-15\\_Q&AonSpon.pdf](https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/p-15_Q&AonSpon.pdf)



# Recovery Recipe

## Throwdown Flan

by Liz P-H, NY



This is not my mother's usual take to a party flan. That flan came out of a box. This is the flan that my mother would have made regularly if she hadn't been a 15-year-old mom dealing with two kids in a country where she barely spoke the language. This is the flan my mother wanted to bring to parties because when she did everyone's eyes would narrow, and the whispering would start. This is the flan that got her all the evil eye looks because folks knew that it was the best flan. Flan to take first place - hand down, no contest - in any competition. Flan that earned her bragging rights. ***Throwdown flan.***

This is the flan that she made rarely, only for the most special occasions. I learned to make it while looking to find my roots as a Puerto Rican, and now I'm sharing it with you.

If you are intimidated by the word flan, just tell yourself it's a custard. You know what else is a custard? A pumpkin pie. If you've made pumpkin pie, you can make flan. Even if you can't make pumpkin pie, you can totally make this. I promise.

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup Sugar
- ¼ cup hot water
- 6-8 large eggs
- 1 14-oz can sweetened condensed milk
- 2 13-oz cans evaporated milk
- 1 tbsp vanilla extract
- Hot water for the bain-marie

### KITCHEN GEAR

- 2 cup Glass (NOT plastic) measuring cup
- Microwave
- Electric mixer or whisk
- Roasting pan large enough to fit the dish your flan will be in
- Dish for your flan
- Aluminum foil

One moment can change a day,  
One day can change a life and  
One life can change the world.

## 1 | *Making the Caramel Sauce*

What is flan without its coating of delicious caramel sauce? This is the part of flan-making that people find the most difficult. Most people make their caramel sauce over the stovetop which can lead to burning the caramel if you're not paying attention or burning yourself. Preparing the caramel sauce in the microwave eliminates that!

1. **Stir** 1 cup of sugar and 1/4 cup of water in a microwave-safe cup.  
DO NOT USE PLASTIC! (Ask me how I know...)
2. Start to **microwave** the sugar-water mixture on high for 5 minutes.
3. **Watch** the color of the mixture as it microwaves.  
You will need to stop microwaving once the caramel hits an amber/golden color (roughly 4-5 minutes). All microwaves are different, so you might need to go longer, so continue to heat in 30-second bursts. My microwave takes about 6 minutes to get to the right level of caramelization.
4. **Pour** your perfect caramel sauce into the bottom of your flan dish and swirl to cover the bottom — easy peasy, lemon squeezy.

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## 2 | *The Custard*

1. **Preheat** the oven to 350°.
2. **Mix** the eggs by hand or using an electric mixer. (Note: Using 8 eggs results in a firmer flan which is more traditional.)
3. **Add** the condensed milk, evaporated milk, and vanilla.
4. **Blend** smooth but do not overmix.
5. **Pour** the prepared flan mixture into the caramelized flan dish and cover it with aluminum foil.

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## 3 | *Cooking using the bain-marie*

A bain-marie is a large pan containing hot water, into which other smaller pans are set in order to cook food slowly and gently or to keep food warm.

1. **Place** your covered flan mixture in the larger roasting pan.
2. **Pour** hot water into the roasting pan until it comes up to 1/2 the height of the flan dish.
3. **Bake** at 350° for about an hour.  
Test for doneness by inserting a wet toothpick in the center. If the toothpick comes out clean, the flan is done. If the flan does not seem solid in the middle, bake it for another 15-20 minutes and test again.
4. **Remove** the flan from the oven and let it cool down to the touch.
5. **Refrigerate** at least 6 hours before serving.

## Prayer

by Kayla, CA

I had this crazy idea about a month ago – to go back to where it all began. Any sane person would have told me I was taking on a lot (maybe too much), and some did. Me, being ever so willful in nature, insisted that I was ready. I can almost assure you that I would later find most of those "I know what I'm walking back into" declarations to be, well, untrue. And not always in a negative way.

I undersold many of my family members when it came to how we could all come together for our grandma and papa. So when I arrived, I quickly found that prayer was becoming more second nature, mostly because all of the emotions of old were being felt in the present.

I had this moment of clarity. If I wanted a clean slate, and let's be honest, I did; I was going to have to give them one too.

We do what we do until we know better. When we know better, we do better. We treat people well when we're happy, and I can always tell how I feel about myself by how I treat others.

I want to keep putting things into perspective, so I pray a lot — simple things like the 7th step, Serenity, and 3rd step prayers. I'm not savvy when it comes to the book; it's starting to really come alive for me, but it's still new. I just keep in any prayer that acknowledges that I was reacting in the past with BIG stimuli feelings for things that were, at best, mildly annoying when I'm balanced.

So I had to get out of my own way. I do a lot of contrary action; but sometimes I burn out and fall off the beam again. Getting back on has become less painful and much shorter; but the feelings still absolutely come.

I know that no feeling that comes is too big for my God, and he has a really good track record and that prayer will help me through.

## Throwdown Flan

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)

### 4 | Serving

To serve, run a knife around the inside of the flan dish, cover the dish with a plate and carefully flip it over, waiting for the flan to drop on its own. Accept the praise and glory thrown your way!

**"FAITH  
IS TAKING THE  
FIRST STEP  
EVEN WHEN YOU DON'T  
SEE THE WHOLE  
STAIRCASE."**

— MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.





# THE BACKDOOR

## 1ST YEAR SOBRIETY BIRTHDAYS

### December 2023

12/01 Sarah B  
12/11 MJ  
12/13 Connie Lancaster Pa  
12/13 Danielle G.  
12/16 Kristy Marie - SC  
12/19 Robbie S. Columbus, OH  
12/19 Travis

### January 2024

01/03 Charlotte P  
01/03 PGPaula LI NY  
01/10 Mark D - Indianapolis  
01/20 Mari J TX  
01/23 Jess

### February 2024

02/18 Ryan A.  
02/22 Sofia T  
02/22 Jason S.

*If you are about to achieve one year of continuous sobriety, aaHomegroup would like to send you a one year coin. Please send your name and mailing address, along with your sobriety date, in a private message to any of our meeting Hosts or Co-hosts.*

## aaHOMEGROUP ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Group Conscience Meetings

Fri, March 29th @ 8 PM EST  
Sat, April 27th @ 11 AM EST  
Mon, May 27th @ 7 PM EST  
Sat, June 29th @ 12 PM (noon) EST

### Service Training Dates

Mod 1 Sun, March 24th @ 2 PM EST (1 hr)  
Mod 2 Mon, March 25th @ 8 PM EST (~1.5 hrs)  
Mod 1 Fri, April 5th @ 8 PM EST (1 hr)  
Mod 2 Sat, April 6th @ 2 PM EST (~1.5 hrs)  
Mod 1 Sun, April 21st @ 2 PM EST (1 hr)  
Mod 2 Mon, April 22nd @ 8 PM EST (~1.5 hrs)

## OUR NEXT ISSUE: COUNTDOWN TO SUMMER

In addition to submissions of personal stories of ESH, we are looking for articles on

- *Coping Strategies for Mother's Day, Father's Day, and Graduation Celebrations*
- *Your Favorite Sober Hobbies*
- *Staying on the Beam in the Summer Time*

We also welcome questions for our advice columns – “Ask an Elder Statesperson” and “Newcomer Corner.”

Please send your submissions, questions, praise, or complaints to [communications@aaahomegroup.org](mailto:communications@aaahomegroup.org).

We look forward to featuring you in the next newsletter.



**WE SHALL BE WITH YOU IN THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE SPIRIT, AND YOU WILL SURELY MEET SOME OF US AS YOU TRUDGE THE ROAD OF HAPPY DESTINY.**