



Perspective

By JAMIE BUCKINGHAM

I sit alone on a protruding rock watching the reflection of the autumn sun on the frothy whitecaps of Long Island Sound. Across the neck of water is Rye, New York. Behind me, surrounded by towering trees clad in brilliant shades of orange and red, is Wainwright House, a huge stone chateau set amidst manicured gardens and lawns.

This is my second trip to Wainwright House. Four years ago I was here as a guest of Guideposts Magazine to attend their first writer's workshop. This year I am back to teach on the faculty at a similar conference.

Guideposts is an inter-faith magazine published by Norman Vincent Peale in New York. Every other year the magazine holds a writer's contest in which they invite writers (or potential writers) to submit manuscripts. The winners' awards are a week's stay at Wainwright House to attend a writer's workshop conducted by the magazine staff. This year 20 winners have been chosen from the 2,200 applicants.

Last night we all gathered in the big mahogany panelled library to listen as Dr. Peale welcomed the incoming group. A log fire crackled in the fireplace as the noted minister, now in his 70s, spun a few yarns and shared the story of how his dream of an interfaith magazine had finally been achieved.

Dr. Peale's sparkling wit, genuine faith and persuasive manner were much in evidence. It was obvious why he has long been recognized as America's best-known minister. Twenty-five years ago he dreamed of a magazine which would show, by personal experiences, how men and women from all walks of life have found strength, courage and hope through their belief in God. The goal would be to point the way to deeper faith, more creative living.

The magazine started as a small four-page pamphlet mailed out to 15,000 persons on the mailing list of the Marble Collegiate Church in New York. Lenord LeSourd, a young bomber pilot recently discharged from World War II, was hired as editor. Radio commentator Lowell Thomas and Eddie Rickenbacker helped publicize the magazine. Gradually the circulation began to grow until the magazine took on national stature.

Today the magazine is read by more than ten million Americans, and at a time when such major publications as Look and Saturday Evening Post have gone under, Guideposts' subscription rate is still climbing. The secret for success lies in simple stories about people — and God.

It's now late afternoon. Most of the conference students are busy re-writing manuscripts after the first day's assignments, or preparing for dinner. Far to my left, down the sound and through the haze, I can see the Manhattan skyline. To my right a dozen little sailboats sit at anchor, their masts bobbing and swaying in a crazy syncopation as the chilly breeze whips across the water.

But there's a warmth inside me. It's thrilling to know that in America, still, a dream can become a reality. I remember Dr. Peale's words, four years ago, when he dared me to let God do a special thing in my life. That dream, too, is becoming a reality. The day of fulfilled ambitions has not yet passed.