

The NIGHT CAP

Published monthly by the San Antonio Central Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous in the interest of greater unity of members in local and Southwest Texas area groups.

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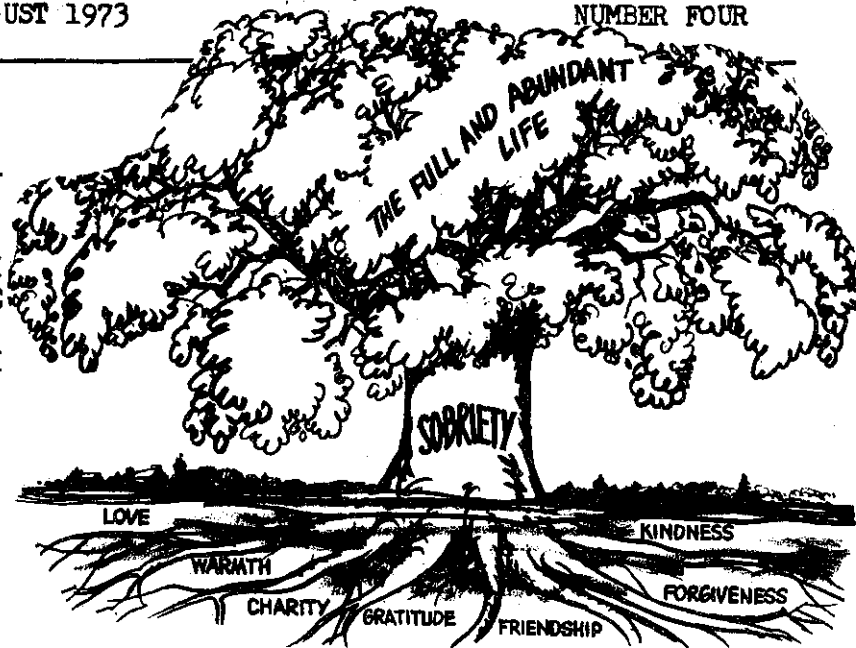
VOLUME TWO

AUGUST 1973

NUMBER FOUR

WE SUBJECTED OURSELVES TO A DRASTIC SELF-APPRAISAL. NOW WE GO OUT TO OUR FELLOWS AND REPAIR THE DAMAGE DONE IN THE PAST. WE ATTEMPT TO SWEEP AWAY THE DEBRIS WHICH HAS ACCUMULATED OUT OF OUR EFFORT TO LIVE ON SELF-WILL AND RUN THE SHOW OURSELVES. IF WE HAVEN'T THE WILL TO DO THIS, WE ASK UNTIL IT COMES. REMEMBER IT WAS AGREED AT THE BEGINNING WE WOULD GO TO ANY LENGTHS FOR VICTORY OVER ALCOHOL.

--ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS



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AN INTERPRETATION OF THE 12 STEPS

STEP EIGHT: MADE A LIST OF ALL PERSONS WE HAD HARMED AND BECAME WILLING TO MAKE AMENDS TO THEM ALL.

STEP NINE: MADE DIRECT AMENDS TO SUCH PEOPLE WHENEVER POSSIBLE, EXCEPT WHEN TO DO SO WOULD INJURE THEM OR OTHERS.

The above is a large order. If we could go to every person who has suffered harm because of our actions, make our amends and begin anew, we might complete it. But- sometimes we lengthen the list instead of shortening it. Too, as new insight and understanding come to us, we become conscious of more harm for which we have been responsible. I feel that our willingness and a sincere desire to make amends suffices in a great many instances, especially if our actions are in line with our thinking. If we are ready to assume responsibility for our mistakes, and give the other person the benefit of the doubt, then we are ready to make amends.

Many times, at the end of a meeting, when we repeat the Lord's Prayer, I have stumbled, faltered and finally stopped at the line which says "Forgive us our trespasses..." because the thought comes to my mind: I don't want that kind of forgiveness; it isn't good enough! I want real forgiveness- whole, complete- not with reservations- not in the manner that I am willing to forgive. And so, I cannot conscientiously and honestly continue with the prayer, because I cannot accept the measure of forgiveness I am willing to measure out; hence the

hesitancy and the faltering. I simply have to wait until I am willing to forgive the way I want forgiveness. In other words, I cannot ask God to do something for me that I am unwilling to do for someone else.

As practicing alcoholics we brought out the worst in other people. Constantly, we placed others on the defensive; aroused antagonism; created conflict and tension. Decisive measures for protection against us were many times necessary. If we fail to understand these things, we are not yet ready to make amends. If we create wrong responses it would be well to examine our own actions. If we think, feel, or react in a manner that implies the other fellow is in the wrong, and invariably run into difficulty, we cannot make amends. If we are quick to take offense or feel WE ALONE are singled out to be maligned, insulted, mistreated, abused and trodden upon, we cannot make amends, because we are not seeing the clear picture.

Most often we are dramatizing our own importance or making a bid for attention. This is the most insidious form of self-pity and completely unrecognizable. Most of us are our own worst enemies... our poorest publicity agent. Through our aggressiveness, our touchiness, our withdrawal, our need of approval, and the desire to be needed and feel important, we over-tax the other guy.

You may ask- what has all this to do with making amends? Well, for one thing it sets off a chain of events whereby it becomes necessary to make more amends, if we are to be at peace with ourselves and other individuals. None of us are perfect and we are going to make errors- honest ones- well-intentioned ones. But we can keep them to a minimum by profiting from past experiences. I do not believe it is a sin or a crime to make an honest mistake; however, I do believe it is absolutely necessary to grant everyone else the same privilege.

Most hurts are not deliberate, but are unintentional, unthinking, bumbling slips of the tongue, and at worst inconsiderate remarks or acts. We are all guilty of these things, and most of the time they stem from dissatisfaction with one's self. We get hurt so we strike out at someone else.

Being aware of these things, being alert, on guard, and gaining in insight and understand-

ing, as well as praying for the same thing for others that we want for ourselves, helps in not having to make as many amends.

Too many times in A.A. we take things for granted. I believe the only time this is allowable is in making our amends, or starting down our list, it should be taken for granted that members of our own family are on top of the list. Being nearest and dearest to us, they are the ones who have suffered most. It is also a fact that they will bear the brunt of our growth and the ensuing turmoil that accompanies it. We should NOT TAKE IT FOR GRANTED, HOWEVER, that they understand and therefore no words are necessary. NO PLACE do we have so adequate a proving-ground as our immediate family circle. No place have our "sins of commission and omission" been so obvious. By the same token, it is the most difficult place to begin. We don't want to "lose face", so to speak. We dislike having to humble ourselves, retract statements, admit we have been wrong. It hurts, so, all too often, we kid ourselves along that they understand; we make excuses and take for granted that our efforts are correctly interpreted.

None of us is a mind-reader; so we must of necessity put these things into words or writing. We should be careful to make amends only for wrongs that have hurt, and not arouse doubt, suspicion or mistrust. Sometimes these wrongs are specific incidents; sometimes they are acts of selfishness, indifference or attitudes that make life unbearable. It is up to us, the offenders, to alleviate the situation.

Often the question arises: "What if the person to whom I owe amends is no longer alive?" I have only one satisfactory answer to that question. The Higher Power will take care of it. Our willingness and desire to make these amends, if it were possible, has to be placed in His hands.

We need only make direct amends whenever possible, be willing to do so when the opportunity presents itself, and do it in such a manner that it will bring peace and contentment. HE will take care of the rest.

--Nedra

SOBRIETY IS A GIFT ** OUR TASK IS TO KEEP IT

GROUP NEWS

GRUPO UNIDAD HI! ALL YOU NICE PEOPLE--
Want to Kick your Heels Off!!!!

Well-- Come to

UNITY FOUNDATION ANNIVERSARY DANCE

Friday, Aug. 31, From 8 to 12 PM, at Mission Room - Convention Center - Music by None other than - Paul Elizondo and his 10 Professors
Admission: \$5.00 per couple. Call Christine F., 533-1785; Pete H., 534-8326 or Joe E., 923-1298.

GRUPOS EN ESPANOL: Fue celebrada la fundación de Alcohólicos Anónimos hace 38 años en la Ciudad de Akron, O. durante los días 29 y 30 de Junio pasado y 1o de Julio presente. El Compañero Pedro H. y un servidor tuvimos la fortuna de asistir a tan grandioso evento. La visita a los lugares históricos como el Hotel Mayflower, the Gate House, la casa del Dr. Bob, el Hospital de St. Thomas y la tumba del Dr. Bob nos dejaron una impresión inolvidable. Conjuntamente se efectuó una convención de grupos de habla hispana la tarde del 30 de Junio; se llevaron a cabo mesas de trabajo en las que se discutieron los temas del Tercer Legado: Recuperación, Unidad y Servicio. Se acordó efectuar la siguiente convención en 1974 en la Ciudad de Washington, DC. Hubo representantes de grupos hispanos de Boston, New Jersey, Philadelphia, Washington, una delegación de Puerto Rico y la Ciudad de San Antonio. Asistieron cerca de 100 miembros.

El día 15 de Julio se llevó el segundo programa de miembros de habla hispana a las prisiones de Darrington y Ramsey. Necesitamos más voluntarios para estos programas que se llevan a cabo cada dos meses; el siguiente viaje será a mediados de Septiembre. Si se interesa en participar, llame a la oficina Central. El 11 de este estuve en Corpus Christi en donde se acabo de formar un grupo en español y se llama Grupo Navarro; se reúnen los miércoles a las 20:00 horas en el salón de la unidad de habitación Navarro. El 13 asistí a una junta en Harlingen y allí me informaron que hace 6 meses que se había formado el grupo: 1901 Spanish Group y que se reúnen los Miércoles también a las 20:00 horas. Los grupos de habla hispana en esta área van aumentando en número, poniendo ayuda al alcance del alcohólico de habla hispana!

El Grupo Unidad y Unity Foundation han organizado un baile para festejar su primer aniversario el 31 de Agosto de 1973 a las

20:00 horas \$5.00 por pareja. Mission Room-Convention Center- orquesta de Paul Elizondo, asista ud. y diviertase.

-Raul M.

SPANISH SPEAKING GROUPS: The 38th Founders Day celebration in Akron, O. this past June 29 and 30 and July 1 was something impressive. Pete H. and I were fortunate to have attended. We visited historic places of A.A.: The Mayflower Hotel, Gate House, Dr. Bob's house, St. Thomas Hospital and Dr. Bob's grave. There was also a convention of Spanish speaking Groups: members representing Boston, New Jersey, Philadelphia, Washington, DC; Chicago, Puerto Rico and San Antonio. Work shops were set up and the three legacies discussed. Washington will host the next convention in 1974. This convention took place June 30. About 100 Spanish speaking members attended.

The second trip with an A.A. program in Spanish to the prison units of Darrington and Ramsey took place this past 15 July; we need more volunteers. If you are interested please call Central Office. These trips are once every two months. The next one will be in the middle of September. A short trip to Corpus Christi and the Valley brought good news, as there is a new Spanish Speaking Group in Corpus Christi called Grupo Navarro; they meet Wednesday nights at the Navarro housing project. There is also one in Harlingen, 1901 Spanish Group, meeting Wednesday nights at 1901 Harrison. It is encouraging to see how these groups are starting to flourish and extending the helping hand to the Spanish speaking alcoholic.

-Raul M.

GROUP 12 will host a Discussion Panel in lieu of the Fundamentals Meeting on Wednesday, Aug. 1 at 8:15 PM at Club 12, 102 Thames. The Discussion, Big Book and Al Anon meetings will be held as usual. "Tex" Barnett will chair the meeting which will present an over-all picture of the help locally available to alcoholics. Agencies included are ASAP, represented by Nancy Brennan; MHA, Robert Pugh; ATP, Phil Edgington; Alcoholic Rehabilitation Center, Elvies Smith; the Haven, Forrest Alexander; NCA, George Kirkland. The discussion will be followed by a Question and Answer period.

The monthly dinner and Bingo will be held Saturday, Aug. 25 at 7 P.M.

(More Group News on Page 8)

BOTTLES AND BONES

Many of my early years were spent in hospitals having knee and back surgery, recovering from it, having heavy casts and braces fitted and in physical therapy sessions. At 16 I was "put back together" except for a limp and with some bitterness, which I hid, I went about the business of living. I finished school, married and had three fine children. All things considered, I felt I was doing rather well with my life.

In 1960 I was in an auto accident which undid all the "bodywork" I had had done. As a result I was in constant and excruciating pain. I went from doctor to doctor, searching for the cause and a treatment that would relieve me. Either the doctors were poor diagnosticians or they felt there was no help and so "made light" of my condition, because none of their prescriptions gave relief although I followed through on the suggestions of each and every one.

Finally one doctor suggested that a drink or two at night might help. It is my personal opinion that doctors ought never recommend "a drink" as helpful to any physical ill, because for me this was the "Go" sign; hurt-and-drink began to go together like bread-and-butter. Until then I had been wary of drinking except at socially acceptable times. I had seen my mother drunk, and although she always had some excuse (physical) for being in such shape, I was embarrassed and angry, and I decided then that I would never drink like that.

Drinking only relieved the pain a little, but it was some help, and I was desperate. It began not to matter whether it was morning or night. A shot for pain, or was it three- or more? My behavior began to change. I was acting terrible and I didn't understand why. I was either laughing madly or raving and ranting at my family, especially my husband. I was blaming him for my pitiful condition and demanding that he do something about it. I became afraid; I could see everything I cared about going down the drain. I tied none of my behavior in with the alcohol I was drinking, but the situation did motivate me to seek out further help.

The next doctor I saw diagnosed my condition properly. He gave me codeine for the pain. The soothing effect of the codeine soon wore off and I began to mix codeine and alcohol. This really had a kick. I remember once lying on the floor, frightened to death that I might fall off. Finally, in 1967, the doctors decided to operate. After seven months in a cast, the constant pain left me. I had not drunk during this time; once a gal in the next bed had offered me a drink, but I had refused, saying alcohol was not good for me. And so I came home looking forward to good times again. My horrible problem was now solved, and I could get on with living. I thought.

It wasn't long before I was offered a drink again. This time I accepted. To my horror I found once I started to drink that I couldn't stop. I couldn't understand why, when I meant to have only one or two, I ended up passing out. I had blackouts and behaved badly without wanting to. This was another kind of horrible pain. I had seen A. A. spots on the television so, in desperation, I called the Central Office.

It was several months later that I had my last drink. Something I heard at a meeting hit home and everything changed. I didn't have to drink- a day at a time- and I was a part of a new and happy world.. the world of Alcoholics Anonymous. I learned that drinking could never make anything better. I now had the twelve tools and the support of the fellowship to face the realities of my own life without a crutch. Best of all, I found God again, a loving and caring God Who was always with me, helping me to do what I could not do for myself.

--Eve M.

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When your head begins to swell your mind stops growing

TIPS ON SPONSORSHIP

How many times did we say, "I can't change anyone except myself," but when someone asked our advice we immediately went into a "hard sell" of our own ideas. In such situations I often felt I was validating my own particular concepts instead of helping the other person work out his own destiny. I asked myself how could I be more effective? Here are some of the conclusions I reached. Maybe they will help you in helping others.

1. It is probably best to give help only when requested. Even then, make it easy for your "baby" to back out. Right timing is important.
2. Under no circumstances should you reveal information given you in confidence. The one you are helping must be made to feel that he or she can trust you.
3. In most cases it is better that the person seeking help begin the talk. His are the questions that must be answered, and it is is hurt that must be relieved.
4. Don't try to be a psychiatrist. Work with the problem which is at hand.
5. Try to feel as he does. Attempt to get in to his problem with him. Look at it from his point of view. Never use such phrases as "This is the way I see it" or "Jack, if I were you, this is what I'd do."
6. Be lavish with your reassurance and support.
7. Sometimes it is hard to talk about what really hurts; it is easier to talk around it. Gently lead the conversation to the hurt and consequently to what is "bugging" the person.
8. Beyond staying sober a day at a time, don't offer him any ready-made solutions. To grow he must define his own goals and find his own ways to reach them.
9. Offer unlimited fellowship, warmth, compassion and understanding, but never offer sympathy.
10. Carry the message, never carry the illness. When all else fails, go back to the Big Book and read the directions.

It may be of some use to understand the mental process brought into play during these talk sessions. Whomever you are trying to help will have some reaction to you, and you can be more helpful if you understand his attitudes. The most common names for these responses are "transference", "resistance", "projection" and "introjection."

Transference is the feeling your man will display toward you. Emotions are a part of any meeting between two people. They are the result of earlier experiences which he for some reason associates with you. They make you either friend or foe; depending on the type of emotional experience he associates with you, he will either show acceptance or hostility. Do not be surprised or disturbed if your man uses you as a temporary target of his hostility.

Probably everyone in A. A. who has tried to help another person knows what resistance is. Most alcoholics have experienced unpleasant events which they wish to forget. In some cases it might even be an extremely pleasant experience which was later viewed with remorse and great mental anguish. Your man will probably resist discussions which threaten to bring these events to mind. Don't push until he is ready.

Projection is a reaction in which the individual assigns to others undesirable traits which he himself has, but cannot tolerate in others. Thus a person who indulges in outright lies becomes highly incensed when he is not told the exact truth. It is easier to censure others than to face the truth about himself.

Introjection is no doubt the most troublesome response you will encounter. It is the tendency of the ego-centered person to find some personal reference in anything you might say. Tell such a person you don't like to discuss politics because people take it too personally and he will probably reply, "I don't."

Regardless of the nature of the confidences, or any skeletons which may be brought out of the closet, your reaction should always be that of a loving friend, who still loves him.

A WRONG Number can be RIGHT, after all ---

When the phone rang for the first time I barely heard it over the noise of my vacuum cleaner. And when a slurred voice asked if Linda was there I was mildly annoyed as I answered, "You must have the wrong number." "I'm sorry," she replied. She really sounded sorry, too.

I was bent over the clothes hamper looking for the mate to my husband's argyle sock half an hour later as the telephone rang again. It shrilled imperatively four or five times before I could reach it. "Hello," I said. A woman asked "Uh- Is-- is this Dr. Brown's office?"

It was the woman who had asked for Linda. Slightly surprised that she had dialled my number again, I said, "No, I'm sorry, it isn't." She hung up, and I sat there by the phone for a few moments wondering how she reached me when attempting to call two different numbers. The tone of her voice bothered me and I muttered "I wish there were something I could do."

My clothes were in the dryer when the phone rang for the third time. I was mentally ready to hear her voice again. "I'm trying to reach my brother," I thought she said. Or was it her mother? She spoke so softly, I couldn't be sure. "Are you sick?" I asked. When she didn't answer I went on, "I'd really like to help you if you're in trouble."

"Yes, I'm sick- sick. So sick. Please help me." She paused, then whispered "I drink too much." She was crying as I said, "I understand. I used to drink the way you do." She listened while I told her how I went to Alcoholics Anonymous for help. I said that now I didn't have to drink anymore, a day at a time. She said her name was Mary and gave me her number, so I called the Central Office and asked them to send someone to visit her.

Two ladies went to see her that afternoon. She was very sick so they helped her admit herself to a hospital.

I may never learn what happens to Mary, so I pray to the Higher Power which I believe guided her fingers on the telephone dial, that she finds the same way of life I have found in A. A.

Thanks to Gym A. of Sonora for sharing her feelings on: GROWTH

Recently I watched a man's "stinking thinking" lead to his getting drunk. Our A. A. program offers such a wonderful way to live without alcohol, but it is the choice of the individual as to whether he accepts the program and enjoys the benefits or chooses to cast it aside for the bottle and a life of destruction.

The program of Alcoholics Anonymous must be lived if it is to work. The Steps and Traditions must be practiced in our daily lives. As a child I had to memorize the multiplication tables so that I could put them to use. Soon the answers became automatic. So it is with the 12 Steps and Traditions. We must apply them to our lives day after day, until they become a part of our thinking and give us solutions to our daily problems such as the multiplication tables give us answers to our math problems.

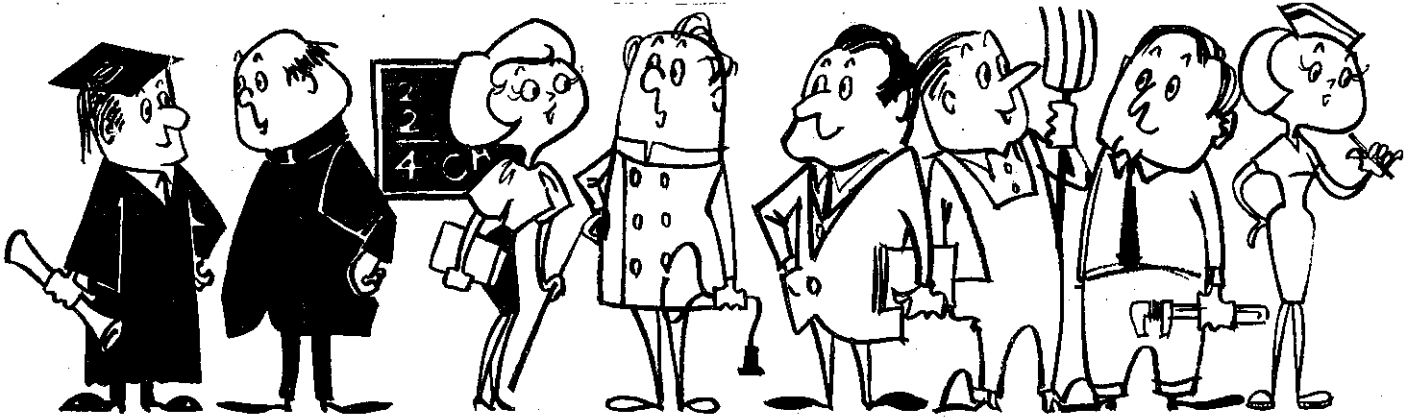
Each day, as we work the program to the best of our ability, we grow spiritually, gaining more understanding of ourselves and our relationship to our Higher Power and our fellow man. Learning to accept life on a daily basis, without alcohol, necessitates that we change our thought patterns; we can no longer indulge in excessive resentments, self pity and fear. We must substitute positive thoughts and actions.

Our sobriety is dependent on our spiritual growth. Taking the letters of this word GROWTH, I find them to mean God Restoring Our Walls to His. My mind must be free of thoughts of self if God's will is to operate in my life. God gives me a choice. I can accept or reject Him. He understands, He cares, He waits. He considers none of us hopeless. If I consider myself hopeless, then I am denying Him and His great love for us. There are times when I feel cut-off from Him. I know these are times of growth for He is always with me.

Peel One Potato at a Time

The reality alcoholics have to face is that we are trying to go all directions at once and as a result, we go nowhere. The alcoholic must face this situation and learn to do

ONE THING AT A TIME



M I T H: ALCOHOLICS ARE SKID ROW BUMS

Tragically, for those afflicted, the word "alcoholic" has become almost synonymous with words like derelict, bum, tramp, degenerate, drunk, etc., in the minds of many people. When the word "alcoholic" is mentioned immediately a mental picture forms of what has been considered as being "typical" -- the skid row habitue.

Practicing ministers, doctors, teachers, business executives, lawyers, even a Rhodes scholar were among the hundreds of alcoholics seen, counseled and treated in one general hospital in Michigan in a single year recently.

There is no such thing as a "typical" alcoholic and if you are looking for an atypical example of a person suffering from the disease alcoholism, the place to look would be skid row. It is estimated that less than three per cent of the total alcoholic population in this country are found on skid rows,

Further, it is believed that no more than fifteen per cent of those living on our nation's skid rows are alcoholics.

If a description of the alcoholic is needed, look around you in your daily working or social situations for clues. Statistically, he is usually a "skilled or semi-skilled person, varying in age between 35 and 50, has been employed in the same place at least seven years, is married, owns his own home, and usually has two or more children" (from "A Basic Outline for a Company Program on Alcoholism" published by the Christopher D. Smithers Foundation, N.Y.) You need not look for him on skid row, he can be found in your own community. He won't look any different than anybody else. As a matter of fact, if you want to see what an alcoholic looks like, peek into the nearest mirror.

--Texas Commission on Alcoholism
Austin, Texas



CENTRAL SERVICE OFFICE NEWS

PUBLIC INFORMATION COMMITTEE is keeping busy during the summer months. Bill S. and Pete H. spoke to a group of 20 people at Comal County Courthouse who were on probation as a result of DWI charges. Bill S. and Doc O. talked at a regional meeting of the Junior Chamber of Commerce in New Braunfels.

Nick St. J. spoke to a Social Action Group at Ft. Sam Houston and to the Windcrest Optimist Club. Jim P. talked at SAC, Abel G. to a postal service group, Lee Ray C. at Lady of the Lake College, and Gary M. at MacArthur High School. La Ree M. spoke to students at Robert E. Lee High School.

YOUR CENTRAL OFFICE

A Sobriety Equation:

1 Buck-A-Month + 1 NIGHTCAP = An informed, happy, sober alcoholic.

Evaluation: Are you in with the winners this month?

Be a Buck-A-Monther

-Jeannie W.

GENERAL SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES

The monthly GSR meeting will be at Club 12 at 7 PM on Sunday, August 11.

MONTHLY INTERGROUP MEETING

The Valley Hi Group will host the Intergroup meeting to be held at Club 12 on Sunday, August 11 at 8:15 PM. Elves S. will talk.

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IN MEMORIAM: Mary Frances M., July 1973
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GROUP NEWS (Cont'd from Page 3)

THE ARC, Southton Road, will feature Hondo Sam Days during the Labor Day Weekend. A 2:30 PM meeting, followed by a Barbeque, will be held Sunday, Sept. 1. A repeat performance will take place on Monday, Sept. 2: meeting at 2:30, Barbeque afterward. Further details will be announced at a later date.

SERENITY GROUP has moved from 1700 Roosevelt to 3823 South Gevers. The first meeting at the new location will be on Friday, August 3, at 8:15 P.M.

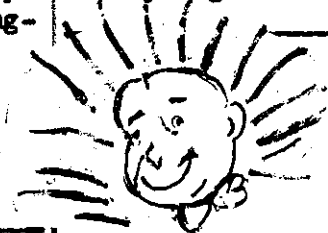
THE GOLIAD GROUP, 104 Avondale, will hold its monthly Barbeque Sunday, August 18, at 6 PM.

24 HOUR GROUP, 24 Hour Club, 1203 Fredericksburg Rd., will have its monthly dinner and Bingo on Sunday, August 26, at 1 PM.

THE HAVEN, 1640 W. Woodlawn, holds its monthly dinner at 1 PM Sunday, August 11, with the Group Meeting at 3 PM. On other Sundays the meeting is at 5 PM. A Discussion Meeting is held on Tuesdays at 8:15 PM.

DOWNTOWN GROUP, Sahara Club, 809 E. Euclid, has Poor Boy Bingo each Saturday at 8 PM. The monthly dinner is on Sunday, August 5, at 1 PM.

PILGRIM GROUP now meets at 2011 N. Alamo on Sunday nights at 8:15 PM.



SMILE WITH US

One of our oldtimers has confessed that he joined the fellowship because he couldn't stay fit as a fiddle by getting tight as a drum.

Did you ever hear about the songwriter who tried to compose a drinking song but couldn't get past the first three bars?

One of the easiest ways to get into trouble is to be right at the wrong time.