

# 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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NUMBER EIGHT

SOBRIETY

honesty  
willingness  
an open mind

MERRY

XMAS



WHY THE URGE TO DRINK AT CHRISTMAS? At this time of year, inside and outside of A.A. circles, the question is asked, "Why celebrate the birth of the Christ with drunkenness?" If we go far enough back into history we realize that this is a dual festival, a combination of pagan harvest rituals at the same time as the religious ones.

For the adult American, perhaps the drinking is a substitute for Santa Claus! Remembering back to my childhood, Christmas was that Magic Time when all my wishes were granted. Everybody loved me and wanted to make me happy on that day because I was a child, and joy and excitement reigned. As I grew into adolescence the cause for excitement changed from Christmas trees to parties. But Magic Time was still there to some degree. But then, as the years went by, somehow the Magic seemed to be slipping away. Things were never quite as wonderful as I wanted them to be. The Child within still expected Santa Claus but he never quite arrived. Of course, since the Child demanded it, excitement there must be. And so I looked for my answer where I always looked for answers -- in the bottle. And as always, instead of answers I found disaster, often a ruined Christmas for myself and those around me.

Slowly and painfully, I have finally come to accept that for me there just ain't no Santa Claus. However, this does not dictate that the Christmas season holds no joy or happiness, but rather that it must be a different kind.

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WHY THE URGE TO DRINK AT CHRISTMAS? (Continued from Page 1)

We have learned in A.A. that the only real satisfactions in life come through giving. If we busy ourselves with plans for making others just a bit happier during the Holiday season, we may somehow avoid that awful, empty feeling of great expectations unfulfilled. We here in A.A. are truly fortunate that there is so much to do in this direction at Christmas. There will be so many activities at the clubs, the State hospital and all the ways in which we try and reach out to other alcoholics. There is work for everyone and everyone is needed. Perhaps, in this way, we may capture a bit of the REAL spirit of Christmas - that of hope and love and sharing. For, in truth, is this not the spirit of A.A. itself?

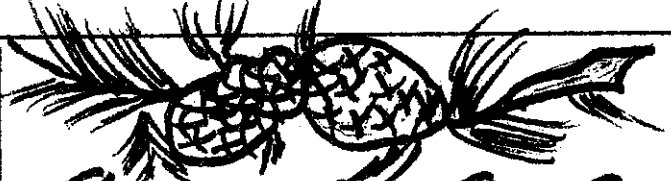
Emilie H.

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 There is a wonderful, mystical law of nature - that the three things we must have in life - happiness, freedom and peace of mind - are always attained by giving them to others.

Author Unknown

A SOBER XMAS IS:

1. Looking at the Christmas tree with 'two eyes' and seeing one tree!
2. Remembering to pick up the turkey, and not having to watch the children eat hamburgers from the drivein!
3. Having 'cheer' in your heart instead of in your glass!
4. Spending Christmas Eve with family and friends, instead of 'good timing it' at a bar!
5. Seeing the Christmas tree through 'rose colored glasses' instead of through red eyes!
6. 'Facing' the boss and fellow employees the day after the office party!
7. Enjoying kicking the kids football around instead of kicking the balls on the tree.
8. Liking what you have, rather than 'wishing' for what you have not!
9. Being awakened on Christmas Day by a member of the family instead of a member of the Sheriff's Department!
10. Getting a kick out of Christmas instead of a kick out of the door.



Annual A. A.  
 Christmas Dance  
 'a winter wonderland'  
 Saturday Dec. 23rd.  
 8:00 Till 12:00  
 Ferner Club 1207th St.  
 Ray Adams  
 Tickets 2.50 each Refreshments  
 Sponsored by  
 the Central  
 office Committee  
 Dorothy C.  
 Clare C.  
 Chairmen  
 y'all Come!

GEMS FROM THE BIG BOOK

"We are not cured of alcoholism, what we are given is a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition. Every day is a day when we must carry the vision of God's will into all of our activities."

The holiday season is the time for us alcoholics to stick close to A.A. Groups and to activity going on there and at the Clubs. No need for that Christmas depression and loneliness! (And other kinds of 'stinking thinking!'). We have a place to go and things to do with our own kind of people! A sober Christmas is full of fun, fellowship and cheer, also service. Just having coffee and chatting with another alcoholic might be the thing that will keep him away from that first drink! It might also be keeping you away from it! So come to the meetings and come to the parties!

is a little early to get all the holiday events - even all the details, but The Night Cap has to go to press, so listen when you attend meetings for announcements of other parties.



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A.A. HOLIDAY CHEER

ALPHA E. 111 Queens Crescent - Invites you to stop in for coffee and conversation during the holidays.

CLUB 12, 102 Thames - Open house nightly from Christmas Eve through New Years Day. Party - New Years Eve.

SAHARA CLUB, 809 E. Euclid - Open House on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

SASH GROUP A.A. CHRISTMAS PARTY, Hospital Area So. Presa St. - Monday, December 18 at 7:00. A really big occasion for alcoholic patients that must spend Christmas in the hospital! The Groups furnish the food and presents, but don't get that to make it a real success, the group membership is also needed.

THE HAVEN GROUP, 1640 W. Woodlawn - From 8:00 New Years Eve until 6:00 New Years morning, an A.A. meeting. The A.A. sessions will last one (Continued following column)

A.A. HOLIDAY CHEER

(Continued from preceding column)

hour with 30 minutes intermission between. This type meeting has gone over great in other cities: COME help this one be a success too.

TWENTY-FOUR HOUR SERVICE GROUP, 1640 W. Woodlawn - Party to be announced.

UNITY CLUB, 311 N.W. 24th St. - Invites you to stop by during Christmas week.

BIRTHDAY PARTIES TOO

AUDUBON GROUP - Saturday night, December 9 at 7:00. Tamales and coffee will be furnished; bring a covered dish and COME help the Group celebrate its 2nd Birthday. An A.A. and Al-Anon meeting will follow; however if you plan to attend another meeting- come to Audubon first for food and fellowship. They want you at the party even if you have to eat and run! Audubon meets at 315 So. Audubon, One block off San Pedro.

LAUREL HEIGHTS GROUP - Semi-annual Group Member Birthday party! (Laurel Heights celebrates birthdays in June and December). December 10th at 5:00 P.M. Speakers: Bishop Everett H. Jones, Chris W. and Jack C. Refreshments. Laurel Heights meets at Christ Church, 301 W. Russell.

AND MORE CHEER!

ALCOHOLIC REHABILITATION CENTER, Southton Rd. - Christmas Party following regular Frontier Group A.A. meeting, Dec. 19. Refreshments for all. Gifts for A.R.C. residents.

A.A. is not a key to Heaven.  
Neither will it keep you from going to hell.  
But it will keep you sober long enough to  
let you make up your mind which way you  
would like to go.

Big Book John H.

GRUPO UNIDAD

There were visiting A.A. brethren in town, so Grupo Unidad called a special meeting on Sunday, November 5, that they might share with the Group their experiences, hopes and strengths. Elijo from Laredo chaired the meeting. Jose F. from Mexico City talked as did Raul H. and Jose G. both from Laredo. Their messages were heart-warming and inspiring and will long be remembered by the Group. It was indeed a very special meeting!

Herbert P., G.S.R., is getting names of members willing to take the time to speak in surrounding towns. The idea is to build morale and give strength to the Spanish speaking A.A.'s who do not have the advantage of bi-lingual groups as we do in San Antonio. Mike Y. who now lives in Lockhart asked that we bring a meeting there. Rudy C.F., Joe G., Joe A., Rudy S.F., and Richard S. went on November 6. It was a wonderfully successful venture and we hope to do more of this soon.

Grupo Unidad wants to thank each and every A.A. who has made it possible to have another (and much needed) Spanish Group in San Antonio. God goes with us.

Pete H.

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"Step 12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs."

A.A. Big Book

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"And having thus chosen our course without guile, and with pure purpose, let us renew our trust in (the justice of) God, and go forward without fear, and with manly hearts."

A. Lincoln

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We are responsible for effort only - results lie in other hands.

Unknown

SASH A.A. GROUP

Back in 1947 a small group of sober and grateful alcoholics, charter members of the first Alcoholics Anonymous group of San Antonio, introduced A.A. to alcoholic patients at the San Antonio State Hospital. Through the cooperation of the doctors and administrative officials of the hospital and A.A. spokesmen, arrangements were made for a suitable time and place for meetings to be held once a week at the hospital.

The A.A. members, initially three men and two women, gave of themselves - they told patients about their own drinking experiences, how they found A.A. and a measure of faith and happiness. Above all, they shared their experience, hope and enthusiasm.

By 1948 State Hospital meetings were an established and welcome routine. Patients there had formed their own group and held meetings among themselves in addition to the San Antonio sponsored group meetings.

Basically, the A.A. talks to the patients emphasized the fact that alcoholism is a disease, that there is no "cure" -- but that if an alcoholic so desired he could, by trying to follow the recommended steps of recovery, learn to live a sober and productive life.

Today there is a special, separate ward for alcoholic suffers at the State Hospital. Dedicated San Antonio A.A. members continue to work and carry the message. The transition from hospital life (security) back to society (risk) remains critical. But if a patient is determined he wants sobriety more than he wants to drink, A.A. help is now plentiful.

Ann E.

REMEMBER TO BRING PRESENTS FOR THE STATE HOSPITAL A.A. CHRISTMAS PARTY TO BE HELD...DEC.18 AT 7:00. PLEASE WRAP THEM.

WONDERFUL WORLD OF SOBRIETY MEANS EVERYTHING TO ME. It is mine to have as long as I want it bad enough to go to any lengths.

I have been down that long lonely road of self-destruction with alcohol as my partner. I know what it is like to be a walking zombie - a blob of nothing. Existing and never dreaming a better life could be mine for the asking. I know the horror of experiencing the painful thoughts, that of vacillating between sanity and insanity. The strong body and reasonably good mind that was to become an empty shell. I was insulting my God. Breaking His laws of nature, by living improperly. Breaking His laws by not living a spiritual life that had been mine - the way I was reared as a child. I did this to myself willfully. I drank from age 17 to 56.

My third and final trip to the hospital was of no real value in this sense. I was not drinking but was given pills every few hours. Bud E., an old friend, took me to several A.A. meetings but my mind was incapable of comprehension. The pills had deadened my brain.

Bud E. told me about Addie A. and The Haven in Tulsa. I did not realize what I was getting into. It turned out to be the greatest thing that could have happened to me. The first weeks were dreadful. I was unable to sleep, simply had to choke every bite of food down my throat. I couldn't remember things, and I had no power of concentration. I thought the dreadful fears, in the pit of my stomach, would never leave me. I remember praying almost constantly. I believed in God and the power of prayer - my only hope and strength. This is the basis of my recovery.

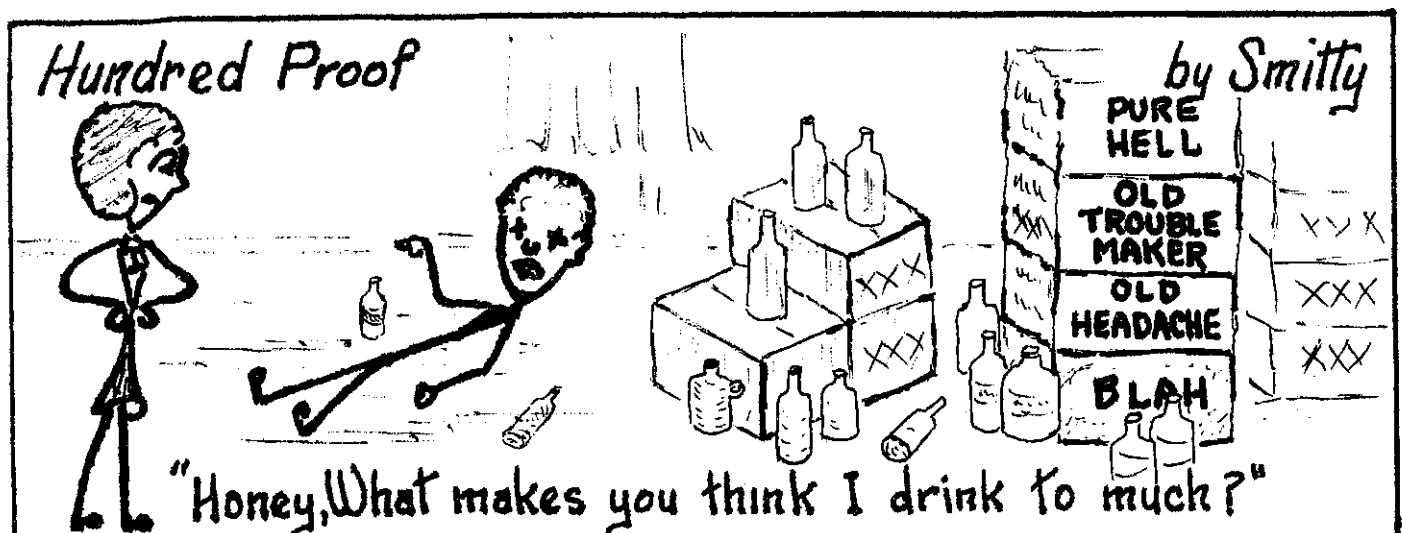
Addie A., the Director of The Haven, taught us the 12 Steps. She gave of herself, unstintingly, each day to help us find a new and finer way of life. Addie asked me to stay beyond the six week period and I spent ten weeks, in all, with her.

As my mind became more poised my attitude changed. I became willing to try. There are three A's I use - attitude, action and adjustment. Change is a constant - therefore my attitudes, actions and adjustments are always changing. In the two and a half years I have been in A.A. I have made some progress-though slow and gradual. I am in a growing process, a state of mind I love. I am free at last from the alcohol. I know I can maintain this wonderful sobriety by going to meetings and living the 12 Steps, each day to the best of my ability. I thank God every day for my life, for A.A. and the many gracious people who have done so much to help me.

A.A., to me, is basic christianity in its purest form.

I am learning to cope, and I am no longer afraid to face reality. God gives me the strength to do this. He provides for my needs, not necessarily my wants. I am, indeed, grateful. I am very comfortable and extremely happy to be so fortunate. My sobriety is the answer and solution to my problems. It is the only way I want to live now.

Lee Ray C.



AREA NEWSTWENTY-SECOND ANNUAL SOUTHWEST TEXAS AREA CONFERENCE

Congratulations to our friends in the south-most part of the United States - the Magic Rio Grande Valley - for the fine conference they hosted October 27, 28 and 29 at the Fort Brown Motor Hotel, Brownsville. It was the first Southwest Texas Area Conference ever held in the Valley, but it surely won't be the last. There were about 220 registered.

Brothers and sisters of the Valley Groups went all out to make this a successful and outstanding conference. A few of those dedicated members were Al P., Chairman, Moe H., Co-Chairman, Stella, Secretary, John H., Area Committee member, and Elizabeth H., Al-Anon Chairman. Of course, there were many more.

In the spirit of the fellowship, the Valley folks graciously insisted on giving credit to our Area officers - Elves S., Delegate, Tony F., Alternate Delegate, Carl H., Area Chairman, Margaret H., Area Secretary, and Christi H., District I Committee Member, for their suggestions and assistance in planning and operating the conference.

Naturally, there was the heart-warming fellowship, the reunion with friends from other places, plus the making of new friends. The good ole A.A. "huggin' and kissin'" was all over everywhere, too.

One of the highlights was the Friday afternoon meeting put on by members from Monterrey, Mexico. Paul chaired the session as Sylvia M. and her Al-Anon husband, Pete, related interesting stories of the effect of the alcohol problem on both sides of the family. They shared their steps towards solution of the problem in the fellowship.

Sylvia and Pete have done yeoman work in the formation and continuing activities of three groups in Monterrey. For the first time in A.A.'s history, it appears the movement is on firm footing in Monterrey, and that it will continue to grow there.

Inspiring messages also were given to us by the other speakers: La Roye G., Austin, Raul M. and Jeanne W., San Antonio, Jim F., Mission, Al-Anon Sue S., Shreveport, Big John C., Brownwood  
(Continued following column)

AREA NEWSTWENTY-SECOND ANNUAL SOUTHWEST TEXAS AREA CONFERENCE (Continued from preceding column)

and Past Delegate Phil S., Corpus Christi.

The Delegate's Meeting, on Saturday morning, was chaired by Gene D. substituting for the ailing Carl H. A report on the General Service Conference in New York last April, and his visit to Stepping Stones, home of Lois and our lamented Bill Wilson, was given by Elves S., Delegate. Area activities were reported by Margaret H. (some of you remember her as Margaret L.) who was honeymooning at Fort Brown following her October 22nd marriage to Bill H. of San Antonio.

The Night Cap, monthly bulletin of the San Antonio Central Service Office, was circulated and discussed. It was pointed out that the publication is intended for all groups in the Southwest Texas Area and all groups should be receiving it. Additionally, all groups and Area committee members were encouraged to send in news stories about their groups and districts. Beth J. is Editorial Chairman for The Night Cap.

Groups were encouraged, also, to use the services of the San Antonio Central Service Office, which was set up originally to serve the entire Southwest Texas Area. Services of the Central Service Office include the sale of A.A. approved literature.

Many of the members and their families went across the bridge (right at the entrance of the motel) into Matamorras, Mexico for shopping, eating and sightseeing. Despite all the cantinas, the program held firm, and there were no casualties - another ribbon of gratitude for our way of life.

Next year's Area Conference was bid in by Skeeter S. from Port Lavaca, and it will be held in Victoria. See you there and then!

Merle D.

NEW GROUP - In District 5 - Named 'The Fort Hood Young People's A.A. Group' located at Fort Hood, Texas. Alfred D., G.S.R., wrote the Central Service Office to notify it of its inception and to ask to be put on The Night Cap mailing list.

MEETING CHANGE SCHEDULE

rent Meeting Directory dated May, 1972 is available from Groups or the Central Service Office and is changed as follows:

Ft.Sam Houston Group: Alternating Open Speaker, Open Discussion meetings are held Monday, 8:15 P.M.

Closed Discussion meetings are held Thursday, 8:15 P.M.

Al-Anon meetings are held Thursday, 8:15 P.M.

Welcome Group: Open Discussion meetings are held Friday, 8:15 P.M. Birthday last Friday in the month, Open Meeting.

Grupo Unidad: New Group holding Open Speaker meetings, 8:15 P.M., Saturday, 311 N.W. 24th St.

Pilgrim Group: Wednesday night meetings discontinued. Holding Open Discussion meetings Sunday, 8:15 P.M.

Brees: New Group holding Closed Discussion meetings Thursday, 8:15 P.M., Sunset Ridge Church of Christ, 2367 Brees, Birthday last Thursday in month, Open Meeting.

Al-Anon meetings are held Thursday, 8:15 P.M.

Broadway: New Group holding Open Discussion meetings, Saturday, 8:15 P.M., Christ Lutheran Church, 6720 Broadway

Northeast: New Group holding Open Discussion meetings, Saturday, 8:15 P.M., John Calvin Presbyterian Church, 8102 Midcrown

Serenity: Closed Discussion meetings are held on Tuesday, 7:00 P.M. and Open Speaker meetings are held on Friday, 8:15 P.M.

Northwest: Closed Discussion meetings are held Monday, 8:15 P.M.

Al-Anon meetings are held Monday, 8:15 P.M.

GENERAL SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES

Meeting will be held Sunday, December 10, 7:00 P.M. at Club 12

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MONTHLY INTERGROUP MEETING

Morgan G., local resident with 16 yrs. sobriety will speak at the meeting to be held at Club 12, Sunday, December 10, 8:15 P.M. The Santa Fe Group will host the meeting, chaired by Raul M.

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HOSTS FOR FRONTIER GROUP MEETING

Harmony Group will host December Saturday night meetings of the Frontier Group held at 8:15 P.M. at the Alcoholic Rehabilitation Center on Southton Rd.

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IN MEMORIAM

Gladys P., an old timer died November 18, 1972.

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FINANCE CHAIRMAN APPOINTED

The Board of the Central Service Office Committee announces the appointment of Marc F. as Chairman of the Finance Committee and wishes to thank Bill S. for the services he rendered to the Central Service Office in this capacity the past year.

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PUBLIC INFORMATION ACTIVITIES

On November 17, Don H. and Ed C. spoke to Physical Ed. classes at MacArthur High School. Jack C. spoke to the B'nai B'rith Youth Group.

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THE REWARDS ARE ALWAYS AT THE  
END OF THE ROAD. IT PAYS TO GO  
ALL THE WAY.

Unknown

EIGHTEENTH ANNIVERSARY

Blue Horizon Group will be held Sunday, Dec. 3, 1:00 P.M. Goree Unit, Texas Department of Corrections, Huntsville, Texas. Location: Four miles south of Huntsville on Interstate Hwy.45. Group lists following Essentials: 1. Attendance restricted to members of A.A. and their wives or husbands. 2. No former inmates, please 3. Registration at 12:30, sharp and asks that this information be posted on bulletin boards and announced at meetings.

AL-ANON NEWS

The Valley Hi Al-Anon Group would like everyone to know that there is a baby-sitter provided every Tuesday night for anyone that is A.A. or Al-Anon that cannot attend meetings because of small children. We hope that they will feel free to attend the meetings and leave the children provided for. The Valley-Hi Group meets at the Marbach Christian Church. There is also an Al-Ateen meeting each Tuesday. So come and BRING THE WHOLE FAMILY!!

A.R.C. BOARD MEETING

The A.R.C. Board has asked that members of A.A. be advised of the Annual Alcoholic Rehabilitation Center Board Meeting to be held at A.R.C.#1 2:30 P.M., Dec.10 and to let them know that all persons interested in the continued operation of the A.R.C. are invited to attend this meeting. There will be an A.A. Meeting with Ed C. Speaker. Coffee and Cookies.

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MIRTH IS GOOD MEDICINE. Everybody ought to bathe in it. Grim care, moroseness, anxiety - all this rust of life ought to be scoured off by the oil of mirth. It is better than emery. Every man ought to rub himself with it.

Henry Ward Beecher



... and A Nappy  
New Year