

The NIGHT CAP

SAN ANTONIO AREA A A NEWS

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NUMBER FIVE

HIGHLAND PARK GROUP FORMS

Adding to the growing list of neighborhood groups, members of A. A. in that vicinity gathered in the home of Paul B. on Wednesday, January 17th, to form the Highland Park Group. A nucleus of both old and new A. A.s who will be group members, as well as a number of enthusiastic well-wishers from all over town, were present to get the organization off to a good start.

The group will meet in the homes of members each Wednesday night until a central meeting place can be obtained.

"Shorty" T. was selected as secretary, and Paul B. will be Central Committee representative.

In our mind's eye, we can envision a day

when these neighborhood groups will dot the whole city, a day when the new member, no matter how timid or skeptical or ill, can be steered to a meeting near his home where he can become acquainted with A. A. Then, as he gains knowledge of his problem and himself, he can venture forth to select a club or another group as he chooses.

We wonder how many of our ilk whom we were never successful in getting across town to a meeting might have been saved from further difficulty if there had been available a neighborhood group, where they could sit down quietly with a group of fellow-alcoholics to consider their problem.

Our neighborhood groups are concrete evidence of a maturing A.A. in San Antonio. May they continue to increase!

GROUP 12 HAS FELLOWSHIP MEETING

A jam-packed Club 12 on Friday, January 26th, was the result of invitations extended by Group 12 to their City-Wide Fellowship Meeting.

The meeting was Cliff H.'s idea and it was a complete success as members from every group in town who attended have been attesting ever since.

Five minute speakers from all groups participated to complete a well-rounded program.

We need more occasions of this kind.

Thanks to Cliff and Group 12 for giving us an opportunity to get together as a united San Antonio A. A.

I expect to pass through life but once.
--If therefore, there be any kindness I can show, or any good thing I can do to any fellow-being, let me do it now, and not defer or neglect it, as I shall not pass this way again.
-Penn.

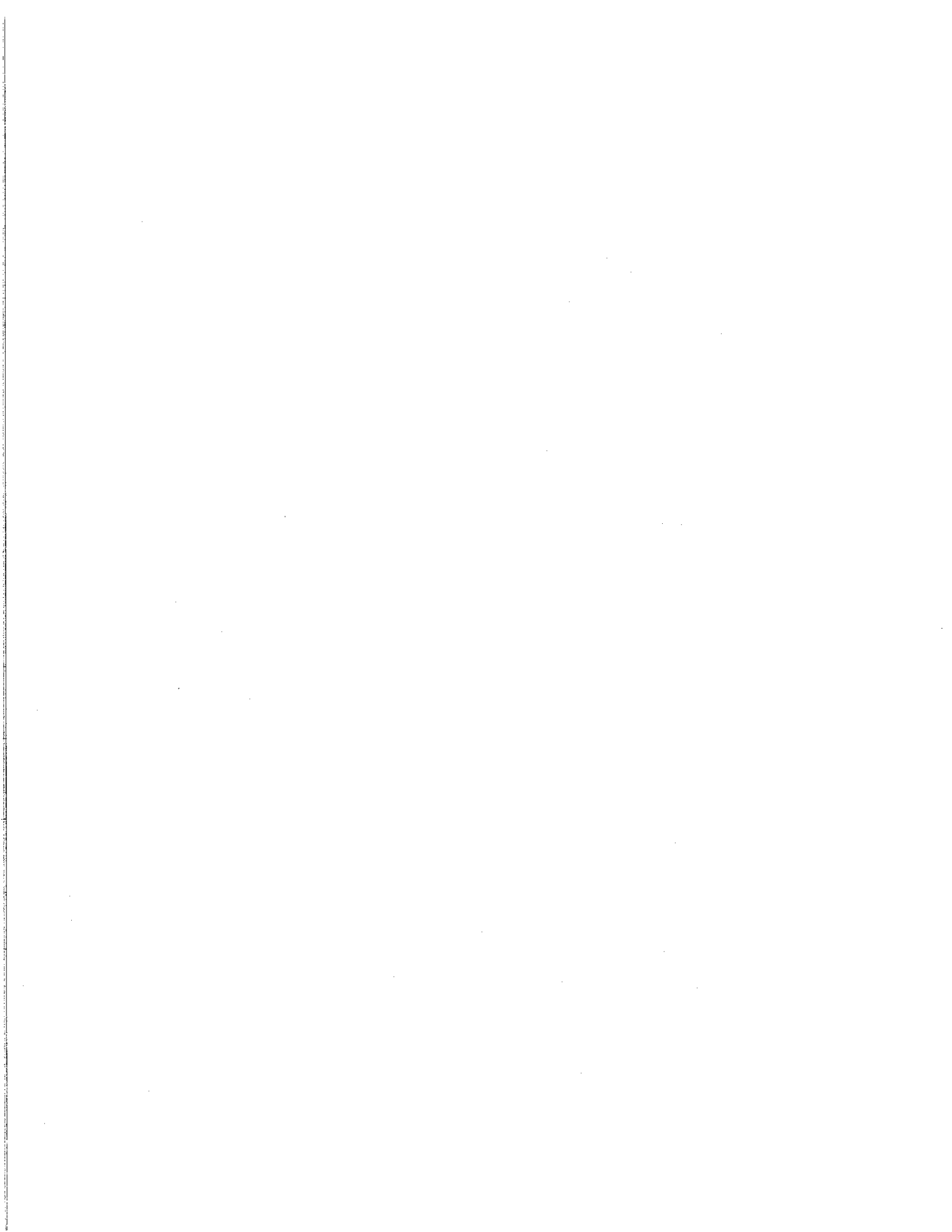
ORLO Q. VISITS NEW YORK OFFICE

Col. Orlo Q. has just returned from New York and reports a pleasant visit in the A. A. Central Office there.

He brings the heartening news that those who view the whole picture feel that our local A. A. is progressing nicely and is doing a good job.

Ruth B., National Secretary, assured him that she will be here to participate in our Regional Conference to be held here on October 12 - 14. A cherished "maybe" is the hope that Bill W. will also be able to be with us.

Orlo also visited a Washington, D.C. Club, where he made a talk.



AN A. A. VIEWS THE NEW YEAR

The New Year is here, and I suppose many of us in A. A. have made many resolutions. Of course, this year we are faced with a chaotic world condition and are living under high nervous tension. A great many of us will be losing members of our family to the service, and I think it is well at this time that we thank God for the A. A. Program, emphasizing the last three steps, which in my opinion, provide insurance for the continuance of our sobriety. The daily inventory is going to be a necessity in order to provide a check-rein on nervous systems and to keep resentments and hatred from becoming a habit with us.

We know that God has performed one miracle in giving us our sobriety because all of us had tried every other possible means to stop drinking and failed. It was not until we learned of the A. A. Way of Life and of the Power Greater Than Ourselves that we became dry. The 11th Step -- "Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God AS WE UNDERSTAND HIM, praying only for the knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out," will have to be our present strength in these times of trouble -- or shall we, as alcoholics, say our "crutch", for that is what the bottle represented in our drinking days.

Let's look at the 11th Step more closely. We are told to improve our conscious contact with the Power. In doing this, we must also increase our faith in His will. We know that God has mysterious ways his wonders to perform. We know that he is constantly working for the good although many times we have not the spiritual perceptiveness to understand. He can only use men as his implements and sometimes they are not of the best quality.

In the Lord's Prayer, which we A.A.'s use at the close of every one of our meetings, we ask that His Kingdom come here on earth. It is up to each of us to ponder on that, realizing that inasmuch as we have been granted the miracle of sobriety by asking His help, we

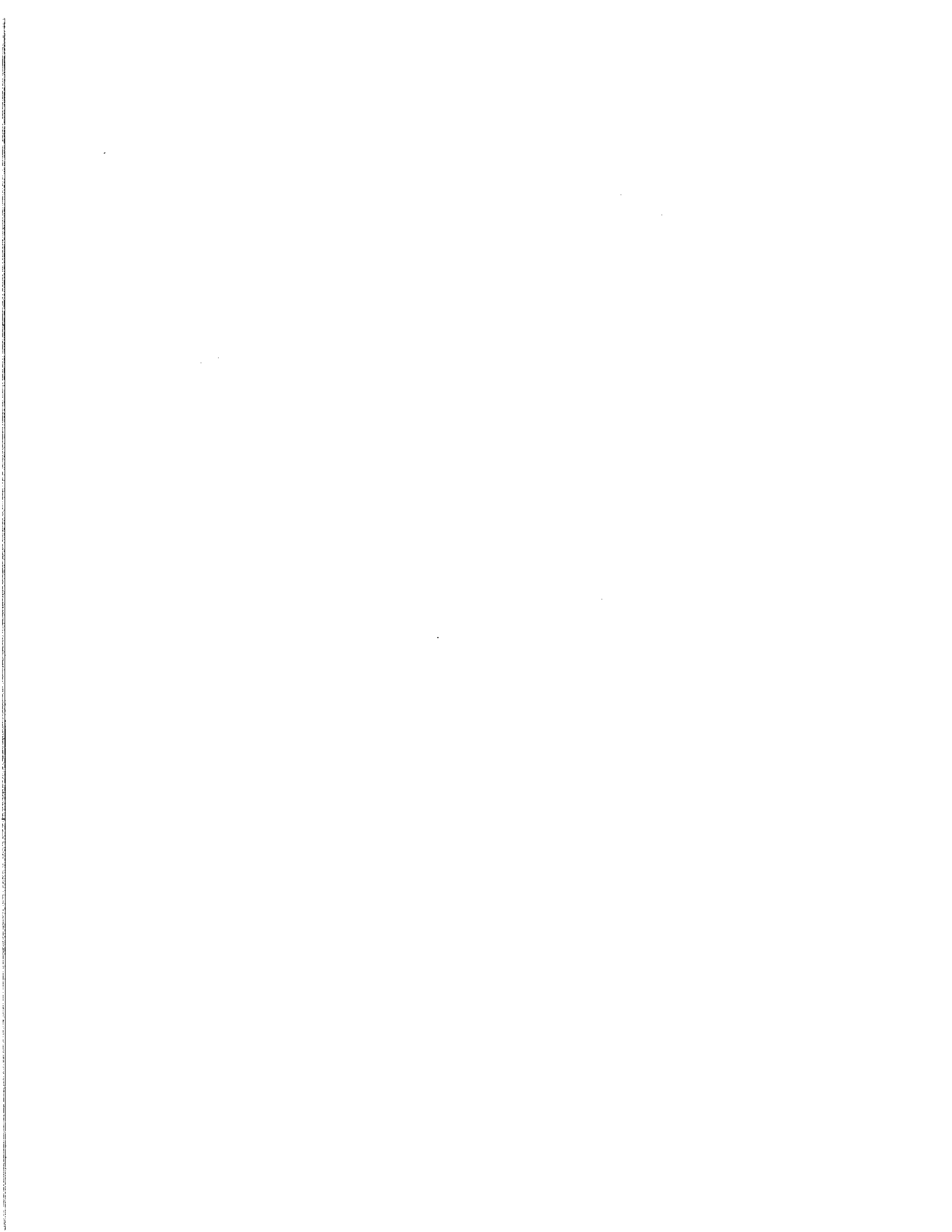
must also sincerely desire that this portion of the prayer become a reality. Through the hours of doubt, sorrow and worry about our loved ones, and our country's condition, we must believe that he will bring about a second miracle. We may not see it in our time, but I personally believe, and I mean strongly believe, that will be the ultimate goal of His will for us. With each individual doing his part, believing in the power of prayer, making the necessary sacrifices, willingly and prayerfully, we should be able, with His help, to stand the strain.

We are going to have a great deal of 12th Step work to do as many new alcoholics will be a by-product of the tension. We cannot let up on this work. We will need to do it more than ever to keep our own sobriety. Now, I know in my own case -- and of course, that is the only person I can speak for -- that without giving help to other sick alcoholics and trying to understand their problems, I could not have peace of mind. It is in giving of ourselves to others that we receive comfort.

I wonder how many of us with all of the many temptations of "get-rich-quick" schemes and war profits are going to be able to accomplish the last part of the 12th Step, "practice these principles in all our affairs". To me that is such an important thing to all of us for if in any way we deviate from that practice, we are treading on dangerous ground. Our conscience will trouble us, we will begin to rationalize, resentments will begin to creep in; and if some scheme should fail, self pity would predominate and we would reach for the bottle.

Let us not fall into this trap, but remember that we are alcoholics and that we must practice God's will -- doing unto others only what we want others to do unto us. Our sobriety must come first. Without it, we would have nothing.

Dorothy H.



A NINE YEAR MEMBER LOOKS AT A. A.

To stop and review nine wonderful years in Alcoholics Anonymous can have only one first result -- to say sincerely, "Lord, we do give Thee thanks for the abundance that is ours!"

In our humble gratitude, however, we cannot help but think sorrowfully of those who have come to us for help and somehow failed to find it. Whether the fault lay with them, or with the human frailties of A. A. members, they have gone back to that black abyss of the alcoholic merry-go-round. Yet nine years have shown that we need not wholly despair for these -- some who failed at first have returned later to live the A. A. life; some, in their very failure, have been a powerful object lesson for those of us who can always profit by the reminder that we live just one drink away from tragedy.

Nine years have shown, too, the dangers of over-enthusiasm, and the incredible value of the "easy does it" philosophy. Early in my A. A. career, when I first watched an A. A. group develop dissension and finally split into two separate groups, I felt that the entire A. A. program had crumbled and that all was lost. Later, in talking with Founder Bill, I discovered that he had reacted the same way to a similar situation. Time taught us both that such splits are an inevitable result of growth and maturity and are almost always a good and productive thing.

The newcomer in A. A. is most apt to fall into the understandable error of too much enthusiasm. Because this wonderful way of life seems to him the answer to all problems, he cannot rest until everyone he knows embraces it as thoroughly as has he himself. But A. A. cannot be forced upon unwilling recipients, no matter how strongly we may recognize their need. In nine years I have learned that we can only display the gift we possess to other alcoholics and wait with patience until they are

ready to accept it. We cannot high-pressure anyone into our way of life; we cannot "save" them through the exciting methods of the old-time evangelists; we can only realize that "easy does it" and be ever ready to extend our help where it is wanted.

One other pitfall waiting for the new member is the frequent tendency to devote all his life to A. A., its people and its work. Alcoholics are extremists in everything they touch, and this extreme can be as costly as the other extremes with which we have victimized ourselves and our families. True enough, A. A. is and should be the most important factor of any alcoholic's new life, but it should not be the only factor. The wise A. A. member will develop, in addition to his A. A. companions, friends who never heard of A. A. He will find new recreations and try to build a good wholesome social life in addition to his A. A. although A. A. should and must always come first.

My nine years in A. A. have given me the most wonderful friends I have ever known. These happy people, who have for years been at war with themselves and have at last won the battle they waged, have shared with me some marvelous experiences. And, no matter in what city I may be, I know that I am never alone and friendless, for the companionship and understanding of A. A. is now available almost all over the world. This great network of restored and revitalized people is truly a modern miracle.

Nine years is a long time. I never worked the A. A. plan with any definite intention to be dry for nine years; I have simply gone this day without a drink. And the days have brought their own reward. Still I know, whenever I see some unfortunate soul who has not made the program, that "there, but for the grace of God, go I!"

- Jim S.

THE BISHOP'S MESSAGE
OUR FINEST HOURS

Winston Churchill has created many vivid phrases but none more striking than his call to Britain in 1940 to make of that crisis the nation's "finest hour". It suggests a question worth consideration by all of us: "What are our finest hours? What are the moments of illumination most worthy of our trust and confidence? What are the mountain peaks of experience from which we see farthest into life's meaning and purpose?"

I am sure that one answer is that life's finest hours come when we refuse to evade or escape life's problems -- when we walk squarely up to our difficulties and master them with the help of God. This is the hour when we are honest, when we face facts, when we become realists. It is an important hour in our personal life -- it is also an important hour in our national life. We face a world crisis that can become for the United States our finest hour if we face earnestly our responsibility and summon the courage and faith we shall need to meet it.

Another fine hour for a man or a nation is when he learns it is not idle talk to say: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." "Blessed" means happy or joyful. There is a vicious question often asked that reduces life to its lowest terms: "What do I get out of this?" The very question usually guarantees that the return will be small in terms of things that matter. It is a great moment when life becomes organized on the principle of giving instead of getting. St. Paul began a new life by asking: "Lord, what wilt thou have me do?" It can be a new life for us, a new quality of life, when each day begins with the same question -- "What can I do, what can I give, that will make someone happier and stronger?"
-Everett H. Jones

AUXILIARY ATOMS

"I WANT TO HELP"

Uppermost in the minds of new auxiliary members is the question: "What can I do to help?" There is a great deal that we can do, but "Take It Easy" is our keynote too.

Knowledge of the A. A. Program, what makes it work, and why the program is needed are a few of the first "musts" for the alcoholic's family.

Patience with your alcoholic's growth in the program is one way to help. We cannot change ourselves overnight nor can the alcoholic change himself in a few weeks or months. We, too, must find ourselves again and in doing so we help our alcoholic.

Understanding, tolerance, humility are terms we hear often in learning of the A. A. Program. We must come to know truly their meaning and put them into practice if we are to adjust ourselves to the new way of life our alcoholic is learning to live, and if we are to gain the maximum benefit from our part in the program. -Barksdale P.

COLLINS GARDENS GROUP HAS AUXILIARY

The good news reaches us from the Collins Gardens' Group that they are now the proud possessors of an auxiliary. January 1951 marked its formation.

We do not wonder at the group's enthusiasm in reporting this new evidence of its growth. San Antonio A. A. knows what it means to have an interested, working auxiliary to complement a group.

We are all proud of the progress made by the C. G. Group in its first year. It has been from the beginning an earnest, honest group with a fine "esprit de corps" and has set a pattern for our small A. A. groups.

P E R S O N A L S

We'd like to list our out-of-town visitors for the month, but it would consume the greater part of this column. Farthest from home was E. F. of Vancouver, B. C.

Dorothy H. and Rubye B. have just returned from Corpus. While there, they visited with Claudine C., who wishes to be remembered to all who know her here. Dorothy is returning to Corpus this month to make one of her super-fine talks.

Julius C., Earl Group, is just recovering from a bout with the "flu".

Grace and Art G. of Club "12" are the happy parents of a brand new baby boy.

We learn with sorrow of the death of Charles E. W. of the Sahara Club.

The Earl Group is now meeting in the homes of members.

Charles D. of Club "12" has been visiting in Washington, D. C.

It is nice to have our Mona S. back with us again.

The Collins Gardens Group is getting ready to celebrate its first anniversary, Marian W., secretary, reports.

Mary G. and Jewel H., who have been on the sick list, are on the mend.

The Hal P.s spent some time last month in Corpus.

Troy J. of Fort Worth and Todd L. of Temple have been recent visitors to the Sahara.

After crosses and losses,
men grow humbler and wiser.
-Franklin.

DIRECTORY OF SAN ANTONIO A.A. ACTIVITIES

General meetings, open to the public, are held every Tuesday night at eight o'clock in the West Wing of the Municipal Auditorium. These meetings are under the sponsorship of the S. A. Central Committee of A. A.

The Suburban and State Hospital Groups meet at 8:00 P. M. on Mondays.

The Alamo Heights, Collins Gardens and Highland Park Groups meet at 8:00 P. M. on Wednesdays.

The Olmos Park and Earl Groups meet every Thursday night at 8:00 P. M.

Downtown group meetings are held in the Sahara Club rooms on Thursday and Friday nights with a beginners class at 4:00 P. M. Sunday. The Downtown Group Auxiliary meets every Friday night.

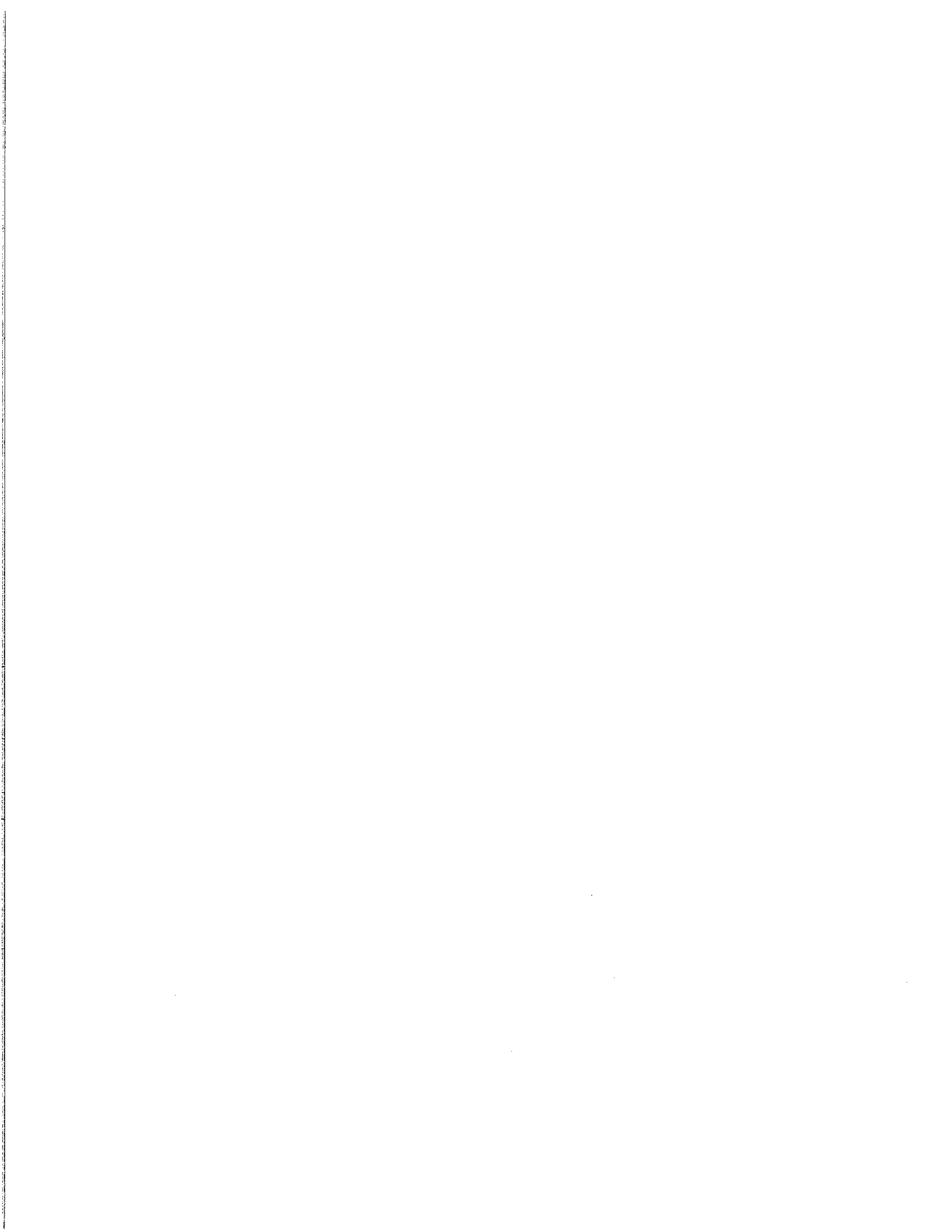
Group "12" meetings are held in their club rooms on Friday. Discussion groups on Wednesday nights. Group "12" Auxiliary meets every Friday night.

Further information regarding any San Antonio A.A. meetings can be obtained by calling "Doc", the Central Office secretary at F-2523.

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

5 years Arthur C.
4 years Earl A., Jay G. and
Bill McA.
2 years Harriett C., Louise D.
and Bobbie M.
1 year Andy A., Emitte P.
and Martha S.

Be wise; soar not too high
to fall, but stoop to rise.
-Massinger.



ANOTHER SLANT

"Lord, help me keep my big mouth shut!" This prayer, or petition, is not spelled out in that many words in the 12 Steps, but it seems to me that it is intrinsically reiterated in several categories, beginning with the first step. At least in my case, when I reached Step Four and began my inventory, I realized that almost all of my debits could be traced to my infernal blabbing and yapping and sniping with my tongue.

In my case, sobriety did not achieve control of my tongue, as I realized after I had a few months sobriety tucked under my belt. The main difference was, in my drinking days my tongue was used mainly to brag and lie about myself and talk someone out of a drink; while in the early days of my sobriety it became barbed and poisonous -- an instrument to spread envy and suspicion and cast shadows across the path of some poor devil trying to grope his way up from the dark valley of alcoholism.

Among the rumpots, of course, there is always at least one man in every crowd or bar room who steps into the picture when some windbag keeps talking when he should be doing a little listening; but, in A. A. we have abandoned those techniques. Along with sobriety comes that serenity that demands you restrain that impulse to throw a bunch of fives into the teeth of the yappity yapper. It becomes, therefore, entirely the problem of the individual to control his tongue.

Upon realizing this I added the opening sentence of this piece to my daily morning petition. "Oh, Lord," has since become my prayer, "I'll do my darndest to stay sober today and if You will give me a lift, I believe I can make it. And, also, Lord, help me keep my big mouth shut"

As of now, I have 15 months total sobriety; and, I'd say, six months partial control over my tongue. Between the two I'm having the time of my young life. I repeat the word is YOUNG. If I make the program another six months, I'll probably get a satchel of books and go back to finish the grade school I left 46 years ago.

- Clyde W.

THANK YOU

When we accepted the task of editing "THE NIGHTCAP" for this year, it was with many misgivings and the fear that we had added another mistake to our long list of the same. It was only a desire to justify the faith of our subscribers and to continue a publication which we felt might grow to be helpful that prompted us to stick our neck out. We distinctly recall a moment of irony when we reflected that this little paper might have been more aptly called "THE NIGHTMARE" than "THE NIGHTCAP".

Now, thanks to the full measure of help and cooperation you have all extended, an onerous task has become pleasant. It is just further evidence of what happens "when good A. A.s get together".

Working together, we can make of this little paper one day a thoroughly worthwhile endeavor. Many thanks to you all!

JUST FOR TODAY

Lord, for tomorrow and its needs, I do not pray; keep me, my God, from stain of sin just for today! Let me no wrong or idle word unthinking say; set Thou a seal upon my lips, just for today.

Let me both diligently work and duly pray; let me be kind in word and deed just for today; let me in season, Lord, be grave, in season, gay; let me be faithful to Thy grace, just for today.

In pain and sorrow's cleansing fires, brief be my stay; O, bid me if today I die, come home today; so for tomorrow and its needs, I do not pray; but keep me, guide me, love me, Lord just for today. -Samuel Wilberforce.

