

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.

Address all communications to:
"THE NIGHT CAP"
Lexington Building
109 Lexington Ave., Suite 215
San Antonio, Texas 78205
Phone 226-2523

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GOD grant me the SERENITY to accept
the things I cannot change

The COURAGE to change
the things I can

And the WISDOM to know
the DIFFERENCE.



AN INTERPRETATION OF THE 12 STEPS

In the book "Alcoholics Anonymous" there is a chapter titled "How it Works". That is the first chapter that we turn to when first we see the Big Book. That is the most vital interest we, as newcomers, have. We want to know what A.A. is going to make us do. We are not over enthusiastic about the deal anyway - maybe this group will find some way to make us quit drinking - and we don't want to quit - we just want to get out of trouble, and maybe stay out of it. But our wives have told us they're leaving, unless! And the boss has told us, or else! So here goes! We might just as well make the best of it - we've got to do something!

This chapter starts out with the words: "Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path." And that is right. That is the experience of Alcoholics Anonymous. And later on in this same chapter: "Here are the steps we took, which are suggested as a program of recovery." These are the steps we try to follow; and steps they are. To be taken one at a time - as we are "ready" - and you will note that in the majority of the steps we only become "ready" or "willing" or "make a decision" to carry out the action that is prescribed in the next step.

STEP NO. 1: "We admitted we were powerless over alcohol - that our lives had become unmanageable."

This is the admission - or let us say, the "acceptance". And we didn't just admit this to our wives, or to our employers or to our fathers or brothers for the effect it might have on them. We really sell it to ourselves. How can a man or woman do anything constructive about a problem that he won't admit he has? How much progress does one afflicted with tuberculosis, for example, make if he or she won't go to a doctor because he won't admit he is afflicted?

12 STEPS (continued from page 1)

If we can drink and manage our lives, good deal! No one has any criticism if we can manage our lives. That's the criterion. No one can decide that for us but ourselves. We haven't come to A.A. because we can "take it or leave it alone." We haven't come because we're perfectly normal people with no problems. We usually arrive down and out; our wives about to leave; our boss about to give up - undependable, miserable, hopeless, doomed people with nothing real to live for - and amazingly, for the first time in our lives, we find a group of people who accept us for exactly what we are - drunks - with nothing to offer; no hope for anything. They don't expect us to live up to performances that we are entirely unable to manage. They don't want anything of us except a chance to help, if we want them to.

They are pretty good people - they know more about us than we do ourselves. They accept us with open arms - and if they can accept us, why shouldn't we accept them? This is the first time we have ever taken any responsibilities for our drinking. This is the beginning. This is the only slim hope we have ever known. Without it, there are no other steps. So let's sell ourselves a bill of goods! "We can never take the first drink." You and I don't dare! The consequences are too disastrous. Come what may we can't take it. If we've ever worked on anything, let's go to work on this.

This is the kind of guy or gal you and I are and we might as well accept it, because there isn't anything else we can do. Where there is smoke there's fire; so let's make up our minds! This is a "decision" - the hardest thing an alcoholic ever has to do. Can we manage our own lives or can't we? Let's decide! And we're on our way. This is half the battle.

Sam McC.

Step one is taken once, but must be accepted daily. "We believe, that the action of alcohol on these chronic alcoholics is a manifestation of an allergy; that the phenomenon of craving is limited to this class and never occurs in the average temperate drinker. These allergic types can never safely use alcohol in any form at all; and once having formed the habit and found that they cannot break it, once having lost their self confidence, their reliance upon things human, their problems pile up on them and become astonishingly difficult to solve."

Alcoholics Anonymous

"The man who says he can drink or let it alone, always drinks; the man who takes one now and then, takes more now than then."

Brighter Side

SO HE GOT DRUNK

He didn't like what someone said about him - so he got drunk. He reasoned he had been doing pretty good for some time now - so he got drunk. Some other A.A. pretty close to him was drinking - so he got drunk. His wife was beginning not to understand him again - so he got drunk. He didn't like the way the group meetings were being run - so he got drunk. He didn't like the way some other people seemed to loom larger than himself - so he got drunk. Things in general weren't breaking for him by a long shot - so he got drunk. Or was it because he really didn't like himself - that he got drunk.

Lifeline

If God seems far away - who has moved?



TWENTY-SECOND ANNIVERSARY
HIGHLAND GROUP

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24, 8:15 P. M.

Aldergate United Methodist Church Auditorium
Kayton at Palmetto
San Antonio, Texas

Guest Talker: Bill G., Kerrville
Chairman: Mike D., San Antonio

Hear Bill's heartwarming message, then enjoy a while of fun, food and fellowship!

.....Flashback.....

Highland Group enters its 22nd year with thanksgiving to its two co-founders, Paul B. and Arthur C., who gave so much of themselves to what was sometimes a seemingly impossible task of organizing Highland. When the one AA group in San Antonio began suffering "growing pains", they started meeting at each other's homes- often just the two of them, but they read the prologue, talked AA, and closed the meeting with the Lord's Prayer.

For their own continued sobriety and their concern for the suffering alcoholic who occasionally, out of desperation, strayed to their meeting, they persevered, they prayed, seeking out others suffering from the same illness as they, offering our wonderful program for living. Some investigated, a few accepted, and finally on January 17, 1951, at 8:00 P.M., the Highland Group was officially organized with fifteen charter members and nine Al-Anons present, and it has since become one of the best loved groups in the area.

GROUP NEWS

The efforts of Paul and Arthur have paid off a thousand-fold. They are both alive and sober today, and those of us who have recovered at Highland owe our lives and our sobriety to them.

THE VILLA ROSA GROUP will celebrate its first Anniversary with a special meeting to be held in the Gymnasium at the Villa Rosa Hospital, 5115 Medical Dr., Tuesday, January 9, at 8:15. Bill O. will speak and Turner A. will Chair. A special invitation has been extended to all the doctors on the Hospital Staff. Refreshments will be served. The Group extends an invitation to everyone to come and help celebrate its first Anniversary!!!

THE HAVEN GROUP welcomes each and everyone to attend its meetings. They are held at The Haven, 1640 W. Woodlawn, every Friday night at 10:15 and on Sunday at 5:00. There is a monthly dinner every second Sunday preceding the meeting.

THE LAUREL HEIGHTS GROUP dedicated its December 31st meeting to the memory of Mary Lou G. Mary Lou, active in San Antonio A.A. for many years, died suddenly on December 26, 1972.

THE GOLIAD GROUP, 104 Avondale, will hold its monthly barbecue on Sunday, January 21st, at 6:00. They particularly want to thank everyone for making their November dinner a success. Member news: Wedding Bells on Dec. 4th for Mack C. and Doris N., and on Dec. 14th for Barbara M. and Dick E. Matt W. is at home now from the hospital and in fine spirits.

GROUP TWELVE, at Club Twelve, 102 Thames, monthly Supper-Bingo will be held Saturday night at 6:00 on January 27th. Menu to be announced; Jack Pot \$115 with 54 numbers. Member news: new Officers for the Group are Harold D., Lucy C., Sue C., Alex M., and Walter N. Dorothy W. died on December 27, 1972 in Bombay, India. She will be missed.

(Continued on Page 4)

GROUP NEWS (Cont'd)

THE OPEN DOOR GROUP has changed its meeting from Thursday to Friday night (The Group will have sole use of the Church on Friday, so no distractions). So remember, Open Discussion meetings on Friday nights, 8:15 at St. George's Church, 6904 West Ave. Open Door will celebrate its first Anniversary Jan. 19 with a special Speakers Meeting. Everyone is invited to come help celebrate! Further plans for the party will be announced.

THE DOWNTOWN GROUP, Sahara Club, 809 E. Euclid, meets three times each week. Speakers Meetings at 8:15 Tues. and Fri., and Closed Discussion Sun. night at 8:15. "Poor Boy" Bingo each Sat. night at 8 P. M., and a dinner the first Sun. of each month, 1 P. M. Merle P. is the new Secretary.

THE KING WILLIAM GROUP- About a year ago Forest A., Pat B., Ora B., and Corrine A. made contact with the Administrator of St. Benedict Hospital, at his request, concerning the founding of a new group of Alcoholics Anonymous. The first meeting of the new King William Group was held January 4, 1972 at St. Benedict's Nursing Home, 322 E. Johnson, in the ground floor dining room, where it still meets each Tuesday at 8:15 P. M.

The Group was started after the disbandment of the Roamers and Honor Court Groups to provide help for an area of the city that was badly in need of A.A. We will be grateful for your support in helping King William grow into a self-sustaining Group.

HOW LONG SHOULD A MEETING LAST? Well, of course, that's the business of the individual group. Most groups in this end of the country seem to think that they have scattered all their pearls of wisdom in about an hour.

THE HAVEN

The Haven is exactly what the name implies. It's a nesting place, a place of security, a place where the sick sick alcoholic...finds peace... and comfort. To dry out and have the seed of A.A. planted. In some the seed takes roots and grows; in others it lies there dormant, with hope to germinate later.

It's a wonderful haven for women as well as men. Both sexes have walked through our doors, seeking help since we opened.

The Haven is something San Antonio has needed for a long time; it works for the benefit of every group in town. It is a place to bring the sick alcoholic you have visited who wants and needs help, but with whom you cannot stay. There is someone on duty 24 hours a day. There are so many who do not need hospitalization, but do need the help and knowledge we who suffer from the same disease can give them. If medical help should be needed, we see that it is available immediately.

There has been criticism. As with any new project, there are and will be many problems and situations that must be met and remedied. We do the best we can, one problem at a time.

-Irma A.

SMILE WITH US * * * * *

(This is the kind of corn that can't do us any harm)



A go-getter is a man who finds a worm in his apple this morning and has fish for dinner tonight.

A man ordered a martini, drank it, ate the olive, chewed up the bowl of the glass and threw the stem over his shoulder.

"I guess you think I'm crazy, don't you?" he said to the bartender, who stood staring at him.

"I sure do," replied the bartender, "The stems are the best part."

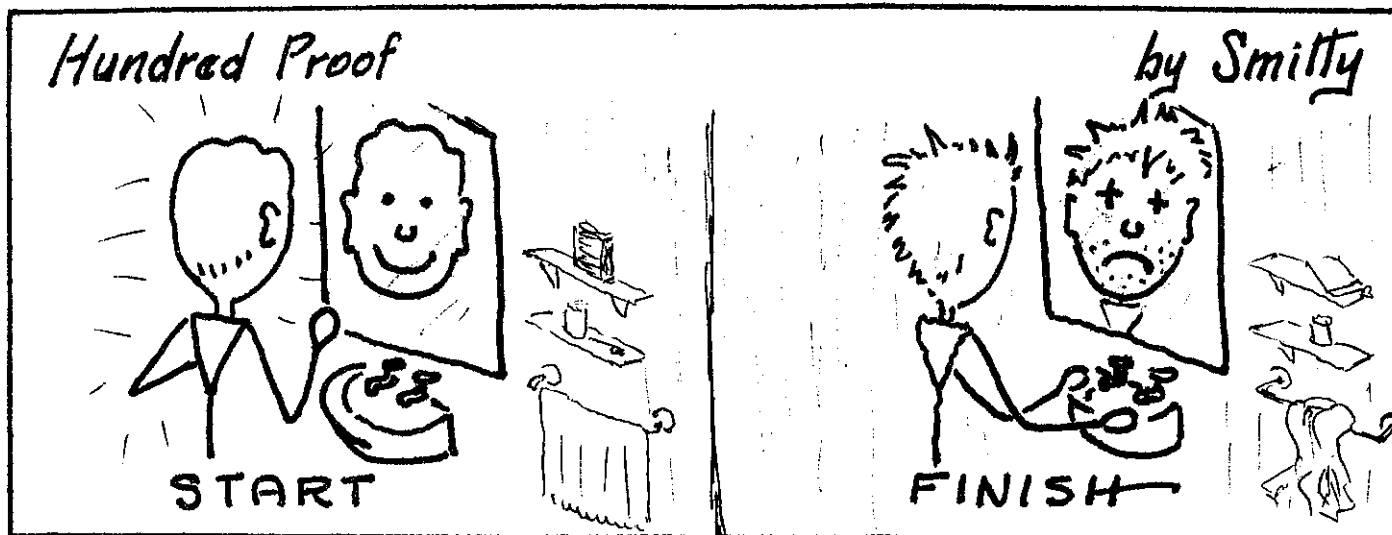
IF ONLY MY HUSBAND WOULDN'T DRINK SO MUCH.

January 1953, another New Year and this time we were going to start over. Never more would we be moving from place to place - my husband had a new job and we were going to live permanently in a new city. We had moved household, kid, fish and dog over 40 times. Powerless? Unmanageable? My life? Who could do half so well? In addition I had worked in the office with my husband, and we had had to move that also. Our son was entering high school in the fall. For the past few years maybe we drank too much, but now we were starting a wonderful new life. I was going to cook, clean and sew for my family. I could get much needed rest, not have to get up whether I felt like it or not.

The first weeks I did very well. The apartment was very dirty; much cleaning had to be done. So I began. With the help of a small (Ha!) drink, I tackled the badly mildewed and calcium crusted shower with undiluted muriatic acid.....At last the shower was spotless. I had needed those drinks! After all that was a mean and nasty job. Next day, the stove - well at least the stove was spotless. It took me about a week and a half to realize that I was drinking all day as well as all night. I became very ill; when I drank I did not eat. I knew I must cut out the daily drinking. When working, I didn't drink so I would get a job. That would do it! The first day, I was too ill to go, but go I must. Perhaps one good shot in a coke would help - Zounds, it did! I could manage the day fairly well. If only my husband wouldn't drink so much at night, then I wouldn't either, and there would be no need for that morning drink. I would fix that. He would have to go to a hospital and get treatment. This took a great deal of planning and finesse between me and my family and the County Judge. No heed was paid to the fact that I was dropping by home at noon and getting a double double instead of eating lunch. Anyone experiencing such an ordeal and new on a job too would need the added courage and certainly deserved a little noon drink.

As a result the worse was yet to come. I stumbled along this drinking road for another five and a half years. There seemed to be no other road. Then I found A. A. By then I was really ready to "Let go and let God". What a relief it was to admit I was powerless over alcohol and my life was unmanageable. God has shown me the way and I will follow. What a difference A. A. has made in our home! With the help of God and the people in A. A., I have not had to rely or depend on alcohol for almost 15 years. I will never forget those dark days, but I can see only sunshine and light now and in the future. God, A. A. is wonderful!!!!

Christe



The most important time in our lives is between the ages of 12 and 20. These are the years when we put together what we have learned and learn how to use our minds and bodies properly. All too often, though, this growth is held back by our parents. Not that it is intentional, but simply their not being able to let go of us, to let us stand free as individuals. Very few are able to do this.

For a teenager who lives with a drinking problem in the home, his problems are compounded. Not only does he have the normal teenage problems, but he is also seemingly faced with rejection and in many cases abuse, both physical and mental. When I think of this, I wonder how I survived.

Many teenagers seek an escape through drugs, alcohol, running away or premature marriage. The least severe of all is running away. This is what I did and I ended up in a "corrective home" for boys. I spent three and a half months in a cell which was smaller than the federal penal institutions have. I didn't get out except to relieve myself and to clean up once a day, and then only under guard. This correction institution has since been closed by the court and many scandals evolved from it.

There is an escape for teenagers living with a drinking problem in the home, but it is an escape to reality rather than from it. This is ALATEEN, where the teenager through the association with other teenagers who share the same problems, learns that the only person he can control is himself, and that through the changes within himself life can be not only bearable, but truly beautiful.

In the year that I have been a sponsor of Alateen, I have met several hundred Alateens from all over the state and from all walks of life. They put me to shame in comparing my maturity with theirs, in fact I have met very few adults with as much mental and emotional maturity as these Alateens. They have received a priceless gift, the Alateen Way of Life. It is surprising, but I have found that about 85% of the Alateens have said they were forced by their parents to go to Alateen meetings at first; now even the suggestion of giving up Alateen is subject to cause a fight.

The Alateen Program is not only for the children of active problem drinkers who have not as yet found Alcoholics Anonymous; it is also for those with parents who are members of A.A. and Al-Anon. My alcoholic sobered up when I was five; I didn't have this program until I found Al-Anon, and I made a mess of my life as a teenager, but I am so grateful now to have the Al-Anon Program and the privilege of working with our wonderful teenagers as an Alateen Sponsor.

Bob H.
Serenity Alateen Sponsor

Of course, you've heard about the girl who went to the party and all she got out of it was rum and coax.

...or the girl who was so shapely she couldn't fall flat on her face if she tried.

Marriage: A union between two people in which the man pays the dues.

Little Billy was saying his prayers in a low voice. "I can't hear you dear." said mother. "Wasn't talking to you." said Billy.

The horse would have the last laugh today if he could see all those motorists adjusting their shoulder harnesses.

AREA NEWS

Thanks to L.R.G., Austin, for sharing her thoughts on boredom.

WHY BE BORED?

When I was drinking, I spent most of the day doing just that- drinking. My pattern was to wake up at two o'clock in the morning. Because I was shaking so hard, I would take a drink. When I was able to keep the drink down, I would do all my housework. Getting the work done kept me from feeling guilty, and my son would not be able to criticize me. This was really insane behavior, but it was the only way I knew to manage. I could not imagine what I would do with myself if ever I stopped drinking. It was the only way I knew to pass the time.

After coming into A.A., I cannot find enough time to do everything I want to do. In the first two years I was doing Twelve Step work twenty-four hours a day. I did not have a job and women with free time during the day were much in demand for Twelve Step work.

So many A.A.s tell me "I get so lonesome and bored." I don't see how they can. There are so many sick people in hospitals, "detox" places, the group. I am at the Club every day and still go to at least five meetings a week, even though I have fourteen years sobriety. The longer I am sober, the faster time goes. There are times I wish I were two people, so I could visit more and do more things. I have been a widow for fifteen years, and it would be easy to become full of self-pity, to be bored and lonesome. A.A. has given me a reason to live; I am happy and contented.

You need never be bored. If you are, ask us, your fellow A.A.s, ask your Higher Power, ask how you can best serve. You'll never have time for boredom again!!

Austin, District 3, celebrated its 27th A.A. Anniversary December 13, 1972.

GENERAL SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES

Meeting will be held Sunday, January 14, 7:00 P.M. at Club 12.

MONTHLY INTERGROUP MEETING

Gene J., San Antonio, will speak at the meeting to be held at Club 12, Sunday, January 14, 8:15 PM. The Serenity Group will be host for the meeting.

PUBLIC INFORMATION ACTIVITIES

On December 8 Sue C. and Lee Ray C. spoke to a health class at Roosevelt High; December 12 Pat O'F. talked at Judson and Abel G., at Holmes.

REMEMBER

the BUCK a MONTH ! !

A New Year-- same old expenses (plus some for inflation) for maintaining our Central Office. Your buck a month makes it possible to meet expenses that could not otherwise be met. So send in your check to the Central Office, Lexington Building, 109 Lexington Ave., Suite 215, San Antonio, 78205, or give your buck or bucks to your GSR. The Central Office works for you!!!

NIGHTCAP-- NEEDS

Articles, fillers, jokes, and cartoons ! ! ! Articles must be limited to 300 to 400 words. Material sent in will not necessarily be used in the same month; we are trying to build a back-log of Nightcap items. Drunk-a-logues as such are not what is wanted, rather a personal point of view toward A.A. principles. All materials will be appreciated. Send to The Nightcap, c/o the San Antonio Central Office, Lexington Building, 109 Lexington Ave., Suite 215, San Antonio, 78205.

MEETING CHANGE SCHEDULE

Current 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.

Open Door: Thursday night meetings discontinued. Holding Open Discussion meetings, Friday, 8:15 P.M.

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.

Valley Hi: Closed Discussion meetings are held on Tuesday, 8:15 P.M. Birthday last Tuesday in month, Open Meeting.

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

Al-Ateen meetings are held Tuesday, 8:15 P.M.

Welcome Group: Meetings discontinued.

ANNUAL WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

The 9th Annual Women's A.A. Conference will be held February 23, 24, and 25 at the Holiday Inn, 617 Broadway, in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Registration.....\$6.00
Buffet Supper.....\$5.50
Buffet Breakfast.....\$3.50

Register now--- write:

Conference Committee
2326 Louisiana St.
Little Rock, Arkansas, 72206

Man hasn't failed until the day
He cries: "No more I'll try!
'Tis here I put my dream away,
No further hope have I."

If with the dawn he will begin
To try again, he still can win.

- Edgar A. Guest