

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

JULY 1973

NUMBER THREE

MY CREATOR, I AM NOW WILLING THAT YOU SHOULD HAVE ALL OF ME, GOOD AND BAD. I PRAY THAT YOU NOW REMOVE FROM ME EVERY SINGLE DEFECT OF CHARACTER WHICH STANDS IN THE WAY OF MY USEFULNESS TO YOU AND MY FELLOWS. GRANT ME STRENGTH, AS I GO OUT FROM HERE, TO DO YOUR BIDDING. AMEN.

--ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS



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AN INTERPRETATION OF THE 12 STEPS

STEP SEVEN: HUMBLY ASKED HIM TO REMOVE OUR SHORTCOMINGS....

HUMBLY: By treading the preceding six steps, working them one at a time, one day at a time, to the best of our ability at this point in time, we arrive at Step Seven, aware of our false pride, self-assertion, arrogance, lust and greed. We have come to realize that much of what we believed in and lived by is of no value. It is now that we attain the quality of being humble in mind and spirit.

ASKED: In confusion, we look at our many character defects; we wonder which of our values are false; we ask how we can eliminate them.

HIM: We discover that there is no human power or person able to give an absolute answer. No one human being, nor even a group of humans, has the ability to rebuild our spiritual and moral values. "But there is One who has all power. That One is God." And for each of us there may be a different interpretation of God. We humbly ask for help from the God we can understand.

TO REMOVE: We have listed, admitted, and become willing to "let go completely". It is with this Step that we begin to remove - -

OUR SHORTCOMINGS: - -those traits of character which we have discovered, through self-analysis, prayers to our Higher Power, and admission of them to another human being, to be undesirable and worthless. We know what we must remove and Who will help us. As we shed our shortcomings, we are ready to rebuild our lives from the very foundation, a brick at a time, a day at a time.

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HUMILITY IN ACTION

Humility is defined by Webster as "the state or quality of being humble; modest, self-respecting, having esteem, honor, reputation, regard."

In my years in A. A. I have had the privilege of observing a number of approaches to our problems; many different ways of attempting to follow the Twelve Steps, and I am convinced that the success of each one of us is based on the necessary quantity, as well as quality, of humility. I do not intend to imply that there are various kinds of humility. We cannot speak of it as being of a certain kind. It is humility, or it isn't. We only have it in greater or lesser degrees. In A. A. we are prone to say that "so and so has peace of mind," or that "he is on the program," because he appears to be so. We do not stop to analyze what he has. The truth of the matter is that he has humility... he is not striving for a place in the sun; neither is he meek. He is poised, serene, confident and self-assured. He does not feel a failure; therefore, he does not have to prove he is a success. He seeks no glory but is just thankful and appreciative of the fact he has been spared to discover the peace and serenity to be gained from having found humility. He does not have to justify himself or his actions. He has sought and found forgiveness through true humbleness of Spirit and is constantly being replenished each time he asks, in the same manner.

To such an individual, this is the respect and honor due a Power mightier than himself. It is complete admission of his human frailties, and he feels no loss of pride, self-respect, or lack of achievement by acknowledging his dependence. Rather, it brings a sense of fulfillment.

Being human, we all tend to take pride in our accomplishments... our little moments of glory. It builds our morale... expands our ego... an occurrence which most of us have seldom or never experienced, and so we want to drain the last drop of such nectar from its source. It is extremely difficult to refuse credit, especially when it makes us feel so good, and I know of no group of people more generous with their praise than A. A.'s, but if we bear in mind that it is only through God's grace that we are alive and spared for such rewarding occasions; that without this Power we could not have reached the level at which we are, then we deserve no merit. We are only fulfilling our obligation at being spared. Individually we have done nothing but what we should do, and no extra honor is due.

This attitude does not demean our efforts, nor does it belittle our success. It is justifiable pride of achievement, but... with understanding and knowledge that we did not accomplish it alone. We had help from a Supreme Being. We also had help and encouragement on a human level. We must always remember that all of this can be withdrawn instantaneously- and then where would we be?

Humility is a nebulous, intangible thing. We don't just get it and thereafter have it forever and ever. Like our WILL, which we finally turn over to its Giver when we get our backs to the wall, we get it back again. So-- we have to keep trying to give it back or turn it over, only to have the process repeat itself endlessly. We find true humility and we are at peace... momentarily... only to discover that while we looked away it had slipped from our grasp.

Humility can be held onto by tenacious effort, in lesser or greater degrees. Just don't ever forget that we are expendable!

"Wish we had a 5th for bridge." "You don't need a 5th for bridge, you dope." "Well, make it a pint then."

Printers don't drink more than other people. It JUst shoze UP_{moo}re in PRint.

GROUP NEWS



According to legend, coffee was discovered in Ethiopia when goatherds noticed that their flocks stayed awake all night after feeding on coffee leaves and berries. Before its use as a beverage, 700 years ago, coffee was a food; then a wine; then a medicine. Coffee moved from Arabia to Turkey during the 1500's, and to Italy in the early 1600's. Coffee houses first sprang up through Europe in the 1600's.

on JULY 4 at the
ARC
10TH ANNIVERSARY

An A. A. meeting will be held at 2:30 PM. C. W. S. from Austin, a State Convention Speaker, will talk.

A Barbecue will follow, prepared by Tiny L. at a cost of \$1.00 for adults and 50¢ for children. The swimming pool will be open.

This, "The Best in the West" - Y'all come and bring the family to the Alcoholic Rehabilitation Center, Southton Rd., for our biggest celebration of the year!!!

THE HAVEN, 1640 W. Woodlawn, will hold its monthly dinner at 1 PM Sunday, July 8, followed by the Group Meeting at 3 PM. On other Sundays the meeting hour remains at 5 PM. A Discussion Meeting now takes place Tuesday nights at 8:15 PM. Come and share!

THE GOLIAD GROUP, 104 Avondale, will hold its monthly Barbecue Sunday, July 15, at 6 PM.

24 HOUR GROUP, 24 Hour Club, 1203 Fredericksburg Rd., holds its monthly dinner and Bingo on Sunday, July 29, at 1 PM.

GROUP TWELVE, Club 12, 102 Thames, holds its regular dinner and Bingo July 28 at 7 PM. Bridge is played each Friday after the meeting.

An old-fashioned 4th of July Picnic (covered-dish) will be held on Wednesday, July 4, in Club 12. Everyone is invited.

DOWNTOWN GROUP, Sahara Club, 809 E. Euclid, has Poor Boy Bingo each Saturday at 8 PM. The monthly dinner will be Sunday, July 1, at 1 PM.

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

BRIDGE GROUP, 323 E. Bridge St., New Braunfels is a Closed Discussion which meets Monday nights at 8 PM.

NEW BRAUNFELS GROUP, Episcopal Church Fellowship Hall, W. Guenther: Roy T. celebrated his 17th birthday at the 8 PM Thursday night meeting June 21st, along with Preston S., 1 year and Audrey S., 1 year.

SEGUIN GROUP, 312 S. Crockett St., adjacent to St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, meets Tuesdays at 8 PM. Nolte S. works hard at getting interesting programs for the Open Meetings.

Thanks to Joyce G., New Braunfels, for the above items. She also sent along this funny:

"Honesty -100 Proof-- Some people purchase brandy because of its bouquet and some because the bottle looks pretty on a tray. According to these experts, I ought to see a shrink. I only bought the liquor because I wanted to drink."

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We have probably left out some events of interest and importance. We are sorry but this is because the news was not given to us. If a reporter has been unable to reach you and you have an event to be announced, please call the Central Office, 226-2164. Intergroup communications are vital to our A. A. health.

FROM TEMP-BEL

HAPPY 26TH BIRTHDAY, AL-ANONS !

Pat M. shares her thoughts on ACTION:

Very early in my sobriety a fellow member made the statement that "We can act ourselves into the right way of thinking, but we cannot think ourselves into the right way of acting." At the time my unopened mind silently said, "He's a nut!"

This statement kept coming back to me, almost hauntingly, and as my mind cleared I began to listen; it came to me that this was what I had been doing for years. How many times had I thought to myself "I will never drink again" or "This time I will control it", or "Next time it will be different." Those were all good thoughts but they hadn't changed anything. I had always gone back to drinking and the same behavior patterns. Act my way into a new way of thinking? It just might work!

I talked to my sponsor and she told me to read the Big Book all the way through like a novel; then go back and read and reread Chapters 5 and 6. The title of Chapter 6 really hit me in the face: "INTO ACTION."

By this time the words "taking action" were meaning more and more to me. I began to notice that the people in A. A. who had what I wanted were the ones who were thoroughly following the path (the 12 Steps). They were taking action.

Being a wife and mother, it occurred to me one day that I could sit around reading a cookbook, but if I didn't cook there wouldn't be any food on the table at mealtime. Suddenly the parallel hit me... Just reading the Big Book wasn't enough. I had to do something more. I would write my 4th Step. I had to be honest. Could I be honest? Yes.

I got out my paper and pen and began a fearless and moral inventory. This done, I took further action. I did my 5th Step. From the releasing action of that Step, I experienced a feeling of freedom I had never felt before. I was released from my guilt. I could forgive myself. I knew I could use my past experience to help others. Thank God for giving us a program of recovery that enables us to accept ourselves as we are and allows us the privilege of showing the new people in A. A. exactly what going into action can accomplish in their lives!

The first family Group in San Antonio was formed in July of 1947. There were certain objections to its formation until it was explained that the A.A.A. (Alcoholics Anonymous Auxiliary), now the Al-Anons, would not discuss the alcoholic in its meetings, that all discussion of alcoholism would be kept objective, and personalities would never enter in.

In 1949 the large A. A. Group then in San Antonio split into two smaller groups, each with its own Club (Clubs 12 and the Sahara). Both groups asked that a Family Group be formed- the A. A.'s and then A.A.A.'s working in conjunction with one another. The non-alcoholic spouse found that he too was sick and that, once he wholeheartedly accepted alcoholism as a disease and started applying the principles of A. A. to himself, he/she was well on the way to becoming a working member in the Al-Anon A. A. way of life.

Holding fast to the basic A. A. principles, the Al-Anon groups in San Antonio have flourished and encouraged the formation of other groups, until to-day there are 15 groups in the metropolitan area.

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Nationwide, in 1949 there were 87 Al-Anon Groups. In the spring of 1973 the groups had increased to 5,190.

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There will be a new A. A. Group in Hondo, Texas. An organizational meeting was held June 28 at the Church of Christ Educational Annex Bldg. Further details will be in the next issue of The Nightcap.

It seems that a New York bartender has invented a new drink called "Ugly Lady" -- no chaser!

" " " " " "

Overheard in a downtown Boston bar: "The first chance I get I am going to quit drinking."

" " " " " "

A. A. AT FOLSOM PRISON

This is a part of a letter written by Ed A. to an A. A. in Phoenix, taken from the May 1973 issue of "The Folsomite". After his parole Ed will return to this area of the country, which is his home. He has written inquiring about A. A. here and expressing his need and desire to become a part of it on his release.

"Dear Bill,

I am a convict writing this letter from a cell in Folsom Prison, Calif. A cell approximately 13 feet long, wide enough so that I can push against both walls without completely stretching my arms sideways. It's only one of many similar cells I've been in over the last 20 years. None of them made me more of a prisoner than alcohol has, they were only the results.

I was an ex-convict when I sat in one of those hard wooden and steel chairs in that skid-row A. A. meeting hall. Not only was I an ex-con but also a fugitive, having escaped from a prison in California a week before. I was a five time loser, the escape has made it six.

I dropped in there because I was broke, hungry and scared. I wanted help with clothes and a job and also I wanted free coffee... I got help with the clothes and the job and I got the coffee, and I got help of another kind, one that meant much more than the clothes, job and coffee, which I knew would be only a passing thing. I got the knowledge, belief and hope that I could stop drinking. What I lacked was the desire which only I could supply. I had been to a few meetings of A. A. in various prisons, but never outside, and never with the desire. I would never accept the first of the Twelve Steps.

There was an old wino I met and liked while living the the Salt River Hotel. He died of an internal hemorrhage while in a drunken stupor, the last of many. He died in my arms... He died a broken and lonely man. My life touched his only briefly, but at that moment he was my brother and I loved him, and I shed tears for him and asked myself "Why?". Suddenly I knew why- "There, but for the grace of God, go I."

I didn't stop my drinking at once, but as the

days passed, every time I lifted a glass or bottle, I would think of that old wino, and what A. A. could do for me, if I would admit and accept.

I left Phoenix on the run, with the law not far behind. But I didn't forget that out-of-the-way hole-in-the-wall A. A. Group, and as I kept moving around I found many others like it, all of them offering help to the alcoholic.

I did stop drinking, I stopped a day at a time, the same way I was living. The days began to pile into weeks, then months. The longer I maintained complete and total sobriety, the straighter I began to think. As a result I surrendered myself to finish my time, along with what I got for escaping.

When the time comes to be set free, a free man in the whole sense of the word free, I know that by attending A. A. meetings, practising the 12 Steps, and helping another sick alcoholic, I will remain free! ! !.. If by chance I have helped just one of you, I will be very grateful, because there is hope and a way... if you take that first step and follow it up with the others.

If this is read... I and the Folsom Fellowship Group would be happy to hear from any of you who might care to send a message...

Keep in mind the uplifting Serenity of the Serenity Prayer.

Sincerely in A. A. Brotherhood,

Ed A.

" " " " " " " " " " " "

A. A. has been in Folsom Prison for 25 years. This year the Fellowship held its 20th ANNUAL A. A. CONFERENCE. 157 attended, 81 from the outside world. Its theme was "One Day at A Time." The cover of the May issue of "The Folsomite" depicted the Conference theme by showing the four seasons, spring, summer, fall and winter- all a part of the yearly cycle of time which can be related to the life cycle of man. "As man progresses into each cycle from infancy to old age, each day is still the very first day of the rest of his life. As long as there is life there is still time for man to make a change which will then affect his life from that moment on."

CENTRAL SERVICE OFFICE

When I came into A. A. I was vaguely conscious of the Central Service Office. Mostly I was concerned about myself. They had told me that I had a disease called "alcoholism". All I wanted was to learn about my disease and feel better.

After about a year of sobriety I became more aware of the Central Office. It was through belonging to a group, sharing their experience, hope and strength, that I was told by a member about donations we could make to the groups or Central Office to help maintain them.

Doc B. was then Secretary of the Central Office and I'd see and hear him talk at meetings. I learned that his job was to take calls that came in for help from people who were having trouble with alcohol. Then I became aware of the meeting brochures and the many changes that had to be made due to the growth of A. A. in San Antonio. One day I went down to pick up some literature for a convention and became acquainted with Doc and the workings of the Central Office. It then became a reality to me.

Like others new in the program, I had joined in everything, and because I had to cut down, now I had to decide where I could be of the most use. The thought popped up -- the core, the heart of the thing -- Where was the heart of A. A.? Yes! To me, the heart is truly the Central Office. For here is the phone contact someone "out there" makes for help. It MUST be there for A. A. So my small problem was solved. I began to center my interests on the Central Office.

Have you been down to our Central Office at 109 Lexington? It's very enlightening. I didn't realize the widespread help given the alcoholic and the general public with the drinking problem. Lots of the pamphlets have new names but contain the same information. There's literature for the Spanish speaking alcoholic and his family; also, literature in Braille for those who are blind. It's well worth the time we take to visit the Central Office and become acquainted with the HEART of A. A. in San Antonio.

--Jeanne W.

GENERAL SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES Meeting will be held Sunday, July 8, 7:00 PM at Club 12.

MONTHLY INTERGROUP MEETING will have Tex R. of Huntsville as the speaker on Sunday, July 8, at 8:15 PM at Club 12. The 24 Hour Group will host.

PUBLIC INFORMATION COMMITTEE

Nick St. J. talked to a group of students at Ashley on June 21st. On June 26th Thala C. and La Ree M. spoke at San Antonio College.

IN MEMORIAM

Jim C. - June, 1973

Harold M. - June, 1973

P E R S O N A L S

JUNE BIRTHS: To Marilyn and Jack H., a girl, Michele.

JUNE WEDDINGS: Mary S. and Blake R.

PLATITUDES WITH LATITUDE

(Strictly cum grano salis)

I joined A. A. to learn how to become a controlled drinker.

I stopped drinking just to please my mother. I get drunk often but I know I am not an alcoholic.

I can stop drinking any time I want to. I do EVERYTHING better with a few drinks under my belt.

Alcohol makes me think more clearly.