

THE NIGHTCAP



Volume 32 Issue 03

WORKING WITH A WET ONE

MARCH 2001

When I snivel a lot in an AA meeting someone is sure to approach me after the meeting and ask, "When was the last time you worked with a wet one?"

Such a situation recently occurred and afterward two things happened. First, I was laid off from a steady half-day job; I am of retirement age but I like the supplemental income to allay my fears of financial insecurity. Second, I received a call from the central office to participate in a Twelfth Step call by taking a drunk from his motel room to a detox facility. I looked upon these two events with a total lack of gladness, which is usually my outlook when I am into self. I responded stoically to the first situation, as there was nothing I could do about it, and I responded affirmatively - albeit grudgingly - to the second because I have been conditioned that way.

As I view it now, both the loss of the job and the Twelfth Step call were the best things that could have possibly happened to me at the time. Had I been working I would not have been in a position to make the call. The call itself was an act of providence. It put me back on the right track.

Service in AA takes many forms. I have been told that just being at a meeting occupying a chair is one. Cleaning cups and ashtrays is another. Also, setting up tables, being the coffee maker, and acting as the group secretary. I have done all of these; I am still the coffee maker at one of my meetings. Then there are the generally accepted "service" jobs of intergroup and general service. Additionally there is sponsorship and Twelfth Step work, which is primarily the subject of this article, in chapter six of the Big Book discussing Steps Eight and Nine it says, "At the moment we are trying to put our lives in order. But that is not an end in itself. Our real purpose is to fit ourselves to be of maximum service to God and the people about us." So in the broad sense I suppose, whatever we do in AA is some form of service.

In my own case I have a poor track record in sponsorship and Twelfth Step work. In the last couple of years I've had three people ask me to be their sponsor; one is back drinking and one has disappeared. The other one is sober. I don't think I am the type of person who instills confidence in others. Definitely not a leader and terrible at suggesting or directing others how they should work their program. Consequently I don't seem to participate in this activity very often.

Therefore, getting that call from the central office, even though I accepted it ungraciously, turned out to be one of the most rewarding opportunities for service I have ever had.

The drunk, who I will call "Robert O.," was in bad shape from being holed-up in the motel room for four days with plenty to drink but nothing to eat. He had been in AA before and knew whom to call when he was ready. Surprisingly to me, the two of us got along splendidly right from the beginning. We had nothing in common, yet we had everything in common. He is a hillbilly type and I am a city boy. Boy? I'm 70 and he is 53, yet we are both alcoholics who need the program. There was just something about him that attracted me. Maybe I was seeing a troubled soul's cry for help. I visited him in detox while he was shaking it out. Now he is staying in a recovery house and approaching thirty days without a drink. He is attending meetings and even has a job.

I guess what I am becoming aware of through this experience is that service is much more than a duty or obligation to repay to AA that which was so freely given to us. It seems that I have always known this but I keep forgetting. Basically I would rather pursue hedonism than service. I see pleasure as something to be desired above everything. I do not like pain. If I could but remember that the pursuit of happiness is futile.

Happiness, peace of mind, and serenity are the result of living the way you think God would have you live. I will not remember this for long unless I continue to act on the AA principle that our real purpose is to fit ourselves to be of maximum service to God and the people about us. Through service I will find the peace of mind and serenity that I sought so futilely in other ways.

T.M., Brea, California

CSO BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Quotable "Quotes"

Three Cop-Outs:

What if...

Yea But...

If Only...!

MANAGERS MAILBAG

****(Printed Exactly as submitted)****

"How did the slang pigeon (sponsee) come about and approximately when did it come into the AA lingo, I've heard it used when referring to a sponsee in different parts of the country.

Hi, Joy L-S. & Sherry H, Thanks for the question. Your E-mail return address didn't work, so I am going to trust God that see your answer here!

The word "pigeon" used to denote a newcomer appears to have come from Dr. Bob, our Akron, Ohio co-founder. According to the reference to "pigeon in DR. BOB & The Good Oldtimers, it was being used as early as 1940.

Dr. Bob himself as applied to an A.A. newcomer or prospect--probably coined the word "pigeon". "He used that word," said Smitty, and one A.A. recalled that Doc would often announce at a meeting: "There's a pigeon in Room so-and-so who needs some attention." Or he might refer to the patient as "a cookie. ")

DR. BOB and the Good Oldtimers, pg146

Dr. Bob used a considerable amount of slang as part of his conversation. He referred to his wife, Anne, as "the skirt", or "the little woman". When he received a kiss, one time he commented, "who slipped me that slobber". He described one of his benders as; "It was a blazer."

There are additional references to the word "pigeon in various Grapevine articles:

Pigeon:

November 1980, page 39 (letter) September 1986; page 39 (letter)

Debate over term:

December 1955, page 61 (letter) April 1986; page 36 (article)

Definition of:

September 1963, page 4

Dislike of term:

October 1957, page 63 (letter) July 1980, page 40 (letter) April 1986, and page 36 (article)

New member as:

April 1979, page 20 (article)

Calvin and Hobbes



Attention:

The Night cap

My name is John. I'm an Alcoholic. A member of the "We Agnostic AA Group" of the Bronx. As a frequent visitor to San Antonio, I try my best to keep inn touch. My subscription to the Nightcap is a definite pleasure.

With 38 years of sobriety and retired I give my attention to AA activities, my home group every Wednesday night, I chair a detox every Tuesday AM. Also make myself available to PI/CPC and B&G. As GSR I attend the miscellaneous committees, I also write to Inmates via the Correctional Correspondence Services.

Well, I'm also irked as Corky S., Into Action Group College Station, Texas in the Nightcap, January 2001 on page 2. All that frantic chanting and cheering is distracting, then the shoulder hugging/swaying in a circle/shouting misc. incantations is too overwhelming.

Strangely in our We Agnostic AA Group of the Bronx half of our membership are religious church attending people. They abhor religiosity in AA. One believer makes it very clear " I didn't arrive in AA as a sinner, I'm a plain every day drunk"

In our several Agnostic groups in New York City the chairman at the closing reads the latter part of Dr. Bobs' last message. (Dr. Bob and The Good Old Timers" page 338.) Starting with "Our Twelve Steps. Then because we don't say any prayers we close the meeting with the slogan LIVE AND LET LIVE, this final note is always a cheerful uplifting closure

Many Happy 24's
John Y
Bronx, New York

1 YR
 Debi H
 Dan C
 Niki E.
 Susan D
 Peggy D
 William D
 Frank A
 Edward D
 Ron M
 Richard M
 Ruth F
 Teresa R
 David L
 C.A. A
 Joe C
 Christopher B
 John O
 Carlos P
 Deborah S
 Robert S
 Kim A
 Mike A
 Doug C
2 YRS
 Kermit M
 Richard G
 Oscar R
 Dan F
3 YRS
 Randall B
 Phillip K
 Marty De L
 Randall B
4 YRS
 Pat T
 Kim G
 Richard R
 Margaret S
5 YRS
 Marcy S
 Steve S
 O Lew S
 Mary G
 Sara P
 Jim J
6 YRS
 Jeff A
 Don T
 Mario P
7 YRS
 Jack F
8 YRS
 Alex B
9 YRS
 Ned S

10 YRS
 Jim W
 Catherine M-J
 Lollie B

11 YRS
 Marcelino M

12 YR
 Betsy P
 Linda McG
 Lawrence H

13 YRS
 Lecann O
 John A
 Harold C
 Linda S-P
 Lin P

14 YRS
 Jodie B
 Ruthie S
 George S

16 YRS
 Ray M

17 YRS
 Maria B
 Mary Lee V
 Bill T
 Noel Mc
 Hampus R
 Rosemary R

18 YRS
 Katie M

20 YRS
 Virginia W

24 YRS
 Bonnie K-M

26 YRS
 Tommie D

29 YRS
 Vivian C
 Betty H

31 YRS
 George B

38 YRS
 Jack C
 Dorothy C

44 YRS
 Glenn W
 Jim W

49 YRS
 Sunny M

Due to a printing error this page was left out of last months issue we are reprinting this page so that the individuals on this page get their proper recognition Bill T

AMENDS CORNER: JAN

Steve S 30 YRS
 Carol S 30 YRS
 Alex G 36 YRS
 Beronica G.



M
A
R
C
H
B
I
F
E
G
D
Q
W
Y
S

1 YR
Nick N
Scott C
Erik N
Diane T
Fredrick L
Norman G
Susan B
Patti F
Gary F
Jerry W
Evelt W
Michaele M
Kenneth C
Kandi C
Delani A
Reb B

2 YRS
Rebecca D
Rob A
Thomas K
Kandlbinder
Stephanie
Jack A
Eric D
Phil J
James R
Richard W
Terri N
Debbie H
Melody S
Derri W
Lilia C

3 YRS
Kimi W
Jonathan E
Robert L
Gina P
Mark C
Linda A
Lucy H
Patsy N

4 YRS
Tracy L
Rhonda Mc
Dawn B
Luther S
Steve B

5 YRS
Burton C
John S
Ardyn C

6 YRS
Paul M
Leigh P
Kaye G
Donald V
Robert W

7 YRS
Vickie S
Richard H
Michael K
Kevin U

8 YRS
Cari L
Jim A

9 YRS
Jennifer Mc
David F
Cherie W
T.J. A
Richard R

10 YRS
Robert S

11 YRS
Ralph B
Morris R
Fred San R
Marybeth H
James G

12 YR
Elaine M

13 YRS
Kevin R
Alfred R
Eddie R

14 YRS
Robin J
Herb C
Rebecca S

15 YRS
John D
David G
Rod B

16 YRS
Joe H

17 YRS
Mario C
Paul O

18 YRS
John M
Jo S
Suzanne McR

19 YRS
Linda T

20 YRS
James T
Diana B
Henry T

21 YRS
Cleo T

22 YRS
Ray A

23 YRS
Nilah S

25 YRS
Dale B

26 YRS
Chris J

27 YRS
Pat M

31 YRS
Vernon M

44 YRS
Curt L



March 2001 **Service opportunities and events**

- 4 March SAMSO Steering Meeting Club 12 4PM
- 4 March SAMSO ARCHIVES Committee meets 7:15 St. David's Episcopal Church 1300 Wiltshire
- 6 March SAMSO Grapevine Committee meet at Jim's Restaurant 410 & Blanco 7 PM
- 5 March New Group opens Fort Sam Hospital Group Third Floor Conference Room B-3-358 Mon-Wed Fri- Noon
- 7 March SAMSO Correctional Facilities Committee meets Club 12 7 PM
- 9 March SAMSO Hospital & Institutions Meeting -Club 12 -10 AM
- 13 March Club 12 Board of Directors meet 5:30 PM
- 14 March SAMSO Cooperation with Professional Community and Public Information Committee meets Club 12 PM
- 15 March CSO Board meets Any member can attend
- 17 March Dance Club 12 8PM to Midnight
- 18 March SAMSO/ Interdistrict Meeting 6:30 COR Meeting 8:30- Districts 16-19-1A meet 6PM St. Andrews Episcopal Church 6110 NW Loop 410
- 25 March Birthday Night -New Life Group (Birthday Night open speaker)
- 26 March Birthday Night Alamo Hts.
- 27 March Birthday Night-Valley Hl.- Windcrest,-Santa Fe- New Acceptance-Life Support
- 28 March Birthday Night -Oblate- Women's Big Book-Northwood
- 29 March Birthday Night : Goliad-Devine- Ft Sam -North San Pedro -Stahl Rd
- 30 March Birthday Night: Pearsall (Come as you are)- SW Loop-Colonles North El Libro Grande - Rush Hour-Group 12-Marymont
- 31 March Birthday Night Schertz-Cibolo-Lambda-Winners club
- 31 March Dance club 12 8 PM to Midnight



Happy
Saint
Patrick's
Day!

2 HOUR HELP-LINE: (210) 828-6235
BUSINESS LINE: (210) 821-6325

What is disliked in AA Meetings *An Informal Survey- or Things. Our Sponsor Should Have Taught Us*

Annoying things do happen in meetings...we stay sober in spite of these things and in the process learn to practice tolerance and acceptance This alcoholic decided to take an informal, very unscientific survey of the most common annoying things people do at meetings.

The following list is a summary of the result of that survey:

Side whispering/talking/giggling during the meeting (the top annoyance)

Alcoholics who introduce themselves as addicts and alcoholics or as alcoholics and addicts

Alcoholics who introduce themselves as cross-addicted

Singleness of purpose (blue card) should be read at every AA meeting---Cross talk

Getting up to get coffee during the meeting — and then asking all those about you if you can get them coffee and then if they do want coffee, asking them if they take sugar or cream

"My counselor at treatment" advice sharing---"My therapist" advice sharing, advice giving

Topics that are psycho-babble therapy in nature - i.e. low self-esteem, setting boundaries, dysfunctional family, inner child work

Beepers/cell phones-Profanity-Knitting sewing, crocheting-Filing fingernails, puffing on makeup, brushing hair

Alcoholics who are constantly late- Alcoholics who go out for a smoke during an hour meeting

Alcoholics who take their dentures out at a meeting and lay them on the table (true story)

Ouch!! I recognized myself in some of these behaviors - (not the dentures one)

Reprinted from "No Booze News", Mesa, AZ

SAN ANTONIO

weekend in SA with AA
April 27, 28, 29, 2001

HOTELS AND SUITES

WALKING DISTANCE

- 2 Hawthorn Suites - 830 N. St. Marys
210 527 1900 - Ask for the special rate for Weekend in S.A.
- 3 Four Points San Antonio Riverwalk - 110 Lexington
1 800 288 3927 - 210 223 9461 - Fax 210 233 9267
- 4 Alamo Travelodge -- 405 Broadway
210 222 1000 --- Fax 210 229 9744

FREE PARKING INFORMATION

We have entered an agreement with The Bank Of America Garage at 300 Convent at No. St. Marys parking from 6 PM Friday through Sunday - Enter from North St. Marys - exit on Convent - 1 and 1/2 blocks east of the Municipal Auditorium. **WE ASSUME NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR DAMAGE OR THEFT. LOCK YOUR CAR AND HIDE ALL VALUABLES.**

FIESTA WEEK

This is a very special time of the year in San Antonio. Why not come a few days early and visit our local A.A. Groups and have a little Fiesta fun? So what is Fiesta San Antonio? It is a 10-day celebration held every April to honor the memory of heroes of the Alamo as well as recognize and celebrate San Antonio's rich diverse cultures. This year marks the 109th. Visit the web site at www.fiesta-sa.org for a schedule of events, or write Fiesta San Antonio Commission, Inc - 2611 Broadway, San Antonio, TX 78215-1022, or call toll free 1 877 723 4378

FULLY SELF-SUPPORTING

There are many A.A. Conferences held around the world. One of the most common misconceptions of these gatherings is that they are A.A. Meetings. Conventions and conferences are special events which require a substantial amount of money. This Conference is funded primarily through registration fees, plus contributions from individual A.A. members and A.A. Groups. The majority of these contributions are in the form of food, drinks and scholarship money. No baskets are passed. Attendance is voluntary and as responsible A.A. Members, "we pay our own way".

A Way Of Life That Is

Incredibly More Wonderful

THEME FOR THE 2001 WEEKEND IN SA WITH AA

SCHEDULED EVENTS

MUNICIPAL AUDITORIUM - 100 AUDITORIUM CIRCLE

FRIDAY, APRIL 27, 2001

2:00 PM Registration Opens
5:00 PM Semi-Marathon Meetings Begin
7:30 PM Patty O. (AA) Laguna Beach, CA

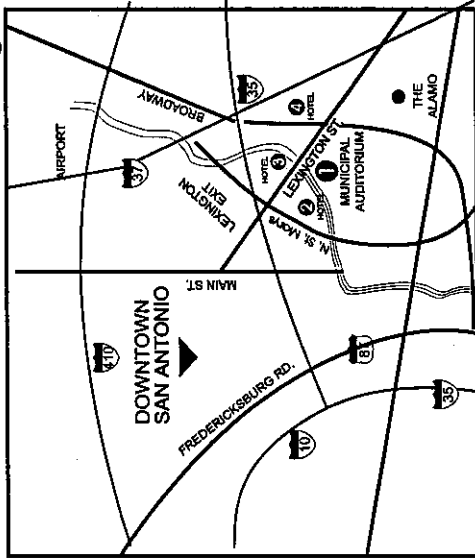
SATURDAY, APRIL 28, 2001

9:00 AM Registration Opens
9:00 AM Semi-Marathon Meetings Begin
10:00 AM Ed C. (AA) Washington, D.C.
11:30 AM Hispanic Speaker (AA)
1:30 PM Janet D. (AFG) Pittsburgh, PA
3:00 PM Talent Show
7:00 PM Jack D. (AA) Pittsburgh, PA
8:30 PM DANCE

SUNDAY, APRIL 29, 2001

8:30 AM Taco Cowbell Breakfast with
side order of Sharing
10:15 AM Gene G. (AA) Punta Gorda, FLA

Visit our website -- www.AAinSA.org



SAN ANTONIO REGISTRATION

NAME _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____

BADGE NAME _____ AA ALANON

BADGE NAME _____ AA ALANON

PRE-REGISTRATION (Per Person) \$20
(\$5. Savings)

DOOR REGISTRATION (\$25 Per Person)

DONATION FOR SCHOLARSHIPS \$ _____

DANCE (Per Person) \$ 5 _____

TOTAL {Check} {Credit Card} \$ _____

Credit Card { VISA } { MC } { AMEX }
{ DISCOVER } { DINERS } { Carte Blanche }

Card Member Name (Please Print or type) _____

Card Number (Please Print or type) _____ Exp. Date _____

Signature _____

If you are using a credit card to register you may choose to complete the registration form and:

FOx it to 210 493 3946

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE AND MAIL TO:

CHAIRMAN, WEEKEND IN S.A.

3607 TRAILWAY PARK

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS 78247 - 2938

DETACH AND RETURN THIS PORTION

GROUP FORUM

GROUP UPDATES

Until further notice the Fort Sam Group is still meeting in its old location (2797 Stanley Road, Roadrunner community center)

NEW GROUP Starting 5 March Noon
The Fort Sam HOSPITAL Group will begin meeting at Brooke Army Medical Center (BAMC) On third Floor West The Health Promotions Center in Conference Room B-3-358 Mon. -Wed-Fri.

The Acceptance Group has added an Open, Friday Night 7PM meeting held at St. Matthew's Episcopal Church (off Kitty Hawk in Universal City) Family members encouraged to attend.

The Get A Life Group Thursday at 7PM St. Stephan Episcopal Church
3726 S. New Braunfels (Near McCreiss Mall) is currently exploring the Three Legacies (Recovery, Unity, & Service) Using AA Comes of Age, The Big Book, The 12&12, and The Service Manual.

The Sunrise Group now meets only on Fridays at 7AM 115 Shannon Lee-next to Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church

The TGIF Group at St. Matthew's Episcopal in Universal City is now a 12:30 meeting

New Group in Blanco
The Happy to be sober Group
Meets 7PM Tu. & Fri.
Blanco Methodist Church
(Behind Dairy Queen)
POC: 1800 828-8017

Meeting Schedule Correction:
Wings Eagle Group meeting at 7PM not 8PM as listed

WORKSHOPS

The Next Frontier: Emotional Sobriety
The Wednesday night Women's Big Book Group is bringing Polly P to San Antonio for a One-day workshop for men and women. Saturday September 29th 9-5 PM, Leon Springs Dance hall
Pre Registration \$10.00 Further Information call 820-3573 Pre-Registration Forms can be obtained at the Central Office



WE CAN HELP

"We can help" I assured the crying woman on the phone. I was about to cry myself as I remembered my own desperation, loneliness, and helplessness on that cold March morning years ago when I was ready at last, to surrender and ask for help,

"What part of town do you live in?" I asked. She named a small community outside of Nashville where we had very few women contacts. "We'll have someone call you right away," I told her. She had already said she was willing to go to a meeting and to talk with an AA member; and now, my job was to find someone.

I felt discouraged with so few numbers available on our 12-step list for her area, then getting no answer at one and an answering machine at another. In the meantime, two people came in to buy literature. I asked one of the ladies the name of her Group to put on the invoice. My heart soared (and my mouth dropped open) when she named a Group in the very community where the woman lived who was asking for help. The lady in our office did not hesitate a minute. "Let me have her number and I'll call her right now. I know exactly where she lives."

Something was working at Central Office that morning and I know what it was.... AND IS.

George H.
Centennial Group

While George passed away several years ago, his experience is still so typical of the day-to-day miracles that occur for volunteers at Central Office.

UPCOMING EVENTS

3 Mar Club 12 Pancake Breakfast 8AM

Club 12 Board of director's Meeting
13 Mar 5:30 PM Visitors welcome

Group 12 Birthday Night
Mar 30 7:30 PM

Dance Club 12
8 PM -Midnight
17 Mar. Dance Club 12

Dance Club 12
8 PM -Midnight
31Mar. Dance Club 12

Birthday Night Winners Club 31 Mar

Winners Club Casino Night
May 12th 9PM-1AM

Tacos -Beef and Chicken Fajitas
Will be served

One month Ending		
PROFIT & LOSS STATEMENT	JAN'01	Jan'00
Sales	\$6,637	\$6,437
Cost of Sales	4,587	3,596
Gross Profit	2,050	2,841
CONTRIBUTIONS		
Nightcap Contributions	60	151
COR Meeting Contributions	13	10
Group Contributions	1,306	1,973
Memorial Contributions	-	0
Individual Contributions	-	146
Birthdays	9	0
Total Revenues	3,438	5,193
OTHER INCOME		
Interest Income	9	33
Miscellaneous	73	
Income from AA in SA	-	33
Total Other Income	82	66
Total Income	3,447	3,798
WAGE RELATED EXPENSES		
Salaries	2,548	3,168
Payroll Tax	194	242
Contract Labor-Clerical	-	50
Travel Allowance	-	50
Miscellaneous	-	
Employee Training	-	0
Total wage related expenses	2,742	3,509
OCCUPANCY EXPENSES		
Rent	855	855
Utilities	517	140
Telephone & Answering system	197	120
Repairs & Maintenance	304	0
Depreciation	250	163
Total Occupancy Expenses	2,123	1,321
OTHER EXPENSES		
Office Supplies, Clerical	100	156
Office Supplies, Non-Clerical	150	0
Postage & Freight	34	79
Equipment Lease & Main	152	152
SWB Yellow Pages	47	45
Nightcap Print. & Post.	268	0
Accounting Service	150	138
Bank and Credit Card Fees	102	0
Total Other Expenses	1,003	567
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 5,868	\$5,358
NET LOSS	(2,421)	(196)

	Jan '01	YTD -'01
Acceptance		
Alamo Hts		
Broadway		
Came to Believe Grp		
Community		
Colonies North		
County Line		
Depot Grp(Port Lavaca)		
Entire Abstinence		
First things First		
Family		
Fort Sam Houston		
Freedom Group		
Free at Last	\$10.00	\$10.00
Goliad		
Generic		
Grupo El Libro Grande	\$15.00	\$15.00
Grupo Esperanza		
Grupo Unidad	\$20.00	\$20.00
Grupo y Paz	\$10.00	\$10.00
Halt Group	\$60.00	\$60.00
Highland		
Hondo		
Keep it Simple Group		
Kelley Special		
La Quinta Tradicion		
Lavernia		
Lambda		
Legal Professions		
Laurel Hts Group		
Marymont		
New Life		
NorthEast Group		
Nueva Vida		
North San Pedro Group	\$70.00	\$70.00
Oak Hills Group		
Oblate Group		
Pearsall		
Pleasanton		
Poteset(Strawberry)		
Road Of happyDestiny	\$218.00	\$218.00
Rush Hour Gro. p	\$187.72	\$187.72
SA North Womens		
Schertz-Glboro		
Serendipity Group	\$150.00	\$150.00
SW Loop Group		
Spirit of Hope		
Stahl Rd Grp		
Sunrise		
Tezel Rd Women		
Travis Park		
Twelve	\$360.00	\$360.00
Utopia Grp		
Universal City	\$120.00	\$120.00
Valley HI	\$40.00	\$40.00
Windercrest	\$25.00	\$25.00
Womens Big Book		
Woodlake	\$20.00	\$20.00
AREA		
Boerne Noon		
Bulverde		
Blanco		
New Braunfels(Area)		
BB Study (Kerrville)		
Total	\$1305.72	\$1305.72
Memorials		
Birthdays	\$9.00	\$9.00

Subject: The Buffalo Theory

I have not seen anyone explain this as well as the all mighty wise Cliff Clavin, on the sitcom **Cheers**.

One afternoon at Cheers, Cliff Clavin was explaining the Buffalo theory to his buddy Norm. Here's how it went:

'Well ya see Norm, it's like this... A herd of buffalo can only move as fast as the slowest buffalo. And when the herd is hunted, it is the slowest and weakest ones at the back that are killed first.

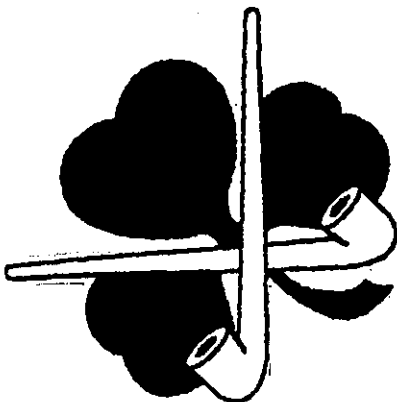
This natural selection is good for the herd as a whole, because the general speed and health of the whole group keeps improving by the regular killing of the weakest members."

"In much the same way, the human brain can only operate as fast as the slowest brain cells. Excessive intake of alcohol, as we all know, kills brain cells, but naturally it attacks the slowest and weakest brain cells first.

In this way, regular consumption of beer eliminates the weaker brain cells, making the brain a faster and more efficient machine.

That's why you always feel smarter after a few beers."

(I wonder if this explains why the potential of the average alcoholic who find recovery is higher than the potential of the average non-alcoholic?)



Danger Sign!

When your eyes have wandered from the alcoholics who still suffer and need help to the faults of those whom the program has already helped.

We Who Cannot Help Ourselves

Here are some words of experience, strength and hope from a chronic relapser. My name is Rita, and I am an alcoholic. Today is my sobriety day, and it is the only day I can stay sober. I came into the program of Alcoholics Anonymous in April of 1987 and have put together about eighteen months of sobriety in those three years. I've been labeled a "classic alcoholic" since I took my first drink. Now, twenty years later, I am still on the bottom because of my drinking

Let this letter be a gentle reminder to those who have years of continuous sobriety, and release from the obsession of alcohol. We who continue to destroy ourselves with alcohol come to an AA meeting to talk about our problem with our drinking, because, that is where we have been told or ordered by the court to go. What we hear is, "Shut us and maybe you'll learn something." We hear from people who have high bottoms, have suffered a few serious consequences, and enjoy the fellowship of this program because they are so-o-o-o spiritual. They're so perfect, in fact that we wonder if they ever took that first drink! These perfect human beings boast about sobriety every chance they get, run the meetings, and talk the longest when they share, whether in a discussion, Step, or Big Book meeting. We un-recovered folks feel like fish out of water.

Does any of this sound familiar? When I go to meetings, day after day, I rarely hear anybody say, "I have a hangover or I have a problem with alcohol." Instead, it is:

"I feel hurt, angry at my boss, mad at my mother, etc., but since I've got ten years of sobriety, I know it won't make me drink." After ten years, they are still miserable and let everybody at the meetings know and they do it week after week. My sponsor says that I should talk to her about my personal problems and go to AA to talk about my alcohol problem.

I honestly have to go to hospital meetings to hear anyone discuss problems with alcohol. A lot of people think AA will solve their marital problems, their problems with jobs and co-workers, their overeating or anorexia, their sex and drug addictions, and their "I just plain lonely" problem. I believe that this is not the right program to take on every problem in life, especially if the problem has nothing to do with staying sober. I sincerely doubt that Bill W. or Dr. Bob could have stayed sober for one minute in today's meetings! I know I can't get one word in edgewise about my alcohol problem with all the different compulsions people bring to meetings. Maybe nobody agrees with me, but I was led to understand that this program was for alcoholics.

I'm so desperately ill, I am dying from this disease. I want recovery more than anything in my life. I have no doubt that if we went back to basics, more people like me would find continuous recovery. It really confuses me when I cannot go to a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous and talk about my alcoholism.

My lengths of sobriety are getting longer, thanks to AA, but I feel like I have to compete with others in the Fellowship during a meeting to get a chance to speak briefly about my problems with alcohol. I get very upset and leave the meeting, even though I know it means I may drink over this resentment with an AA group.

Most meetings have a one-year sobriety requirement before members can talk at a meeting, give a lead, or sponsor anyone. How the hell are we supposed to stay sober? I have never read anywhere in the Big Book of such a thing, and wish we could just go back to the old style meetings of just a bunch of last gaspers who have a drinking problem who come together to talk about their problem with alcohol. Am I being unrealistic or unfair. I realize I may sound like a typical alcoholic, complaining about the program, but I wonder if any of your readers agree with me?

We alcoholics have an obsession with alcohol, a fatal attraction. We cannot stop drinking all by ourselves without the continuous help of others in the program who have long-term sobriety. The whole focus of AA meetings should be on helping the newly sober person *stay sober*, because we are the ones totally defeated and demoralized by alcohol.

First things first, folks—help us who cannot help ourselves. We too want to be happy, joyous and free.

Rita G., Columbus, Ohio

**San Antonio Metropolitan Service Organization
MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 18, 2001 MEETING**

In Attendance:

District 1A DCM – Lynne G.
District 17 DCM – Steve J. (Secretary)
District 1F DCM – Frank E.
Corrections Chair – Marvin Q.
Hospitals / Institutions Chair – Bob T.
Cooperation with the Professional Community / Public Information Chair – Glenn C.

District 16 DCM – Barbi H. (Treasurer)
District 19 DCM – Bill T. (Chair)
Archives Chair – Tom H.
Grapevine Chair – Martha H.
SAMSO to Central Service Office Liaison – Judy F.

Absent:

District 1E DCM – Len A.
Central Service Office Liaison to SAMSO – Randy S.

District 18 DCM – Gil C.

Meeting called to order by **Bill T.**, at 6:40 PM with Moment of Silence and Serenity Prayer.
Jack F. - Read the Traditions. New GSRs: **Tom** – Rush Hour Group, **George** – Universal City Group
New DCMs: None

Announcements: Judy F. introduced herself as the Hospitality Chairperson for Weekend in S.A, which is to be held April 27-29 at the Municipal Auditorium. The Hospitality Committee would like to hear from the Groups on how they want to participate. The Committee can use food and/or money and will be signing up volunteers at meetings in the weeks to come. Judy is available any time for questions, comments, or to let her know how the Groups decide. Judy can be reached at 832-9068.

Presentations: None.

Central Service Office Liaison to SAMSO – Randy S. – (Absent – *No Report*)

SAMSO Liaison to Central Service Office – Judy F. – No Report.

Chairman's Report – Bill T. – No Report.

Secretary's Report – Steve J. – Noted a correction to January's minutes – the meeting place/time printed for the H&I Committee was incorrect. Asked for a motion to approve the minutes as printed in the *Nightcap* with the noted correction. **Glenn C.** made the motion; seconded by **Bob T.** All approved.

Treasurer's Report – Barbi H. – Submitted the report for January. Donations were \$433.64 with expenses of \$750.00 for a balance of \$3,661.03, of which \$2,625.00 is earmarked for Area Workshop attendance by the five Standing Committee Chairs, leaving an available balance of \$1,036.03. A motion was made by **Karen C.** to accept the report as given. **Mike C.** seconded the motion. All approved.

Archives – Tom H. – Any Groups interested in storing their Archives material in the climate controlled storage facility can contact Tom. The Archives Committee holds its meetings on the 1ST Sunday of each month at St. David's Episcopal Church, 1300 Wiltshire, at 7:15 PM. Tom can be reached at 696-5228, or email at teh543@sprynet.com.

Correctional Facilities – Marvin Q. – The Committee is always in need of more people. A representative from the Huntsville Unit will be at the Goliad Group on March 3RD, from 9-12 AM. The CFC Committee holds its meetings on the 1ST Wednesday of each month in the Alanon room at Club 12 at 102 Thames at 7:00 PM. Marvin can be reached at 365-9973.

Grapevine – Martha H. – Thanked the Groups for their participation in the "Pass-It-On" campaign. The Grapevines collected from the campaign will be divided between the H&I and CFC Committees. The Grapevine Committee is looking for new members and Martha will be happy to attend Group Conscience Meetings upon request. The Grapevine Committee holds its meetings on the 1ST Monday of each month at Jim's at 410 and Blanco at 7:00 PM. Martha can be reached at 344-6588, or email at JHernden@aol.com.

Hospitals / Institutions – Bob T. – Information on the Temporary Contact Program was placed on the table. Bob has instated the program at the NIX and Transplant Hospitals. Individuals interested in the Temporary Contact Program can call Bob. The Hospitals/Institutions Committee holds its meetings on the 2ND Saturday of each month at the Winner's Club (Snack Bar Area) at 11 AM. Bob can be reached at 256-8681, or e-mail at anotherdrunk@r67.net.

Cooperation with Professional Community / Public Information Chair – Glenn C. – The *American Physical Therapy Association Convention*, held February 15-17, went very well. There were ~2,800 participants, with ~1,000 booths. The next event is the *"American Counseling Association Convention"*, to be held March 15-20 at the Henry B. Gonzales Convention Center and will likely be even larger. This event is a 5-day event that will run over the weekend, setup will occur on the 14TH. The Committee will also be participating in the UTSA Health Fair on March 21ST from 10AM – 4PM. Whenever the Committee is asked by New York to support an event, New York sends a complete package of materials (both English and Spanish) –, that include 2 display racks. Glenn currently has 10 racks of materials from past events. While some of the larger Groups are participating in the "Adopt a Literature Rack" program, where Literature racks are placed within the community; the startup cost for a Group is \$65.00.

Glenn suggested that the Literature racks from past CPC/PI events are put to good use by donating them to smaller Groups for that cannot afford the \$65.00 startup cost. The only cost the Group will be that of maintaining the Literature - \$5.00 per month. Glenn asked for and received unanimous approval from the GSRs for the proposal. Any Groups interested in receiving a donated

'THE STRAWS

The 3rd step waltz is what we know as 1,2,3 1,2,3, 1,2,3 1,2,3 etc. It's not that we can't get the first 3 steps right, it is that we avoid the 4~ step by doing 1,2,3 over & over. It's what I did & I am not alone. For my first 18 months I worked at getting 1,2 & 3 perfect. I went deep! I went very deep. I was not even conscious of what I was doing. I was doing anything to avoid 4. I thought of it as "Fatal 4." I knew it would kill me if I ever got to it. I was 31 years old.

I sobered up on July 8, 1971 in San Antonio, Texas. I was 30 years old & most of the AA members were at least 65. They were old, fat & ugly. Today I am 59, old, fat & ugly. I thought they were really dumb & out of step with time. Today I am really dumb & out of step with time, but today I am working to keep up. I lost my intelligence one-day at a time. I was just brilliant when I sobered up! Today I have to pay real close attention in meetings so I won't miss what I need to learn today. I have to listen to everyone be able to learn.

To get me past 1, 2 & 3, my sponsor told me this story. I don't know where he got it or if he made it up for me but it was & is profound to me & for me today. He said, "Boy!" That was a polite term he used to get my attention. . . . "Boy I notice you still haven't done your 4th" step. The book says that if you skip this step you may not stay sober." This was not the first time we had had this conversation. He said, "let me tell you a story."

"All your life you have created different characters for different people. I don't know how many of Corky characters you have created & you probably aren't even aware of them. You have one for your wife, one for your children, one for your girlfriends, one for your mother, one for each brother, one for your sister one for your priest, one for each friend & one for each in-law & so on. When you combine all these characters into one — we have Corky."

That hurt! That was cruel! How could he! I was scared to death because he was right & I knew it inside! I wanted to cry! He had gotten my attention. He went on, "you see, these characters you created are like soda straws. Each one independent & your own creation. The real Corky today is the total sum of these characters. Think of Corky as all these straws bound by a rubber band." Wow, he could have bound them by something stronger I thought but I understood all too well. He was absolutely correct. I had never thought of me in that light.

"Now" he said! "What we have to do is stand the straws up on end & cut the rubber band. That is the 4th & 5th step. Now don't worry because one of them will remain standing. Only one! That one is the real Corky! Whatever that character is, however that character appears, that is what you have to deal with. That character is where you have to start. That character is what you have to live with & try to improve.

That's the bad news! The good news is that you get to start all over & develop that character in any way you want. That character must be pretty much the same to everyone. He has certain characteristics that you really can't change. For example, in your case he is probably never going to be what the world considers as pretty. He is probably never going to be a size small. However you can become anything you choose. You can do anything you want. You can go anywhere you choose. You in effect are going to begin again.

Now! Finally! As long as you continue to not drink, go to meetings, read the "Big Book", work the steps, & carry this message to other alcoholics on a daily basis, you never have to take a 4th & 5th step again. You will use the 10th, 11th & 12th steps on a daily basis after you do the 4th & 5th steps."

That did it. I went & did my 4th & 5th step! Thank you Charlie B. I am alive & still sober today, in part, because of your "Straw Story."

"Corky" S.-7-8-7 1. Into Action Group. College Station, Texas

From "Dr. Bob's Nightmare:"

"I spend a great deal of time passing on what I learned to others who want and need it badly. I do it for four reasons:

1. Sense of duty.
2. It is a pleasure.
3. Because in so doing I am paying my debt to the man who took time to pass it on to me.
4. Because every time I do it I take out a little more insurance for myself against a possible slip."

SEVEN DEADLY SINS

These considerations were taken from pages 48, 49, 66 & 67 of the Twelve and Twelve
The bold type presents definitions from Webster's Unabridged Dictionary.

PRIDE: An over high opinion of oneself; exaggerated self-esteem; conceit, arrogance, vanity, self-satisfaction.

- Have I been so proud that I've been scorned (disrespected) as a braggart (bragger)?
- Have I acted prideful, consciously or unconsciously out of fear?
- Have I used pride to justify my excesses in my sex conduct?
- Do I like to feel and act superior to others?

GREED: Excessive desire for acquiring or having; desire for more than one needs or deserves.

- Have I been so greedy that I've been or could be labeled a thief?
- Do I long for the possessions of others out of fear of not getting enough?
- Do I let greed masquerade as ambition?

LUST: To feel an intense desire, especially sexual desire; to long: after or for.

- Have I been lustful enough to rape, if not physically what about in my mind?
- Do I fear I will never have the sex relations I need?
- Do I have sex excursions that have been dressed up in dreams or delusions of romance?

ANGER: A strong feeling excited by a real or supposed injury; often accompanied by a desire to take vengeance, or to obtain satisfaction from the offending party; resentment; wrath.

- Have I been angry enough to murder?
- Do I get angry out of fear when my instinctive demands are threatened?
- Have I enjoyed self-righteous anger in the fact that many people annoy me and that makes me superior to them?
- Have I enjoyed gossiping as a polite form of murder by character assassination?

GLUTTONY: One who eats too much. One with a great capacity for something; as, a glutton for work.

- Have I been gluttonous enough to ruin my health?
- Do I grab for everything I can, fearing I'll never have enough?
- Do I bury myself in my work, hobbies or activities?

ENVY: To resent another for excellence or superiority in any way, and to be desirous of acquiring it.

- Do I agonized over the chronic (persistent or recurring) pain of envy?
- Does seeing the ambitions of others materialize make me fear that mine haven't?
- Do I suffer from never being satisfied with what I have?
- Have I spent more time wishing for what others have than working towards them?

SLOTH: Disinclination to action or labor; sluggishness; habitual indolence; laziness, idleness; slowness; delay.

- Have I been paralyzed by sloth?
- Do I get alarmed with fear at the prospect of work?
- Do I work hard with no better motive than to be secure and slothful later on?
- Do I loaf and procrastinate?
- Do I work grudgingly and under half steam?

The Traditions are neither rules, regulations, nor laws. No sanctions or punishments can be invoked for their infraction. Perhaps in no other area of society would these principles succeed. Yet in this Fellowship of alcoholics, the unenforceable Traditions carry a power greater than that of the law...Perhaps the secret of their power lies in the fact that these life-giving communications spring out of living experience and are rooted in sacrificial love."

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