

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.

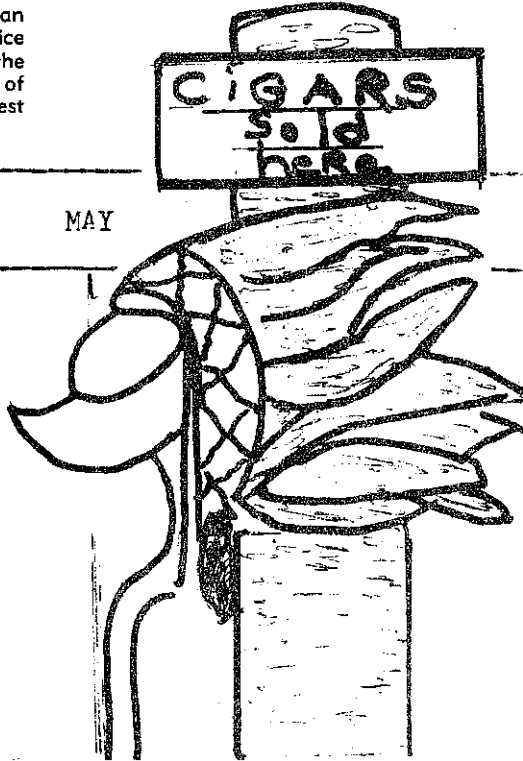
Address all communications to:
"THE NIGHT CAP"
Lexington Building
109 Lexington Ave., Suite 215
San Antonio, Texas 78205
Phone 226-2523

VOLUME TWO

MAY

1973

NUMBER ONE



WE MUST BE ENTIRELY HONEST WITH SOMEBODY IF WE EXPECT TO LIVE LONG OR HAPPILY IN THIS WORLD. RIGHTLY AND NATURALLY, WE THINK WELL BEFORE WE CHOOSE THE PERSON OR PERSONS WITH WHOM TO TAKE THIS INTIMATE AND CONFIDENTIAL STEP.....

--ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

AN INTERPRETATION OF THE 12 STEPS

STEP FIVE: ADMITTED TO GOD, OURSELVES AND ANOTHER HUMAN BEING THE EXACT NATURE OF OUR WRONGS

(Two Points of View)

1

To those of you about to embark upon your 5th Step and those who have not yet done so, BLESSINGS ON YOU! Plunge in... You are in for one of the most enlightening and rewarding experiences of your entire life.

Many look at this Step with chagrin, and hastily put it on the bottom of their list. Are you one? If so, delay no longer, because far from being something to dread, you will wonder why you procrastinated, once you do it. The release and the joy of being free from so many feelings of guilt, and the sense of exhilaration that accompanies this action cannot be described. It simply has to be experienced.

Once this is done, our progress is assured. Having admitted to God, ourselves and another human being the nature of our wrongs, we have cleared the deck for action. We have burned our bridges behind us--we can't go back. However that is not the most important aspect of this Step. It is designed primarily to assure our humility, our honesty, and the facing of reality. It enables us to "clean house" so to speak, to get rid of the clutter - clean up the attic. Having done this, we cannot conscientiously return to our former way of living. We are forced by the inherent good within us to reach higher and higher. Old habit patterns and reactions must be adjusted and changed to fit into the new life.

There is something psychological about the 5th Step that gives us humility. Having admitted our defects and past wrongs to another human being renders us vulnerable, which is good.

Having bared our weaknesses, we have rid ourselves of pretense and sham. Our defenses are down and we can no longer pretend to be what we are not while at the same time we are obligated to live up to the best within us.

Admitting these things before has been impossible because of our false pride. In our distorted minds this was a sign of weakness, but in fulfilling our obligation to ourself, in compliance with the 5th Step, we gain innumerable compensatory values. We gain a new kind of pride...a feeling of worth.. , self-respect, humility, honesty, freedom from the past, self-confidence and a clean spiritual feeling. Fear is gone and we know we never have to fear again. We are in harmony with our environment.

It has been the experience of many alcoholics that selecting the right person with whom to take this step is of utmost importance. For this reason I dare suggest-- NAY, ADVISE, that you choose someone outside AA. These individuals are to be found among doctors, lawyers, ministers and counselors. Perhaps this matter cannot be accomplished in just one session, so in selecting the person to whom you are going for help, you should explain both the nature and reason for this step. This does not necessarily mean that our list of wrongs which we are to recite is so long, but merely that an understanding attitude and adequate time are needed to do it properly.

If we keep in mind that we are the person who is the most intolerant of our own shortcomings; that we are the harshest of judges and the most unforgiving of our past errors, and that in ridding ourselves of these things, we receive not only God's forgiveness but our own, then we will seek to hasten the day that we can look in the mirror and see a serene and smiling countenance reflect itself. Such are the compensations to be received from the 5th step.

Let me reiterate...plunge... and BLESS YOU.

N.M.

* * * * *

2

To anyone outside the program of Alcoholics Anonymous, Step Five would seem like the ravings of a maniac:

"Here is a poor human being so sick, they think they talk with God!" "They are demented to the extent that not only can they Talk With God,---they can even ADMIT various things to Him!

"Such a SIMPLE (and desperately sick) faith they must have! Poor souls! What tragic illness struck them so hard?

This could even lead the shocked observer to study Step Five further:

"Admitted to God,---and Ourselves??? Does this twisted mind consider himself to be PLURAL??? How many people must he think he is??"

"---And Another human being!" This goes too far!!! He classifies himself a Human Being, ---a Plurality on a Parallel with God! No such person walks the earth,--"

"The EXACT NATURE of---Now, we are surely in the Land of OZ! A person that talks with God, considers himself plural, a human being, and able to discern the NATURE of Things, in an EXACT way!!! This must represent the very Zenith of mental disaster!!!"

"The exact nature of OUR WRONGS!!!!!!" Close the gates! This wretch must never be considered for parole! To allow this type of mind Freedom would expose us all to the most treacherous and dangerous personality alive! It Honestly Believes that it comprehends the Exact Nature of All Our Wrongs! Unquestionably, some massive compulsion urges it to splatter the sins of the Universe before the Throne of God, (and some hapless human bystander!) and with such Clarity and Exactness of Nature, that the whole stinking mess will somehow turn upon itself; exposed to the Glory of God, and one of His creatures, thereby restoring the world to its original tranquility! The madness of such reasoning almost infects the rational mind: seeking through pity, some shred of sanity or hope! Turn away quickly! There is nothing here for us but desolation and total defeat! We are not defeated! Come! Fight on!!

----Well! Who would ever have thought that our poor old "Step Five" would cause such flurry?

Do we really mean that we talk with God? No. Just to Him. True. A tragic illness has struck us hard. Alcoholism. But do we consider ourselves Plural? Well, yes. In a way. A Fellowship. How many do we think we are? Many, we hope. And many more, tomorrow. Many will not come, but through God's Grace, many will. Do we really know the Exact nature of our wrongs? Perhaps the people who wrote the Steps knew the alcoholic mind best. Had they said "Admitted the nature of our wrongs", we would have had the tendency to evade and rationalize. We intentionally closed off that possibility, by seeking the "exact" nature of our wrongs. We seek to be precise; like spiritual progress, and not perfection.

And how about defeat? Somehow, we have found victory in it: In the Big Book, Page 103 says "We have to stop fighting." So we do. "Fight On!" is Not our motto. Page 341 explains the Great Paradoxes in AA. We lose to win, and die to live. Step Five is TOTAL SURRENDER to the TRUTH. And what about Freedom? Why,---Everyone knows that the TRUTH will Make You Free! That's What Step Five is ALL About! FREEDOM! From Alcohol, old ideas and the old life! Thank God for AA, Step Five, Sobriety and a whole, New, Free LIFE!

Jim A.

A. A. HIGHLIGHTS

Bill's first day of sobriety: Dec. 11, 1934

Bill met Dr. Bob: Mother's Day, 1935.

Dr. Bob's first day of sobriety: June 10, 1935.

First AA hospitalized: Akron, Ohio, 1935.

First AA Group: Akron, 1936.

First plans for AA movement begun: Fall, 1937.

12 Steps written: Brooklyn, N.Y., 1938.

"Alcoholics Anonymous" published April, 1939.

Rockefeller Dinner: Union Club, New York City, Feb. 18, 1940

First AA Clubhouse: NYC, June 18, 1940.
 First Foreign AA Group: Australia, 1942.
 First AA publication: Central Bulletin, Cleveland, Sept., 1942. First religious hospital open to AA: St. Thomas, Akron, 1942.
 First issue of The AA Grapevine, June 1944.
 First hospital plan: Knickerbocker Hospital, NYC, April, 1945. First National Anniversary: 10th at Cleveland, June 10, 1945. First draft of 12 Traditions of AA: Published Grapevine, April 1946. First Draft of Short Form Traditions, Nov. 1949. Anne Smith died: June 1, 1949. First International Conference: July, 1950. Dr. Bob died: Nov. 16, 1950 at City Hosp., Akron. The First Memorial Issue of Grapevine dedicated to Dr. Bob, Jan. 1951. First General Service Conf. April, 1951, New York City. THE LASKER AWARD - October 30, 1951.

GROUP NEWS

THE HAVEN, 1640 W. Woodlawn, will resume its monthly dinners, always the second Sunday of each month. This month the dinner will be on May 13 at 1:00 PM with its usual Sunday Haven Group meeting moved up to 3:00 PM. On other Sundays the meeting hour remains at 5:00 PM. Plan to be at The Haven on Sunday afternoon where you know there will be plenty of good food... for eating and for thought!

THE ST. AGNES GROUP, 804 Ruiz St., celebrated its 1st Anniversary!!! Congratulations to St. Agnes and all the Bi-lingual Groups! They are adding so much to AA in San Antonio.

24 HOUR GROUP, 24 Hour Club, 1203 Fredericksburg Rd., has plans for a merry month in May.

Come to our monthly dinner on Sunday, May 27 at 1 PM, followed by Bingo!

THE GOLIAD GROUP, 104 Avondale, will hold its monthly Barbecue on Sunday, May 20, at 6 PM.

GRUPO UNIDAD, 311 N.W. 24th St., is having great success with its "Group Exchange Program". Groups from as far away as Laredo have exchanged meetings with us. We hope to trade speakers with the Monterey Groups in the near future. We would like to express our thanks to Bill S., Jeanne W., and Edna McG. for the help they have given us on this project.

THE LAUREL HEIGHTS GROUP, 301 W. Russell, will have its semi-annual Birthday Party in June with a Speaker's Meeting followed by refreshments. The Group meets every Sunday at 5 PM in the parish hall of Christ Episcopal Church.

THE REALITY GROUP is a new AA Group with Open Speaker's Meetings held each Friday at 8:15 PM in the Calvary Missionary Church, 1518 Steves Ave. Located near the State Hospital, this meeting was started with the idea of giving help to those guys and gals just leaving the Hospital. As anyone who has been a patient there knows, the transition period between Hospital and home is difficult. Sharing experience, hope and strength is the reality of Alcoholics Anonymous. See you at the meeting.

THE SANTA FE GROUP, 1108 Brunswick, celebrated its 4th Birthday with a party on April 27. There was a short meeting chaired by Joe O., and Frank P. from Pleasanton spoke. The meeting was followed with a Mexican supper, complete with Mariachis and dancing -- Lots of fun and fellowship! ! !

THE DOWNTOWN GROUP, Sahara Club, 809 E. Euclid, has changed its Closed Discussion Meeting from Sunday night to Wednesday nights at 8:15. Poor Boy Bingo continues at 8:00 PM each Saturday night. The monthly dinner is held the first Sunday in each month at 1:00 PM, this month on May 6.

GROUP TWELVE, Club Twelve, 102 Thames, has an Al-Anon Beginners' Meeting on Sundays at 4:00 PM in conjunction with the 90-day Beginners. The regular dinner and Bingo will be held May 26 at 7:00 PM. On May 18 there will be a special speaker, Olan (Ollie) L. from Dallas, Texas. Bridge is played each Friday after the meeting. Everyone is invited!

VALLEY HI GROUP, Marbach Christian Church, Marbach at Loop 410, reminds you of its Alateen Meeting on Tuesday nights at 8:15 PM, with Closed AA and Al-Anon meetings at the same time.

Faith is like a bird that feels the light and sings before the dawn is broken.

AN ALCOHOLIC STORY

I WASN'T A DERELICT

I was not born an alcoholic. I had to work at it. I never had trouble with drinking in high school. When I got drunk it was more of an experiment than a cop-out on life. After I joined the Service I drank more often, one after work and a few at parties, occasionally getting smashed.

In 1957 I was in a plane accident and permanently retired from the Service. My life changed radically. I was unable to support my family and changed jobs like people change shirts. I worried about my job, my family, and anything else I could think of. I felt under great pressure, that life was giving me the short end of the stick. It was then that I discovered that drinking would settle me down and allow me to think straight.

With the drinking, my family began to go to pieces. I countered this with more drinks, and the vicious circle grew tighter. I found I could not face life without the booze. I became frightened; I hated life and what it was doing to me.

My family was sick of me and I of myself, but I was helpless. What more could I do? My wife had mentioned AA in the past, suggesting that I go, but she wasn't being realistic about my problem. How could a bunch of bums and moral degenerates help me? I wasn't like them. Finally my wife asked me to leave our house. Hurt and confused, I went to my first AA meeting. I went only because I had no other place to go. I don't remember much about the meeting, but it was there that I suddenly realized I was no longer alone in this world.

From my new friends I learned that alcoholism was a disease- that people from all walks of life suffered from it. Alcoholism had happened to them; they had felt the same fear and despair. They too had come in desperation and had stayed to find a solution through the fellowship of AA and the 12 steps of recovery. This was for me! I am now a grateful recovering alcoholic and a happy and useful man.

J. M.

AN AL-ANON STORY

STOP, LOOK & LISTEN IN AL-ANON

When I attended my first Al-Anon meeting several years ago, I was frightened, frustrated, and sick as most newcomers are. I saw how my husband had changed through his working the AA program and I liked what I saw. I found the "Al-Anon way of life" was just what I had been searching for and that it was, for me, to be worked 24 hours of every day.

It is difficult to change old habits and the life style acquired over a period of years, and recovery is a slow process, but by attending meetings I gain strength and courage to live ONE DAY AT A TIME: I also know just how dependent I am on the Serenity Prayer. I have found that I cannot stand still; I must grow. By taking part in the meetings, asking questions and speaking my thoughts, I have gained more confidence and strength.

Although sobriety left our home a couple of years ago, I must still draw strength from my Al-Anon and AA friends, reading the excellent Al-Anon literature, and most of all from God, my Higher Power. He is always there to listen, forgive and pick me up when I have slips. I am learning to Let Go and Let God through the strength that He gives me and faith in the Al-Anon Program.

I pray that someday my husband will return to the AA Program and to his AA friends. He knows where to turn for help and I know that I must let him find his own way.

With the help of Al-Anon and AA I am still learning to STOP, LOOK & LISTEN!

1. STOP worrying and giving in to the luxury of self-pity, and follow the Al-Anon way of life as closely as I am able.
2. LOOK for some way to help at the meetings or for someone who needs help, and try to do some good each day.
3. LISTEN to the newcomers and members with an open mind, and listen for God's answer to my prayers and accept even though it may not be what I want to hear.

Goldie H., Valley Hi Group

REPORTING BACK:

SOUTHWEST AREA WORKSHOP There were 86 present at the Workshop held in San Antonio at the Quality Inn March 31 and April 1. Elves S., Delegate to New York, Tony F., Alternate, Carl H., Area Chairman, Margaret H., Area Sec'y-Treas., and from the Central Service Office, officers and the Exec. Sec'y, Corrinne A. There were 30 GSRs, 9 Alternates, 2 past Delegates, 8 Committee Members representing 4 Districts, and 37 AA and Al-Anon members. Broken down a little more, there were 48 from San Antonio, 36 from other towns and cities in the Area, and 2 from Germany. Counting them up or breaking them down, the attendance at the Workshop was good. It seems to indicate an increasing interest and desire to participate by the Group members in the total AA picture.

90 Delegates from the United States and Canada will gather in New York this month for the 1973 General Service Conference. Topics to be discussed, which were on the agenda for the Workshop, include:

1. Should an AA group have permanent (non-rotating) officers?
2. Are we losing our valued one-to-one relationship as AA groups get larger?
3. Are Traditions being violated in Institutions?
4. Is your life worth a penny a day?
5. To whom is the Delegate responsible for his performance in that office?
6. What is the most appropriate use of the Bill W. Memorial Fund (now about \$40,000)?
7. When is a newcomer in AA long enough to learn about AA's service structure?
8. Ask-It-Basket sessions with questions from the delegates.

And so Elves, our Delegate, will go to the New York Conference representing the "group conscience" of this Area on these subjects. We will be hearing from him on his return when he will visit the Groups and share the conclusions of this year's General Service Conference.

28TH ANNIVERSARY, SAN ANTONIO On April 12, 1973, twenty-eight years of Alcoholics Anonymous in San Antonio was celebrated with a dinner followed by an AA speaker, John C. from Brownwood, with Arthur C. of San Antonio as MC for the occasion. 170 alcoholics and nonalcoholics joined together at the Anacacho Room of the St. Anthony Hotel to make it a Birthday Party to be remembered. Kate R. served as Chairman.

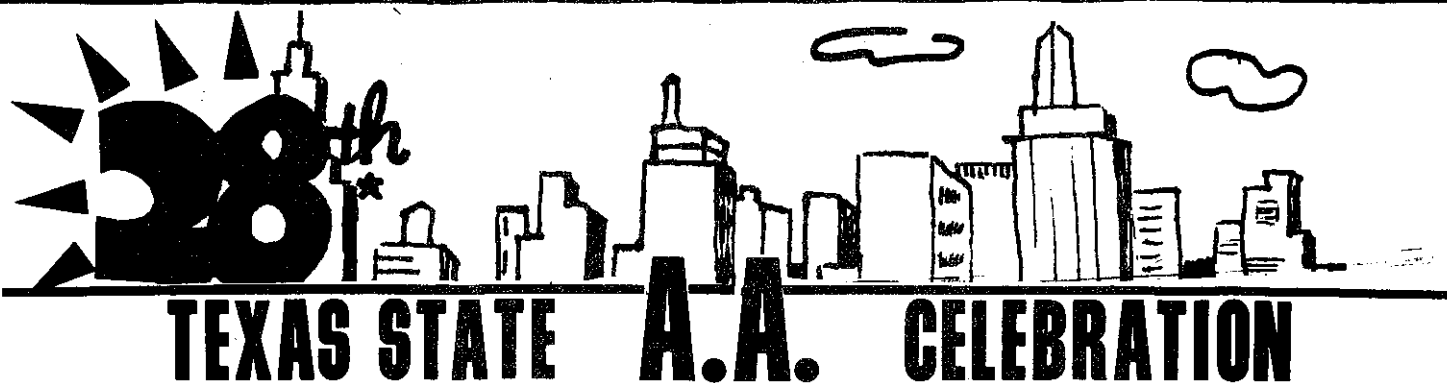
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LOOKING FORWARD:

19TH ANNUAL CONVENTION MINDEN, LA. Group of AA will be celebrated at Lake Bistineau with a Lake Party May 25-27, 1973. Their flier says "The Biggest Little AA Convention in the World".

32ND ANNIVERSARY: OKLAHOMA AA State Conference will be held at the Skirvin Hotel, Oklahoma City, May 18-20, 1973. Theme "Sponsorship- the Hand of AA". Flier says "Excellent Speakers-Banquet- Dance- Good Old AA Fellowship. Join your Friends and Make New Ones". Registration \$5, Banquet \$6. For more information write Conference Committee, P.O.B. 60826, Oklahoma City, Okla., 73106.

16TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE of Young People in AA will be held at the St. Francis Hotel in San Francisco, Calif. on July 6-8. Registration forms, flyers and other information may be obtained by writing to: 16th International Conference of Young People in AA, P.O.B. 6759, San Francisco, Calif., 94101.



WIRE - WRITE - CONVENTION COMMITTEE:

P. O. BOX 2081

DALLAS, TEXAS 75201

SPECIAL BULLETIN!

LOIS W.

WIFE OF OUR LATE BELOVED
CO-FOUNDER - BILL W.,
MOTHER OF AL-ANON - ALATEEN FAMILY
GROUPS ALL OVER THE WORLD,

WILL ATTEND OUR CELEBRATION ALL 4 DAYS
AUTOGRAPH BOOKS - LITERATURE - "VISIT WITH HER IN PERSON"

SPECIAL FRIDAY NOON: "LOIS LUNCHEON" AL-ANON - ALKIE - ALATEEN GROUPS

A PACKED PROGRAM OF THE BEST SPEAKERS YOU SAID YOU WANTED TO HEAR AGAIN !!!

- **** JACK B. (Queen for a Day), HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA (Banquet)
- **** NORM A. (You'll never hear a better A.A. Talk), MORAVIA, CALIFORNIA
- **** CECILY C. (Author, Writer, Speaker) A TERRIFIC A.A. STORY, ST. DAVIDS, PA.
- **** FATHER ED. M. (Grapevine Story, 1968) SUNDAY SPIRITUAL ANALYSIS, BOSTON COLLEGE
- **** MIDGE McF., NEW YORK - G.S.O. - YOU'LL LOVE HER STORY
- **** WILLIAM C., BOSTON, MASS., Attorney - Ex-Trustee - "A TERRIFIC A.A. STORY"

- THURSDAY NITE JAMBOREE - ONE OF HOLLYWOOD'S BEST COMEDIANS -

SPECIAL

ALL TABLES FOR BANQUET ON RESERVE BASES - EARLY REGISTRATIONS WILL HAVE FRONT TABLES.....
GET YOUR GROUP TOGETHER - RESERVE 8 PLACE TABLES IN GROUPS ON FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED BASES -
WE EXPECT OVER 3,000 - MAIL YOUR CONVENTION REGISTRATION IN NOW!!!! MAIL YOUR HOTEL RESERVATIONS
NOW!!!! DIRECTLY TO HOTEL - GET FORMS FROM YOUR GROUP SECRETARY - OR WRITE.

SEARCY W., Chairman - 214/357-1478
LLOYD C., Co-Chmn. - 214/239-3225
PAULINE T., Secty. - 214/352-5092

Send Registrations to:
28th TEXAS STATE CELEBRATION,
P. O. BOX 2081
DALLAS, TEXAS 75201

JUNE 28 - 29 - 30 - JULY 1, 1973 • DALLAS, TEXAS

YOU'LL MISS THE BEST IF YOU MISS THIS!!!

CENTRAL SERVICE OFFICE NEWS

PUBLIC INFORMATION COMMITTEE

Thalia C., a new member of the PIC, will be in charge of lining up AAs to answer the many requests from schools, churches and civic organizations for speakers. During April AAs spoke at MacArthur, Churchill, Clemens and Kenedy High Schools. TOPS (a woman's organization) also asked for and got a speaker. With the many requests for AA speakers, more AAs to answer the calls are needed. How about it? **WON'T YOU VOLUNTEER?** Call the Central office, 226-2523, and have your name put on the list.

" " " " "

Ed C. gave the announcement of our 28th AA Birthday Celebration to the television networks, the radio stations and the newspapers. It was run April 10.

" " " " "

KTSA ran free spot announcements for AA during March worth \$400. Raul M. made a tape to be run on KCOR radio.

INSTITUTIONS/REHABILITATION

Joe W., Chairman of the Institutions/Rehabilitation Committee, would like a list of all AAs willing to extend a helping hand to AA members released from The Texas Department of Corrections. Both men and women are needed. If you can help, contact the Central Office, 226-2523.

28TH ANNIVERSARY

The Central Service Office made a profit of \$213.27 from its Birthday Party held in April in the Anacacho Room of the St. Anthony Hotel

* * * * *

A San Antonian consulted a psychiatrist about his drinking-- he reports a great change. Now he says "I do all my drinking on the couch."

YOUR CENTRAL OFFICE

We alcoholics are never cured, but our disease can be arrested.. one day at a time. Today is the most important day of our lives. What are we, who are sober today, doing for those who are still suffering from alcoholism? Are we supporting our Groups, our General Service Office in New York, our own Central Office?

If not -- the life we save may be our own. It's a thought.

" " " " "

For those who need them there are copies of the books "Alcoholics Anonymous" and "The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions" in Braille available at your Central Office.

MEETING DIRECTORY

A new Meeting Directory will be available soon, therefore Meeting Changes are not included in this issue of the Nightcap.

GENERAL SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES

Meeting will be held Sunday, May 13, 7:00 PM at Club 12.

MONTHLY INTERGROUP MEETING

Mona S., from Corpus Christi, formerly of San Antonio, will speak at the Intergroup Meeting on Sunday, May 13, at 8:15 PM at Club 12. The Thursday Morning Ladies' Group will host.

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IN MEMORIAM: Carl B., April 9, 1973.

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Comedian Joey Bishop squelched a noisy ring-side heckler at the Latin Quarter with "Boy! Alcoholic you may be, but Anonymous -- NEVER!"