

# THE NIGHT CAP

Published monthly by the Central Committee  
of Alcoholics Anonymous in San Antonio

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Volume Four

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Number Two

## AN INTERPRETATION OF THE TWELVE STEPS

**STEP ELEVEN: "SOUGHT THROUGH PRAYER AND MEDITATION TO IMPROVE OUR CONSCIOUS CONTACT WITH GOD AS WE UNDERSTOOD HIM PRAYING ONLY FOR KNOWLEDGE OF HIS WILL FOR US AND THE POWER TO CARRY THAT OUT."**

Here, we choose between the desires of the flesh and the noble impulses of the spirit. To the devout man, this Step will mean a surrender to his God - as Jesus taught, "not my will but thine be done." To the more philosophic-minded, it will mark a turning toward the best in man.

Let none of us be contemptuous of the best in man. Not even the gods have penned an Othello; not even the gods have composed a Parsifal or a Liebstd; we doubt that Valhalla or the New Jerusalem are stocked with less gadgets for the comfort and relaxation of their inhabitants than those provided man by the genius of Edison.

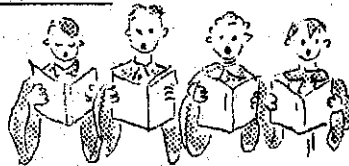
However, you interpret this Step, following its precepts will bring you closer to the love, tolerance, and understanding of others which all good men seek.

Merrill L. "Doc" F.

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### NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS...

- 1 Year: Loy H.
- 2 Years: Bob H.
- 3 Years: Jay M.
- 4 Years: Arthur G.
- 5 Years: Norval "Matt" Matthews
- 6 Years: Mack C.
- 8 Years: Harry F.; Frank F.



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Teach me to forgive,  
Dear Father in Heaven,  
Then help me to forget  
That I have forgiven.

- Anne C. Stark

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## HOW MANY DRINK?

- by Tim O'Shannahan

From the Manitoba Department of Education pamphlet on the education on alcoholism, the following is quoted: "From the standpoint of health, alcoholism is the most serious problem related to alcohol. About 1 out of 17 people who use alcohol become an excessive drinker and face the risk of becoming an alcoholic. The exact cause of alcoholism is not known, but it is believed to be a combination of a personality disorder and organic factors. Alcoholics are regarded as sick people. They are found in all occupations and social classes. For them, drinking constitutes a progressive disease, and which, unless arrested, sooner or later leads to insanity or death. Alcoholics are not to be confused with all heavy drinkers, and are a serious problem to themselves, their families, their friends, and society in general. It is estimated that there are approximately 4,500,000 excessive drinkers in the United States today, of whom almost 1,000,000 are chronic alcoholics."

In the United States, it is estimated that about 1 out of every 15 who use alcohol becomes an excessive drinker. If we knew of 1,000,000 people in any part of the world that were entirely without God, and alcoholics certainly are without God, we would send missionaries to them and recognize those people as being exceedingly unfortunate. The alcoholic is as unfortunate as are primitive people that are without God. It is our duty as a church, as Christian people, to recognize that we have a problem in our community and in every community in the United States - large or small - that there are some of these people that need your help; need the understanding; the tolerance or the church. They certainly do not need hate; they need tolerance.

I may hate the thing that makes me sick, but I have no right to hate the individual that is made sick by the thing I hate.

IN MEMORIAM

Paul J. Stanley, 58, died Saturday, September, 1953, in Akron, Ohio, City Hospital, of injuries received in an auto accident. Paul was well known in San Antonio, having spoken here at Tuesday meetings at the Auditorium and also at other group meetings. He was the fifth member of A.A. His sobriety date was July 2, 1936.

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WE BRAG ... MODESTLY

The following letter from Robescia, Pa., just came to Editor's attention.

Dear Friend: For some time I have been receiving The Nightcap and I want you to know that I appreciate your efforts. Your publication has materially aided my continued sobriety and I look forward to reading it each month. Please keep me on the mailing list and also correct my address. Thought you might like to know that I pass on to our A.A. Loners your very fine publication and many have expressed their thanks to you through me.

- Dick C.

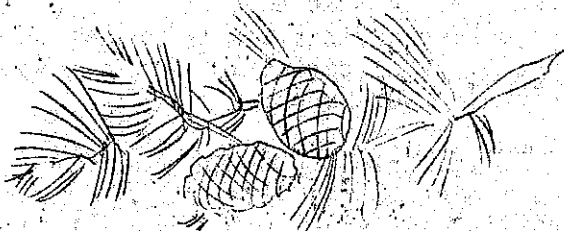
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Another letter from Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, asking for a back number of The Nightcap!

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"What passes among us for ambition is an odd mixture of avarice and vanity."

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HOW TO PRAY?

Plenty of new members of A. A. complain to us that they do not know how to pray. That God won't listen to them anyhow, etc. Of course, we had the same feeling when we first started out on the grand life of A.A. as suggested in the program. We are now firmly convinced that God hears our prayers as well as any others's. Recently we saw the following prayer in St. Mark's Messenger, a weekly pamphlet issued by St. Mark's Church in San Antonio:

A GENERAL INTERCESSION . . .

O GOD, almighty and merciful, let Thy Fatherly kindness be upon all whom Thou hast made. Hear the prayers of all that call upon Thee open the eyes of them that never pray for themselves; pity the sighs of such as are in misery; deal mercifully with them that are in darkness; increase the number and graces of such as fear and serve Thee daily. Preserve this land from the misfortunes of war; this Church from all wild and dangerous errors; this people from forgetting Thee their Lord and Benefactor. Be gracious to all those countries that are made desolate by the sword, famine, pestilence or persecution. Bless all persons and places to which Thy providence has made us debtors; all who have been instrumental to our good by their assistance, advice, example, or writings, and make us in turn useful to others. Let none of those that desire our prayers want Thy mercy, but defend and comfort and conduct them through to their lives' end; for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

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"And having thus chosen our course, without guile, and with pure purpose, let us renew our trust in (the justice of) God, and go forward without fear, and with manly hearts." - Abraham Lincoln.

WHEN IS A MAN AN A. A.?

When is a man an A.A.? When he can look over the rivers, the hills, and the far horizon with a profound sense of his own littleness in the vast scheme of things, and yet have faith, hope and courage.

When he knows that down in his heart every man is as noble, as vile, as divine, as diabolic, and as lonely as himself, and seeks to know, to forgive, and to love his fellow men.

When he knows how to sympathize with men in their sorrows, yes, even in their sins, knowing that each man fights a hard fight against many odds.

When he has learned to make friends and keep them, and above all how to keep friends with himself. When he loves flowers, can hunt the birds without a gun, and feels the thrill of an old forgotten joy when he hears the laugh of a little child.

When he can be happy and high-minded amid the meaner drudgeries of life. When star-crowned trees, and the sunlight on flowing waters subdue him like the thought of one much loved and long dead.

When no voice in distress reaches his ears in vain, and no hand seeks his aid without response. When he finds good in every faith that helps any man to lay hold of higher things, and to seem majestic meanings in life whatever the name of that faith may be.

When he can look into a wayside puddle and see something besides mud, and into the face of the most forlorn mortal and see something beyond sin.

When he knows how to pray, how to love, how to hope, when he has kept faith with himself, with his fellow man, with his God; in his hand a sword for evil, in his heart a bit of song - glad to live but not afraid to die.

In such a man, whether he be rich or poor, scholarly or unlearned, famous or obscure - A.A. has wrought its sweet ministry.

- The Key

TOMORROW IS FOR YOUTH:

Because of my youth, many well-meaning friends have hinted the improbability of my actually being so far gone as to have had my life become unmanageable. Notwithstanding the fact that I am a three time loser behind bars as a very definite result of drink, there has been a continual round of decision and rejection for me, because I stood in need of assurance that I had taken the right step in "copping-out" to an alcoholic background.

In quantity, my drinking has been negligible, when compared to the staggering (no pun intended) amounts of alcohol the more seasoned veterans have consumed. Although I've been poured out of my share of taverns, I've never been able to do away with as much alcohol as some claim to have consumed. In point of fact, I hardly passed the two quarts a week stage. However, it is a foregone conclusion that once alcohol has had an individual subjugated for even so short a time as five minutes, that individual is never his own master again, insolong as he continues to drink. Although the person in question may not be a full fledged alcoholic at the time his authority is transferred, and most assuredly can continue to drink, to all intents and purposes, like the social drinker in the corner bar, still he has gone beyond the pale once and can go too far again.

A coherent train of thought relegates such a one to the realm of the more than potential phase of alcoholism. He has matured, so to speak, and is in danger of becoming over-ripe. My own particular pattern of thought has left many gaps to be filled. A.A. is doing the job nicely. Some one once remarked that "A good name in man or woman is the immediate jewel of their soul." I would like to go a bit further and say that "A good thought in man or woman is the inward manifestation of soul."

I guess I've come to another cross-roads. I have no fear of choosing the wrong way, because even philosophy from an old foggy's lips tells me which way to go: "Tomorrow is for Youth;" and how can I have tomorrow if I refuse the A.A. way, TODAY???

- Pat F.

HERE AND THERE IN A. A.

At the recent South Texas Conference in Harlingen, Ira P., of Corpus Christi was elected to represent this area at the New York Conference for the next two years. Dr. J. J. "Joe" M., of San Antonio was elected as alternate. "Doc" B., San Antonio Central Office Secretary, was elected secretary of the Conference and Jerry C., of San Antonio, was elected as Treasurer.

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Col. Orlo G., C. W. "Dan" M., and Hugh H., and Dan McI., are all patients in Brooke General Hospital.

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There is no longer any excuse in San Antonio for not being able to attend at least one meeting each week. Here are the meetings, time and places: Call F-2523, for any information.

MONDAY - State Hospital Group at MPH #1. Friendship, at American Legion Home.

TUESDAY - Municipal Auditorium, West Wing, city wide; Women's group.

WEDNESDAY - Club 12, Collins Gardens, Highland Park, Industrial, 12 A.M.

THURSDAY - Olmos Group.

FRIDAY - Club 12, Downtown. Family groups meet at same places and time.

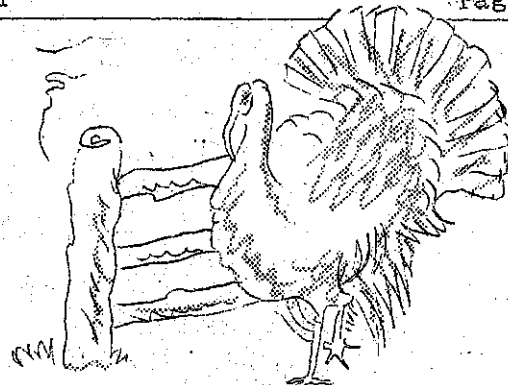
SATURDAY - Industrial, Northwest.

SUNDAY - Industrial, Downtown.

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C R I T I C I S M . . .

CRITICISM is the plague of every Group. It stems from pride. The critical man adopts a slightly different slogan: "I don't like what or the way someone does something and I criticize - not because it is wrong, or because it does or will harm the common good, but because it is not what or the way way I think it should be, and I criticize to destroy, so I can build ME up. Wives, families, and superiors could learn much from this. At the bottom of every destructive criticism is pride, vanity and self-conceit. Such people are just like buttons, "Always popping off." One time such a person dies, and the following remark was overheard at his wake: "Poor Jim, he won't like God!"



R E S E N T M E N T . . .

Resentment is common to all Alcoholics. We are never safe from it and as intangible as it may seem, it does pay off in material ways with destructive force and energy. Resentment is dynamite to the alcoholic. In studying the book "Alcoholics Anonymous" we are reminded that resentment is the number one offender. It destroys more alcoholics than anything else. From it stems all forms of spiritual disease, for we have not only been mentally and physically ill, we have been spiritually ill. When the spiritual malady is overcome, we straighten out mentally and physically. The alcoholic who conquers resentment is on the way to recovery.

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SO THEY SAY: . . .

Thomas A. Edison: "I have better use for my brain than to poison it with alcohol. To put alcohol in the human brain is like putting sand in the bearing of an engine."

Dr. William Mayo: "From the point of view of health, there never has been any question but that abstinence from alcoholic liquors proves extremely beneficial."

Proverbs 23:39-40: "Who hath woe? Who hath Sorrow? Who hath contentions? Who hath babbling? Who hath wounds without cause? Who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine."

William Howard Taft: "Leave drink alone absolutely. He who drinks is deliberately disqualifying himself for advancement. Personally, I refuse to take such risks. I do not drink."

Alcoholics Anonymous: "If you want to drink, that is your business. If you want to quit drinking, that is our business."

WHAT IS HUMAN NATURE? ? ?

TWENTY FOUR HOURS .....

I wonder how many people have glanced contemptuously down upon a drunk in the gutter, a man they've known for years as a sot - and remarked "Well, you can't change human nature." But would they make the same remark about another man they've known for years as a good citizen? If, a year later, they should see that drunk out of the gutter - living a good life - would they say, "Well, you can change human nature."

Human nature, then, seems to be one-directional: downward. Whenever someone says, "That's human nature for you," they are referring to Trouble and Strife - never to Wisdom and Peace. Such remarks come from the ignorant person who would be the last one to recognize the difference between a Man's Behavior and Human Nature. The last one to realize that his remark is in truth a discreet admission that human nature has no directional tendency outside the man himself. And man being what he is within himself, the one-directional tendency of his nature is upward.

It is human nature for man to strive for Life, Health and Security - not Death, Sickness and Hopelessness. If this were not true, man would provide gas chambers for the ill, not hospitals. There would be isles of banishment for the alcoholic and drug addict, not fellowship organizations and rehabilitation centers.

Call it Human Nature. Call it Self Preservation. I call it Relief. It is a relief to know and acknowledge that it is not my nature to remain in a prison of "Stinking Thinking" and everything those two words suggest.

- Dick R.

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The best bridge between despair and hope is a good night's sleep. Prayer is the pipeline to God's throne - the golden thread that binds us to Him.

IN ALL THINGS IT IS BETTER TO HOPE THAN TO DESPAIR

... Goethe

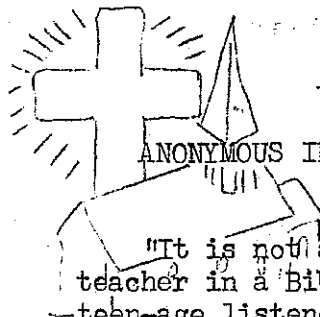
I PRAY THEE, O GOD, THAT I MAY BE BEAUTIFUL WITHIN

... Socrates

Some people mistakenly think that in order to get rid of the alcohol habit, all they have to do is take a quick trip to an AA meeting. They think that they are going to come away from that meeting with a new lease on life. It is my personal belief that the thought habits of the human mind which cause us to become alcoholics are not that easily eradicated. Changing one's method of thinking takes years, not minutes. Reform, as alcoholics, is like any other type of personal reform. It is something a man must do for himself. No one else can fight that battle for him. Others can advise him until they run out of breath, but unless he has in his own mind that spark of desire to quit, then they are wasting their good advice and he is wasting his time, and their's too, in listening to them.

The best method of combating alcoholism is the 24-hour plan, which Dale R., of the Carver, Minn., group spoke of at a recent meeting. It seems to me that the 24-hour plan will help a person to not only overcome the habit of alcohol, but of any habit that is injurious to one's health, either physically or mentally. And, that with the 24-hour plan, plus a firm belief in our Maker, we can look to the future in a happier frame of mind and with stronger faith in our destinies.

- Douglas B. M.



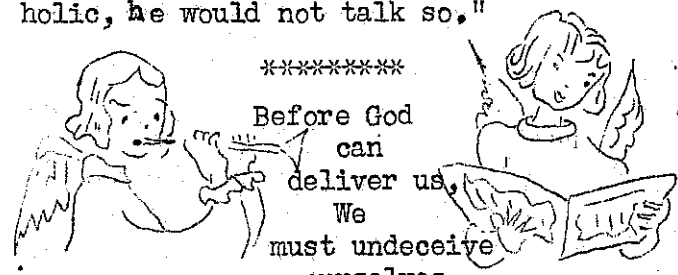
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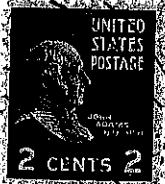
ANONYMOUS IN TWENTIETH CENTURY CHRISTIAN: . . .

"It is not a beer salesman but a teacher in a Bible class who told his teen-age listeners that social drinking is harmless. Please don't let him or anyone similarly uninformed ever talk to my children. Please don't let him talk to anybody's children. If he had ever been intimately acquainted with an alcoholic, he would not talk so."

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Before God can deliver us, We must undeceive ourselves.





MONTHLY A.A. THOUGHTS

P.O. Box 1294

Corpus Christi, Texas