

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

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NUMBER SIX

... SOUGHT - - -

THROUGH PRAYER

AND MEDITATION...



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.

When we first started trying to follow the program of Alcoholics Anonymous as outlined in these twelve steps, we hadn't the remotest notion what we'd do when and if we ever arrived at the serious contemplation of this step as applied to ourselves, for we hadn't prayed or meditated prayerfully for many a long year.

But we have learned to pray and, what's more important, we have come to believe implicitly that our prayers will receive consideration from God as we understand God. We have learned that our previous selfish thinking or asking for things for self was not even faintly akin to prayer.

Now, we ask God as we understand God, to help us through the immediate day before us without taking a drink of anything containing alcohol. As we go through the day we remember to ask Him to help us whenever we get "off the beam" in our thinking, and when we arrive at our bedside at night in a sober condition, we remember to thank Him for the sober day.

Normal people have a day that is divided roughly into three categories: sleeping, working, and playing. Equally divided there would be eight hours for each of these. Pursuing our working relationship with God, we set aside a time at the end of each day for this prayerful meditation and, as suggested in Step 10, "Continued to take personal inventory." We go over the events of the day analytically, and take note of the errors made which could have been avoided,

retrospectively, so that we won't make them again, and admit the wrong things we have said and done that sometimes call for going to people and mentioning the fact that we were wrong and making the necessary overtures toward a better relationship with those people.

A man that said a prayer in a certain garden nearly two centuries ago taught us to pray for "knowledge of His will for us". He was the first man ever recorded as praying for this knowledge. Prior to that time it had been the custom for people to bargain with their gods. They would, in effect, say "God, if you'll get me out of this I'll do so and so for you."

Ironically, that was our own pattern until we learned to pray after studying the AA program. Now, all we want is to stay sober from day to day, help others stay sober and help others learn, in turn, to pray for their own knowledge of His will.

-Arthur C.

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LIVING ELEVEN

Since I first said "My name is Bob and I am an alcoholic" thirty-one months ago, and have accepted it completely, my life has taken on new meaning and purpose. I knew, at the age of thirty-nine, that I was helpless; my life was full of failure, jealousy, hate, fear and anger. But AA told me I wasn't hopeless, that if I gave this way of life a chance, things would get better.

They told me they cared and wanted me to keep coming back. My new friends in AA answered my stupid questions; noone laughed at me as I sat and cried like a baby. There was no way I could turn my back on such love and compassion. I knew I wanted what they had: peace-of-mind, happiness, caring for others without thought of reward.

My first hurdle was finding that Power greater than myself. It had been a long time since I believed in God, so I took the AA group as my Higher Power. Many wonderful, unexplainable things began to happen. I soon "came to believe". Believing was not enough. I had to do as suggested in Step 11 and put God and AA into every corner of my life, and continue this on a daily basis.

I had to straighten some of my definitions, mainly my definition of "love". Now "love" means caring about others' feelings and wanting good things for them; giving my all for them and expecting nothing in return. My definition of "living" is passing on the little I've learned. It isn't much, but it's more than I had to start with, and possibly is enough to get another person started on the right. If it is enough, then my life will have been a success.

-Bob R.

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In my third year of sobriety I began to want to return to my church for Communion just to say "Thank You". Through Esther J. and Dorothy H. I was introduced to AA Retreats, and this is what retreats gave me...

I became better acquainted with my prayer book... I learned the true purpose of Communion... they brought me back to God as I understood Him... became introduced to Ruel Howe's books, a great help in my search: Creative Years, Man's Needs, God's Action, The Miracle of Dialogue...

It all helped me to get well. There's hope and help for the woman alcoholic. I belong now.



-J.W.

GROUP NEWS

GROUP TWELVE, Club Twelve, 102 Thames, will hold its second Discussion Panel on Wednesday, Oct. 3 at 8:15 PM. Ed C. will chair the meeting. Panel members are: Dr. Gene Seale, San Antonio State Hospital; Robert Pugh, MHA; Dr. B. H. Landgrebe, Bexar County Hospital, and Judge Archie Brown. There will be a Question and Answer period. The weekly Discussion Group will also meet.

The 24th Anniversary of Group Twelve will be celebrated at 8:15 PM on Friday, Oct. 19. Turner A. will chair. Jack H. and Tex B. will speak. A fellowship hour will follow with refreshments furnished by the Alanon Group.

Other activities at Club Twelve include the monthly dinner and Bingo on Saturday, Oct. 27 at 7 PM. Buffet dinner is served every Sunday from 12:30 noon to 2 PM; breakfast and lunch are available Monday thru Saturday from 9:30 AM to 4:30 PM. Group Twelve conducts AA and Alanon Beginners' Meetings every Sunday at 4 PM.

EL CARMEN GROUP, Villa El Carmen Catholic Church at the corner of Martinez and Losoya Sts., is a new bilingual Group meeting on the south side of San Antonio on Thursdays at 8:15 PM for Group Discussions. Alanon meetings are held at the same time and place.

HAPPY HOUR GROUP, 3114 Nogalitos, is another new bilingual group. They meet for Closed Discussions on Fridays at 8:15 PM; the last Friday of each month is an Open Speakers Meeting. An Alanon Group meets at the same time.

DOWNTOWN GROUP, Sahara Club, 809 E. Euclid, has Poor Boy Bingo each Saturday at 8 PM. The monthly dinner is on Sunday, Oct. 7 at 1 PM.



this happy occasion!!!

ALAMO HEIGHTS GROUP, St. Luke's Episcopal Church, No. 11 St. Luke's Lane, will celebrate their 17th Birthday Monday, Oct. 15, at 8:15 PM. Bishop Everett H. Jones and Pat O'F. will speak. Refreshments will be served. As usual, the Birthday Meeting will be held in the basement of St. Luke's. Everyone is invited to attend

BREES GROUP, Sunset Ridge Church of Christ, 2367 Brees, invites you - one and all - to our gala 1st Anniversary Open Meeting on Thursday, Oct. 25, at 8:15 PM. See enclosed Flyer for details.

24 HOUR GROUP, 24 Hour Club, 1203 Fredericksburg Rd., will have its monthly dinner and Bingo on Sunday, Oct. 28, at 1 PM.

THE HAVEN, 1640 W. Woodlawn, holds its monthly dinner at 1 PM Sunday, Oct. 14, with the Group Meeting at 3 PM. On other Sundays the meeting is at 5 PM. An Open Discussion Meeting is held on Tuesdays at 8:15 PM.

SAN ANTONIO STATE HOSPITAL GROUP, S. Presa St. Oops, we goofed! Open AA meetings are in the Auditorium and Alanon meetings in the Library across from the Auditorium every Monday at 8:15 PM.

GOLIAD GROUP, 104 Avondale, will have its monthly Barbeque on Sunday, Oct. 21, at 6 PM.

Many times, at an AA meeting, I have seen a person walk into the room and heard him say, "I NEED this meeting." Everyone feels a response, is glad he is there and wonders what the person's problem is. Here is a ready-made opportunity for service. The person who says he needs this meeting is obviously going through some kind of personal torture. If he is shunted from one well-meaning person to another, ignored, or laughed at, he just might end up in that bar. This is where you and I can help. The guy might be you! As Job said to his friends, "Only do not two things unto me... withdraw thine hand from me and let not thy dread make me afraid."

I AM AN ALCOHOLIC

My father died when I was eleven years old, and I grew up in the care of my mother who tended to dominate me and made most of my decisions for me. I went along with her, maybe because I was afraid not to, but as time went on I resented her more and more. I also became angry with my father because he had died and left me in an intolerable situation. Both resentments I carried into my adult life, feeding them a bit as I went along.

When I was seventeen Mother enrolled me in college; the rebellion against her came out and I flunked out. It was then that I discovered the bliss of booze. If I drank enough of it, I could escape reality. Although I never got into any serious trouble with alcohol, I drank excessively in college and during my stint in the Air Force.

After separation from the service I went back to college and managed to graduate after a shaky stay. In due course I went to work as a salesman. Happily I found that selling and hard drinking went hand-in-hand. I married and we had two children. I was emotionally immature and not ready for so much responsibility. I could not cope with it. Unhappy and frustrated with myself and my situation, I drank more and more. I became even less able to cope. Finally my wife and I separated; I moved in with two bachelors and my life became one big drinking party. It wasn't long before I could not do my work at the office. I was put on notice and was on the verge of being fired.

About this time I met a woman who helped me to straighten myself out. We were married, and for a while everything went well. I was on the up-swing in my business- no real financial trouble. Then I started to drink heavily again and the bottom began to drop out. Financially I was in ruin. I blamed the local economy for my plight and decided to relocate in New Mexico. Such disaster would not happen to me there. If anything, New Mexico was worse! There was no money and I continued to drink. My wife left me. I stayed a while longer and eventually returned to San Antonio in a fifty dollar car with few clothes but with several bottles of booze. I knocked around wondering what my problem was. Then I got lucky. I was offered my old sales job. I remarried my second wife, with high hopes for our future, but things were never the same between us again.

I had started on amphetamines and was hooked on them for the next few years. While drinking steadily and taking pills, I was hospitalized with a mild stroke. A year later I was back in the hospital suffering from hyper-tension. Happily, when I got out I was able to get off the pills; however, I began to drink again. Once more my job was in jeopardy. My wife had had it; she asked me to leave, and so I went back to my mother's home. I was demoted, my health was failing, and all I could think of to do was to commit suicide.

Through all of my adult life, with its many troubles, I had never faced the fact that alcohol might be my main problem, although I had suspected it off and on, subconsciously. By this time I had become so desperate that I decided to go to an AA meeting to see if I really had a problem with booze. At that meeting I became totally convinced that I was alcoholic.

My life has been completely changed ever since. I became involved in all phases of the AA program: 12 Step work, chairing meetings, speaking at them, generally learning to give a little of myself. My office efficiency increased, my health improved, my finances became more stable, and I discovered a relaxed relationship with a Higher Power that gives my life a dramatic impetus. I married once again, this time to an AA member, and we began a wonderful life together, learning to share. For the first time I am experiencing the joy of happy, useful living. God and AA have been very good to me, and for that I am grateful.

-John D.

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COMING INTO AA IS LIKE WALKING OUT OF A DARKENED ROOM INTO THE SUNLIGHT

NO AWARD - JUST REWARD

Al-Anon does not give the "Boss of the Year" award. We come to Al-Anon to learn how to live; we do not come to learn how to control an alcoholic or how to handle or maneuver him. The first step of Al-Anon is that we admitted we were powerless over alcohol, and that our lives had become unmanageable; in our case we are powerless over the alcoholic member of our family, and our lives are becoming unmanageable, so we come to get help for ourselves.

Neither does Al-Anon give "Purple Hearts" for wounds received in interaction with an alcoholic. We all have them. The reward comes in applying the soothing and healing balm of self-honesty, understanding, compassion and love to these hurts. Once they are healed, we use the remaining scars to identify with and help another sick Al-Anon.

Nor is there a "Toastmaster" award given for monopolizing meetings with personal problems or opinions. In fact such antics are frowned upon. Each of us has a problem much like the other's. We learn to listen and listen to learn, and use what we gain to help ourselves and others.

Al-Anon awards no degrees in Psychology. We learn about our own behavior patterns; we keep what is good and work on the defects that are causing us trouble. By understanding ourselves we are able to understand others and so gain more compassion and tolerance.

We have no "Hall of Fame". Anonymity is unanimous. We respect the other fellow's and expect him to respect ours. Gossip and "putting people down" have no place in our fellowship. Our purpose is not self-aggrandizement; it is self-help and helping others.

We award no halos. Only our Higher Power can judge our worthiness.
-Ted T.



The purpose of Al-Anon is personal growth through applying the Twelve Steps and sharing our experience, strength and hope. We try to share experience, not impose ideas. We are learning a whole new way of life, a bright, promising new pattern for living. We are attempting, with all of Al-Anon's willing help, to exchange old sick attitudes for new optimistic ones; old familiar painful words like dread, fear and resentment for challenging new ones like love, courtesy, hope and serenity. Daily we become more capable of facing each day, as each of us continues working his own personal adventures in Al-Anon.

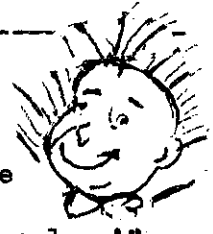
HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THIS?
AA OR AL-ANON

Are you an active member,
The kind that would be missed,
Or are you just contented
That your name is on the list?
Do you attend the meetings,
And mingle with the flock,
Or do you stay at the office
And criticize and knock?
Do you ever work on committees,
To see there is no trick?
Or leave the work to just a few
And talk about the clique?
So come to the meetings often,
And help with hand and heart:
Don't be just a member
But take an active part.

-Anon.

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SMILE WITH US



The Sunday-school teacher was horrified when she saw the picture one of her pupils had drawn. "Why, it looks like a cowboy walking into a saloon!" she said. "It is," said the child. "But it's all right. He's not going to drink anything. He's just going in to shoot a man."

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Businessman to stewardess: "May I smoke my cigar?" Stewardess: "Well, sir, we leave it to your discretion. You may smoke if you don't annoy the lady passengers." Businessman: "Then I won't smoke. I'd much rather annoy the lady passengers."

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The best medicine for you to take is yourself - with a grain of salt.

PURPOSE OF AL-ANON

CENTRAL SERVICE OFFICE NEWS

GENERAL SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES

ALL GSR'S:

THE GSR MEETING WILL BE HELD SUNDAY, OCT. 7, at 7 PM at Club 12, one week earlier than the usual date, due to the Southwest Texas Area Conference in Victoria the week of Oct. 12-14.

MONTHLY INTERGROUP MEETING

THE MONTHLY INTERGROUP MEETING WILL BE HELD SUNDAY, OCT. 7 (instead of Oct. 14) at 8:15 PM at Club 12. The Wesley Group will host. Ray and Nona B., from Kerrville, will speak.

IN MEMORIAM

Maurice I., Sept. 1973
Bill C., Sept. 16, 1973
Helen F. (Al-Anon), Sept. 12, 1973

TENTH NORTHEAST TEXAS AREA CONFERENCE will be held Oct. 12-14 at the Tropicana Inn, 135 at Oak St., Denton, TX, 76201. Make reservations with Tropicana Inn. Mail Registrations to: N.E.T.A. Committee, Box 1385, Denton, TX, 76201. Registration: \$5.00. Banquet and Dance: \$5.00. Breakfast: \$2.50.

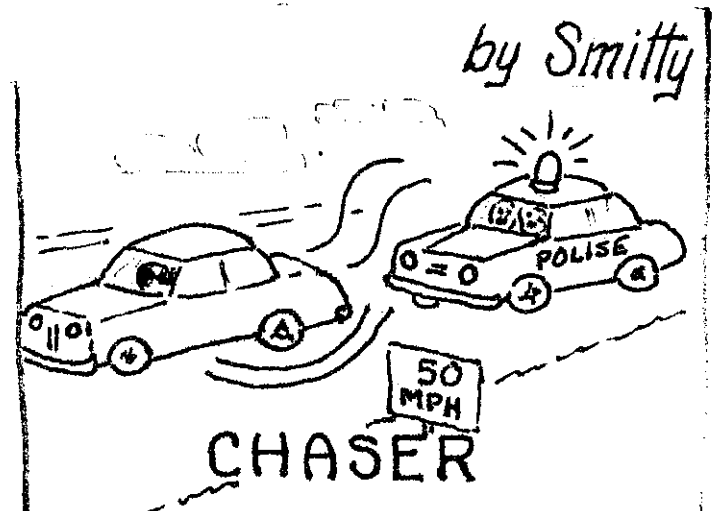
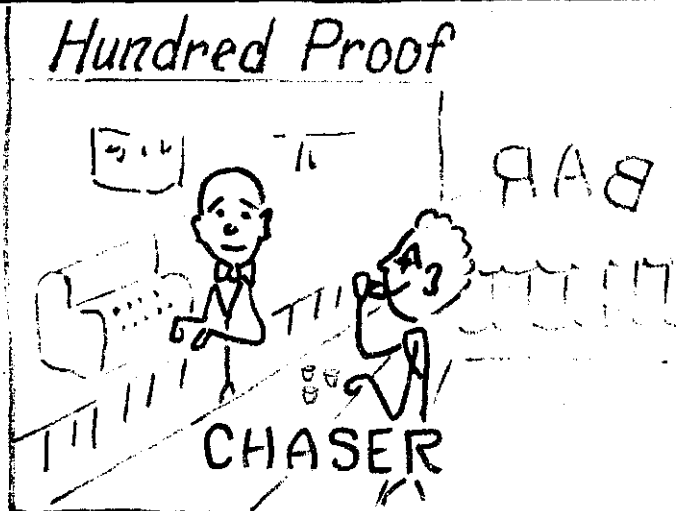
23RD ARIZONA STATE AA CONFERENCE takes place Oct. 5-7 at Ramada Inn, Tucson, Ariz. Mail reservations to: Ramada Inn, 404 N. Freeway, Tucson, Ariz., 85705. Mail registrations to: 23rd Arizona State Conference, P.O.B. 6498, Tucson, Ariz. 85733.

26TH ANNUAL TOP OF TEXAS AA ROUNDUP is to be Oct. 5-7 at Holiday Inn West, Amarillo, Tx. Mail reservations to Holiday Inn. For registrations, write AA Roundup Committee, Box 412, Amarillo, TX, 79105. Registration \$6.00. Banquet, \$4.50; Dance, \$2.50.

4TH ANNUAL FALL INDIAN LODGE A.A. CONFERENCE will be on Oct. 19, 20, and 21 at the Indian Lodge, Ft. Davis, TX. For reservations, write Indian Lodge, Box 786, Ft. Davis, TX, 79734. For registrations write 4th Annual Indian Lodge AA Conference, Box 484, Alpine, TX, 79830. Registration \$5.00. There is no fee for those with less than two years of sobriety.

23RD SOUTHWEST TEXAS AREA A.A. CONFERENCE is on Oct. 12-14 at the Holiday Inn, Victoria. Mail reservations to: Holiday Inn of Victoria, 2705 E. Houston Highway, Victoria, TX, 77901. Registrations: Box 226, Port Lavaca, TX, 77979. Conference: \$5.00 (Ala-Teen Conference free); Friendship Luncheon: \$4.00; Banquet: \$5.00.

Marilyn F. of Victoria sends along this information which may be of interest to those coming to the 23rd Southwest Texas Conference: There is going to be an Antique Show in Victoria the same weekend as the Conference. It will be open from 12 to 9 on Oct. 12 and 13, and from 12 to 6 on Oct. 14. One ticket is good for all three days. This is the third year for this show, which attracts dealers from all over the country.



SUPPORT

Money

your

Participation

COMMUNITY MEETING

Theatre for the Performing Arts
HemisFair Plaza

Wed. Oct. 24th

8:00 to 9:30 P.M.

CHAIRMAN: FRED H.

SPEAKERS

Bishop EVERETT H JONES

Col. DONALD R SEIDEL MD

AA SPEAKER

Al-Anon SPEAKER

