



The Nightcap

AA IN SOUTHWEST TEXAS

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A.A. AND MONEY

"Good morning," said the lawyer cheerfully. "I am happy to inform you that my late client has willed to your organization the sum of \$15,000."

"I'm sorry responded the A.A. spokesman, "we accept no money from anyone except our own members."

"What's the catch?"

"There is no catch. In fact, we won't take more than \$500 from our own members in their wills."

"Oh, I get it. You get so much money from the government that you don't want to accept other contributions because it will mess up your books."

"As a matter of fact," our spokesman told him, "in over 45 years of existence we have yet to accept our first dime from any government--federal, state or local."

"Don't you like money?" the lawyer asked.

"No, we don't. Our founders thought it wasn't good for us."

"Who told them such a story?" the lawyer asked skeptically.

"Two people: St Francis of Assisi and John D. Rockefeller, Jr."

This conversation is neither hypothetical nor fictional. It occurs regularly, with minor variations, in the General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous, New York.

A.A. is the world's largest self-help fellowship. Perhaps unique among organizations devoted to helping others, it steadfastly refuses to accept government money, outside contributions, grants, gifts or bequests. A.A. is totally and resolutely self-supporting, even limiting the voluntary contributions of any one member to \$500 a year. This limit also applies to bequests from members wishing to express gratitude to the fellowship in this way.

A.A. jealously guards its independence. Our trustees believe that "He who pays the piper, calls the tune." A.A., over the years, has turned down literally hundreds of thousands of dollars from governments, foundations, and grateful families of recovered members.

The Twelve Traditions of the program, which govern its conduct, also fully embrace the concept and wisdom of corporate poverty. The leaders of A.A. believe that money and the power that goes with it, would divert the fellowship from its primary purpose: to stay sober and help others to achieve sobriety.

In his book "A.A. Comes of Age," Bill Wilson, the late co-founder of A.A., related how the early members took their inspiration from St Francis of Assisi whose spiritual movement was founded on the principle of poverty. "The less money and property they had to quarrel about," Wilson wrote, "the less would be their diversion from their primary purpose." A.A. adopted the wisdom of St Francis as its own, but the all-too-human leaders of the fellowship were tempted later by their own success which, in 1937, attracted the attention of John D. Rockefeller, Jr.

When the wealthy philanthropist asked to meet with the A.A. people, Wilson relates he and his associates developed grand visions of chains of A.A. hospitals, rehabilitation centers, and tons of free literature for still-suffering alcoholics, all because of the unlimited financial backing they were expecting. (Cont next page)

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST POSSESSION?

If you asked me what is my greatest possession, I would probably say my sobriety. And you would probably agree.

But I was startled to see the answer to this question in the Big Book on page 124: "Cling to the thought that, in God's hands, the dark past is the greatest possession you have--the key to life and happiness for others. With it, you can avert death and misery for them." That is a very powerful and rather puzzling statement, don't you think? How can this be? I thought about it for a long time and then it began to make sense.

By sharing my story with others, I am able to let them see how our recovery program has worked in my life. They are convinced by the miracles I have experienced and the serenity and freedom I now enjoy. By carrying the message to others I am able, with the grace of God, to stay sober myself, one day at a time.

The Big Book also says that, unless I carry the message in some way to other alcoholics, I will drink again. And that message is: how this program has changed my dark past to a useful present and future.

Without my dark past, I wouldn't need the recovery program. So, it is clear now that my greatest possession is my life as a drunk which can encourage others and at the same time keep me sober.

The Big Book is full of wisdom.

SACSO

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GROUP ANNOUNCEMENTS

FRONTIER GROUP is sponsoring a dance at the ARC on the last Saturday of each month. Dancing begins at 9:15 PM and continues until 12:00 midnight. Everyone welcome! Please come and have a good time.

TWENTY-FOUR HOUR GROUP will hold their regular monthly dinner on Sunday, Sept 27. Serving time is 5:00 PM. A \$2.00 donation is requested. Meeting to follow at 6:30 PM. Also there is an open discussion meeting daily, noon 'till 1:00 PM.

GOLIAD GROUP holds a regular monthly barbecue on the 3rd Sunday of each month at 6:00 PM. Come join us in the fun and fellowship...the food is good too!

GRUPO UNIDAD has a free breakfast on the first Sunday of each month at 10:00 AM, followed by a Spiritual meeting at 11:00. The next one is Sept 6th. The group is located at 3210 W Commerce.

CSO BOARD MEETING Sept 8. THE CSOC (GSR) MEETING WILL BE HELD AT CLUB12, SUNDAY, SEPT 13th.

31st ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS for the SOUTHWEST TEXAS AREA at the Valley Inn & Country Club, Brownsville, TX on October 16, 17 & 18, 1981. Contact Howard C., Conference Chairman, PO Box 4856, Brownsville, TX, ZIP 78520.

TWENTY-FOUR HOUR GROUP has added another meeting! For you "night people" it is conveniently scheduled to start at midnight each Friday and will be an OPEN DISCUSSION. Address: 1203 Fredericksburg Rd, San Antonio, Tx.

HAVEN GROUP has an open discussion meeting Tuesday at 8:15 PM; open speaker's meeting Saturday at 8:15 PM; and open speaker's meeting Sunday afternoons at 5:00 PM. Come and enjoy lots of good A.A. fellowship with us. The Haven is located at 1640 W Woodlawn. Phone: 734-8604.

WHAT DID YOU DO TODAY?

So you've been around for many years
 helping to spread A. A.
 You've worked like hell since you first came
 in but what did you do today?
 I heard your pitch-it was kinda long
 and you really told them how
 You worked the steps in '41 but how are
 you working them now?
 Do you still get up from your soft, warm
 bed when someone is in trouble?
 Do you grab your hat and your A. A.
 book and get there on the double
 Or have you forgotten the early times when
 you were sort of new?
 Maybe you've been around so long that
 A. A. is old hat for you.
 Maybe you're one of the Senior Saints,
 sober and satisfied,
 And you've forgotten when you were sick
 and when you damn near died.
 Maybe I shouldn't bring it up,
 maybe you're too blasé
 But just for the hell of it Mister, what
 did you do today?
 Have you been around so cock-eyed
 long you leave it to Harry or Sam
 'Cause you're not your brother's keeper
 and you don't give a damn.
 Maybe tonight the fights are on or
 you're going to the old ball game.
 So what the hell if the guy is sick, he
 has only himself to blame.
 Well Mister you have a perfect right to
 work your own A. A.
 And you know you'll do it your own
 way no matter what I say
 But tonight before you go to bed, just
 look in the glass and pray
 That you and the Lord know the
 answer to WHAT DID YOU DO TODAY?

W. S.

IS ALCOHOLISM REALLY AN ILLNESS?

The American Medical Association and the World Health Organization, as well as many other professional groups, regard alcoholism as a disease. The judiciary and law-makers also are recognizing it as a disease.

Some authorities continue to see alcoholism only as an expression of underlying emotional problems. Others see it starting as a symptom which precedes an illness and requires treatment in itself.

The Committee on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence of the American Medical Association defines alcoholism as an illness in which there is preoccupation with alcohol and loss of control over its consumption, as a type of drug dependence that can harm a person's health and interfere with his ability to work and get along with other people.

The alcoholic usually drinks heavily and gets drunk often. Quantity and frequency, however, are only one sign. Although some alcoholics actually drink less than some social drinkers, this does not change their basic condition nor make it less serious. The key factor is loss of control and craving for the drug, alcohol.

Physical disabilities and difficulties adjusting to life may contribute to the development of the illness, as well as result from it. Drinking by one's self, or drinking early in the morning, may be signs of alcoholism, but they are not always present.

Similarly, living on skid row, being irresponsible and other behavior commonly regarded as fundamental to alcoholism, are neither limited to the disorder nor necessarily part of it. In fact, the class of alcoholics made up of financially successful professional persons may well be one of the largest, and certainly one of the most seriously neglected, groups in this country.

—From the pamphlet "The Illness Called Alcoholism," published by the American Medical Association (Committee on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Council on Mental Health, Department of Health Education); reprinted with permission.

SALLY MEETINGS

SEP 2,9 Universal City
 SEP 16, 23, 30 The Haven

VILLA ROSA MEETINGS

SEP 1, 22 Grupo Unidad
 SEP 8, 29 Serenity
 SEP 15 Northeast

ARC MEETINGS

SEP 5, 12, 19, 26 Lytle

OCT 7, 14, 21, 28 John S

OCT 6 Northeast
 OCT 13 Colonies North
 OCT 20 Morymont
 OCT 27 Downtown

OCT 3, 10, 17, 24, 31
 Stepping Stones

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PRESENT GROUPING

A (13)		B (11)		C (11)		D (20)	
1	Alamo Heights	14	Downtown	25	Grupo Del Sol	36	V. A. Hospital
2	Broadway	15	First Step	26	Frontier	37	Audubon
3	Eisenhauer	16	Fort Sam Houston	27	Grupo Unidad	38	Callaghan
4	Marymont	17	Goliad	28	Kingsboro	39	Coker
5	Northeast	18	Highland	29	Lytile	40	Colonies North
6	Northwood	19	Laurel Heights	30	Sally	41	Group 12
7	Reliance	20	Sahara	31	Santa Fe	42	The Haven
8	Randolph	21	SASH	32	Southwest Loop	43	Helotes
9	Spiritual Life	22	Serenity	33	Valley-Hi	44	Lambda
10	Schertz	23	Stepping Stones	34	Wesley	45	North San Pedro
11	Sunset	24	Spiritual Awakening	35	Wilford Hall	46	Northwest
12	Windcrest					47	Open Door
13	Universal City					48	Park North
						49	Summit
						50	Triangle
						51	Twenty-Four Hour
						52	Villa Rosa
						53	Tejas
						54	Young Peoples
						55	Priest & Religious

PROPOSED GROUPING

A (11)		B (10)		C (11)	
27	Grupo Unidad	40	Colonies North	45	North San Pedro
28	Kingsboro	38	Callaghan	39	Coker
34	Wesley	54	Young Peoples	7	Reliance
42	The Haven	48	Park North	6	Northwood
51	Twenty-Four Hour	47	Open Door	12	Windcrest
50	Triangle	41	Group 12	9	Spiritual Life
46	Northwest	55	Priest & Religious	1	Alamo Heights
49	Summit	53	Tejas	11	Sunset
36	V. A. Hospital	37	Audubon	2	Broadway
52	Villa Rosa	19	Laurel Heights	20	Sahara
43	Helotes		GROWING TOGETHER	4	Marymont
			BOERNE		

D (11)		E (12)	
23	Stepping Stones	29	Lytile
14	Downtown	33	Valley-Hi
44	Lambda	35	Wilford Hall
15	First Step	25	Grupo Del Sol
24	Spiritual Awakening	31	Santa Fe
16	Fort Sam Houston	30	Sally
3	Eisenhauer	18	Highland
5	Northeast	17	Goliad
8	Randolph	21	SASH
10	Schertz	22	Serenity
13	Universal City	26	Frontier
		32	Southwest Loop

HAPPY HOUR