

# *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

THE NIGHTCAP

NUMBER EIGHT



## THE REAL MEANING OF CHRISTMAS

"This is the Holiday Season, fella! Just one won't hurt you." Where have we heard that one before?

We have heard it in many places, many times-- every Christmas, every New Year, every holiday season. At the office where all is hilarity. In the warmth of our good friends' homes. From the doorway of a bar where the ole gang is gathering to have one before they go home.

Any holiday can be trying, and Christmas with its extended period of fun and frolic, starting before the 25th, and lasting through the New Year, can be the hardest.

There is always the time when our good friend is gently trying to persuade us that this is the Christmas season and just one couldn't possibly hurt. He is proud that we joined AA and stopped drinking. He thinks it is wonderful. But he doesn't quite understand. He really can't see why just one would hurt us, for after all it is the season to be jolly.

The Christmas holidays pose a choice-- we can take the short view or the long view, the dim view or the bright view. We can be worried and miserable or relaxed and happy. In short, we can get drunk or stay sober.

From the short view, particularly to the newer member, the set-up looks unfair. Look at everybody! They're all having a good time. They are gay and giddy, running from one party to another. But not us. We have been discriminated against. The fates have been unjust. Life is cruel. And so for ten days or however long- party season- we can mope around and feel sorry ourselves, oozing self-pity from all our pores. We can even end up taking that first drink.

But let's look at the long view just to see what that has to offer us. At most, the holiday

season runs two weeks. How does this compare to the length of time that you have been in AA and sober? How does that two weeks compare to the years ahead that all of us can go on in AA, sober? Two weeks isn't very long, especially when it is broken down into periods of twenty-four hours. What is twenty-four hours compared to all we have gained so far, and all we can gain in the future? Just not taking that drink this twenty-four hours is all that anyone needs to get through the holiday season safely. Eight of the twenty-four can be disposed of getting a good night's sleep which leaves only sixteen hours to cope with. Furthermore, a good many of the sixteen can be filled with AA friends, AA Club or Group parties, AA meetings and AA thought. Who'd trade sixteen hours for a lifetime?

Time is not the only comparison that the long view brings into focus. Santa Claus comes once a year for most people. Must we not admit that he comes every day for us? Hasn't he been coming every day for however many days we have been sober, after all those years of being drunk, mentally and physically?

Ole Santa, if we want to use that name for the moment, has been a regular caller. Furthermore, the gifts we have been receiving show pretty discriminating taste. What better present, what more practical and at the same time more valuable gift, could one give an alcoholic than sobriety?

Not every one likes to go so far as to say he is glad he is an alcoholic. Some think that is straining it a bit, perhaps almost as much as if the TB patient confined to a sanitarium proclaimed that he was glad he had TB. But it is reasonable to assume that, having become an alcoholic, we are glad now that we found AA and sobriety and grateful for the knowledge and viewpoint that we have gained in AA.

This knowledge and the AA viewpoint combine to give us the opportunity to make a great deal more of Christmas than we ever could before. We have learned through rough experience that it is really better to give than to receive and that, in fact, only by giving do we receive. To help ourselves we have had to undertake to help others; to stay sober we have had to help others find sobriety. Through no virtue or nobility of our own, but through a choice imposed on us by circumstances, we have learned the real meaning of Christmas and its true spirit of giving, of good will and peace. We have learned this day by day. The experience of AA has piled up the proof until what was once fatuous sentiment for which we had little time, especially at Christmas, has become a vibrant and living truth. We know so by our own experience.

Christmas then brings us a warming reminder of all the good we have received and can now pass on to others, and that where we once had little to give, we now have much.

-tdy

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### CELEBRATING-- THE AA WAY

In San Antonio the holiday season begins with the annual Christmas Dance on December 7 at the Turner Club. San Antonio State Hospital Group holds its Christmas party for patients in the Alcoholic Ward at 1 PM on December 16. The ARC (Alcoholic Rehabilitation Center, Southton Rd.) will have its party on Saturday, December 22 at 8:15 PM. YOU can make someone's Christmas brighter by taking a gift or gifts to Groups or Clubs for delivery to the hospital and the ARC. Better yet, you can also volunteer your time by attending the parties and giving of yourself to those less fortunate than you. Every Club in the area where A.A. Groups meet and many individual Groups will be having Open House and parties. For details see GROUP NEWS, page

EASY DOES IT

GROUP

SAN ANTONIO STATE HOSPITAL GROUP, S. Presa St.: Santa comes to Ward 17 Sunday December 16 at 1 PM with presents for the patients. There will be boxes at Club 12, 24 Hour Group, Sahara Club, The Haven, Unity Club and Goliad Group where you may take your presents. Please wrap and tag them, specifying whether for a man or woman. NO razor blades, shave lotion, hair spray, please. Gifts will be picked up from Groups/Clubs Saturday, Dec. 15. All AAs are invited to come to the party and visit with the patients, many of whom will be unable to attend the Christmas Dinner. The dinner will be in the State Hospital Auditorium at 7 PM Monday, Dec. 17. All AAs and Alanons are invited.

THE ARC, Southton Rd., is holding its annual Christmas Party December 22 at 8:15 PM starting with a short meeting. There will be all kinds of snacks and refreshments. Everyone is invited. Donations of gifts by AA members will be appreciated, such as cigarettes, shaving lotion and cream, razor blades, lighters, etc. There are approximately 40 male residents at the ARC and they would value your presence in sharing the fellowship with them. Gifts may be collected at each Group and taken to the ARC or call Elves S. at 633-0201 and he will arrange to have them picked up.

GROUP TWELVE, Club Twelve, 102 Thames, holds Open House through the holidays, beginning Christmas Eve at 5 PM. A Buffet will be provided every day during the holidays. A gala New Year's Eve celebration is planned. Come dance the New Year in! There will be no Bingo in December.

19TH ANNIVERSARY - BLUE HORIZON GROUP, Goree Unit Texas Department of Corrections, will be Sunday, Dec. 16 at 1 PM. Location: 4 miles south of Huntsville on IH 45. Attendance restricted: 1. to AA members and their spouses, 2. no former inmates. Registration will be at 12:30 sharp.

UNITY CLUB, 311 NW 24th St., invites you to stop by during Christmas week.

ALPHA HOME, 111 Queens Crescent, invites you to stop in for coffee and conversation during the holidays.

THE HAVEN GROUP, 1640 W. Woodlawn from 8:00 P.M. New Years Eve until 6:00 A.M. New Years morning, an A.A. Meeting. The A.A. sessions will last one hour with 30 minute intermissions. Groups wishing to participate are asked to notify the Haven Group of the Chairman and time of their respective meeting.

NEWS

24 HOUR GROUP, 1203 Fredericksburg Rd., is starting an Open Discussion meeting on Mondays at 8:15 PM. The first one will be Dec. 3. Christmas Day the Group will have Open House. The monthly dinner and Bingo will be Sunday, Dec. 30 at 1 PM.

DOWNTOWN GROUP, Sahara Club, 809 E. Euclid, will be serving turkey at their Christmas Day Open House, beginning at 12 noon. The usual monthly dinner will be Sunday, Dec. 2 at 1 PM. Poor Boy Bingo is played each Saturday at 8 PM.

THE HAVEN, 1640 W. Woodlawn, is cancelling its Sunday monthly dinners until March, 1974. Open House will be held Christmas Day. Meetings at the Haven include an Open Discussion on Tuesdays at 8:15 PM, Open Speakers' meetings on Sundays at 5 PM and on Fridays at 10:15 PM.

OPEN DOOR, St. George's Episcopal Church Parish Hall, 6904 West Ave., invites you to the Friday night Open Discussions at 8:15 PM. Sandy L. is the program chairman for December. Also plan to attend our big 2nd Anniversary celebration in January. Watch for flyers!

LAUREL HEIGHTS GROUP, Christ Church, 302 W. Russell, will hold its semi-annual birthday party at the Carriage House across from the church on Sunday, Dec. 16 at 5 PM. Refreshments- sandwiches, punch and all those goodies will be served after the Open Speaker's meeting. Everyone is welcome.

AUDUBON GROUP, 315 S. Audubon, one block off San Pedro, will celebrate its Third Anniversary Saturday, Dec. 22, 1973, with a "Pot Luck" dinner at 6:30 PM followed by a meeting. Rudy Z., Houston, is the speaker. Audubon will furnish turkey, ham and bread, and asks those attending to bring a "Pot Luck" dish.

GOLIAD GROUP, 1004 Avondale, will have an all-day Open House on Sunday, Dec. 16.

More GROUP NEWS at bottom of page 4.

THE AA PREAMBLE

In June, 1947, the editor of the Grapevine, in order to explain AA to the magazine's non-AA readers, borrowed from the foreword of the original Big Book, and wrote the following:

"Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism. The only requirement for membership is an honest desire to stop drinking... AA has no dues or fees..It is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution..Does not wish to engage in any controversy. Neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety."

Groups around the country began to read it at the beginning of their meetings and it thus became our preamble. The September, 1958, Grapevine published the preamble which is used today universally:

"Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism.

"The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for AA membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. AA is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy, neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety."

Using the 1958 preamble as a base, the Groups often adapt it to suit their membership. In the Southwest Texas area Groups it is usually more detailed and somewhat longer. It defines alcoholism as an illness, states the purpose of Alcoholics Anonymous "to help the sick alcoholic recover and lead a happier and more useful life". The preamble also specifies areas AA does not embrace; i.e., "we are not crusaders, reformers, or evangelists". "We exact no promises, we administer no drugs. We tell no one what he must do."

It expresses the reliance of AA on a Higher Power "the conception (of which) is entirely up to the individual", and affirms our right to anonymity: "I have the right to tell anyone that I am a member of Alcoholics Anonymous but I have no right to tell anyone that you are", or, in some groups they say from the podium: "Remember what you heard here, but forget who you saw here." And there is a pause before the meeting starts, as the Chairman concludes with "Let us begin with a moment of silent prayer."

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GROUP NEWS (continued from page 3)SPANISH GROUPS

Austin has a new Spanish speaking Group; they meet every Monday night at 8:00 PM at 1619 E. 1st St., Austin. The name of the group is GRUPO GUADALUPE. For more information call Al M., 477-2601.

GRUPO MONTAÑA, a new Spanish speaking group in Seguin, had its first meeting Nov. 1. They meet at 728 E. Mountain Thursdays at 8:00 PM. The GSR is Adrian H. and you may call 379-7968 when in Seguin.

We wish lots of luck to these new groups, lots of sobriety and lots of twenty-four hours.  
-Raúl M.

GRUPOS EN ESPAÑOL

En Austin se formó un grupo nuevo de habla española hará un poco más de dos meses. Se llama GRUPO GUADALUPE y se reúnen los Lunes a las 20 horas y la dirección es: 1619 E. 1st St., Austin. Para más informes diríjense a Al M. tel. 477-2601. En Seguin se llevó a cabo la primera junta el 1o de Noviembre del GRUPO MONTAÑA, a las 20 horas, y se reúnen los jueves en 728 E. Mountain. El GSR es Adrián H. y pueden hablar al numero 379-7968 en Seguin.

Mucho éxito les deseamos a estos dos grupos nuevos, que nunca se les acabe el entusiasmo y que tengan muchas veintecuatro horas. -Raúl M.

CENTRAL SERVICE OFFICE NEWSIN MEMORIAM

Windcrest Group in memory of the father of  
Mrs. Lee C.  
Doris L. died November 1973  
"Mac" McG. died November 1973  
Ralph D., Macon, Ga., died November 1973  
Emmitte P. died November 1973

CHANGES TO ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS SAN ANTONIO  
MEETING DIRECTORY DATED AUGUST 1973

AA GROUPS:

ADDITIONS: EL CARMEN (Bilingual) meets in recreation bldg. behind El Carmen Catholic Mission, 18487 Martinez-Losoya Rd., for Open Discussion meetings on Thursdays, 8:15 PM.  
GRUPO MONTANA (Bilingual), Seguin, TX, meets 728 E. Mountain for Open Speaker meetings on Thursdays, 8:00 PM.

CORRECTIONS: GRUPO UNIDAD (Spanish speaking) meets at Unity Club, 311 NW 24th St., for Open Speaker meetings on Saturdays at 8:15 PM.

WESLEY (Bilingual) has moved and meets at 2025 Monterrey for Open Speaker meetings Thursdays and Sundays at 8:15 PM.

DELETIONS: HAPPY HOUR (Bilingual)- Disbanded.

ALANON/ALATEEN GROUPS:

ADDITIONS: EL CARMEN (Bilingual) meets in recreation bldg. behind El Carmen Catholic Mission, 18487 Martinez-Losoya Rd., Thursdays, 8:15 PM.

DELETIONS: NORTHWOOD ALATEEN- Disbanded  
HAPPY HOUR (Bilingual)- Disbanded

CENTRAL SERVICE OFFICE COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

Bill S. was elected Chairman and Charlie B. Co-Chairman of the Central Service Office Committee at the November 11 CSOC meeting. They automatically become voting members of the CSO Administrative Board. Jim B. was elected Recording Secretary. The present CSO Executive Secretary, Corrinne A., was re-elected and automatically becomes a non-voting member of the Administrative Board and its Sec'y-Treas. All were elected for two years beginning Jan. 1974.

Two voting members were elected to the Administrative Board: Herbert P. for one year completing the unexpired term of Raul M., Dis-

trict 1 Area Committee Member-Elect, and Preston S. for two years.

Some changes to Administrative Board Procedures were recommended by Ad Hoc Procedures Review Committee Chairman, Imogene U., and approved by the CSO Committee. These changes, along with Administrative Board Chairman, Vice Chairman and Standing Committee Chairmen for next year will be reported after the December Administrative Board meeting.

PUBLIC INFORMATION COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

The GSO Public Information Committee publishes an AA Public Information Bulletin which is sent to PIC members throughout the world. It is a series of bulletins sharing local public information activities. Bulletin #38, Sept.-Oct. 1973, P.I. WORK AND THE TWELVE TRADITIONS shared an item sent in by our local PIC Chairman, Frost U.; the Texas speaker referred to is Bill S., CSO Committee Chairman-Elect; "Tradition Six - 'Outside Enterprise' (Georgia, Texas) Operation Threshold, the campaign against alcoholism being conducted this year by the Jaycees, is a typical 'outside enterprise', not connected with the AA program, but certainly putting the Jaycees in the ranks of 'our friends'.

"At the start of the campaign, Jaycees in Atlanta, Ga., asked the local PIC to provide an AA speaker for one of their meetings. The PIC chairman commented, 'The Jaycees in this area plan to tackle alcoholism in industry here, and that is good news to us.' Midway in the campaign, the Jaycee president in a Texas town wrote to thank an AA speaker for 'a most informative and interesting program...At no time has any speaker been able to hold the attention of the membership as you did.'

"Of course, the purpose of these speakers was neither to 'endorse' the Jaycees' program nor to 'lend the AA name' to it. Their talks were designed only to give information about the AA program, and the reaction indicated that the Jaycees found the talks helpful-effective 'cooperation without affiliation' in other words."

Also listed in this Bulletin was the following USEFUL READING MATTER:

Focus (Xerox Education Publications), Oct. 12,  
(Continued on page 6)

PIC ACTIVITIES (continued)

1973: In this magazine for high-school students, "Afraid to Live, Afraid to Die" tells the story of a boy who joined AA at 18; a questionnaire for the reader and two columns of general comment on "Teenagers and Alcohol" accompany the article. There is also a Teacher's Edition of the same issue, with suggestions for a class discussion using the article as a springboard.

Grapevine, Nov.: Like last year's November issue, this is a "Classic Grapevine", made up of choice reprints; Bill W.'s "AA Tomorrow" emphasizes the vital need for P.I.; just the title of "One Doctor- An AA- To Another" tells how this article can be used; "The Public's Opinion" centers on the topic of this bulletin- the Traditions; "God is Not Yourself" is an illuminating view of AA from the outside by writer-scientist Paul de Kruif.

The local PIC Chairman sent another article to GSO from the San Antonio Light Action Line of Sunday Oct. 14, 1973, "Alcoholics Anonymous in Your Community." The GSO staff member said it was one of the finest reporting jobs about AA she had ever seen and they were sending a letter of gratitude to the writer. They also thanked Pat B. for his part in providing such accurate and clear information in response to a call made by Action Line to the CSO.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION: In November Bill S. talked about the AA Recovery Program to the NW Cosmopolitan Civic Club at the San Francisco Steak House and Jack A. spoke to a health class at McCullum High School.

**! WEDDING BELLS !**

Betty D. & Louis (Van) Van D.  
Joy W. & Walt N.

CENTRAL SERVICE OFFICE COMMITTEE MEETING will be Sunday Dec. 9, 1973 at Club 12. These meetings are held the second Sunday of each month at 7:00 PM. The CSO Committee is comprised of GSR's representing all groups serviced by the Central Service Office. Secretaries and all interested AA's are welcome at these meetings.

AREA MONTHLY INTERGROUP SPEAKERS MEETING will be on Sunday, Dec. 9, 1973, at 8:15 PM, at Club 12. The Alamo Heights Group will host. "Smitty" S., from San Antonio, will speak.

ANNUAL AA CHRISTMAS DANCE

Plan now to attend and join in the fun on Friday, Dec. 7, 1973, at Turner Club, 120 9th St. 8:00 to 12:00 PM. See your Group Secretary or GSR for tickets: \$2.50 Singles, \$4.00 Couples. Rex S. is Dance Chairman.

**ADDITIONAL NEWS** from THE ARC: An Open AA meeting will be held at the ARC on Dec. 16 following the 2:00 PM election of ARC Board members.

**Merry Christmas &  
a Sober New Year!**

