

The ism in alcoholism

"It's not the alcohol that gets you, but the ism," say my anonymous friends who are in Alcoholics Anonymous. AA folks have a zillion little sayings, or, as one friend put it, "These people talk in bumper stickers!"

I like it when they pass their wisdom my way, but sometimes it takes me awhile to unravel the meanings. Usually until something trips me up again and then I get it.

I had a run-in with the ism this year.

I was standing in my kitchen alone. Alone, that's important to note.

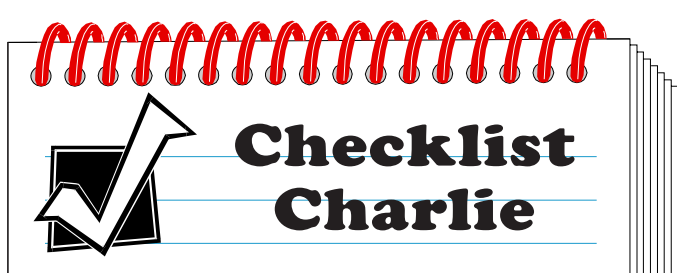
I reached to the back of a high cabinet where my husband hides the Jack Daniels he uses to marinate steaks.

I poured a coffee cup full. Coffee cup, catch that?

In the quiet, I heard my own thoughts.

"It's been a tough time. I need this drink. It will make me feel better. I deserve this because I am so hurt. If I have a drink, I'll be less stressed."

Good grief.



This is not the first time the ism has tried to trip me up.

I am happy to report that I poured the whiskey down the sink and put the coffee cup in the dishwasher.

I put on my tennis shoes and went for a brisk walk.

"All alcoholics must reach some sort of bottom or be beat down by alcohol to the point that they realize that not they, nor their doctor, nor anyone else, can solve their alcohol problem," writes one of my anonymous friends.

"Then, when approached by another alcoholic, they are ready to listen. Although group therapy plays a major role in the recovery of an alcoholic, a belief in God - a higher power or some spiri-

tual belief - is the key to unlock the door for the treatment of this disease.

By attending meetings, getting a sponsor - someone to guide them through the twelve steps of recovery - they learn how to live a productive and happy life," adds my friend.

If you are looking for a friend who understands the ism, the 61st Tyler AA Anniversary is a great place to meet one. Or hundreds of friends.

Harvey Convention Center will be packed with folks who view the disease as serious, many of whom are not alcoholics themselves. There will be alcoholics there who have been in recovery for years and those who just recently hit

rock bottom.

There will be kind-hearted men and women who suffer as they live with a loved one who thinks alcohol is the answer to life's problems.

The event happens from 6pm, Friday, January 11, to around noon on Sunday, January 13. Besides friendly people, there will be food, raffles, dancing, and fabulous, funny speakers. There's a \$15 registration fee.

There will be lots of wisdom delivered in the form of stories, personal experiences, and, yes, quite a few sayings.

So, what is the ism exactly? That's a great question.

As best as I can tell, it's what gets us in trouble with alcohol in the first place.

Some problems are really painful; it is just easier to soak our problems in something on the rocks.

- Could the ism be our own fear about trying something different in life or in relationships?

- Could it be taking the easy way out by blaming others?

- Could it be nursing our wounds and our self-pity?

- Could it be the habitually dysfunctional ways we respond to our loved ones? Or the way we provoke the folks we love?

- Could it be a lack of courage to tell the truth?

Truth is hard sometimes. It takes courage to acknowledge to oneself that alcoholism is a physical disease that is a byproduct of internal problems. Lots of courage.

It also takes integrity. Maybe mixed with a dose of desperation.

There is an antidote to the ism that is able to saturate our lives with wholesomeness and humility, instead of alcohol. It often begins with 12 steps.

It is easier with friends who get it. If you have anything to add to this discussion, I'd love to hear from you.

Cathy Primer Krafve, aka Checklist Charlie, lives with her family in beautiful East Texas. She welcomes all comments, questions, or lists at CAEKrafve2@aol.com.

What's Happening

(Continued from page 1)

The Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter #932 will meet on Thursday, Jan. 17 at 7 PM in Tyler at Traditions Restaurant on 6205 S. Broadway. Member ship is open to U.S. armed forces veterans who served on active duty (for other than training purposes) between Feb. 28, 1961- May 7, 1975, (in Vietnam), or between Aug. 5, 1964-May 7, 1975 for Vietnam-era veterans. For more information, e-mail Jack at jbcusmc@dishmail.net or call him at (903) 581-5138; or e-mail Robbie at sunsbor@att.net or call him at (903) 581-5973.

East Texas Girls Softball has a "planning meeting" scheduled for Sunday, Jan. 27 at 2 PM at the Chandler Elementary Cafeteria. All people interested in helping with the league this year, please plan to attend. All current coaches or those interested in coaching a team this season are encouraged to attend as well. The upcoming softball season will be discussed and planned. If you have any questions, call Billy Ray Palmer at (903) 849-3631 or Debbie Taylor at (903) 849-6005.

Free Income Tax Assistance provided by AARP volunteers. The services will be available from Feb 1st through April 14 at the following times and locations: Fridays 8-Noon in Athens at the Henderson County Senior Center, Mondays 8- Noon in Seven Points at the Library at Cedar Creek Lake, and Wednesdays 8- Noon in Malakoff at the Senior Citizens Center. For more information or questions call Gil Betts at (903) 778-2423.

The Brownsboro Theater Angels are now distributing for Homemade Gourmet. You can help us support the fine arts by purchasing your homemade gourmet thru our website www.homemadegourmet.com/brownsborotheaterangels or pick up selected products at Ellis Mercantile on Hwy 31 east of Chandler on north side of highway before FM 2661. Special thanks to Ellis Mercantile for allowing us to set up in their store.

Palmetto State QT. from South Carolina will be performing on Saturday, Jan. 19 at the Texas Gospel Music Hall on 6513 HWY 19 South in Athens. Also in concert will be **Lifeway Trio** of Athens and special guest, Joseph Ellenberg, of Longview. The concert will start at 6PM, but the doors will open at 5PM. Reserved seat tickets are \$15. Advance Tickets General Admission is \$12, day of the concert \$15. Tickets are available at The Scroll in Tyler, First State Bank on the square in Athens, and Music Hall by calling 903-677-2492.

The Chamber Banquet and Silent Auction will be Thursday, February 7.

Starting Dec. 13 and every Thursday following, **St. Stephen's Anglican Church** in Athens will host a day care service for Senior Citizens at 2101 East College St. Care will be available from 8AM-4PM. Lunch will be served at noon. The fee for the service is \$4 for the first hour and \$3 for each additional hour. There are limitations on guests that may be accommodated; reservations are required. Call 903-675-1639 for reservations and more information.

GED Preparation Classes, Monday from 6-9 PM. For more information call Joyce Martin at 903-849-6918.

Story-time for pre-schoolers resumed at the Chandler Public Library beginning Thursday, Sept. 13, at 10:00 AM. Interested persons can call the library at 903-849-4122 for more information.

Murchison Postmaster retires

(Continued from page 1)

post office," Lewis said. "It is my job to see the mail delivered and the customers taken care of."

From Brownsboro and Murchison's post offices Postmaster Lewis went to Wood County and Quitman in 1993, Lindale in 1994 and '95 then shipped off to Lindale for Ben Wheeler in 1999 through 2000. Here she went to Forney in 2001 and Van from 2002 to 2003.

Also of note during this period is the fact she was the editor of the Quality of

Work Life Ruralcraft Newspaper from 1997 to 2001.

The short stays in many of the towns of East Texas are obvious, though Lewis said this was not because of any dislike of the areas she worked, but because her job as a postmaster sees her moving around a great deal.

From 2000 to 2007 Ann Lewis also served as an aviation security officer in the Murchison office.

"I checked security measures for aviation security in the mail system," Lewis said.

Even including her stay as



Ann Lewis

a trainer for the Dallas District training Craft employees as mandated by the post office unions, Lewis has worked in the Murchison post office for 26 years.

She has been a member of the National Association of Postmasters of the United States and even been a lobbyist for the group on Capitol Hill. Ann was also in the Kickapoo Kiwanis Club, and a board member of the Texas Inmate Families Association, a group designed to support and encourage the family members of the incarcerated.

In addition, Lewis is about to be trained as a grant writer, she said Thursday, January 3.

Leaving the office, Ann Lewis reminisced about her career.

"I've been blessed with a good job and the best employees," Lewis said. "I have a good life and good children."

Ann has two grown children and one grandson.

"Allowing God to take care of my life has been the natural thing to do," Ann said.

Lewis noted that she has been a member of the Murchison Methodist church, and that her religion has had an absolute impact on her life.

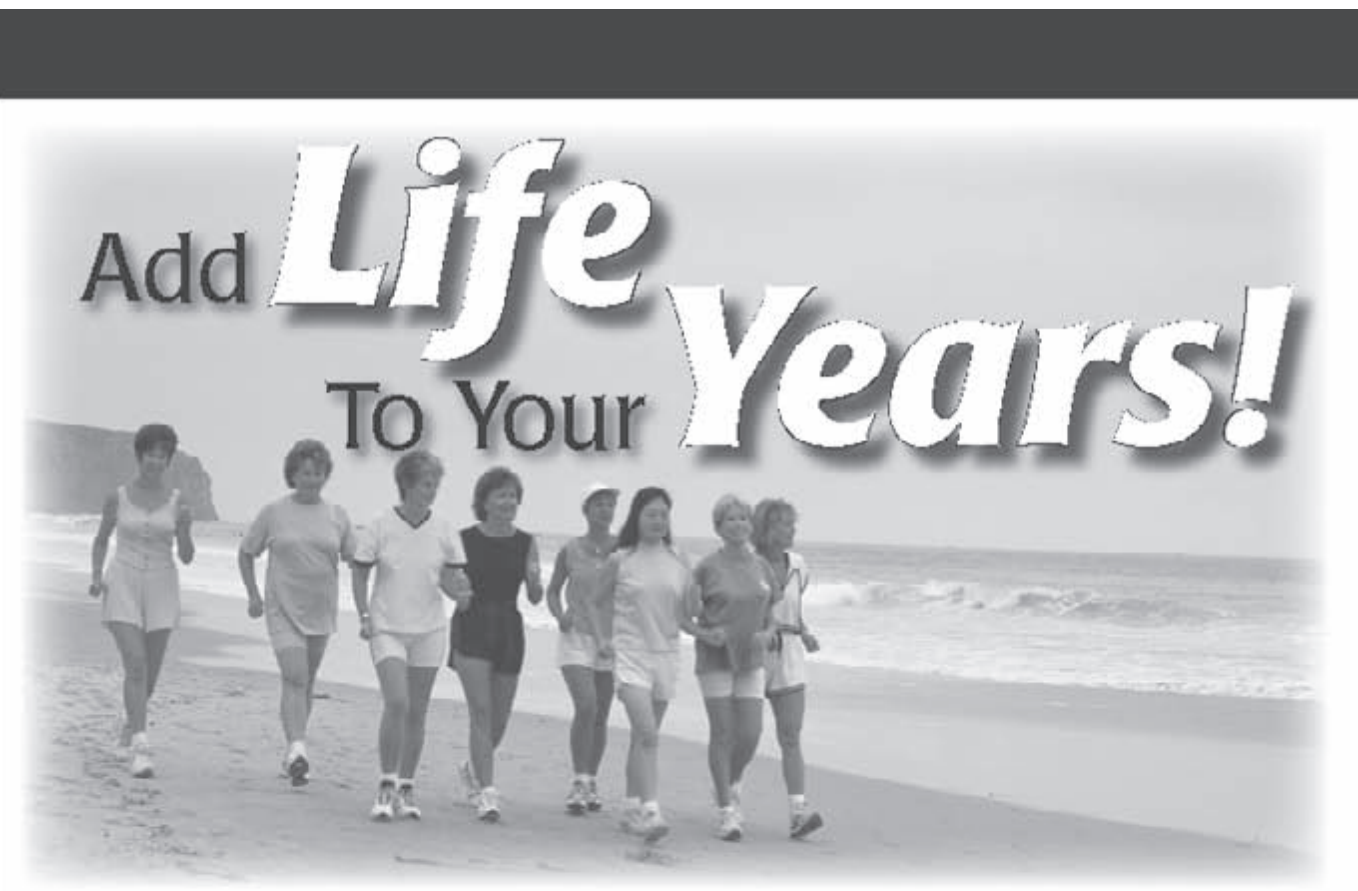
JoAnn Perry, the officer in charge since Ann's departure, said Lewis will be missed.

"She was a great boss," Perry said. "She knew everybody and was a hard worker, I can't think of enough good qualities."

Rickey Williams, postmaster of the Brownsboro Post Office, said he has worked with Ann a great deal over the years.

"She's always been a good neighbor," Williams said, "as far as a Post Office neighbor. She's been supportive and helpful and I will miss her as a fellow postmaster."

Ann said working at the Murchison Post Office has been a wonderful experience for her, and she will remember it.



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For more information call the ETMC Chandler Olympic Center at 903-849-4404 or Visit us on-line at www.etmc.org/fitness



Meals on Wheels

Menu January 14-18 (Milk served with meals) Orange Juice Served in Centers

MON: Chicken nuggets/sauce, oriental rice, oriental vegetables, wheat bread, cookies

TUE: King Ranch casserole, vegetable sticks, seasoned broccoli, wheat bread, brownies

WED: Salisbury steak, scalloped potatoes, California blend vegetables, wheat bread, fresh fruit

THUR: Smoked sausage, pinto beans, sauerkraut, cornbread, Jell-o

FRI: Catfish filet, tater tots, Cole slaw, bread, peach cobbler

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