



Good News



November
1975

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By the Northern California Council of Alcoholics Anonymous

Vol. XIX
No. 11

Ed C. Resigns from Good News

At the October 4, Northern California Council Conference Steering Committee meeting, I announced that my wife, Nancy, and I would be disassociating ourselves from Good News after the publication of the December 1975 issue. (This leaving of the paper will not be like a former editor's five-years of resigning!)

There are several reasons for our having to leave Good News. (Notice, I said having, not wanting.) And these fall in the province of establishing realistic priorities.

First, I am unable and unwilling to spend upwards of twenty-five hours a week that goes into producing a monthly paper, bookkeeping and keeping subscription records current. I have a full-time job with a large San Francisco corporation, and, in order to advance, I will have to spend time on evening classes and, probably, some travel.

Second, my wife, Nancy is not well enough to continue expending the effort she has in the past in getting finished papers from the printer, supervising collating and mailing, handling group envelope addressing and billing, plus re-writing many of the articles for the paper.

When we took over Good News, we assumed that many members of the fellowship would be eager to help with the many hours of detail work that are necessary to keep the paper going. This has not proved to be the case. A few members of the staff have faithfully written and worked each month.

The rest of the work has been done by different volunteers recruited each month. Very few are willing to spend a second stint at stuffing envelopes or writing out bills.

Even more discouraging is the lack of news sent to Good News. Month after month, we receive news too late to print—although each issue carries the “deadline box”. Month after month, we hear of stories we should have had — after the paper is out.

With all these facts, and the proliferation of secretaries' newsletters, bulletins from Alano Clubs, etc., it seems to us that Good News has outlived its usefulness.

The process of putting the paper out with the present setup is also obsolete. Bids from professionals who will type, print, collate, mail and sort Good News are on their way to NCC secretary, Anne S. We feel the cost is prohibitive, in view of the seeming lack of interest of our readers.

If Good News is to continue, I feel AA members should audit the books and sign the checks; AA members should write and edit the copy—but what copy?

Does Good News continue? We recommend that Good News be discontinued with the December issue.

Ed C.

AA — Doctors Tell It Like They See It

Thoughtless gossip among AAs and ignorance about alcoholism among some doctors were cited at a recent meeting as two major factors in making cooperation between AA and the alcoholism professional less effective than it could be, reported a group of prominent physicians at a recent workshop on alcoholism held in Honolulu.

Some problems in cooperating with AA: idle gossip, breaking of a person's anonymity, breaking professional confidences (“d’you know who I saw in Detox this evening?”) all tend toward less enthusiasm for involvement with AAs. The 12th-stepper should stay with his or her pigeon at the hospital until he's admitted — don't drop and run.

Too few groups assign sponsors (even on a temporary basis) to the newcomer to make sure he gets to meet others, pick up phone numbers, and generally feel welcome. How about “group greeters” to keep an eye open for those coming to their first meeting.

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San Francisco All Groups 29th Anniversary

All Groups will celebrate this very important event on Friday evening, November 23, at St. Mary's Cathedral, Gough and Geary Streets, Hall D. (Enter the parking lot from Gough Street.)

The 29th anniversary meeting will have Paul G. of Mill Valley as chairman and Gil A., also of Mill Valley, as speaker.

Doors will open at 7:30 p.m. The meeting time is 8:30.

Visit with your friends and enjoy homemade cake and coffee after the meeting. Lots of free parking!

New York AA — the Same Yet Different!

New York City AA — “This is a nice place to visit, but . . .” It makes one blush to recall actually having made such presumptuous and resentment - laden comments, in some of the very rooms where that first handful of newly sober alcoholics began it all!

Yet those were my feelings, my first reactions, upon attending New York groups as a visitor from San Francisco, where I had joined the Fellowship. As a former New Yorker, of course I knew all about the Big City pressures, the all-pervading attitudes of mistrust or at least the need to be on guard against possible attack (both literally and emotionally). And, I'd been forewarned that N.Y. meetings would seem more “impersonal” than those on the West Coast. Yet, somehow, I'd expected AA New Yorkers to be different from “outsiders,” and to be perhaps warmer to their own kind than to other citizens.

But no one said “Hi!” when I introduced myself. No one asked me to “keep coming back,” or asked for my phone number, or even noticed me.

It didn't seem to matter whether the group was large or small, speaker or discussion — I was just another face in

(Continued on page 3)

The Link

California Northern Coastal Area of General Service

Neatly entwined in the network of AA services, otherwise known as the Third Legacy and which includes everything from the Twelfth Step call to the AA General Service Office in New York, is the function of AA as its own publisher.

The decision to assume this responsibility came about very early; it was almost accidental, and it has never been regretted. In terms of the unity, growth, and good health of the fellowship, this has proved its worth throughout our history.

In order for a book or pamphlet to bear the "Conference-approved" seal (a triangle enclosed in a circle) the need for it must first be established — and a lot of would-be gems stop right there.

Then comes the writing — the draft upon draft, all scrutinized by committees and staff members. Finally, many months later, emerges a new publication. This does not happen often, and it is not approached lightly. "Came to Believe", a small soft-bound book is a recent (1973) addition to the list of World Services, Inc., the name of our publishing company. (AA Grapevine, Inc. is a separate but equally official AA publishing agency.) There is a more recent soft-bound book, called "Living Sober" which endured these rituals of conception and birth.

The Conference Committee on Literature does not wish to restrict anyone's selection of personal reading material; its functions, instead, as a means of keeping the AA program intact and free from the inroads which would inevitably be made by the well-meaning but misinformed, misled, or excessively eager.

There has never been any attempt to confine the reading adventures of the membership; many of us have favorite publications, frequently obscure, which we find personally helpful, and which we recommend to our friends without hesitation. The point is, that these publications have no place on our literature tables — unless they are separately placed and identified as non-AA literature. Picture the confusion of the newcomer, eager to read everything he thinks he is required to, faced with an array which could include (according to the secretary's whim) anything from the Bhagavad Gita, to the Bible, the Torah, or the Koran. The merit of none of these books is in dispute; they, and many others,

may help many people. But their presence on AA tables, unless set apart, is a source of confusion. We have, after all, been admonished to Keep It Simple.

Implied approval is enjoyed by several books which are consistently and conspicuously present; these include the Marty Mann books and the Twenty-Four Hour book. Joining this roster is the recently published "Bill W" which is a biography of Bill Wilson who, together with Dr. Bob Smith who died in 1950, started this fellowship some forty years ago.

This would seem a natural for our tables, and one wonders why the Literature Committee never undertook to produce such a book, but the fact remains that "Bill W", whatever its interest to AA members and whatever its merits, is an outside enterprise.

The general public is becoming increasingly aware of the success of AA, and it likes to learn about us. The public press, in its zeal to meet this need, has bestowed on "Bill W." the authority of "official AA book". One syndicated columnist even referred to it as an autobiography, and Bill dead these five years.

It is, then, not a question of what we should or should not read. In fact, "should" in some circles has become a dirty word. But we owe it to ourselves to know what is official and what is not — after all, for the first time for many of us, we are on the inside looking out, and it is fun.

Ralph L.

H & I Broadides

Having just returned from a most fantastic conference in Sacramento, I can, perhaps, touch on some of the things that are in my heart that didn't come out from the podium, when I had the privilege of participating as a Hospital and Institution Committee member.

"We share our experience, strength and hope with each other." This means different things to different people. Although I have served the fellowship in various ways in the past, H & I Committee is, and always has been my first love.

I shall always be grateful that at my first AA meeting, in 1953, one of the speakers was a former inmate of San Quentin, who found sobriety "inside" because H & I, and other AA members cared enough to carry the message to those who still suffer. This man had five years' sobriety, and he was sharing what

had been so freely given to him. I was impressed.

I also owe a debt of gratitude to Benny K. of Alameda, who first took me to Napa State Hospital when I was only dry a few weeks.

These two happenings instilled in me a desire to strive for the sobriety to become active in hospital and institutional work.

I became contact chairman at Napa State Hospital, and remained one for several years. When meetings were terminated there, I became involved with other facilities. When meetings were resumed at Napa, I again became contact chairman.

In 1960, the late Ross Marsh asked me if I would speak at Vacaville. I was overwhelmed with gratitude. (At that time women were allowed there only once a month, and were well screened. Ross explained to me that it was not important that I was a gal going into men's prison. What was important was that I was an AA member carrying a message. Attending this meeting was a beautiful experience.)

A few days after this meeting, I received a letter from the secretary of the inside group asking me to return the following month. I returned a second time to Vacaville, and this turned out to be the last time I would enter an institution as a single woman.

Larry, the group secretary, after corresponding with me for several months was released. Six months later, in 1966 we were married.

Our greatest happiness results from "carrying the message" into hospitals and institutions. We have been into many, and hope to continue going as long as God allows us.

I would like to share some of my observations about women going into men's prisons.

If we act like ladies, dress like ladies, talk like ladies, walk like ladies, we may assume that we will be treated like ladies (I have yet to be insulted by an inmate of any of the six prisons I have visited).

We, who visit prisons, receive so much more than we give. To me this has never been a thankless job.

We must never forget that visiting prison is a privilege, and this privilege is not to be abused.

All we can really give the confined person is hope and the conviction that we are there because we care. (In caring we strengthen our own sobriety.)

Beyond this, we do what our hearts

tell us to do. Often this means a willingness to sponsor those who are coming out. At least, we can get them to meetings and introduce them to other AA members.

We promise nothing besides hope, love and encouragement. But we give all of these we are capable of.

Among the friends I love most dearly are former hospital patients and prison inmates who have found their God, their sobriety and their happiness through AA and the H & I Committee, which I am so proud to be a part of.

Let us never forget: "There but for the grace of God." Having spent a night in jail at age 21, I'm amazed I didn't end up with far worse confinement. Especially, since I didn't stop drinking for 15 more years. God has been good to me.

I'm thankful I could share some of my thoughts in this column and to have served on the panel in Sacramento. These are truly AA fringe benefits. And all I've been promised is sobriety.

See you all in Fresno. God bless you all. I love you.

Ollie O.

AA — Doctors . . .

(Continued from page 1)

There seems to be too little initiative in following through with the alcoholic who enters and later leaves an alcoholism treatment facility. If you carried the body, how about carrying the message?

Many AAs tend to practice medicine without a license by telling newcomers to stop taking their prescribed pills — all pills! Not all pills are bad. Some people must take certain medications to stay alive, to avoid epileptic seizure, diabetic coma, etc.

Tranquilizers and sedatives are bad for the alcoholic; in composition and effect they are very much like alcohol. An alcoholic who is taking them is neither dry, nor sober. Alcoholism treatment facilities should use them sparingly and under no circumstances should the patient leave the facility until he has been off tranquilizers for a day or two. In treatment, however, these drugs are useful for avoiding the d.t.s and convulsions.

Antabuse is o.k. as a crutch. The longer the patient remains dry, the greater are his chances of seeking and finding long-term sobriety without antabuse . . . if he wants it.

The Myhna Bird
October 1975

N.Y. AA

the crowd.

Still, I did keep going back. The message was the same, and I needed that message more than ever. It might be "cold comfort," but it was keeping me sober, one day at a time.

And then, one noon at the Renaissance Group on E. 48th St., the topic was "Anger and Resentments — and how they had 'destroyed more good drunks than any other single cause.'" Some one remarked that he'd had to learn that he was not the only person in the room, and suddenly the ego-trip I'd been indulging in was crystal clear. So I spoke of the resentments I'd been harboring and admitted that it was possible to feel the concern in that group if I opened myself to it. After the meeting, a few men and women who didn't have to rush back to work took time to welcome me and make suggestions about various other groups I might like.

The rest of my two weeks in the City seems a kaleidoscope of groups and friendly faces — interspersed with the business details that had necessitated my trip. Names we've heard so much about like the Mustard Seed, Oxford, Lenox Hill, Chelsea Riverside, The Regency, Murray Hill, St. Thomas, Foglifters, Silkworth, Life Line, Gotham and Gramercy.

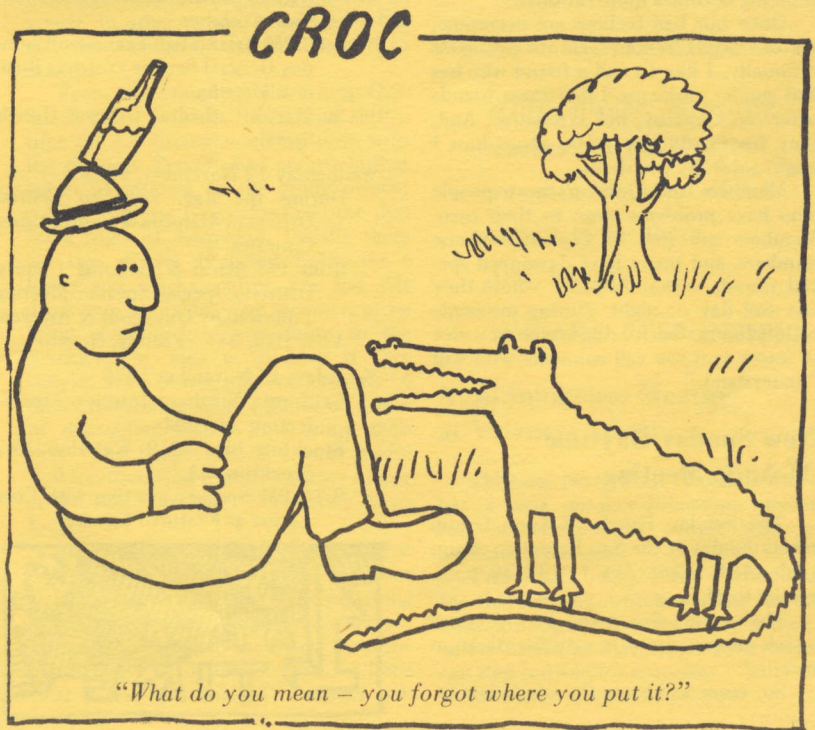
(Continued from page 1)

Young people and older ones, Madison Avenue executives, career women and long haired hippies, Jews and Gentiles, blacks and whites, a glorious melting pot brimming with sober alcoholics and drunks trying to recover.

It didn't matter that the musicians were on strike and all the Broadway musicals were closed. Because a man named MacDonald spoke at the Life Line group on October 7th about his sobriety being a jewel to be treasured and polished. About the Program's principle of love being "the glue that holds AA together." And the vibrations of energy and joy that radiated from this alcoholic made him seem a "Superstar."

It didn't even matter very much that gangs of toughs still roamed the streets, or that hostile people pushed and shoved in the subway dungeons. Because an elderly man with shaking hands shared my umbrella outside Intergroup's office, and with trembling voice asked me to help him stay sober. Standing there with the rain sloshing around my ankles and telling him all he had to do was not take the first drink, and keep going to meetings — I knew then: that's what AA is all about!

Pat M.



Facing Loneliness, Fear and Depression

In Al-Anon, we learn that sometimes people have to contend with feelings of loneliness, fear and depression. These feelings may be caused by interaction with an active alcoholic, a recovered alcoholic, or an institutional problem. They may even arise from problems of our own making—we may be too hungry, too angry, or too “uptight.”

Al-Anon reminds us that it is important to put our problems in a proper perspective. In this way, we can contend with our bad feelings and begin to feel better again.

First, it is important for us to identify our problems. This sounds easy, but may be difficult. For instance, when I feel badly, I write down all the things that bother me. When I force myself to continue writing, I begin to see a pattern. I can see that I may be feeling ignored, oppressed, or fearful of the future. Once I have identified my real problems and my real feelings, I can begin to plan a course of action.

Feelings seem to be our biggest obstacle. Mine seem to get better once I have written them down. The unpleasant thoughts seem to leave my brain once I have stated them. My thinking becomes more rational.

Once our bad feelings are overcome, we can begin to approach our problems rationally. I like to call a friend who has had similar problems. I find these friends offer me empathy, not sympathy! And, they frequently have ideas about how I might solve my problems.

Members of Al-Anon meet people who have problems close to their own. Members are free to exchange phone numbers, and many have developed special friends within Al-Anon whom they can call day or night. During moments of loneliness, fear or depression, it's nice to know you can call someone who will “understand.”

Tina C.

New Sunday Daytime Al-Anon Meeting

The Sunday Punch Al-Anon Group meets Sunday at the San Francisco Alano Club, 414 Grant Ave., at 12:30 p.m., on the third floor.

There are also two AA meetings which run concurrently with the Al-Anon meeting.

So, come and bring the whole family.

Schedule of Cora Louise B. GSO Staff Member, New York City

Saturday 8 November 1975

California Northern Coastal Area Fall Assembly, College of San Mateo, 1700 West Hillsdale Blvd., San Mateo, Ca.

10:00 AM “Dialog With Cora Louise”
Your questions & comments

8:15 PM Speaker meeting with Cora Louise as featured speaker

Sunday 9 November 1975

7:30 PM Monterey County General Service Districts Special Speaker Meeting

St. Paul's Church, San Miguel & Pajaro Sts., Salinas, Ca.

Monday 10 November 1975

During the day, visits to Central Offices in Monterey, Santa Cruz, & Santa Clara Counties

8:00 PM Santa Clara & San Mateo County General Service Districts Special Speaker Meeting followed by questions & comments

Immanuel Lutheran Church, 1710 Moorpark Ave. (Corner Leigh)

Tuesday 11 November 1975

During the day, visits to Central Offices in San Mateo & San Francisco Counties.

8:00 PM Attend San Francisco Counties General Service Districts Business Meeting,

St. Mary's Cathedral, Geary & Gough Streets

Wednesday 12 November, 1975

During the day, visits to Central Offices in Alameda & Contra Costa Counties.

8:00 PM Marin & Sonoma County Districts Special Speaker Meeting Followed by Questions & Answers.

VFW Hall, 344 Sweetser, Novato

Saturday, 15 November 1975

California Northern Interior Area Election Assembly

Stockton Inn, 4219 Waterloo Rd., Stockton, CA

8:15 PM Speaker meeting with Cora Louise as Featured Speaker

Fall General Service Assembly Nov. 8

California, Northern Coastal Area of AA, will present its annual Fall General Service Assembly Saturday, November 8, 1975 at the South Cafeteria, San Mateo College, 1700 West Hillsdale Blvd., San Mateo, California. Featured will be Cora Louise B., staff member from General Service Office, New York.

George D., Area Delegate, will moderate an unstructured workshop with Cora Louise commencing at 10 AM, followed by registration, lunch, and a business meeting. Commencing at 2:30 p.m. there will be the following presentations and workshops:

1. The role of the GSR – Moderator, John G., San Francisco; Reporter, Roger C., Alameda
2. Sponsorship – Moderator, Gordon R., Santa Clara; Reporter, Jack M., Santa Cruz
3. General Service and Public Information – Moderator, George M., Mountain View; Reporter, Bill M., San Ramon
4. What makes a good Area Officer? Moderator, Win S., Fairfield; Reporter, Harriette T., Martinez
5. The How's and Why's of 12 Step Calls – Moderator, Pauline H., Tiburon; Reporter, Kathy D., Salinas

Dinner will be served at 5:30 p.m., followed by “The AA Follies”, a variety show MC'd by Ozzy O., of Moraga. At 8:15 p.m. there will be the workshop reports and Speaker Meeting – Chairman, John B., San Mateo; 5th Chapter, Gordon A., San Francisco; 12 Traditions, LaVerne P., San Francisco, and the Speaker, Cora Louise B., New York City.

The Great Mocker

Booze has snapped more wedding rings, sold more homes, bankrupt more people, blighted more children, hung more crepe, defiled more innocent, twisted more limbs, smashed more vehicles, wrecked more manhood, dishonoured more womanhood, filled more jails, broken more hearts, caused more suicides, armed more fools, drained more blood, blinded more brains, blasted more lives, dug more graves, made more insanity and created more living hell for more good people than any other single scourge that ever took root within the human race.

Sarah, Glasgow – The Roundabout



1976 General Service Agenda Topics

George D., CNCA Area Delegate, announced on October 10th, after in-depth discussion by the General Service Area Committee, that the following suggested Agenda Topics have been recommended to General Service Office, New York, for inclusion in the 1976 General Service Assembly:

1. (As part of "Sponsorship") 12 Step Calls: Are AA members becoming reluctant to make them? Are today's members unsure of what to do with an alcoholic who isn't quite dry? Is the old-fashioned 12 step call becoming obsolete?
2. To what extent, and under what circumstances, should AA World Services, Inc. participate in the sale or distribution of non-AA material?
3. If there is a presentation or report on the feasibility study of a paperback Big Book, we would like an expression of the conscience of the Conference as to whether this is what the groups really want.
4. To what extent should we encourage AA members to work as volunteers for agencies in the field of alcoholism at a time when many areas are having difficulty interesting members in all levels of AA service?
5. We would like some sharing on problems of helping the "hard to reach" alcoholic (specific interest in handicapped - deaf or blind - and members of minority groups.)

Individual members also contributed following suggestions: (1) A souvenir book for the 1980 International Convention; (2) A cumulative topical index to the AA Grapevine; (3) A "words and phrases" index for the Big Book; (4) Further discussion on cooperation with detox wards, halfway houses, etc. Is AA's role changing?

These suggested topics will be forwarded to the Conference Agenda Committee for consideration along with any suggestions received from other Areas in the United States and Canada. After study and discussion, final Agenda Topics will be published in the December issue of Box 459.



Mini AA Meeting To Handle Teleservice

The Federal Breakfast Group, San Francisco, is responsible as a Group for a 4 hour shift once per month from 6 to 10 p.m. for 12 Step calls relayed to the "Group Captain", Virginia W. by teleservice. Often no calls are relayed by teleservice but twice there have been 4 calls relayed in the 4 hours.

Group members have volunteered (and been drafted) to help on all calls received from teleservice. One volunteer is a woman who is glad to call and talk to those women who insist they want only to talk to someone by phone. A few men do have cars available and will call on the still suffering alcoholic and will attempt to take him, or her, to a meeting if at all possible.

Since the Group Captain must remain at home and must keep the phone clear for calls from teleservice she decided it would be preferable to have company during this 4 hours. Usually there is a group of from 4 to 7 people, many of them with no prior experience at 12th Stepping; some with only a few months of sobriety, and some retreaded retreads.

There are men, women, black, white, young, old and from a few months to many years sobriety. Some go to 7 or more meetings a week, some to 7 or so a year. In other words, it is a mixed bag and the members vary from month to month.

From the beginning, the Group Captain decided to make this 4 hour shift a time for AA discussions. They open with the Serenity Prayer, read an article that seems of interest to the group present (often from the Grapevine) and use that for a topic of discussion. Usually there are two articles discussed during the 4 hours and snacks, coffee, tea and soft drinks are available. (The members often bring something to contribute to the snacks.) The idea is to keep it very simple, very casual and yet keep the 4 hours interesting with a planned format of discussion topics. This group feels that "The Grapevine" is a most useful tool for discussion topics. Another source is the San Francisco "Secretary's News Letter."

In October the discussion centered on "Sponsorship." An excerpt from our Delegate's letter to New York regarding Sponsorship as an agenda topic was read. This was followed by an article from the September, 1975 Grapevine - "Let's Hear It For Sponsorship!" Another arti-

cle, "Suggestions From a Temporary Sponsor" was read and discussed. Also read was "Leaders in Sober Living" from the same issue of the Grapevine.

These articles and the resulting discussions led to the reading of many excerpts from the AA Group Handbook which gave exact answers to many questions. This, in turn, led to a discussion of the function of the Central Office and to the function and structure of General Service. (This resulted in 3 of the members sitting in on a General Services meeting and all finding it interesting and comprehensible.)

The Mini-Meeting is one way to assure that a teleservice shift will be thoroughly covered - while giving those participating another form of AA fellowship.

New Horizons Fourth Anniversary

On Monday, November 3, New Horizons AA Group, at Harrison House, 1275 Harrison St., San Francisco, will celebrate its fourth anniversary.

The meeting, at 8:30 p.m. will have as speaker Nick G. There will be a lavish buffet after the meeting.

There is unlimited parking in the lot behind the house.

Everyone is sincerely invited to come and help celebrate.

WE ARE RESPONSIBLE: —

When anyone, anywhere.

reaches out for help,

we want the hand of AA
always to be there.

And for that:

WE ARE RESPONSIBLE.

New Smokeless Meeting at Valencia Street

Thirteen Sixty-Four Valencia Street has a new speaker-discussion meeting for non-smokers, or people who are bothered by smoke.

Friday at 11 a.m. is the starting time for this meeting, which will last for one hour. During the meeting, there will be a coffee break, so that people who wish to can step outside for a smoke.

Everyone is welcome.

Came to Believe

I was taken to my first A.A. meeting having made contact the night before. Of course, I took all my preconceived ideas with me. I heard the Preamble, but was too concerned with myself to bother about what it said. I enjoyed the story, but couldn't remember a word of it next day.

It took time. I had to learn to listen. The first time I listened to the Preamble I liked it so much I took it home and read it.

I knew all about fellowships. Basically they were clubs and, one way or another, cost a lot of money. They elected officials who wouldn't talk to me, even after I'd bought them a drink. The officials' wives were insufferable unless I was drunk and then everyone else was insufferable: "He's such a nice man," I imagined them saying. Memberships cost a bomb and there was a long waiting list — so I was somebody special because a lot of folk were waiting to be as miserable as me. Any members I knew crossed the street when they saw me coming. Alcoholics Anonymous taught me a lot about other fellowships.

For one thing, they let me become a member without having the only requirement for membership. They gave me that, although I didn't want it. They took nothing from me and gave me their time. They didn't preach or moralise. They understood and accepted me for what I was.

The Preamble spoke of a "common problem" and I liked that. It meant I was neither alone nor unique. Someone said the fact I was unique made me as common as dirt in A.A. The common problem was alcoholism. Booze. I knew how to get drunk. A.A. said, stay with us and you'll get sober.

So I went back. Keep coming, they told me.

I didn't like it when I heard alcoholism was more than booze. I'd put the bottle down and thought the story should end there; or maybe start, I wasn't sure which. So I sat back and waited for something to happen. Nothing happened; except that I heard some more stuff I didn't like.

Keep an open mind, they said. My mind was open until the word "God" was mentioned. Then it closed. They were now digging out a subject I had previously evaded and filed under, Don't Want to Know. I had borrowed a copy of the Big Book and read it up to and

including the first paragraph of Chapter 4—We Agnostics. The last sentence of that paragraph says, ". . . you may be suffering from an illness which only a spiritual experience will conquer." I didn't want to know the rest.

So I sat in 8 Cunningham Street. When I couldn't concentrate on what was said, I read the slogans. Sometimes I made up speeches that would have left them dew-eyed and gasping. Mostly I stared straight ahead. On the wall was written the word GOD.

Beneath it was the rest of the Serenity Prayer. We said that before we got our tea. I'd sussed them out—tambourines, a collection and a big drum. War Cry sellers! I brought a pub mind into A.A.

Carl, Glasgow — The Roundabout

Alcoholics Anonymous

There are no rules or laws in AA, but every member of this wonderful fellowship is honor bound to respect the anonymity of another member, particularly now that we are coming out of the blackout. Not the blackout of the individual, but the blackout of public misunderstanding and indifference that has long clouded the alcoholic problem.

Politicians, radio, television, newspapers and magazines are all scrambling to get on the AA band wagon to spread the story of alcoholism. In many cases the individual member lends his name to the newspapers, however, this wouldn't matter much if it would only affect the individual member. In the process of an awakened public interest there lurks a danger to the fellowship, and if the individual gets drunk, he leaves a cloud of doubt about the fellowship. This is a danger that every member should consider as a calculated risk. Therefore, we should know what we are doing and be constantly aware of the calculation.

Certainly, we don't want to do anything to hinder the present wave of interest in alcoholism. This interest is good and eventually it may help the public to understand the alcoholic problem and help to remove the stigma that still shrouds the alcoholic. But most alcoholics are "prima donnas" who like to be in the spotlight. Their ego is fed on attention and now that others are studying the alcoholic problem, the alcoholic wants to do the teaching.

We still need the same kind of AA that was handed down to us almost 40 years ago and we should never forget that there are two parts to the fellowship

— Alcoholics Anonymous. Our anonymity is a vital part of our fellowship. It builds our honesty which strengthens the bond that holds this fellowship together.

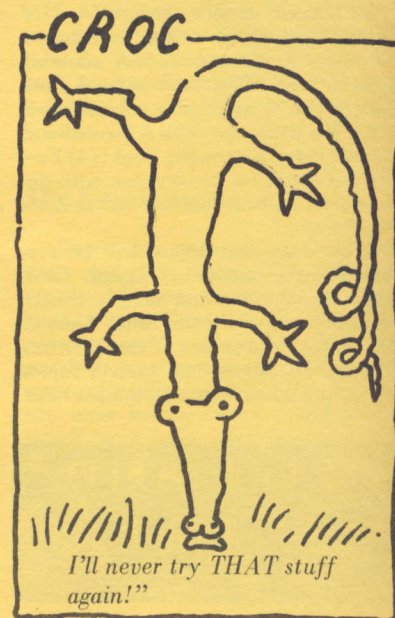
Anonymity is important to some business men and to some professional men who are doing business or serving people that have a contemptuous attitude toward alcohol and the people who drink it. One of the greatest offenses against another member is to breach his anonymity without his consent. A person may be able to make his own decision for himself, but he cannot be certain that the breach will not hurt another.

There are some men and women in AA who want to impress their friends by dropping names of people who are holding highly responsible positions. They overlook the fact that AA is for alcoholics, and we are all on the same level. There is no aristocracy in AA, but outside of AA every member should be free to live his own life.

The founders of AA did their best to protect the alcoholic from people who do not understand him or his problems, but are always ready to bring in a verdict of guilty, without giving him a chance to defend himself. So, if it was good 40 years ago to protect the alcoholic's anonymity, it is also good today.

Every member should have the right to live, work and play under the protective cloak of anonymity.

Central Bulletin, Cleveland



Good News

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Martin (Benny) McKeon died suddenly on October 6, 1975, following a speech he gave at the Foxworthy Group of AA in Santa Clara County. After the meeting, members found him in his car where he had suffered a fatal heart attack.

Benny was very active in AA for a number of years. He was on the AA Advisory Board of Santa Clara County in San Jose, was interested in recovery home work, and was on the board of Fortunes Inn.

He is survived by his wife Barbara, a son and four grandchildren.

LETTERS

Dear Friends,

I picked up my first copy of Good News at the Sacramento conference.

This was my first conference, since I am a newly-elected Group Representative for our Al-Anon group. I thoroughly enjoyed reading the August issue. I checked with our Alano Club to see if I could buy more issues there. I could not.

So I'm sending money for five copies to be sent to me monthly, so that I can pass around this "Good News".

Virginia W., Fresno

"The Future Belongs to You"

These simple, meaningful words, "The future belongs to you," were spoken by our co-founder Bill 13 years ago at the 1962 General Service Conference as it gave final approval to Bill's CONCEPTS FOR WORLD SERVICE.

"Since all my main service tasks are now complete," Bill went on to say, "it seems right that my primary and long-held responsibility for our world operations ought to end with this session. This should be the final step in placing AA wholly on its own."

12 Steps (RECOVERY) which came into being in 1937, in 1946 an early step towards this goal had given us the 12 Traditions (UNITY). In 1955 at the Second International Convention in St. Louis we accepted the General Service Charter and the third legacy SERVICE. Bill then spent several years detailing and putting on paper the exciting collective experiences contained in the 12 Concepts, in order that this final transfer of responsibility could occur as it did in 1962.

Just as the Traditions tell us how AA groups and individual AA's can relate successfully to each other and to AA as a whole, so the Concepts are a beautifully simple design, or pattern, if you will, for the functioning of our service structure and for the relationship of all its different parts to the "WHOLE."

At the Fifth International Convention (1970) in Miami when the late Bernard Smith, that beloved non-alcoholic Trustee, spoke in place of our hospitalized co-founder Bill, he used as a very fitting title for that moving talk, "Unity and Continuity."

He talked of unity as a totality of related parts, and he said, "Our fellowship is composed of . . . all the groups of AA, the separate areas of the General Service Board and all its related service organizations, and the General Service Conference, . . . and so, the whole of the parts have continuity only so long as the structure of Alcoholics Anonymous remains strong. Slowly and painstakingly," Bern continued, "we have built upon the spiritual foundation of this great society a structure that can, with continued devotion, insulate this fellowship against the ravages of time, of dissent, of materialistic decay."

As Bill explains in his introduction to the Concepts, "They detail the experience and reasoning on which our operation stands today. These Concepts aim to record the why of our service structure in such a fashion that the highly valuable experience of the past and the lessons we have drawn from that experience can never be lost or forgotten."

The Concepts help to insure AA unity and in so doing, they do a very beautiful thing for us — they FREE you and me so that we may devote our attention to carrying out our Fellowship's Primary Purpose. Thus, the Concepts, too, help to bring recovery to the alcoholic out there, anywhere in the world who might need our help!

(Based upon a presentation by
Margaret C., Trustee, at the
Silver Anniversary Conference
in April 1975)
—From The W.A.I.A. Reporter,
Washington, D.C.

Deadline the 15th

A deadline means just that! The Good News deadline is the 15th of every month. Any mail received in the Central Office after 5 p.m. on the 15th cannot be included in the next issue, nor can any news be telephoned in after that time.

Friday Central All Groups

Curtis J. of Francisco Noon Group will be the first speaker of the month, November 7, at San Francisco Inter-county Fellowship Friday Night All Groups. The host group will be San Francisco-Marin Breakfast.

All Groups meets on the main floor of the Alano Club, 414 Grant Ave., at 8:30 p.m.

Other speakers and host groups for the month will be:

November 14 — John R., San Carlos; AA for Hope.

November 21 — Barbara McC., Monday Beginners; Stepping Stone.

November 28 — Gil A., Mill Valley. (This is the anniversary meeting. See separate story elsewhere in this issue.)

Come early and bring a friend. Coffee and arms-length before and after the meeting.

When Your Peace of Mind is Threatened

Many times since my sober life with AA began I have used the Serenity Prayer to help me to maintain my peace of mind when something has occurred that threatened it in either a large or small way. The prayer consists of three simple statements which most of us know by heart:

"God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
The courage to change the things I can,
And the wisdom to know the difference."

When something or someone comes along and causes me to feel tense, uptight, impatient or irritable, I say to myself, "Is this something I can change in any way so that my peace of mind can be restored?" To me this is a very important decision and each time I give it careful thought. To make this decision I have to be honest with myself, realistic, practical, and unafraid.

If I decide that I can make no change I ask my Higher Power to "grant me the serenity to accept" the situation. I have had no cause so far to question my faith in my Higher Power in these circumstances.

If I decide that it is possible and desirable that the troublesome situation be changed I ask my Higher Power to "grant me the courage" to go ahead with compassion, determination and without delay.

I feel that there is little to be gained if I just recite the prayer to myself when trouble comes and hope that it will go away.

AA has taught me to live my life positively. So when trouble looms I have to make a decision about it and then ask my Higher Power for the serenity or courage to handle it.

AA teaches us many simple things to use in our daily life, but don't be fooled by their simplicity. Seek to fully understand them.

Jim A., The News
(Victoria, Australia)



SAN FRANCISCO ALANO CLUB

Chinatown Gate

414 Grant Avenue, near Bush Street

The Alano Club is open from 10 a.m. to 10:45 p.m. Sunday to Thursday, and from 10 a.m. to midnight, Friday and Saturday. AA meetings daily. Your friends are welcome, too. Come and join in the fun! (Information for the Entertainment Calendar was not submitted for November's Good News).

Anger

Anybody can get along with those who are quiet and mild tempered. It is no great accomplishment to associate with those whom you like or with those who see things your way. True greatness is proven by getting along with people who are difficult and contrary, or with those who are thoughtless and selfish.

Some live at peace with themselves and those around them. Some, however, have no peace within themselves and they seem determined to ruin the peace of others.

You will find peace only if you are willing to hear patiently what you cannot remedy. He who knows how to suffer patiently will receive the gift of peace and is master of himself.

If troubles come to you — do not let them disturb you. Look to God (Higher

Power) and at least give God the loyalty of being patient with His will. If human efforts fail to bring a solution to your troubles it means the Higher Power wants you to bear this trial. The Higher Power wants this for good reasons which you may not understand just now.

Avoid anger when matters go against your wishes and let no word of resentment fall from your lips. Give a good example of faith and confidence in God. Let your patience shine before men.

Do not force others to share your troubles by making them feel your impatience, anger or self pity. Follow my words in these matters and your present trouble will bring you a joy greater than you can imagine.

—Anonymous

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