



Good News



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By the Northern California Council of Alcoholics Anonymous

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The Demise of Good News

With this issue Good News will cease to exist. It is just twenty years since what had been a mimeographed newsletter became AA's only printed newspaper.

Today, there is a proliferation of central office bulletins, secretaries' newsletters, bulletins from New York General Service, monthly alumni news from many drying out facilities, etc. There is also an ever-increasing stream of news releases from state and federal agencies regarding alcoholism programs, new laws and new approaches to the disease.

The public press has grabbed onto alcoholism. (Alcoholism has become fashionable!) There are articles everywhere from *Time* to the women's magazines, often mentioning AA, but nearly always playing up the dramatic recovery possible from the illness of alcoholism. (Not since the early days of hypoglycemia have "medical reporters" for the press had such a field day with a "new disease".)

In addition to government sponsored spots on TV and radio, National Council on Alcoholism's spots, there have been full-length programs, ranging from AA meetings on the air to the recent "Teenage Alcoholic—Sarah T."

Perhaps this is why less and less news has been reaching Good News. When month after month we have been begging for group news, stressing our deadline, we have watched the trickle of stories decline until last month over 80% of the paper was taken from such bulletins as "Roundabout" from Scotland. When the members of the staff met readers of Good News face-to-face, usually we heard good comments about the paper. When it came to doing anything—such as writing a short story or even a letter—response was rare.

This same apathy extended to physically putting out the paper. Any number of people would "... like to write a little something, someday". But only a small handful came back month after month

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Good News Refunds

Since this is the last issue of Good News, many readers will have some months coming on paid-up subscriptions.

Also, some groups have recently paid for renewal of sizeable numbers of copies.

If you feel that you cannot write off the balance of your subscription as a donation to AA, please write Northern California Council of Alcoholics Anonymous, 166 Geary St., San Francisco, CA 94108, and a refund will be arranged.

Many Californians At Hawaii Conference

More than 900 AA's and Al-Anons attended the 14th Annual Hawaiian AA Conference in Honolulu the weekend of November 7th. Most of the Mainlanders came from California, although other areas were well represented—among them Alaska, Ohio, Illinois, Washington, and Alabama. More than 50 came from San Francisco and the Bay Area, most of whom were part of the special tour arrangements set up by Paul G. of Central Office.

The tour group left San Francisco Monday the 3rd and had a chance to see a bit of Waikiki Beach, Honolulu and Oahu before the Conference began on Friday. Price of the tour included round trip jet fare, choice of one or two weeks at the Waikikian Hotel, a traditional "aloha" lei greeting, transport from and to the airport, as well as several sight-seeing extras. Members who took advantage of the low tour rates were "on their own" after arrival, but there was ample opportunity to join hometown friends if they wished. Before the Conference opened, California AA's visited many of the local meetings and got a preview of that famous Hawaiian hospitality.

All the Conference meetings and festivities were held in the Ilikai Hotel's Pacific Ballroom, plus a Hospitality Suite on the hotel's second floor, where AA's

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Unity Day in San Francisco

Saturday, January 17, 1976, there will be a Unity Day symposium at St. Mary's Cathedral, 1100 Gough St., San Francisco. Sponsor for this event will be General Service District 600.

Fellowship members involved in the following areas of service will be in attendance: Public Information, Central Service, Hospitals and Institutions, General Service, and Young People, in cooperation with Al-Anon and Alateen.

Topics for discussion will center around two areas—"Cooperation and Affiliation—what is the distinction?" and "How Best to Help the Beginner in AA". This second topic area will include particularly twelfth stepping of beginners, beginners' meetings and sponsorship.

At 10 a.m. there will be topic discussion, an open participation meeting.

Following this, at 12 noon, there will be a brown-bag lunch—tables and coffee will be provided.

And at 1 p.m. there will be an open speaker meeting.

A hospitality room with coffee and refreshments will operate from 9:30 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. (Cake and cookie donations are requested.)

Why Only Four Pages?

All of our readers, I'm sure, are curious. Why is this issue only half the usual number of pages? There are three reasons for this issue's abbreviated size.

First, this size is all we can afford to put out. The paper's coffers are low again—so, what's new? We felt, in all conscience, we could not bill our readers for renewal of subscriptions of a paper that would soon cease to exist.

Second, we wanted to see what this paper would look like minus most of the filler.

Third, some of our regular contributions—such as "The Pitch" and the San Francisco Alano Club schedule—were not received by press time.

Ed C.

The Link

California Northern Coastal Area of General Service

Most of us have heard of someone outside of the fellowship who has an uncle (friend, whatever) who is a Big Shot in AA, and we listen with amused tolerance because we know that there is no such animal. While we are having our sleeve chuckle at this absurdity, we continue to perpetrate the nonsense that there is such an animal as a governing AA head office.

The conference delegates remind us each year that this is not true; our area and district meetings are filled with debate concerning our future; and our General Service Representatives are constantly testing for that ethereal Group Conscience. Yet it takes a visitor from that mythical kingdom by the far sea to drive home the truth that we are in full control of our own destiny—that there are no Big Shots in AA.

Cora Louise B. is a staff member of General Service Office in New York, and she visited the Northern Coastal Area last month. Her schedule was such that she was hard to miss, and her message was always the same: There are no bosses in AA. The New York General Service Office acts as a clearing house for problems of individuals (anyone can write; all letters are answered) and groups. Its files, compiled over the years, contain suggested answers to almost any problem, and the needs for changes dictated by changing times are handled by the yearly Conference which receives its information from the delegates who have received their information from the individual member through his GSR.

At her meetings with GSR'S at District meetings throughout the Area, Cora Louise discussed the workings of the New York office, the distribution (and especially the rotation) of duties, as well as the connection of AA World Services, the General Service Board, the Grapevine, and the General Service Conference. All of this information is in the greatly unread Service Manual (available to all), but it becomes more pertinent when it is explained by someone who works with it daily.

The growth of AA has made it important that a personal liaison with New York be established. Our fourth tradition which states that each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or AA as a whole, has sometimes been interpreted to mean that

the groups should isolate themselves from each other, an insularity which is certainly not in the spirit of homogeneous fellowship.

This link with the New York office, which is ultimately a link with all other groups throughout the world, is necessary for our continued unity. Future visits from New York staff workers are predicted. May the visitors be as effective as Cora Louise. And as charming.

Ralph L.

H & I Broadides

This being the last month of 1975, I will look over my shoulder at what has happened in the Hospital and Institution Committee of Northern California in the last year.

One of the highlights would have to be the Third Annual Hospital and Institutional Conference of California, held in Fresno last May. The conference was well attended and loaded with an abundance of knowledge for people interested in carrying the message to the confined alcoholic.

Next year, this conference will be held May 7, 8 and 9 in Fresno. You can register now, which would be very helpful to the conference committee, since it takes money to put a conference in motion. Contact your Area Chairman for registration forms.

Another highlight was the Institutional Symposium held in Sacramento. This, too, was most informative.

Each institution had an open house. These are always a pleasure to attend. The most recent open house was at Soledad. About 60 inmates enjoyed a home-cooked meal provided by the outside guests and their wives. The guests, in turn, enjoyed four hours of good conversation, an AA meeting and music by an inmate band.

As I look back on these events—the ones I've mentioned and the three Northern California Council Conferences—I've neglected to mention the hundreds of H & I meetings held in jails and hospitals, involving dedicated H & I people, who distributed approximately \$600 worth of AA literature. That, my friends, is carrying the message to the alcoholic who is confined.

If you are interested in becoming a part of this, please attend the next General H & I meeting at 10 a.m., December 7, at the Triangle Alano Club, 631 Jackson St. in Hayward.

Jerry G.
General Chairman

Peninsula All Groups

This month's first speaker, on December 6, at Peninsula All Groups will be Ken F. of Milpitas. The host group will be South San Francisco Country Club.

Peninsula All Groups meets each Saturday at St. Matthew's Episcopal Church auditorium, El Camino Real and Baldwin Ave., San Mateo. Time is 8:30 p.m.; doors open at 7:30.

Other speakers and host groups for this month will be:

December 13—Stan W., Fairfax (AA Trustee); San Carlos Awareness.

December 20—Mary C., Pacifica; Pacifica Coastside.

December 27—Linda I., San Mateo; Home Group, San Mateo.

Coffee and arms-length before and after the meeting.

El Cerrito Holiday Party

Saturday night, December 27, El Cerrito Fellowship will celebrate the holidays.

The place will be 11231 San Pablo Ave.

There will be a pot-luck supper at 6 p.m. At 8:30 p.m. there will be a meeting, featuring Dr. Gil A. of Mill Valley as speaker.

Following the speaker it will be party time, with birthday recognition and celebration of the holidays.

Come one; come all.

Friday Central All Groups

Earl C. of the Hillsborough Group will be the first speaker of the month, December 5, at San Francisco Inter-county Fellowship Friday Night All Groups. The host group will be Roundtable Discussion.

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:

December 12—John McG., Alumni; Sinbar Discussion.

December 19—Mike J., San Francisco Fellowship; Marin Alumni

December 26—Marjory C., San Francisco Fellowship; New Life Wednesday.

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

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EDITORIAL

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to send out bills, fold and stuff the paper into envelopes and do the other uninspiring parts of producing a newspaper.

All costs are spiraling. When it became impossible for me to spend an average of sixteen hours a week on the paper, it was suggested we get quotes on having all but the actual editing and writing done outside.

The lowest bid came to \$1655 per month—and our intake is about \$300 a month! And the more subscriptions sold, the higher the price to handle them.

With these facts in hand, Anne S., Northern California Council Secretary, has directed us to end the paper with this issue. All the books are up to date. There are resources for printing, addressing, etc., so if someone wants to try to make Good News work in the future, it is being killed out in good order.

Working on Good News has been rewarding in many ways. It has brought together a devoted staff—all professionals, who have given much time and effort to the paper. Personally it has helped me to revive unused skills after many years of doing other work. It has opened the doors to many new friendships with people all over Northern California.

I especially want to thank members of Al-Anon who have helped with everything from the art work for the printer to addressing bills and getting the paper in the mail.

And to everyone on the staff, thank you again for doing a difficult job well.

Ed C.

LETTERS

To the Editor of Good News:

It was with a feeling of remorse that we read in the Good News that perhaps the December edition would be the last. When we organized our group two years ago, we immediately considered which literature and publications we needed for our group to be aware of the activities of other groups. And we found the Good News a "must".

Each month, articles and news items are read and reread across the tables before and after our meetings.

If we have failed to hold up our end with news articles, I'm sure we fall into the category of many groups, where a periodic reminder is appreciated.

We hate to lose something worthwhile, so in discussing this at our business meeting we wish to add our vote of confidence and appreciation, along with the many you undoubtedly will be receiving.

Please, if at all possible, "hang in there"!

Napa Downtown Group

Dear Napa Downtown:

Thanks for those kind words.

Unfortunately, it is impossible to "... hang in there".

As for "periodic reminders" of our need for copy, every issue has carried a deadline box and request for news. To remind personally every group subscribing to the paper to send news would require more hours of clerical work and would cost us more money for envelopes and postage—totally impossible.

The Staff



Forest Hills 14th Anniversary

Forest Hills Group will celebrate its fourteenth anniversary, December 9, at 8:30 p.m. at the George Christopher Recreation Center, 5260 Diamond Heights Blvd., San Francisco.

The speaker will be Dr. Gill A. of Mill Valley.

After the meeting, there will be homemade cakes and cookies and hot coffee.

Surf Group Christmas Party

Jack B. of Modesto will be the speaker when Surf Group celebrates Christmas December 16.

The meeting will be at 8:30 p.m.; doors will open at 7:30.

Following the meeting there will be a lavish buffet.

Surf Group meets at Christ Lutheran Church 20th Ave. and Quintara St., San Francisco.

Marin Young People's Christmas Dance

On Friday, December 12, at St. Stephen's Church in Belvedere the Marin Young People's Group will hold a Christmas party and dance.

A speaker meeting will be held at 8 p.m. at the church located at Bay View and Golden Gate. The dance will follow with a live rock band and refreshments.

Hawaii Conference

(Continued from page 1)

congregated during intermissions and before or after meetings for refreshments and conversation. The hotel facilities were ideal—spacious, air conditioned, well staffed, with excellent audio equipment, attractively and comfortably decorated—and with plenty of that good AA coffee!

Beginning Friday night, members were dazzled with a varied program of speakers and entertainment—too many to list here. Saturday a.m. highlight was Lois W., Bill W.'s widow, at the Al-Anon meeting. So many more—speakers from Hawaii, Alaska, California; the "Alka-thon" and Mainland Participation meetings; the Big Banquet (candlelit, sumptuous), followed by the Big Meeting (Dr. Paul O., Anaheim, Speaker); and—for those who had the energy—the Big Dance with romantic music.

Sunday morning hundreds of bright-eyed AA's congregated once again for a delicious brunch, which was followed by the Spiritual Meeting, chaired by Bob A., Honolulu, with Johnny H., Lakewood, Calif. as Speaker. There was hardly a dry eye in the huge room as the conference closed (after the Lord's Prayer) with everyone singing:

"Aloha Oe Aloha Oe
E ke o-na no ho-i ka li po
One fond embrace a ho-i-a e-a-u
Until we meet again
"Aloha Oe Aloha Oe
Thou charming one who dwells among the bowers
One fond embrace—before we now depart—
Until we meet again."

All of us who attended the Conference hope we'll meet our wonderful Hawaiian AA friends again, very soon, and want to say "Mahalo"—many thanks—once more for an inspiring vacation in their very special paradise.

Pat M.

Non-Smokers Meeting in Napa

For those who are non-smokers or who can do without smoking for one hour, there is a non-smokers' meeting in Napa.

It is held at 12:15 p.m. in the Quonset building at 1455 Pueblo St. The group has been meeting about eight weeks. The response has been terrific.

The members say, "If you are in the area, come join us in our clean air."

Why Come to Al-Anon?

Why do people come to Al-Anon, and what does Al-Anon do that brings seemingly miraculous changes to its members?

When people come to Al-Anon, they generally have spent so much time blaming the world for their problems and wallowing in their own inadequacy and misery that they are unaware that they are afraid to hope.

People usually come to Al-Anon because they are unhappy. Why are they unhappy? Yes, because someone close to them is alcoholic. But, more importantly, because these people are unable to fulfill their needs. They may lack personal direction, self-control or self-confidence. They also frequently lack involvement with responsible human beings.

People need to love and be loved and to feel that they are worthwhile to themselves and others. Al-Anon offers a warm and friendly environment where people may not find "love", but they find caring. In Al-Anon, people care about fellow members, and even new members find people to care about.

Members begin to solve their own problems the first day they take responsibility for getting themselves to a meeting. Next they find friends who care about them, and about whom they can care. During meetings, members discuss their hopes and aspirations. New members begin to lose their fear of hoping. The twelve-step philosophy of Al-Anon helps direct members toward self-control and fulfillment of aspirations. When members begin to fulfill their needs, they regain self-confidence.

This program really works.

Tina C.

Christmas Meeting At Napa Downtown

Napa Downtown Group of AA wishes to thank everyone for supporting their monthly speaker meetings.

They invite everyone to attend their Christmas speaker meeting on Friday, December 19.

There will be a buffet dinner at 7 p.m. The meeting will follow at 8:30 p.m., with Red K. of St. Helena as speaker.

Napa Downtown meets in the Centennial Hall, Methodist Church, 4th and Franklin Streets, Napa.

Oakland Active In Public Information

Under the aegis of the California Northern Coastal Area Public Information Committee, the Merritt Group and Dimond-Link Group of Oakland responded to an invitation from fifteen United Methodist Churches in Oakland for an informational presentation and booth at their "Caring Ministry of Oakland" display, Sunday, October 26 through Thursday, October 29. In use was the literature board recently prepared by CNCA.

The display was under the direction of Eric R. of Tuesday Night Discussion Group of Oakland. It was manned by members of Merritt and Dimond-Link Groups.

A feature of the church's celebration was the attendance of the Bishop of Kenya.

Eric remarked that it was of interest to note that when AA members were at the booth to answer questions, people shied away. But when the booth was left unattended, the audience flocked around to take literature and study the display.

Any AA member interested in public information work is invited to attend CNCA PI Meetings, held the second Wednesday of each month at the Oakland Central Office, 370 40th Street, Oakland.

San Francisco Alano Club Changes

Roger O'D., manager of the San Francisco Alano Club, 414 Grant Ave., resigned effective November 15.

Lacey D. has become acting manager subject to final approval at the membership meeting to be held December 10 at the Club.

Lacey has already started several new projects. Bylaws are being printed with rules and regulations on the back of the pamphlet, and each member will receive a copy by mail before December 15.

Thorough housecleaning of the foyer, restrooms and kitchen has begun. Restaurant operators are being interviewed to take over the food concession on a six-month trial basis, with Lacey reserving the right to inspect and check on cleanliness, service and quality of the food.

"Every effort will be made to get more people interested in the club and enjoying its facilities," according to Lacey.