



GOOD NEWS



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Sacramento Breaks All Time Pre-Registration Record; Committee Is Praised

The Sacramento Conference Committee really showed us how pre-registration can be effective. Their outreach program was super with a record number of 684 sign-ups before conference time. This becomes important with the high cost of our conferences as we go more and more into big cities. Many of these facilities require a sizeable deposit just to hold the space on their calendars, and many require payment in full before we even get there. Pre-registration provides some of the "up front" money needed for this. Perhaps more important is that they reached hundreds of people who might not have heard about the Conference and the AA message it brings. Publicity worked well for this one. Congratulations Sacramento! We can all take a lesson from you!

The committee members were everywhere during the conference. The Raffle gang was most evident, selling hundreds of tickets for those super prizes. The registration tables were busy, especially on Saturday night and even on Sunday morning. Volunteer help was everywhere, offering to help wherever needed. The treasurers gang was kept busy collecting money, making change and counting, counting.

The speakers were all excellent, a tribute to the Council Speaker Recommendation Committee. They were: Bob L., from Glendale, CA; Terry F., from Vista, CA; Ray V.,

from Texas; and John M.; also from Texas.

All the final tabulations are not in at press time so no financial report is available but it was a great conference, that much we know. Our hats are off to you, Sacramento!



The Reclaimed Turkey Carver

On Thanksgiving, the turkey is the main event in my family household. When I was a boy, the art of carving the bird was passed on to me by my father. But later, my drunkenness on Thanksgiving kept me from carving the bird, and I found myself being fed on a tray in front of the television set - so I could watch my football games, I thought. I learned later that my banishment was by request of family friends who dined with us on Thanksgiving Day and felt my eating habits did not enhance their meal.

After eleven months in AA, I was asked to carve the family bird for friends and family on Thanksgiving. On my way to the kitchen, I counted noses and plates to see if I

Fresno Next

The Fresno Conference Committee under the direction of Dennis T. will have its first organizational meeting in early November. At this time they will choose committee chairpeople and lay plans for the conference on March 8, 9, & 10 of 1991. Flyers are already available and show the speaker for Friday night to be Milt L. of Cleveland, Ohio. Cindy F. from Newbury Park, California will enlighten the young people on Saturday afternoon, while Scotty A. from Midland, Texas will speak on Saturday night. Pat Y. from Pasadena, California will finish up on Sunday morning.

The Fresno Convention Center will be the site and the adjoining Holiday Inn Center Plaza will be the host hotel. They will hold a block of rooms for us until February 8, 1991.

was eating with everyone else, and found I was. As I was carving the turkey, I started to laugh, and I laughed until I cried, and laughed some more.

It is a nice feeling to be welcomed back to the dining room table and even nicer to be reinstated in the turkey-carving department. Maybe, through AA and my Higher Power, I can carve the bird this Christmas, too.

You know, I do not remember who won the football games last Thanksgiving, but I know who carved the turkey in my house, and for this, I am grateful.

D.B., FORT MEYERS, FLA.
(From the December 1975 Grapevine).

Fletch Sez . . .

Hi Alkies,

Yep, we're back, and I know that you're just as excited as I am. About what? Why this thing called sobriety, that's what. OK, since we're talking about sobriety, let's talk about it. Let's talk about something that's constantly on every alcoholic's mind . . . no gang, not sex! I mean the odds of us staying sober.

Now if there's anything I'm good at, it's odds. Why I'm so odd that when I chair a meeting I only call on names by the odd numbers on the sign-in sheet. Now that's odd, right? In fact, just the other day one of the AA's I sponsor told me that I was an "odd" ball when I told him that sponsors were there to work the Steps and the Principles behind them, not to talk about the relationship that I told him not to have in the first place.

Odds huh? Just ask wife #1 what the odds of Fletch ever approaching something like say . . . oh . . . 20 years of sobriety? She'll tell ya. Slim and none she'll say, and she will have plenty of backers. I'm not sure if there would be anybody out there that would bet the other way . . . including me! Why! Well alkies, it seems that there is only one way that is absolutely 100% guaranteed. Now that's my kind of odds! Yep and the old timers had a name for it, too.

They called it the 13th Step. That'll be enough of that snickering over in the corner 'cause some of you youngsters forget there have been some changes in the fellowship over the years. The 13th Step to a real old timer means "to die sober". Now I can live with odds like that. . .

Love in Fellowship,
Fletch

Moved Lately? Tell Us!

Each month we have a number of newsletters returned to the Good News mail box with the notation: "RETURN TO SENDER POSTAGE DUE=\$.25. In order to obtain your new address, the staff has to pay the postal clerk an additional 25 cents to obtain the newsletter with your new address label on it--providing you have left a forwarding address with the Post Office. We need your assistance in keeping the Good News coming to you without added charges and additional time. If we resend the copy to your new address, our lean budget is then almost 50 cents per copy poorer. It adds up to a considerable amount with each issue. Please help us by sending your new address to Post Office Box. 64090, Sunnyvale, CA 94088-4090. Thanks.

Subscription List Update Coming

The subscription list for the GOOD NEWS is long overdue for an overhaul. We will be doing this with the next issue, due in January. Many subscriptions have expired but we have carried them on just to be sure that a full year's worth of issues have been received by all. (We have missed a few, sorry!)

Please check the expiration date on your label and if it has expired or is about to, please use the renewal form on the back page of this issue. Many of our subscribers renew on their AA birthday. Not a bad idea!

TYRANNY

In various paragraphs under Concepts V, IX and X, certain types of tyranny are defined in contrast to the spirit of democracy which is ideal for our service structure. One of these is the tyranny of apathetic, self-seeking, uninformed or angry majorities. Another, worse tyranny is that of very small minorities invested with absolute power. The Concepts press for carefully defined relations between AA majorities and minorities in the spirit of the 12 Steps, the 12 Traditions and the Conference Charter.

Behind all tyrannies is the tyrant alcohol, waiting to entrap the suffering and the complacent into slips and relapses. A man of the cloth (now deceased) once placed four reasons among the typical causes of slips. I have slightly reworded them as follows: Reservations on Step One; Neglect of meetings; Neglect of prayer; Uncontrolled, self-administration of prescription medicine. Such medicine and its administration should always be under the control of a doctor qualified to treat alcoholics.

We urge the suffering alcoholic under duress to call another AA before taking the first drink. Let's urge such a one to call BEFORE the drink-thought arises. Call when depressed by loneliness, fear, worry, anxiety, self-pity, anger, resentment; by temptations to envy, jealousy, sloth, self-indulgence. Call before things become the insanity of the first drink. Drink equals drunk and drunk equals terror, bewilderment, frustration and despair. However WE can do what I can't do alone.

FRANK B. - - NAPA, CA

EDITORS NOTE: Frank B. has been a contributor to the GOOD NEWS for a long time and we wish to thank him for his continued support!

Missed you in Sacramento but hope to see you in Fresno.

Thanks again, Frank!

GOOD NEWS

Newsletter of the
Northern California Council
of Alcoholics Anonymous

Articles of interest to our readers are welcomed and may be mailed to the editor at:

Post Office Box 64090,
Sunnyvale CA 94088-4090

Deadlines for Material

December 10 for January-February
February 10 for March-April
April 10 for May-June
June 10 for July-August
August 10 for September-October
October 10 for November-December

A Suggestion For Thanksgiving-Bill W. 1949

The idea is in the air that AA might adopt Thanksgiving week as a time for meetings and meditation on the Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous. The friend who hatched this notion tells you why he thinks the idea good. I heartily agree with what he says and hope you will too.

Pre-AA, we alkie could sometimes achieve that dubious state called "sobriety, period." How bleak and empty this alleged virtue is, only God or a dried-up drunk can fully testify. The reason? Of course every AA knows it: nothing has taken the place of the victim's grog; he's still a man of conflict and disunity. Come then the Twelve Steps of recovery, bringing to him a personality change. The shattered prospect feels reassembled; he now says he seems all one piece. We understand exactly what he means, for now he describes the state of being at oneness; he is talking about personal unity. We know he must work to maintain it and that he can't stay alive without it.

Will not the same principle hold true for AA as a whole? Isn't it also a fact that the alcoholic is in no greater peril than when he takes sobriety for granted? If vigilant practice of sound principle is a matter of life and death for him, why isn't that equally so for the AA group, and for our far-flung Society itself?

Yet many of us still take the basic unity of Alcoholics Anonymous for granted. We seem to forget that the whole of modern society is on a dangerous and contagious "dry bender." We evidently assume we are so different from other men and women that disintegration can't hit us. Our unity appears as a gift from heaven; something to be perpetually enjoyed by us AAs quite without effort.

Criticism is not intended, because our present attitude is natural enough. It stems from the fact that no society

in its infancy has ever enjoyed more providential protection against temptation and untoward happenings than has ours. Minor troubles we have had, but none serious enough to test our adult strength. It's not strange that we are a bit complacent and self-satisfied. Surely there need be no council of fear, nor lack of faith, in the prediction that a far greater time of trial may yet be ours. When we think our situation through, simple prudence and foresight will tell us that.

The Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous are a distillate of our experience of living and working together. They apply the spirit of the Twelve recovery Steps to our group life and security. They deal with our relations with the world outside and with each other; they state our attitudes toward power and prestige, toward property and money. They would save us from tempting alliances and major controversies; they would elevate principles far above personal ambitions. And as a token of this last, they request that we maintain personal anonymity before the open public as a protection to AA and as proof of the fact that our Society intends to practice true humility.

For the information of the general public and for the instruction of new AA members, the Twelve Traditions have just been released in a much condensed "short form" which we hope will be as widely read and understood as the Twelve Steps of recovery. Should this happen, our current growing pains will be lessened and we shall commence to lay up a great store of insurance for the years ahead.

What then could be more appropriate than to set aside Thanksgiving week for discussion of the practical and spiritual values to be discovered in our Traditions? We could thus reinforce our faith in the future by these prudent works; we could show that we deserve to go on receiving that priceless gift of oneness which God in his wisdom has so freely given to us of Alcoholics Anonymous in the precious years of our infancy.

Bill W. 1949

(From "The Language of the Heart" - Bill W.'s early Grapevine writings. AA Grapevine, Inc. with permission.)

Financial Statement

The Council Treasurer reports that she will have a financial statement for the Sacramento Conference to distribute to the Steering Committee at its meeting in Stockton on December 2. Present indications are that the Sacramento Conference may break even which is quite an accomplishment for the Host Committee considering the tremendous expenses incurred just to put on the Conference.

A year-end financial statement will appear in this section for the January issue.

Report on the 1990 Pacific Regional Forum

The Pacific Regional Forum, which like all Regional Forums is a sharing week-end. The Forum is intended to foster wider communication and understanding among AA service workers, the General Service Board, AA World Services, and Grapevine Boards, as well as the General Service Office. The meeting was held on August 17, 18, and 19 in the Town and Country Hotel in the Mission District of San Diego, California.

As I approached my first forum, I was determined to bring back as much information as I could that would be helpful to my district. So, armed with a bandoleer of pens and pencils and reams of paper, I stepped into what appeared to be rather foreboding areas. After 22 pages of notes, 8 hours of speakers, 3 hours of sharing sessions, 1 1/2 hours of workshops, another 1 1/2 hours of coffee breaks, and all but 6 hours per night of just talking, I've come to some conclusions that just a short while ago I never would have even considered.

My first impression was one of mild amazement and pride because of the number of people from Northern California and Oregon that have meant so much to me in my sobriety; there was well over 50. There were: 8 Trustees, including Ruth J. who as her last official duty as Pacific Regional Trustee, introduced Greg M. of Hawaii as the new Pacific Regional Trustee; there were 5 staff members from GSO, and a total registration of 803 (although some of those may have been from a wedding that took place in the same facility).

I think the most important thing I became aware of was that all over AA we talk about the same things. Because of that, speaking to trustees, GSO staff, and the 13 delegates that were there, offered all of us the opportunity to be on level ground and to gain understanding that I never knew was possible.

There was discussion about finances and prudent reserves, and what I found out was that while I went to the Forum confused and more than a little afraid of finances, I left still confused but not frightened or frustrated. There are an awful lot of people who know a great deal about finances in the Pacific Region and they are willing and able to go through the specifics to assure those of us who are less adept that all is really O.K. We were able to have a deficit as a fellowship because of our prudent reserve. The underlying fact is that everything is going up except the value of the dollar and we as members of Alcoholics Anonymous think nothing of going to a nice restaurant spending \$20 or \$30 and then drop a buck in the basket come meeting time. Maybe it's time to start to consider putting \$2 in as it was suggested in 1955.

There was talk of the Eastern Bloc countries and how AA can be of use to those who still suffer and yet not become involved in politics and other causes--never was it made clearer how important AA's singleness of purpose really is. I was most impressed with the fact that it was the AA message that saved my life and that co-mingling that message or mudding the waters or diluting it would be to not give those who still suffer the very best that I know; it would be shirking my responsibility.

It was reaffirmed and intensified by non-alcoholic trustee Amos Reed that AA is an independent people-to-people process and that because of it so many have the opportunity to live.

I was able to spend time with some of the GSO staff, and absolutely fell in love with Ann W., the Executive Editor of the Grapevine. This marvelously warm and gentle woman not only left me spellbound with her love of AA but also assured me the the Grapevine - at least not at this time - would not sell out its inter-

gety by selling "AA TRINKETS".

The "What's on Your Mind" session saw a committee from hearing-impaired AAs that spoke not only of the great need in this area but also how they want to be a part of AA as a whole.

Delegate reports were sometimes informative and sometimes heart-tugging, but they were always filled with love, dedication, and humility. It was an honor to hear them all.

I had my socks "knocked off" with the report of Clark D. from Alaska; he talked on Concept 5--the right of appeal--he spoke of how the minority voice protects the majority; he reminded us of other groups that had the answer to alcoholism and how they lost it. He spoke of how in the long run we do and we must trust God, AA, and ourselves. When he finished, my heart was hiding somewhere in my throat; I couldn't speak for quite sometime.

Later, in my room, I broke down and realized just how much I've become caught up in the awesome work God does through AA and how much my life has changed since coming here; I've never known a better life.

I don't know if I can put into words what the advantages of sending a representative to the Pacific Regional Forum or a NCCAA conference, or any other function that is in service of Alcoholics Anonymous are; I don't think it's just the reports or the information one brings back, there's more to it than that. It's true that I'm less uninformed and I hope more useful to my group, district, area, and AA as a whole, but I think that of all the profound events that have happened to me since I've been sober and even before, this awareness of trust and love has made me more than ever before eager to pass on the message AA has to offer, for free and for fun.

Submitted with love in service,

JIM M.

FIRESIDEGROUP, EUREKA, CA

Tidings Of Comfort & Joy

When I was a practicing alcoholic, the time from Thanksgiving to Christmas was always ripe with reasons for extra drinking. There was a sense of gaiety, real or pretended, that seemed to need some festive drinking to make it complete. There are more cocktail parties, office parties, and other seasonal gatherings that give rise to toasts, days off from work, and other camouflage for us problem drinkers. The other people in my life never seemed as surprised that I had gotten drunk on these special occasions as they did on a Tuesday in May. Naturally, I used every opportunity to its fullest, including episodes of passing out at parties, sleeping in religious ceremonies, and running up even larger than usual bar tabs.

Now, after some years of sobriety in AA, the season still has special meaning for me, but the message has changed. I am excited about the reality of the two messages of these two holidays. First, there is much for which I am thankful, and second, there is a loving Higher Power who has gone to some trouble to give me a way out of my dilemma. In the middle of my alcoholic life, I would have told you that I would be thankful for a series of happy drinking occasions to celebrate my material successes. The only message of Christmas was that those who needed it could have a belief system to comfort them.

I believe that the difference between my driven frenzy then and my quiet, bubbling joy of today is that the source of my feelings has changed. Then it came from the outside, and now it comes from the inside. I remember all those times when in the midst of a big party, I would have that empty feeling - "Is this all there is?" Now I can participate in such functions and know that what I am doing is real and it is enough, because the result is peace and quiet on the inside.

I don't want to give the impression that life doesn't still have its ups and downs. But the important difference is that the daily problems have shrunk to life-size, and I no longer experience the sense of impending doom described in so many AA talks. This way of life really does work; even others can see its effects. One of these effects showed clearly when I asked my fourteen-year-old daughter, who was born during my sobriety, to write down her feelings about AA. She wrote that she appreciated AA for saving her dad's life, for showing him that he couldn't manage his life, and for helping so many other people. I found out that she prays for AA. With evidence like that, why shouldn't we feel a

Upcoming Conferences

FRESNO-March 8, 9, 10, 1991
OAKLAND-June 28,29,30,'91
REDDING-Oct. 12,13,14,'91
MONTEREY-March 1992
SANTA ROSA-June 1992
SAN JOSE-October 1992
Mark your Calendars

quiet peace instead of a frantic search for something we couldn't even have described?

D.G. PARKER, COLORADO
DECEMBER 1986 GRAPEVINE
 (With permission of AAWS, Inc.)

*Please Check Your
Expiration Date*

COMING EVENTS

November 16 - 18
Friday - Sunday

7th Annual Yosemite AA Summit Conference. Pre-Registration ONLY: \$10.00 per per person AT DOOR
 Deadline for registration October 31.
 Yosemite National Park
 Curry Pavilion, Curry Village

November 17
Saturday

C.N.C.A. Election Assembly
 McCormack Hall
 Solano County Fairground
 Hiway 37 at I-80 Vallejo, CA
 Starts 9:00 a.m.

November 22 - 25
Thursday - Sunday

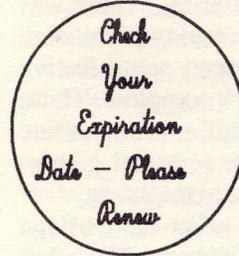
24th Annual Las Vegas Roundup of AA
 Registration \$15.00 per person
 RivieraHotel
 2901 Las Vegas Blvd. S.
 Las Vegas, Nevada

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 and have a Happy New Year!*

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