



# GOOD NEWS



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## From the NCCAA Chairman's desk...

### HAS ANYONE NOTICED?!

At the Fall Conference last year in Redding, the Steering Committee voted to change our meeting time at the Conferences from 10:45 AM to 8:00 AM. We weren't sure if that was a good idea, but we were willing to try .The purpose of doing this was because members of the Steering Committee were missing out on some Conference events. We were missing out on the Workshop at II :OOAM and by the time our meeting was over, we sometimes had to make the decision as individuals to either go to lunch or the General Service or H&I Meeting at I :00 PM. We couldn't do both! Now that we have had two Conferences since then, we have found that this works quite well for everyone involved. Great decision! !

At the San Ramon Conference this year in March, a couple of interesting things happened during the weekend. The Friday Early Bird Meeting was not your typical Speaker meeting. It was about the "Oldtimers Do the Twelve Steps". These twelve individuals who presented the Steps had at least 25 years of sobriety!

Then at the Workshop on Saturday morning, Don H., from Belmont, presented "the History of AA and the Big Book" to a

## Galt Fellowship's 33<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary Dinner & Speaker Meeting

The Galt Fellowship invites you to join them in celebrating their 33<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary on November 6<sup>th</sup>. The doors open at 5:00 PM and a Roast Beef Dinner will be served at 5:30 PM. There is no waiting in line! The Basket will be passed to cover the food cost. Two drawings will feature cash and "Prizes Galore" including a 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition of the Big Book. The Speaker Meeting featuring Keith D from Yorba Linda starts at 7:00 PM. The Dance is from 9:00 to 11:00 PM. For information and directions call Mary R 209-748-2698, Peggy H 209-745-7382, Betty C 916-681-7112 or John P 916-687-6104.

## 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual San Mateo County Central Office Anniversary Party

The San Mateo County Central Office is planning a Dinner & Speaker Meeting with a Dance to follow on October 9th. It will be at the Arms Length Fellowship will be from 4:00 to 5:30 PM.

You can contact the Picnic Chair, Ty M @ 916-204-9504 or download the flier from their website [www.aasacramento.org](http://www.aasacramento.org) if you want to help or need any information.

See you there!

## In Memory

Jack Barnes, from Modesto, a Past NCCAA Chairman passed away March 25<sup>th</sup>.

## Have you "Heard it from the Grapevine?"

Sixty years ago, six drunks rubbed

## NCCAA 58<sup>th</sup> Annual Spring Conference Foster City, California March 9, 10 & 11, 2005

Friday	8:00 PM	Karen G.	Venice
Saturday	3:30 PM	Sterling H.	Omaha NE
Saturday	8:00 PM	Scott L.	Nashville TN
Sunday	11:00 AM	Penny P.	Livermore

their creative pencils together and launched the Grapevine Magazine, and it has been the magazine's honor to mirror the wisdom, strength, and humor of the Fellowship in its pages ever since. To commemorate the Grapevine's 60th Anniversary this June, the Grapevine Digital Archive has been launched on the Internet to make available every article, editorial,

letter, and cartoon that appeared in the magazine between June 1944 and December 2002. Reflecting on the technology boom of the 1960s, Bill W. wrote: "A vast communications net now covers the earth, even to its remotest reaches ...nothing can matter more to the future welfare of AA than the manner in which we use this colossus of

communication. Used unselfishly and well, the results can surpass our present imagination."

This quote appeared in an article called "Freedom Under God: The Choice Is Ours" in our November 1960 issue, and I found it easily in the Grapevine's newly instituted Digital Archive.

The joke running in that issue goes as follows:

"Two tramps were lighting a fire at the base of the Washington Monument to warm their stew. A passing drunk stopped, scratched his head, and muttered: 'They'll never get it off the ground!'"

Well, the Digital Archive has gotten off the ground, and we hope its uses will indeed surpass our present imaginings, taking the Fellowship further into the 21st century. The Digital Archive allows everyone to browse and to search the thousands of Grapevine articles published over the years, and for the month of June this access is FREE!!!

Bill's article ends with the following pertinent wishes:

"We now entrust you of AA's distant reaches - you who so well symbolize the unique and loving communication that is ours in this universal Fellowship - to carry this message to fellow members everywhere; and most especially to all those others who still know not, and who, God willing, may soon issue out of their darkness into light."

May the Grapevine Digital Archive carry the message for everyone in the rooms, and to those who have yet to walk through the doors; may this website be a bright, guiding light toward our Fellowship.

Happy browsing!

Reprinted from an e-mail from:

Maggie K.  
AA Grapevine

## **Joe C Re-elected as NCCAA Chairman**

In case you haven't heard, Joe C has been re-elected as our Chairman.

**Congratulations Joe!**

## **Singleness of Purpose**

"Our Singleness of Purpose -The Cornerstone of A.A.," theme of this year's General Service

## **Birthday Club**

<b>April-</b>	Noe V	Hollister	4 Years
	Kendra W	Stockton	12 Years
	Veronica S	Pacifica	13 Years
	Kitty O	Sunnyvale	16 year
	Ruth B	Cottonwood	17 years
	Dale D	Atwater	21 years
Joe K	San Mateo	29 years	
<b>May-</b>	Mons C	Magalia	2 years
	Lianne M	Fieldbrook	11 years
	Leslie K	Modesto	12 years
<b>June-</b>	Sandy H	San Carlos	1 years
	Jim D	San Jose	3 years
	Laura L	San Mateo	17 years
	Barbara B	Capitola	20 years

## **Congratulations to All ! ! !**

The Birthday Club celebrates AA Birthdays every quarter. If you would like to be on the birthday list please come by the Good News table at your next conference and give us your information. This is done at no charge.

### **33<sup>rd</sup> Annual**

### **Northern California Hospital & Institution Conference**

**April 22, 23 & 24, 2005 at the Littleton Civic Center  
123 Civic Center Drive In Galt**

The main purposes of this Conference are:

1. To improve mutual understanding and cooperation between AA and non-alcoholic professionals in an effort to help the confined alcoholics;
2. To improve understanding and cooperation between institutions and AA through workshops, panels, and general discussions; and
3. To be "friendly with out friends", and in doing so AA members experienced in such cooperation report three gratifying results:
  - A. It helps us to stay sober
  - B. It often attracts alcoholics to AA
  - C. It helps non-alcoholics to gain an understanding of, and respect for, our fellowship.

### **We Need Readers for future NCCAA Conferences!**

Have you ever been a reader at an NCCAA Conference? We are always looking for people to be Chairpersons and Readers at our conferences. Please contact Joe C., Dave W., Katy P or Tim R. if you are available.

Conference, highlights one of the principal reasons the Fellowship has endured for nearly 70 years as a safe haven for the suffering alcoholic. Since that afternoon in 1935 when Bill W. and Dr. Bob first met and talked for hours, drunks have been sharing their experience, strength and hope with one purpose alone: to help themselves and other alcoholics recover through A.A.'s Twelve Steps. During the week of April 18-24, 2004, Conference members will reexamine our singleness of purpose -its spiritual foundation and the challenges the Fellowship faces today. They will hear presentations on such topics as responsibility to the newcomer, safeguarding our unity, and the role of the home group, and will participate in a workshop on the importance of singleness of purpose to the individual, group, district, area, and G.S.O. and Grapevine offices.

On the face of it, the idea is simplicity itself. Traditions Three and Five state it clearly: "The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking." "Each group has but one primary purpose -to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers." A.A. is for alcoholics and people who think they might have a drinking problem, and as a Fellowship we do one thing only - share our program or recovery. Yet time and again, members, groups, and A.A. as a whole have encountered roadblocks as they sought to live out these most basic and essential of our traditional principles.

All Twelve Traditions were hammered out over years of trial and error, and for the most part, they were shaped, less by the founders' inherent wisdom than by the recognition that they, as well as future generations, needed safeguards against their own character defects. In the formative years, power drivers among the early members would have diverted A.A.'s energies into hospitals, alcohol education, and other grandiose projects. Yet in

tandem with their grandiosity ran a constant fear of losing their newfound sobriety. In *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, Bill wrote that the early members, "scared witless that something or somebody could capsize the boat and dump us all back into the drink," devised membership rules to protect themselves. "Our Foundation office asked each group to send in its list of 'protective' regulations. The total list was a mile long; If all those rules had been in effect everywhere, nobody could have possibly joined A.A. at all, so great was the sum of our anxiety and fear.

"We were resolved to admit nobody to A.A. but that hypothetical class of people we termed 'pure alcoholics.' ...Maybe this sounds comical now. ...Well, we were frightened. ...After all, isn't fear the true basis of intolerance? ...How could we then guess that all those fears were to prove groundless?"

More than half a century later, those words still do not sound comical. With the influx of prospective members who suffer from other problems, our faith that those fears are groundless is tested daily. As A.A. has become increasingly well known and respected in the eyes of the public, many other organizations have adapted our Twelve Steps to recovery for a wide variety of addictions and problems. One result has been a blurring of the distinction between A.A. and other fellowships - "a drug is a drug," we hear from newcomers who are not alcoholics but believe (often because well-meaning friends of A.A. have told them so) that A.A. meetings are the place for those with any addiction.

The guidelines for that situation are clear. In a 1958 Grapevine article, "Problems Other Than Alcohol," Bill W. wrote: "our first duty as a Society is to insure our own survival. Therefore we have to avoid distractions and

multipurpose activities. ...Sobriety -freedom from alcohol -through the teaching and practice of the Twelve Steps, is the sole purpose of an A.A. group. ... We have to confine our membership to alcoholics and we have to confine our A.A. groups to a single purpose. If we don't stick to these principles, we shall almost surely collapse. And if we collapse, we cannot help anyone."

How to handle dually addicted alcoholics who persist in talking about other problems in meetings is a murkier issue. In that same article, Bill writes about "one of the best A.A.s I know" -a man who had been doing drugs for years before joining A.A., "but prior to that he had been a terrific alcoholic. ...Therefore he could qualify for A.A. and this he certainly did." Should groups today insist that dually addicted newcomers confine their discussion to alcoholism alone? Should we require prospective members to identify their "primary addiction" before participating in a group? Or can we simply welcome these men and women and trust that they will come, listen, and find their own way?

In a presentation at the 1983 Conference entitled "Are we helping the dually addicted?" delegate Dyanne G. described me way her group welcomed her. "I will continue to thank God that I came into an A.A. group spiritually fit enough that its members did not find it necessary to censor my conversation or actions in order to protect themselves-: I did talk about drugs, and I used a lot of four-letter words to do it! My group allowed me the dignity to choose to change these things and the freedom to do it when I *could*, not when *they* thought I *should*. ...My group seems to have no trouble sticking to our single purpose, which is to carry the message to still-suffering alcoholics, however damaged and confused they are in the beginning. ...There is a fine line between upholding our

singleness-of-purpose Tradition and limiting or restricting our membership. The day A.A. appears to be rejecting people who may be alcoholic, we will begin to die. What good will it do us if, while we are defending our 'rights,' A.A. is destroyed?"

Singleness of purpose has been the theme of several previous Conferences, and virtually every year discussion of related Advisory Actions' as taken up long hours. The 1987 Conference debated for nearly a full day a recommendation for Conference approval of a statement differentiating open and closed meetings and suggesting that "when discussing our problems, we confine ourselves to those problems as they relate to alcoholism." Some argued that no group has the right to tell anyone what to say; others pleaded for help in dealing with people with other additions who were dominating meetings. Normal voting rules were suspended, and several times votes for and against were reconsidered, until everyone was satisfied they had reached a true group conscience. In the end, the Conference compromised by voting with substantial unanimity against Conference approval, but it made a service piece (known as the "Blue Card") available for groups that needed to use it.

The "druggies" and other disruptive influences will not go away -they are one of the consequences of our own success. Ironically, some of our good friends in the field of alcoholism compound the problem because they believe our program works better than anything else for a variety of addictions. Good public information work and cooperation with professionals is part of the answer, but ultimately we cannot control what others do -only how we ourselves react. If we respond with a defensive flurry of restrictions, will we actually depart from our singleness of purpose by turning away alcoholics who have

not yet recognized their problem? In 1986, retiring G.S.O. general manager Bob P. gave the Conference closing talk. He said in part: "I echo those who feel that if this Fellowship ever falters or fails, it will not be because of any outside cause. ... it will be simply because of us...It will be because we have too much fear and rigidity and not enough trust and common sense..."

"If you were to ask me what is the greatest danger facing Alcoholics Anonymous today, I would have to answer: the growing rigidity

that is so apparent to me and many others, The increasing demand for absolute answers to nit-picking questions, Pressure for G.S.O. to 'enforce' our Traditions, Screening alcoholics at closed meetings. ...And in this trend toward rigidity, we are drifting further and further away from our co-founders. Bill, in particular, must be spinning in his grave, for I remind you that he was perhaps the most permissive person I ever met. One of his favorite sayings was, 'Every group has the right to be wrong;' he was maddeningly tolerant of his critics; and he had absolute faith that faults in A.A. were self-correcting."

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## **Have you visited your Web Site yet?**

<http://www.ncc-aa.org>

### **You'll find:**

**The History of NCCAA**  
**Our "Purpose Structure & Function"**  
**Past issues of the "Good News"**  
**A list of Future Conferences**  
**A list of upcoming Speakers**  
**Flyers - Future & Past**  
**Programs - Upcoming & Past**  
**Information on our Archivist**  
**Guidelines for Hosting a Conference**  
**A Link to AA General Service**  
**And More...**