



Have you heard the Good News?

# Good News



Est. 1948  
Spring 2011

## Upcoming Spring Conference

There is much excitement for this upcoming Spring Conference in Foster City, Ca. March 11,12,& 13, 2011.

The following hotel is offering special rates for those attending the 64th Annual NCCAA Spring Conference in Foster City. To ensure your reservation, you should register at least 30 days in advance of the Conference, and you must mention that you are attending the NCCAA Foster City conference in order to obtain these rates. The Host Hotel is the **Crowne Plaza Hotel**

1221 Chess Drive  
Foster City, Ca. 94404  
Ph: 800-477-5700

Rates:  
\$ 112.00 single

AA Grapevine  
Volume 1 Issue 5  
October 1944

\$ 112.00 double

Amenities:

Indoor Pool, whirlpool, high-speed internet access, Health/fitness center on-site, 3 restaurants

**Foster City**  
**NCCAA 64th Annual Spring Conference**

March 11, 12, & 13, 2011

Crowne Plaza Hotel  
1221 Chess Drive

Foster City, Ca 94404

• **Friday March 11**

- 2:00 p.m. Registration Opens
- 3:30 Early Bird Meeting
- 8:00 p.m. Open Speaker Meeting—Betty H.,

**Saturday, March 12**

- 9:30 a.m. General Service Panel Meeting
- 11:00 a.m. Host Committee Workshop
- 1:00 p.m. Hospital & Institutions Panel Meeting
- 3:30 p.m. Young People's Speaker Meeting—Paco D., San Jose, Ca.
- 8:00 p.m. Open Speaker Meeting—Rosie T., Lakewood, Ca
- 10:00 p.m. Dance Following Drawing

• **Sunday, March 13**

- 9:30 a.m. All A.A. Services Panel Meeting
- 11:00 a.m. Open Speaker Meeting—Gary Ann., Modesto, Ca.

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 upcoming Speakers
- Flyers
- Future & Past Programs
- Information on our Archivist
- Guidelines for Hosting a Conference
- A Link to AA General Service
- And More



THIS POOR GUY DOESN'T KNOW WHAT AILS HIM . . . HIS FAMILY AND FRIENDS THINK HE'S A BAD EGG OR WORSE. "THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR EDUCATION ON ALCOHOLISM" IS GOING TO TRY TO GET THE PUBLIC TO UNDERSTAND THAT THIS BIRD HAS A DISEASE CALLED ALCOHOLISM— THAT HE IS WORTH HELPING— AND THAT HE CAN BE HELPED (WITNESS US A.A.!).

## THE PROFESSOR AND THE PARADOX

*Says he, "We A.A.'s surrender to win; we give away to keep; we suffer to get well, and we die to live."*

I am in the public information business. I use that phrase or designation because if I say I am a college professor everybody always has a tendency to run the other way. And when they learn that I am a specialist in English, they have looks of horror for fear they are going to slip up and say "ain't." I often wish I sold shoes or insurance or fixed automobiles or plumbed pipes. I would have more friends.

My story is not a great deal different from others - except in a few specific details. All the roads of alcoholism lead to the same place and condition. I suppose I have always been shy, sensitive, fearful, envious, and resentful, which in turn leads one to be arrogantly independent, a defiant personality. I believe I got a Ph.D. degree principally because I wanted to either outdo or defy everybody else. I have published a great deal of scholarly research - I think for the same reason. Such determination, such striving for perfection, is undoubtedly an admirable and practical quality to have, for a while; but when a person mixes such a quality with alcohol, that quality can eventually cut him almost to pieces. At least it did so to me.

I began drinking as I social drinker, in my early twenties. Drinking constituted no problem for me until well after I finished graduate school at the age of thirty. But as the tensions and anxieties of my life began to mount, and the set-backs from perfection began to increase, I finally slipped over the line between moderate drinking and alcoholism. No longer would I drink a few beers or a cocktail or two and let it go at that. No longer did I let months or even weeks go by without liquor. And when drinking, I entered what I now know was the dream-world of alcoholic fantasy. Then for about five years of progressively worse alcoholic drinking, of filling my life and home with more and more wreckage, it looked as if I were going to ride this toboggan of destruction to the bitter end.

Maybe I didn't get as bad as some of the others. I must confess that I never went to teach one of my classes drunk or drinking - but I've been awfully hung-over. My pattern was to be drunk at night, boil myself out to creep to work in the morning, drunk the next night, boil myself out in the morning, drunk again the next night, boil myself out the next morning. I may not have drunk as much whiskey as some, but there isn't anybody who's drunk any more Sal Hepatica than I have!

Now there are all kinds of drunks: melancholy drunks, weeping drunks, traveling drunks, slap-happy mind stupid drunks, and a number of other varieties. I was a self-aggrandizing and occasionally violent drunk. You wouldn't think a little fellow like me could do much damage, but when I'm drunk I'm pure dynamite. I'm not going into any of the details-the University can fire me yet.

I came to believe actually that life was not worth living unless I could drink. I was utterly miserable and sometimes desperate, living always with a feeling of impending calamity (I knew something was bound to "break loose"). And to do away with such a fear, I would try a little

more drinking, with the inevitable result - for by this time one drink would set up in me that irresistible urge to take another and another until I was down or hung-over and in trouble. In the hangover stage I would vow never to touch another drop, and then be drunk the next night.

I knew at least that there had to be some changes made. I tried to change the time and place and amount of my drinking. I tried to change my environment, my place of living - like most of us who at one time or another think that our trouble is geography rather than whiskey. I even entertained the idea of changing wives. I tried to change everything and everybody, except myself - the only thing I could change.

I did not know that it was physically impossible for me to drink moderately. I did not know that my body's drinking machinery had worn out, and that the parts could not be replaced. I did not know that just one drink made it impossible for me to control my behavior and conduct and my future drinking. I did not know, in short, that I was powerless over alcohol. My family and my friends sensed or knew these things about me long before I did.

Finally, as with most of us in A.A., the crisis came. I realized I had a drinking problem which had to be solved. My wife and a close friend tried to persuade me to contact the only member of Alcoholics Anonymous we knew of in town. This I refused to do. But I agreed that I would stop drinking altogether, maintaining stoutly and sincerely that I could and would solve this problem "on my own." I would feel much better doing it that way, I insisted. I stayed sober for two entire weeks! Then I pitched a "lulu"-a terrific drunken affair in which I became violently insane. I also landed in the City Jail.

I don't know exactly what happened on this bender, but here are some things that did happen which I was told about subsequently. First, the officers who had come out to my house did not want to take me in - but I insisted! Also, I insisted that they wait in the living room while I went back to the bedroom and changed into my best and newest suit (with socks and tie to match), so that I would look nice in jail! I don't remember the ride downtown, but when I "came to" in the jail corridor. I didn't like the looks of the little cage they were shoving me into, so I took issue about that with three officers and indulged in some fisticuffs with all three of them at once - each one of them twice my size and armed with a gun and a blackjack. Now what kind of drinking and acting is that? If that isn't insanity, or absurd grandiosity, or some sort of mental illness, what is it? Because I yelled so loud and made so much noise, I ended up downstairs under the concrete in a place they call "solitary." (That's a fine place - now isn't it? - for a college professor to spend the night!) Two days later I was willing to try A.A., which I had only vaguely heard of a few months before. I called at the home of the man who started the A.A. group in my town, and I went humbly with him to an A.A. meeting the following night.

As I look back, something must have happened to me during those two days. Some forces must have been at work which I do not understand. But on those two days - between jail and A.A.-something happened to me that had never happened before. I repeat, I don't know what it was. Maybe I had made a "decision" just a part of Step Three (I had made lots of promises but never a decision) -though it seems to me that I was at the time too confused and fogged up to make much of one. Maybe it was the guiding hand of God, or (as we Baptists say) the Holy Spirit. I like to think that it was just that, followed by my own attempt to take the Twelve Steps to

recovery. Whatever it was, I have been in A.A. and I have been dry ever since. That was more than six years ago.

A.A. does not function in a way which people normally expect it to. For example, instead of using our "Will power," as everyone outside A.A. seems to think we do, we give up our wills to a Higher Power, place our lives in hands - invisible hands - stronger than ours. Another example: If twenty or thirty of us real drunks get away from home and meet in a clubroom downtown on Saturday night, the normal expectation is that all thirty of us will surely get roaring drunk, but it doesn't work out that way, does it? Or talking about whiskey and old drinking days (one would normally think) is sure to raise a thirst, but it doesn't work that way either, does it? Our program and procedures seem to be in many ways contrary to normal opinion. And so, in connection with this idea, let me pass on what I consider the four paradoxes of how A.A. works. (A paradox, you probably already know, is a statement which is seemingly self-contradictory; a statement which appears to be false, but which, upon careful examination, in certain instances proves to be true.

1. We SURRENDER TO WIN. On the face of it, surrendering certainly does not seem like winning. But it is in A.A. Only after we have come to the end of our rope, hit a stone wall in some aspect of our lives beyond which we can go no further; only when we hit "bottom" in despair and surrender, can we accomplish sobriety which we could never accomplish before. We must, and we do, surrender in order to win.

2. We GIVE AWAY TO KEEP. That seems absurd and untrue. How can you keep anything if you give it away? But in order to keep whatever it is we get in A.A., we must go about giving it away to others, for no fees or rewards of any kind. When we cannot afford to give away what we have received so freely in A.A., we had better get ready for our next 'drunk.' It will happen every time. We've got to continue to give it away in order to keep it.

3. We SUFFER TO GET WELL. 'There is no way to escape the terrible suffering of remorse and regret and shame and embarrassment which starts us on the road to getting well from our affliction. There is no new way to shake out a hangover. It's painful. And for us, necessarily so. I told this to a friend of mine as he sat weeping to and fro on the side of the bed, in terrible shape, about to die for some paraldehyde. I said, "Lost John" - that's his nick-name - "Lost John, you know you're going to have to do a certain amount of shaking sooner or later." "Well," he said, "for God's sake let's make it later!" We suffer to get well.

4. We DIE TO LIVE. That is a beautiful paradox straight out of the Biblical idea of being "born again" or "in losing one's life to find it." When we work at our Twelve Steps, the old life of guzzling and fuzzy thinking, and all that goes with it, gradually dies, and we acquire a different and a better way of life. As our shortcomings are removed, one life of us dies, and another life of us lives. We in A.A. die to live.



## Sobriety Birthdays

Theresa A.	Paradise, Ca	April 1, 1991
Bill K.	Oakland, Ca.	March 16,1977
Brian G.	Mountain View, Ca.	April 17, 1973
Bud A.	Modesto, Ca.	April 9, 1959
Chris J.	Carmichael, Ca.	March 3, 1984
Clinton N.	Roseville, Ca.	May 7, 2008
Guy J.	Old Station, Ca.	March 5, 1984
James H.	Alameda, Ca.	May 1, 1988
Jeffrey N.	Novato, Ca.	May 6, 1988
JO M.	Turlock, Ca.	March 15, 2001
Joe P.	Antelope, Ca.	April 6, 2003
Kathleen C.	Sunnyvale, Ca.	May 21, 1998
Keith H.	Guernville, Ca.	May 31, 1983
Lisa T.	Elk Grove, Ca.	March 18, 1988
Mary C.	S. San Francisco, Ca.	April 1, 1972
Megan R.	Richmond, Ca.	March 28, 1981
Cindy P.	Manteca, Ca.	May 1 ,1994
Robert B.	Modesto, Ca.	May 6 1986
Ron J.	Paicines, Ca.	March 19, 1979
Terry F.	North Highlands, Ca.	March 2, 1994
Theresa A.	Paradise, Ca.	April 1 1991
Veronica S.	Pacifica, Ca.	April 1, 1991
William R.	Woodland, Ca.	April 6, 2006



# Upcoming NCCAA Conferences

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## Stockton June 10, 11, & 12 2011

Friday 8:00 p.m.	Sreve B.	Pennsylvania
Saturday 3:30 p.m.	Mary M.	Walnut Creek, Ca.
Saturday 8:00 p.m.	Dave P.	Washington
Sunday 11:00 a.m.	Denise P.	Concord, Ca.

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## Santa Rosa October 28, 29, & 30 2011

Speakers To Be Announced

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## San Ramon March 16, 17, & 18 2012

Speakers To Be Announced

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## Sacramento October 4, 5, & 6 2012

Speakers To Be Announced

## **Heard at Meetings. . . . .**

Inter Group: "An alcoholic is a man with two feet firmly planted in mid-air."

Greenwich: "A.A. is like an umbrella. It won't work unless you put it up."

White Plains: "An alcoholic is a person who finds he has nothing in common with himself."

Manhattan: "Time heals all cuts; time also cuts all heels."

Inter Group: "The twelve steps are a matter of long, slow work. One can't go from a heel to a halo in twelve easy lessons!"

Manhattan: "When I look at a new prospect I say to myself, 'If you don't take a drink, feller, you'll be where I am, and if I *do* take a drink, I'll be where you are--in no time flat'."

Nassau: "The surest way to lose your health is to keep drinking to other people's."

NCCAA  
Good News

First Class

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