



Good News



DECEMBER,
1971

Published Monthly in San Francisco, California
By the Northern California Council of Alcoholics Anonymous

Vol. XIV
No. 12

S.F. Drunk Program Is Disappointing Failure; New Study Will Begin

Hospitalization, as a humane alternative to the City Prison drunk tank, has not worked out as the answer for San Francisco's chronic Skid-Row alcoholics.

Results of a now-concluded four-month pilot program revealed that:

1—Of 174 persons who voluntarily opted for hospitalization — instead of being arrested as drunks—106 walked out on the program. They did so "against the advice of their attending physician.

2—The answer to the problem may be residential housing facilities with detoxification services. Alcoholics might be taken to such drying out units by City Health Department officers, instead of by the police.

Municipal Judge Charles Goff, chairman of a committee which spearheaded the pilot program, says the committee will now work toward an alternative to hospitalization.

NO ARRESTS

The report on the program revealed that 78 of the 174 alcoholics who chose hospitalization — instead of being arrested as drunk—never reached San Francisco General Hospital's detoxification unit.

They walked out of the hospital's emergency room, adjoining San Francisco General, after being brought there by policemen who picked them up.

(Continued on page 4)

ALANON PARTY

The San Francisco Al-Anon Intergroup will hold its annual Christmas pot-luck supper at 7 p.m. on Friday, December 7, at St. Elizabeth's School, Somerset and Maryland Streets. Gene D., Calistoga, will speak at 8:30.

PLANS FOR BIG A.A.-'72 ARE SET. PUBLIC IS INVITED TO ATTEND PANELS, WORKSHOPS

Plans are being finalized for the San Francisco District of General Service's "A.A.—'72 program at Saint Mary's Cathedral on Jan. 8.

The "A.A.—'72" event, a repeat of last year's exciting and acclaimed "A.A. — Today", is designed to acquaint the general public with the principals and traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous, according to Leo L., chairman.

More than 1,600 persons from all over Northern California attended the innovative program last year—a program fashioned to illustrate how A.A. can offer cooperation without affiliation in public and private areas.

The program will open at 1 p.m., with opening remarks by A.A. member Bill G. and an A.A. friend, Judge Peter Allen Smith, Marin County.

At 2:15, the following workshop sessions will be held:

A.A. and Health: Dr. Gil A., chairman. Panelists: George Staub, Administrator, Alcoholism Program, State Department of Rehabilitation; Doctor Charles Becker, Director, Acute Detoxification Center; San Francisco General Hospital; Chester Wright, Rehabilitation Program Worker, San Francisco Bureau of Alcoholism.

A.A. and the Law: Judge Charles G., chairman. Panelists: Superior Judge Robert Merrill, Lieutenant John Devine, San Francisco Police Department and Joseph Russo-niello, Deputy District Attorney, San Francisco.

A.A. and the Employee: Florette Pomeroy, National Council on Alcoholism, San Francisco; A. J. Sullivan, Petroleum Industry;

Keith Kelly, United California Bank; Norman Cook, Pacific Telephone Company; Robbie D., Post Office.

A.A. and the Family: Dolores Moran, Chairman; Panelists: Arthur Serchera, Betty Fleming, Margaret Preble, Winnie Brughelli. Alateen members: Jay Martin, Moira Cavanaugh.

A.A. and the Young People: Lyn H., chairman. Panelists: Claude K., Pat O'B. and Marge D.

A.A. and Social Service: Allan Skinner, A.R.A. House, chairman. Panelists: Father Thomas Gearhart, Henry Olhoff House; Jane O'Toole, Stepping Stone; Leona Kent.

(continued on page 4)

ALCOHOLISM GRANT OF \$1,224,000 IS GIVEN SANTA CLARA

The largest Federal grant in the Nation has been given to Santa Clara County, Ely Axelrod, County Alcoholism Program Coordinator, told the San Jose Alano Club recently.

The grant, amounting to \$1,224,000 will go to the County Health Department to provide professional and para-professional staffing for work with alcoholics at the Alcoholism Clinic and the branch Mental Health Clinic.

Work will also be done in conjunction with Half Way houses in the county under the program. Ten beds, according to Axelrod, are now available at Valley Medical Center and a 20-bed sub-acute ward is being planned.

PUBLIC DRUNKS ARE SICK! NOT CRIMINALS NEW STATE LAW SAYS

A bill providing for treatment of public drunks as sick persons rather than criminals has been passed by the State Assembly and returned to the Senate for concurrence in Assembly amendments.

The bill would eliminate public drunkenness as a crime and substitute a civil procedure under which a drunk could be taken into protective custody for up to 72 hours. He would be treated at a "detoxification center."

Supporters of the bill said that areas which did not have detoxification centers would continue with their current practice of handling drunks.

FOE

Assemblyman Gordon Duffy, Hanford, opposed the bill, declaring "detoxification of public drunks is not going to solve the problem of alcoholism."

"There are better ways to spend state money than on public drunks."

Assemblyman Alan Sieroty, Beverly Hills, co-author of the bill, said, however, that the measure does not require expenditure of state funds.

He added that it could result in a savings of millions of dollars to local agencies by relieving them of the cost of arresting, jailing and trying public drunks.

ARRESTS

Supporters of the bill have estimated that last year there were 250,000 arrests in California for drunkenness.

The measure does not require counties or cities to establish detoxification centers. It would provide for the noncriminal treatment of drunks only in counties where such facilities exist.

Anniversary Slated For South of Market Group, One of S.F.'s Oldest

Twenty five years ago—in the seamy center of San Francisco's Skid Row — one of San Francisco's oldest A.A. groups was born.

The group was the South of Market Group. The location was Minna Valley, between Third and Fourth and Mission and Howard Streets.

The members were drunks, drifters and derelicts who had lost homes, friends, relatives, position and purpose.

Since that year — 1946 — thousands of men have tried "to put their lives back together" by attending South of Market Group meetings at the St. Vincent de Paul Day Shelter for Men on Minna.

Some succeeded. Some failed. Some made it. Some didn't. Some died. Some drifted away into forgetfulness. Some "crossed over" Market Street with new hope and faith in themselves — because of A.A.

In 1947, the group has a first anniversary party. More than 150 men were there, oblivious to the unmistakable rumble of the paddy wagon as it cruised the dirty darkness of Minna.

Next month, the South of Market Group will celebrate the 25th anniversary of the founding of the group, which now meets at the Society of St. Vincent de Paul's new Day Center at 1175 Howard Street.

Details will be carried in the January issue of Good News.

MARIN

Marin Monthly All Groups will hold its Christmas meeting Christmas Night at 8 p.m. in the auditorium of Mt. Carmel Church, 17 Buena Vista at East Blithedale, Mill Valley. Betty S., San Francisco Fellowship, will speak. The host group is the San Rafael Tuesday Women.

CONTRA COSTA

The Contra Costa Breakfast Meeting announces the following schedule for December: Fifth, Miz H., Danville; Twelfth, Hugh J., Alameda; Nineteenth, Ken K., Hayward, and the Twenty Sixth, Si P., San Francisco.

SALINAS-MONTEREY

Alano Clubs of Salinas and Monterey will hold open houses on Christmas Day and New Years Day, they announce.

Meanwhile, Salinas groups also have announced start of a Unity Group meeting the first Monday of every month to discuss activities and problems of the area.

S.F. ALL GROUPS

Following is the December schedule of speakers and host groups for the San Francisco All Groups:

Third, Robbie D., S.F. Fellowship and Bud O'K., San Rafael; Host Group, Unity. Tenth, to be announced; Seventeenth, Father Kevin C., Antioch; Host group, Sunday A.M. Discussion. Twenty Fourth, Marnie D., Laguna Beach; Host group, 90 Minute Beginners, and the Thirty First, Bill and Roberta S., S.F. Fellowship; Host group, Marina Discussion.

S.F. ALANO CLUB

The San Francisco Alano Club announced the following events for the month of December:

Saturday, December 4 and 18, dancing to music by the Dry Notes. Christmas Day, A.A. meeting 12:30 to 1:30, followed by Xmas dinner 2 to 5 p.m. Friday, December 31, New Years Eve dancing. Buffet starting at 9:30. \$2.00 donation.

Peninsula All Groups

Following is the San Francisco Peninsula All Groups schedule for December:

Fourth, Art D., Hidden Valley; host group, Redwood City Stag. Eleventh, Phyllis McG., Parkside; host group, Menlo Tuesday Womens. Eighteenth, Bill G., Surf; host group, San Carlos Walnut. Twenty fifth, Juanita, Brisbane; host group, Brisbane Breakfast Bunch.

BOOZE INTAKE BY KIDS IS INCREASING, SURVEY IN SAN MATEO REVEALS

Junior high and high school youngsters are drinking alcohol even more than they are using marijuana and other drugs, a survey recently released in Redwood City showed.

Officials in San Mateo County, where the survey was conducted, said they are more concerned by the widespread and growing use of alcohol by teen-agers than they are by drug findings.

The survey, which involved nearly all the county's secondary school students, showed that the use of drugs of all kinds—alcohol, amphetamines, barbiturates, LSD, marijuana and tobacco—climbed in 1971.

The San Mateo County Department of Health and Welfare has been surveying its junior high and high schools yearly since 1968.

Although only four years old, it is the oldest survey of its kind in the nation, and its results are closely watched for national trends by drug abuse officials in Washington. This year's survey was funded by a grant from the National Institute of Mental Health.

One of the year's most striking—and disappointing—findings is a leveling-off trend noted last year has not continued this year.

After showing sharp increases in usage of drugs in 1969 over 1968, the 1970 survey showed a slackening of usage.

However, this year the rates are once more climbing, although less than between 1968 and 1969.

Mrs. Lillian S. Blackford, a county statistician who has conducted the survey from the beginning, said the increase in drinking

alcohol is the most alarming finding.

The 1971 poll, conducted last April, showed that 75% of the high school freshman boys and 83.6% of the senior boys claimed some use of alcohol during the year. For girls the comparable figures are 68.3% and 79.1%.

Those figures are from three to 10 percentage points higher than for 1970.

Mrs. Blackford said there was a striking increase in use of alcohol among junior high students, particularly those in the seventh grade, where 50% said they had drunk alcoholic beverages.

The survey covered 35,458 youngsters. San Mateo County has the highest per capita and per family income in the state and is one of the top 10 in the nation.

NEW ENGLAND ACT ERASES DRUNK LAW

The Massachusetts Legislature has enacted and sent to Governor Francis W. Sargent a bill eliminating the crime of public drunkenness and setting up a network of detoxification centers where alcoholics can sober up.

The intent of the bill is to treat alcoholism as a disease rather than a crime and creates a State Division of Alcoholism.

INDUSTRIAL CLUB

The San Francisco Industrial Club will hold its Second-Saturday-of-the-Month Christmas Dance on December 11 at the club, 3198 16th Street, with live music.

WOODLAND

More than 160 members of the Fellowship in Northern California attended the opening of the new Alano Club in Woodland last month. Guests at the club, 115 Elm Street, came from as far away as Redding, Red Bluff, Stockton and Sacramento.

A Minute At A Time

Some believe that only one person in a thousand knows the trick of really living in the present. Most of us spend 59 minutes an hour living in the past with regret for lost joys, or shame for things we have done; or in a future which we either long for or dread.

Yet the past is gone beyond prayer and every minute you spend in the vain effort to anticipate the future is a moment lost.

There is only one world, the world pressing against you this minute. There is only one minute in which you are alive — this minute — here and now. The only way to live is by accepting each minute as an unrepeatable miracle. Which is exactly what it is—a miracle and unrepeatable.

SO, WHAT ELSE IS NEW?

A \$157,200 study of the cause and cure of drunks at various treatment centers across the nation will be made by the Stanford Research Institute at Menlo Park.

The study is sponsored by the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. It will conclude by March 31, 1972.

One objective is to develop and pretest a uniform date reporting system which will describe each patient admitted to treatment centers.

(Editor's note: How About That?)

AZURE ACRES

The Azure Acres Fellowship Group in Sebastopol announces its annual Christmas Party December 19 at 2264 Greenhill Road will feature informative discussion panels. Panelists will be: Doctor Victor Stallone, Albany Hospital; Mary C., San Francisco All Groups, and Jim Nielsen, Sonoma County Mental Health Department. A buffet will follow.

'73 PARTY

San Francisco Peninsula All Groups, will hold their annual New Years Eve party on Friday night, December 31, in the auditorium of St. Matthews Episcopal Church, Baldwin and El Camino, San Mateo.

H & I BROADSIDES

By KIM M., General Chairman

Northern California Hospital and Institution Committee

Sunday, November 7th was a beautiful day for a drive to the Monterey Peninsula and that may be one reason for a good turn-out at the H & I meeting. Bob F., Chairman of Area 11, had secured the rec. hall of the Monarch Pines Mobile Homes park way out on the Pacific Grove Peninsula and he and his wife saw to it that we were well supplied with coffee and goodies. Ellery S. flew up from Corona del Mar to be with us; he is not only the Delegate to the General Service Assembly from the Southern California Coastal Area, but also involved and very interested in H & I work in Southern California.

After Secretary, Librarian and Treasurer's reports, the Chairman announced the program for the spring Conference in San Jose. The open meeting on Saturday, March 4th at 1:00 p.m. will be chaired by Ken K., Galt, Regional Chairman for the Northern Valley; the A.A. speaker will be Jim M., San Jose; and the guest speaker will be Judge Peter Mannino of Sacramento Municipal Court No. 3. On Sunday, March 5th, at 9:30 a.m. the Institution Workshop will be chaired by Barbara S., Santa Rosa, Area #1 Chairman and the Hospital Workshop by Clarence J., Concord, Coordinator of the Contra Costa County Hospital.

Regional reports were generally good. Area Chairmen brought up some local problems, such as the loss of Crittenden House in Oakland and no meeting at Highland Hospital. Area 11 has problems at Soledad, among them the difficulty of keeping meetings within A.A. guide lines. Because of the large size of Area 11, it was decided to annex the coastal area down to Watsonville to Area #7. Jim reported the northern areas were doing well: Redding and Reno are cooperating in covering the territory. Jim is to be commended for the time and effort he puts into looking after this large area. And how many people would travel from Redding to Pacific Grove for a four hour H & I meeting!

After a lunch break, Ellery explained the H & I set-up in Southern California. He suggested a North-South conference at some convenient place for exchange of experience and information. He reported that he had been shocked to discover how many states had no H & I organization at all and that others had very small coverage.

The next H & I meeting will be held in Stockton on February 13, 1972 at the Holiday Inn.

As we go to press, news has come that San Quentin is being reopened to A.A. I know we'll be welcomed by the inside group and certainly those of us from outside will be delighted to greet our old friends once more — although, of course, we would rather not see them there at all.

In Pacific Grove, I met an old friend whom I had known some years ago in Stockton. Bert D. had been a CPO in the Navy and was an A.A. loner. He did not have the benefit of group meetings, but maintained his sobriety with the Big Book and correspondence with New York. He is a living example — and a happy one — of what can be accomplished by perseverance if you have the desire, an open mind and a willingness to learn. Noe Bert has a dream job on that oceanographic ship that goes all around the world taking samples from the sea floor for analysis by a rotating team of some of the world's greatest scientists. This is not a fringe benefit, but the direct reward of a messed up life cleaned up and straightened out.

DRUNK PROGRAM FAILS

(continued from page 1)

Eighty-three alcoholics in the program ultimately were sent to Hassler Hospital for longer term rehabilitation attempts. But 38 of these "signed out against medical

advice after a short stay, the report said.

The committee consists of representatives from the Police Department, the Social Services Department, the Health Department and the National Council on Alcoholism, San Francisco.

Greatest Remedy

Work is man's greatest function. He is nothing, he can do nothing, he can achieve nothing, fulfill nothing, without working.

If you are poor, work. If you are rich — continue working. If you are burdened with seemingly unfair responsibilities — work. If you are happy — keep right on working. Idleness gives room for doubts and fears.

If disappointments come — work. When faith falters—work. When dreams are shattered and hope seems dead—work. It is the greatest remedy available for both mental and physical afflictions.

TELEPHONE COMPANY APPOINTS ALCOHOL PROGRAM'S HEAD

The Pacific Telephone Company has announced the appointment of Norman Cook as coordinator of the alcoholism program for the company in the Bay Area.

Cook served as alcoholic coordinator for the company in the Los Angeles area from 1968 to August of this year. He will devote his efforts to reaching alcoholics through an education program and providing referral for employees who seek help.

A.A.-'72 SET (from page 1)

A.A. The Spiritual Path: Arnold R., chairman. Panelists: Monsignor Clement McKenna, St. Patrick's Church; Father Thomas Lacy, Church of the Visitation, and Chaplain Herman Kegel, Director, Alcoholism Program, Pacific School of Religion.

The panel workshops will end at 4 p.m. and will be immediately followed by a summarization of the panel discussion by workshop leaders and A.A. Chairman, Norman W.

After a break for dinner (no food will be served in the Cathedral), the open, public meetings will be held at 8:30.

Speaker will be Judge Robert H., Ventura, widely acclaimed through out the Southern California Fellowship.

LETTERS TO TEX A. IN FOLSOM BRING HOPE, FAITH HELP

(Editor's note: Several months ago, Tex A., a Folsom prison inmate, wrote to Good News and told us a little about himself. He also asked members of the Fellowship to write. Good News did, and apparently others did, also. Here is his reaction:)

"I want you to know that I am grateful for your printing my letter in the September issue of Good News. Because since, I have received so many beautiful letters from all over the good old U.S.A. and also Canada.

"And I answer everyone of them promptly. I have had a ball both writing and receiving. What a wonderful thing these step-calls by mail. No one needs to be lonely or left out when we have a wonderful organization like ours. Or should I say 'family'. Because A.A. is all the family I have left. And thank God it is a never-ending one.

"While sitting here in my cell one day and looking out through the bars at the beautiful sunshine, I got to thinking of how grateful I am even here in prison. Grateful that we have A.A. in here twice a week and one night a month. Grateful that A.A. people from outside give their time and travel to come here and share with us.

"Grateful that I have only a short time to do, that I have the best of health, that I have serenity and a peace of mind. Grateful that I can look into my mirror and I like that fellow now.

"I found out that Half-Way brings misery. All-the-Way brings happiness. And now All-the-Way-A-Day-At-A-Time makes me do easy time."

Tex A.,
Folsom Prison
Box 29603

(Editor's footnote: Tex A. also included a bit of poetry he had written. Space prohibits Good News from using it in this issue. But we shall. Later on.)

(From An Anthology,
by Albert Schweitzer:)

Page 28 **The Fellowship of Those Who Beat the Mark of Pain**

"The Fellowship of those who beat the mark of Pain. Who are the members of this Fellowship? Those who have learned by experience what physical pain and bodily anguish mean, belong together all the world over; they are united by a secret bond. One and all they know the horrors of suffering to which man can be exposed, and one and all they know the longing to be free from pain.

"He who has been delivered from pain must not think he is now free again, and at liberty to take up just as it was before, entirely forgetful of the past. He is now a 'man whose eyes are open' with regard to pain and anguish, and he must help to overcome those two enemies (so far as human power can control them) and to bring to others the deliverance which he has himself enjoyed."

Page 30 **We Can be Rich in Love**

"I hear people say: 'Oh, if I were only rich. I would do great things to help people.' But we all can be rich in love and generosity. Moreover, if we give with care, if we find out the exact wants to those who need our help most, we are giving our own loving interests and concerns, which is worth more than all the money in the world."

Contributed by:
Anonymous

HARD ROAD

You cannot help somebody who does not want to help himself. This is a simple truth, but a hard one to learn and observe.

Over the year, I have sometimes been asked by friend A to get together and see if we could do something to help friend B. Friend B. is falling apart, in work, or marriage, or just generally.

But friend B is not ready to be helped, I have learned, then
(Continued on page 8)

Make Good News

GOOD NEWS

for

CHRISTMAS

Give A Subscription

WHAT BETTER

GIFT?

FOR SOMEONE

YOU LOVE!

OR SOMEONE WHO

MIGHT NEED

HELP!

Good News Helps

Everyone

even **YOU!**

Jim M., Carmichael, will speak at the annual San Francisco Surf Group Christmas party on Saturday December 20 at 8:30 p.m. at the Holy Names Church School cafeteria.

THE PITCH

Many groups in the California Northern Interior Area General Service have elected new General Service Representatives who are asking, "Now that I'm a G.S.R., what do I do?" There is literature available which relates specifically to A.A. unity and service, which are the two areas of concern for the G.S.R.

A pamphlet which is **MUST** reading for any G.S.R. is **A.A. Tradition — How It Developed**. This pamphlet contains reprints of Bill W.'s first articles on the A.A. Traditions, which tell the story of the evolution of the principles that underlie A.A. unity & growth. The Traditions are given in the original rather than the abbreviated form in this pamphlet. In addition, there is an article by Bill W., "Why Alcoholics Anonymous is Anonymous."

Another informative pamphlet is **Inside A.A.**, which explains the A.A. service structure and how things get done on a worldwide basis. It briefly describes each of the world services and their relationship through the General Service Conference to local groups. **The G.S.R.—What he does, who is best qualified** is a leaflet describing the duties of a G.S.R. It is for all members who want to know who is qualified to serve as a G.S.R., and for all G.S.R.'s who want to know more about their responsibilities.

If, after studying the above three pamphlets, the G.S.R. feels he wants to know even more, he can then wade into **The A.A. Service Manual**. This manual should be available in every group for the use of its members and especially for the use of its G.S.R.

Unlike jobs held in business or government, A.A. has no educational requirements or training and orientation programs. We learn through experience and by trial and error. Fortunately the experience of those who have preceded us in A.A. can provide guidelines to avoid repetition of errors made in the past.

Pentagon Favors Drug Programs Over Those For The Sick Drinker

Congressional investigators report an estimated 130,000 alcoholics in the armed forces, but say the Pentagon has done little to treat them, preferring punishment instead.

A recent report by the General Accounting Office said the Defense Department could save thousands of careers and at least \$120 million a year by treating and rehabilitating alcoholics as it now does for drug users.

The GAO recommended a comprehensive alcoholism-control program which would provide that alcoholism be recognized as a disease.

MORAL DEFICIENCY?

Although both the World Health Organization and the American Medical Association formally recognized alcoholism as a disease, the GAO said, it found hospital commanders who "believed that chronic alcoholism and problem drinking represented moral and spiritual deficiency."

The GAO study was made at the request of the Senate subcommittee on alcoholism and narcotics headed by Sen. Harold Hughes.

Releasing the report, Hughes

criticized the armed services for paying attention to modern alcoholism-control programs "compared to the effort being expended on newer more sensationalized forms of drug abuse."

WIDE IGNORANCE

"This ignores the fact known to every expert in the drunk field, that alcohol abuse causes more deaths, accidents, destruction of families, delinquency, breakup of families, human misery and economic loss all other forms of drug abuse combined," said Hughes.

The GAO said that although the percentage is comparable to that of civilian population, the incidence in the military "could be more serious because of the frequently dangerous and critical issue involved."

Earlier this year, the Pentagon appointed an inter-service task force to study the alcoholism problem.

Although a report is expected shortly, the Pentagon has told the GAO it prefers "to recognize alcoholism as a condition which is preventable and treatable through the application of enlightened attitudes and techniques."

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Therefore, to answer the question "Now that I'm a G.S.R., what do I do?" — a G.S.R.'s first responsibility is to become informed. This is best done by reading and attending meetings and assemblies which are held throughout the area during the year and which are concerned with matters relating to General Service. Possibly the best lesson of all that can be learned is contained in our 12th Tradition — that A.A. is a

FOREST HILL

The San Francisco Forest Hill Group will hold its annual Christmas party Tuesday, December 7, at 8 p.m. at the George Christopher Recreation Center, 5260 Diamond Heights Boulevard. Speaker will be Stand Up Hank, Redwood City.

fellowship based on principles, not personalities.

Alternate Delegate,
Calif. No. Interior Area
General Service

The Humboldt-Del Norte Central Committee will hold its annual Christmas Dinner Sunday night, December 19, at the Veterans' Memorial Building, Eureka. \$2.00 for adults. \$1.25 for children.

Good News

Published Monthly in San Francisco
By the Northern California Council
of Alcoholics Anonymous
Leo L.—Editor

Doug C.—Business Manager
Address all letters to GOOD NEWS
166 Geary Street, Room 84
San Francisco, California 94108
Outside U.S. \$2.50 per year
Subscription Price—\$1.80 per year



VOL. XV December, 1971 No. 12

Membership In Alcoholics Anonymous Grows To 500,000

...With a net gain of more than 500 new groups and 25,000 members, the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous continued to grow during the past year as it had every year since its beginning in 1935, Dr. John L. Norris, non-alcoholic chairman of the board of A.A. reports.

In issuing A.A.'s annual report to the public, Dr. Norris said that the number of A.A. groups throughout the world had increased from nearly 16,000 a year ago to about 16,500 in 1971 and that membership has grown from 475,000 in 1970 to an estimated 500,000 men and women in 92 countries this past year.

Dr. Norris stated that there is a growing public awareness regarding alcoholism. He pointed to the increasing treatment, counseling, research and education now being undertaken by federal, state and local governments, as well as churches, businesses and private agencies.

NEEDLESS SUFFERING

"After decades of indifference, both the private and public sectors of our society seem to have awakened to their responsibility to do something to help the sick alcoholic and bring an end to the needless suffering and deaths caused by this major health problem.

"THE LINK"

(General Service,
No. California Coastal Area)

The holiday season is upon us. Christmas becomes more of a wonder to us as we come to realize it is more than a celebration of an event almost two thousand years ago. To A.A.'s it is a right now thing; an event that is happening to us, in us, wherever we are, whatever we are thinking. It is redoubled proof of the rebirth, the awakening. It becomes love in our hearts; it becomes life filling our being; it becomes the joy filling our soul. From the Area Committee, a wish for a joyously inspirational Christmas. May the holidays treat you well.

Jim A., Merle G.,
Norm W., Jane B., Bob H.
and the Area Committee

—000—

"For the first time in history, A.A. now has a committee to work with alcoholism organizations. We feel this sort of activity holds a vast potential for A.A.'s continued growth.

"As A.A. is available almost everywhere, almost all the time, and at no cost, it may be the first referral source that occurs to many people. But even though they may know about us, they may not always understand A.A.'s traditional ways of functioning. One purpose of the new committee, therefore, is to help us find creative and productive ways of cooperating with other agencies in the field of alcoholism, in line with our primary purpose of helping alcoholics who want to stop drinking."

MEETING SET

Dr. Norris also noted that plans are underway for the second A.A. World Service meeting which will be held in New York during October, 1972. The first meeting held in 1969, was attended by 27 elected delegates from 12 countries and one zone who met to discuss various aspects of structure, finance, publishing and service experience. "While A.A. continues to grow,

The 5th Pacific Regional Assembly, as announced in "Good News" last month, scheduled March 4, 5 and 6, 1972 at Pasco, Washington finds conflicting dates with the NCC Northern California Spring Conference, to be held at San Jose Friday, Saturday and Sunday, March 3, 4 and 5, 1972. This is an unfortunate turn of events, as many Northern California A.A.'s had hoped to attend both events. A resolution of the conflict is being sought.

—000—

At this time of year many groups will be considering electing (or selecting) new Group officers (Group workers generally are chosen by the Group membership for limited terms of service; six months, a year—it varies). Rotation is important! Traditionally no worker becomes perpetuated in A.A. office because of rotation. Jobs, like almost everything else in A.A. get passed around for all to share. After one term in any office, most members move on to other kinds of A.A. service (Many Groups have alternate, assistant or co-officers, who can step into the jobs they have been trained for, and new members take the slots they just left). This way problems based on personalities are prevented, no power or prestige gets built up, no individual gets taken advantage of or imposed upon, and the blessings of giving service are shared by more and more members.

To step out of an A.A. office you love can be hard. If you have been doing a good job, if you honestly don't see anyone else around willing, qualified or with the time to do it, and if your friends agree, it's especially tough. But it can be a real step forward (Continued on page 8)

there is still much to be done to make it available to the many millions of alcoholics who still suffer," Dr. Norris continued.

"It is in line with this aim of making A.A. more available and realistically portrayed that a series of public probes regarding the image of A.A. members has recently been undertaken.

A FAMILIAR STORY, BUT WELL WORTH REPEATING. DRUNK, SICK & SHAKY!

His breath smells. His hand shakes. He's often hostile. He's suffering from what medical opinion now recognizes as a serious disease. Without help, he'll die 12 years sooner than the average person.

The United States has an estimated six and half million alcoholics — the highest incidence of alcoholism in the world. One in eighteen beginning drinkers will eventually suffer from it.

The alcoholic is not to be confused with the heavy drinker. He's a drug addict who plans his life around his alcohol, taking great pains to guarantee a supply.

SIDEWALK DERELICT

Now he is the derelict slumped on the sidewalk. Six out of seven alcoholics are educated people between 35 and 55 and members of a family. Many of them are women.

Often it's the family that suffers most from the effects of alcoholism. The emotional stress caused by the alcoholic's excessive drinking can lead to divorce and delinquency. Forty per cent of the problems brought before a large city-family court are directly or indirectly attributable to alcoholism.

Gradually, the alcoholic causes the disintegration of the social structure around him. Embarrassed friends avoid him. He quits or is fired from his job. His marital problems get worse. Not surprisingly, 33% of all suicides are chronic alcoholics.

NO SYMPATHY

Followup studies show that the alcoholic's continued deterioration is closely linked with the lack of helpful relationships with the family and friends.

Yet his anti-social behaviour denies him the sympathy and understanding that he could have expected had he suffered from any other ailment.

The alcoholic can't save himself without help. That doesn't mean suchioning him, protecting him, or

constantly rescuing him. It does mean getting professional guidance from some experienced organization such as Alcoholics Anonymous or an alcohol clinic. Or from a doctor.

NO CURE

In the sense that they can ultimately resume drinking, alcoholics can never be 'cured'.

But the illness can be arrested successfully. It takes time — sometimes with an occasional relapse — and determination. But without strong support from family and friends the 'treated' patient's course is as disastrous as his untreated counterpart.

Perhaps more than with any other affliction the alcoholic requires not just a physician but the combined efforts of many people for his total rehabilitation. And that's where friends come in.

THE LINK

in growth — a step into humility, which for some people is the spiritual essence of anonymity.

Among other things, anonymity in A.A. means a renunciation of personal prestige for any A.A. work we do to help other alcoholics. Rotation helps bring us spiritual rewards far more enduring than any fame. With no "A.A. status" at stake, we have complete freedom to serve as we are needed, and we don't have to compete for any titles or praise.

We can always step into another A.A. chore, such as being the Group's secret dishwasher, or an always dependable 12-stepper, or a quietly anonymous volunteer in some other kind of service to those who suffer from alcoholism.

A.A. jobs aren't arranged upward like a ladder. They are all on the same level — the base of service to others, which seems to be the foundation of our kind of recovery, under God's will as we understand it. "The highest we can go in A.A. is—sober".

ASILOMAR ASSEMBLY. Pre-registrations at the November 20th

Assembly show a growing interest in this upcoming 1972 event. Already volunteers are forming a working committee. Fred M., Carmel Valley, recently was named as chairman of the Host Committee. Arrangements are being worked out to provide extra parking in the beach area at the conference grounds through cooperation with the Pacific Grove police department. Keep watching for further details on this 1972 Spring Assembly.

HARD ROAD

we might as well save our breath. It is an axiom that you cannot get well until you know you are sick.

* * *

THIS IS TRUE in every area of human relations. The alcoholic cannot respond to treatment of any kind until he admits he is an alcoholic. The emotionally disturbed person cannot be helped by psychiatric care until he acknowledges that he is deeply torn and troubled.

And the plan, is distressing, fact is that many persons do not want to help themselves.

The self-destructive urge is stronger than we know; the desire to fail may become a passion; the retreat to irresponsible infancy may turn into a way of life (and, of course, eventually, a way of death).

* * *

I am underlying these obvious truths because I see all around me persons who want to push others — husbands, wives, relatives — into "getting psychiatric help."

But nobody can be pushed into this, any more than you can push a drunk into Alcoholics Anonymous. The recognition of weakness is the first step on the road to strength, and this step must be taken voluntarily.

Freud himself admitted that could cure only those who didn't need it very much — by which he meant that those who freely seek help on their own are already halfway home.