



Good News



MAY,
1974

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By the Northern California Council of Alcoholics Anonymous

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FOUR IN A PINTO

By SUE

There are more ways to carry the message than by responding when someone calls for help. Speaking in prison meetings is a special 12-step call for one AA member who has no record herself. She was invited to participate in the recent trip to Tehachapi sponsored by the San Francisco H & I Committee of AA, which is responsible for the AA meeting there whenever a fifth Saturday occurs in a month. Here is her description of that trip:

Driving down Highway 5 together were Jim, Steve, Cruz and me. Fringe benefits of such trips include discovering that squeezed into that tiny car were four non-smokers. Although all had met before, we were not well acquainted, and soon learned that only one is a native Californian, one an east-coast transplant and two had migrated here from the same home state 30 years apart. Two work for the same company but all four had totally different occupations. Sobriety ranged from 6 months to 6 years. Only one had visited Tehachapi before and one had never been to any prison.

During the long drive down and back, we took turns reading from the 24-hour Book and generally shared experience, strength and hope with each other while passing the thermos of coffee around. In addition, it was interesting to pool our knowledge of the countryside through which we drove, discussing new irrigation and land reclamation programs, desert foliage and earthquakes, as well as the prison itself.

Tehachapi has two facilities. When we got there, Steve and Cruz attended the "medium security side," and Jim and I attended the "minimum security side." The

NEW GOOD NEWS — by Ed C.

As of April 4, the Good News is being produced by an Editor-in-Chief and an Editorial and Production Board. This is a departure from the way this paper has been put out in the past. Previously, there were an Editor, a Circulation Manager and a Business Manager. The Editorial and Production Board assumes responsibility for the reporting, editing and production functions of the paper. The Circulation Manager and Business Manager will retain their functions. Bob C., the former Editor will stay on the paper's staff as a member of the Board. His talents and time will be of help to us.

There has been criticism of this Northern California A.A. paper. Heretofore, criticism and very little action! Hopefully, the Editorial and Production Board will provide less of the former and more of the latter.

What prompted this change in management? Criticism! News coverage of the area has not been what it should be. Circulation has been only a fraction of what it might be. Much of the content of the paper has been filler material, and some of that dated filler material. Although Good News is not designed as a

money-maker, it has not come close to making costs.

Because of the criticism of Good News, members of its staff approached some of us in the fellowship who have had professional experience with printed media for help. Board members' experience includes reporting, writing, re-writing, make-up, proofreading, paste-up and job shop work.

Also, all of us are involved in A.A., either with San Francisco Central Service, General Service, Hospitals and Institutions Committee, Public Information Committee, or as Group Secretaries.

Individual members of the Board will do what news-gathering they can. But everybody is limited as to how many activities he can cover. With a publication of this sort, the primary source of news is the written release — whatever our readers write and send to us. The paper will be filled with some sort of printed matter every month. If our readers do not like the quality of what is printed in Good News, it is their fault!

Send your news stories to:

Good News
166 Geary St.
San Francisco, Ca 94109

minimum side was a participation meeting. The inside chairman, after opening the meeting, called on several members to speak from the podium. There was no topic; most described what they were "in" for and how they felt about it. Some described how AA had changed those feelings, including one young man serving "life without" who had nevertheless been permitted to attend the outside meetings on the "community betterment program," evidently as a result of AA's effect on him.

Inside meetings necessarily follow a different style. Members already know each other from living in the tightly knit prison community. Uppermost in their culture is what they were busted for, and alcohol or drugs frequently don't enter a man's pitch unless awkwardly tacked on as a peripheral afterthought. Other members, however, know booze got them there and will bring them back if it gets the chance. These members want to stay sober, inside or out, and

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THE LINK

By RALPH L.

District Committee Member
California, Northern Coastal Area
of General Service

This is a sort of 'twixt and 'tween time for General Service activities. By the time this paper is in your hands our delegate, Merle G., will have returned from the 1974 Conference which was held at the Hotel Roosevelt in New York April 22 through 27. At this writing, we are only on the verge of knowing what the outcome was. A matter of deadlines.

We do know, though, that the pre-Conference assembly, which was held in Santa Clara on April 6th, was a lively affair. Everyone from the delegate up to the rank and file AA member was there, including general service representatives, and district committee members from the whole Northern Coastal Area, which extends from just north of San Luis Obispo to the Oregon border. There were even some visitors from out of the area — checking up on what Big Time AA is all about, no doubt.

For those of you who came in late, the chief purpose of the Pre-Conference Assembly is to communicate to the delegates the combined group consciences on agenda topics. These topics have been arrived at through a sifting, filtering, and debating process which started many moons ago with suggestions from AA members. By the time Merle gets to New York, he has a pretty good idea of what we are thinking. As is true with any democratic process, and AA has the purest form known to this observer, the voice of the people must be heard. Each year there are indications of greater participation by members than was evident the previous year. Individual members participate through their general service representatives, and if you don't know who your GSR is, find out from your secretary. There are some cases in which a group has a GSR who has not been especially vocal. Before he or she, is judged too harshly, remember that there was a concentrated effort this past autumn to fill as many vacancies as possible in order to accommodate a deadline for the New York office; therefore, some of our GSR's are new to the job

and, in the presence of some of you Ogres, too timid to ask for a few minutes now and then to ask for your cooperation — and it is your cooperation with your GSR which precedes your participation which makes this whole thing work. So, please, smile the next time your GSR asks for a little time, and maybe you won't be Ogres anymore.

NEXT MONTH: A full report on the New York Conference as revealed at the Post-Conference Assembly at Konocti.

How to Kill Fellowship

- 1) Don't come to the meetings.
- 2) If you do come, be late.
- 3) Find fault with the other members.
- 4) Never accept an office; it is easier to criticize than to do things for the program.
- 5) Nevertheless, get annoyed if you aren't appointed to a committee.
- 7) If asked by the Chairman to give your opinion, say nothing, but afterward, tell everyone how you would have done it.
- 8) Do no more than necessary. When others get things done, say the group is run by a clique.
- 8) Hold back your contribution as long as possible, or don't give it at all.
- 10) Don't bother about getting new members, but if you do, be sure they are grippers and complainers just like yourself.

from the AA Folsomite,
Box W, Represa, CA

Friday All Groups

John J., of the SF Stonestown group will be the first speaker this month on May 3 at the Friday Night SF Central All Groups at the Unitarian Church, Franklin and Geary at 8:30. The host group that evening will be Midway of South San Francisco.

Other speakers and hosts for the month are:

May 10, Gena H., Novato General; Panhandle;

May 17, Maury S., San Mateo Thursday; Federal Breakfast;

May 24, Connie B., San Rafael; Corte Madera;

May 31, Fran and Bud S., SF Fellowship; Westlake Tuesday Night.

Doors open at 7:30. Coffee and Arms-Length before and after.

A Daughter's—Eye View

By PRISCILLA P.

As a child blessed with not one, but two sets of parents, I have noticed the extreme differences in atmosphere between my two homes. In the one situation where I spend the majority of my time now, I certainly have all of the material advantages known to man. I have private music lessons, a good school, a large house to live in, nice clothes ... but one thing is absent.

My parents certainly love me. This is not the missing element. They frequently tell me so, as they smother me in overly protective rules and regulations.

There is no communication between my parents and me, because to be honest with them invites dire results. They look at my life as they want to see it. But at the same time they don't trust me, so they set up rules that are completely unrealistic. This entire atmosphere often culminates in unpleasant scenes between us, when reality and truth push too close to their cherished image of me.

On the other hand, my second set of parents is the complete opposite of this. Although I only come to visit about once a month, I always return to school with a new resolution to face the situation at home with honesty and at least to be always truthful with myself. What makes me think this way? I simply follow the example that my family sets for me while I am visiting them. This family is an AA family. My mother and step-father are both members of AA. Because of this there is no game playing, as there is in my other home. There is no lying, and no unrealistic expectations.

Instead, I have the pleasure of truly being able to tell a parent everything. If I have any kind of a problem, I always know that I will have a ready ear if I need one.

Because of this complete openness — with themselves and with others, including me — I am very glad that my parents are AA parents. To me, AA has brought a much greater change into my parents' lives than just to stop them from drinking. It has also brought a great change into my life, and has given me the courage to be honest with myself.

PINTO

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it is gratifying to watch the transformation over a period of time.

After a coffee break, the inside chairman introduced Jim who then introduced me. I related how I had felt in visiting my first prison meeting five years ago and had been relieved to discover that it was just another AA meeting after all. Being an outsider, having little identity with the inmates' environment, I had found myself talking about the mental prison of alcoholism and the feelings shared by most "hopeless drunks." The inside members had been grateful for my glimpse of the outside AA style where many of them hoped to be someday. Now, a dozen prison meetings later, I saw again that gratitude from inside members.

There are of course other reactions. Many inmates attend the AA meeting because of the coffee, the cigarettes, or the chicks. Being the only chick on the Tehachapi trip made me awfully nervous: I couldn't help but respond to all the attention while also recognizing the responsibility it represented. Trying to remember that "our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics achieve sobriety" helped me to keep cool.

In telling the insiders a little of what I used to be like, I described my own "record" — one traffic ticket that had been dismissed years ago — which got a good laugh. I also related two things that had happened to me in AA to illustrate how important it is to get active in outside meetings as quickly as possible.

One was about a man I had met in AA shortly after he was paroled, who went to a few meetings but drifted away and finally drank again and a year later was back in the "pen." The other incident was when a man told me at a meeting in The City that he had just been released on parole and how encouraged he was that at his first outside meeting he should run into someone he had met inside when I had visited his facility several months before. I urged the Tehachapi group to lean on AA, inside or out, and to "let us help you," and I tried to reassure the members that since many people in the Program have a record, they

need not worry about being accepted in outside meetings.

After my talk, Jim spoke again, telling some of his story and his experience in AA. I was still so nervous I don't remember much he said but in the last few minutes of the meeting, he asked for volunteers from the group just as a latecomer arrived. The members pushed the new man to the front where he managed to introduce himself and say a few nervous words. After the Lord's Prayer (hands joined above the skirt, the slacks, and thirty blue denims) the fellowship and good cheer were truly heartwarming. It was then that the visitors learned about the last speaker: he always arrives five minutes before the meeting ends, and never before had he been willint to participate at all.

That was one of many rewards for us four travellers to Tehachapi.

THE PITCH

By Jack B., Area Chairman
California Interior Area of
General Service

The General Service Conference is a great deal more than the annual meeting of Conference delegates each April in New York City. The General Service Conference is, as it should be, in effect 365 days per year. A most vital role in the conference structure is the General Service Representative, who has the job of linking his group with AA as a whole. He represents the conscience of his group — reporting the group's wishes to the committee member and to the delegate, so that they will be passed on to the Conference.

"This is a two-way street, allowing the G.S.R. to bring back to his group the problems and remedies that affect AA unity, health, and growth. To the extent that a G.S.R. keeps his group informed, then expresses the group conscience, only to that extent can the conference feel it is acting for AA as a whole. This becomes more evident each year — whether a G.S.R. speaks for a group of two or three, or for a 250-member group."

Tradition Two: "For our group purpose, there is but one ultimate authority — a loving God, as he may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern."

Concept 1, of the Twelve Concepts for World Service is: "The final responsibility and ultimate authority for AA world service should always reside in the collective conscience of the whole Fellowship.

Responsible representation, informed group conscience, obedience to our spiritual principles, with communication the key, are vital elements to insure our survival.

I need AA, you need AA, yet you and I are AA.

"The main principles of Tradition Two are crystal clear: the AA groups are to be the final authority; their leaders are entrusted with delegated responsibilities only.

"The life of each individual and of each group is built around our Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. We very well know that the penalty for extensive disobedience to these principles is death for the individual and dissolution for the group. An even greater force for AA's unity is the compelling love that we have for our fellow members and for the principles upon which our lives today are founded.

"Therefore, we believe that we see in our Fellowship a spiritualized society characterized by enough enlightenment, enough responsibility and enough love of man and God to ensure that our democracy of world service will work under all conditions. We are confident that we can rely upon Tradition Two, our group conscience and its trusted servants. Hence, it is with a sense of great security that we oldtimers have now fully vested AA's General Service Conference with authority for giving shape — through the labors of its chosen Delegates, Trustees and service workers — to the destiny that we trust God in His wisdom is holding in store for all of us."

Bernard B. Smith, in his opening talk at the 1954 conference answered the question, "Why do we need a conference?"

"We may not need a General Service Conference to insure our own recovery. We do need it to insure the recovery of the alcoholic who still stumbles in the darkness one short block from this room. We need it to insure the recovery of a child being born tonight, destined to

Continued on page 7

Carrying The Message

By NANCY C.

The Public Information Committee's activities continued to expand during the month of April. This committee, sponsored jointly by the San Francisco Central Service Committee and area General Service, was established in January. And each month has brought new opportunities for its members.

In April, Ben M. Spoke at Walden House (a partially federally-funded recovery house) on the spiritual aspects of our program. The lively discussion which followed ran overtime, with many interested residents staying on in their "free time" to speak with Ben at length.

Betty S. Spoke at St. Stephen's School at the request of S.P.A.R.C., and shared a panel discussion with a representative of the National Council on Alcoholism, following their film on alcoholism.

The AA booth at the American Society of Orthopsychiatrists' Convention was manned by some of the members of the P.I. Committee and other AA's. Responsibility for the booth was shared by George D. of General Service and Nancy C. of the P.I. Committee.

An AA nurse spoke to student nurses at U.C. Medical Center. And perhaps most unusual of all, two speakers spoke to a group of 12 junior drug counselor trainees in the Ethnic Drug Program. These young men and women — average age 18 — consider alcohol the most dangerous drug in use in the schools. They are from Chicano, Samoan, American Indian and Black ethnic groups, and, when their training at the Center is completed, they will return to work with their peers at the various high schools in the City. Graduates are already at work in Washington, Galileo, and Lincoln Schools.

A speaker also talked about recovery through AA for the Mission Kiwanis group at their April luncheon meeting.

The Public Information Committee assumed responsibility for the Wednesday AA radio program on station KEST at 8:30 p.m., and Barbara H. reported the schedule filled well into May. Anyone who

would like to be on the show is invited to call the Central Office in San Francisco and leave his or her name and phone number.

At the regular monthly meeting of the Committee, it was with regret that the resignation of Eileen A., Speakers Bureau chairman, was accepted. Eileen and her family are moving out of the City in the near future.

Spanish-Speaking Convention

The second National Convention of Spanish-speaking Groups will be held in Washington, DC, August 31 to Sept. 2. Groups are coming from Arizona, Colorado, California, Florida, Louisiana, New York, New Jersey, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Texas, Wisconsin, Maryland, Idaho, and Washington, DC.

HOST BIDS ASKED

A facility is needed to accommodate 1,500 or more visitors for two three-day meetings in 1975 according to a request from the Northern California Council Conference Committee. Bids are requested at the next committee meeting to be held in Eureka on June 15, 1974 at 11:30 a.m.

The dates in 1975 they are shooting for are March 14, 15 and 16 as well as June 13, 14 and 15. Meeting rooms that seat from 100 to 250 are required as well as rooms for H & I facilities, General Service, Alanon and Alateen.

To host a conference is one of the best ways to do a 12th Step service to your home town.

FRED MILLER

Passed away Sunday, March 18, 1974. Carmel Valley, California after a long illness. Fred had many years of sobriety in AA, and very active with the General Service committee. He is survived by his wife Gloria.

Lee G. of Alameda will be the speaker at the El Cerrito Fellowship meeting, Saturday, May 15. This group meets Saturdays at 8:30 p.m. at 11231 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito, CA.

COMIN' UP

May 10, 11, 12 — 3rd Annual Spring Festival, Reno, Nev. Mail: Nugget Motor Lodge, P.O. Box 797, Sparks, Nev. 89431.

May 18 — Cascade-Sierra Mountain Group, P.O. Box 790, Susanville, CA 96130.

June 14, 15, 16 — Northern California Council Conference, Eureka, CA. Jack G., c-o AA, 166 Geary, No. 804, San Francisco, CA 94108.

Marin Alano Club Moves

The Marin Alano Club moved to new quarters at 1360 Lincoln Ave., San Rafael on April 20. This fact represents quite an accomplishment. In just 30 days, members of the Marin fellowship raised \$12,000 to buy this larger facility with better parking.

A rummage sale is planned for July 15. The new club has a storage room for items to go on sale.

Azure Acres Anniversary

Azure Acres will celebrate its 16th anniversary with its Sunday, June 2 meeting. Speaker will be Doyle L. Time and place are: 2264 Green Hill Rd., Sebastopol, at 3:30 p.m.

4th Brisbane Anniversary

The Brisbane Breakfast Bunch will hold its fourth anniversary meeting Sunday, May 19, at 23 Club, 23 Visitacion Ave., Brisbane. Lee G. of Alameda will be the speaker. Breakfast will be at 10 a.m., followed by the meeting at 11:30 a.m.

GSO Archives Request

The General Service Office is making an effort to establish an archival library. If you know of anyone who has material of AA historical interest, please contact Nell Wing at GSO. Of special interest are photographs, correspondence with Will Wilson, or material pertaining to Dr. Bob.

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NCC IN EUREKA

Eureka is preparing to host the Northern California Council Convention, June 14 through 16. The conference will be held at St. Bernard's Church at Dollison and C Streets.

Kickoff speaker Friday the 14th will be Dorothy G. of San Francisco. Saturday night's speaker will be Margaret C. of Houston, Texas.

Busses are expected from Marysville, Sacramento, San Francisco, Oakland, and various other communities. Gas supplies are said to be plentiful between Santa Rosa and Fortuna. Those driving should fill up on the way, arriving with as much fuel as possible. We are assured that no one will be stranded in Eureka.

Serenity To Accept

By George D.

The famous Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous have helped thousands of men and women and young people to contentment, where before these people had known mainly suffering and defeat. As has often been observed, only one of those steps — the first, says anything about alcohol. All the rest are steps which anyone could practice to advantage to improve the level of his living.

The following is an attempt to interpret the Twelve Steps in a way that might make their benefits available to those who (a) have no drinking problem, and (b) may be allergic to such rooted AA concepts as "God". However, inherent and implicit (and essential) in the successful working of these steps is one condition. The steps are practiced primarily by groups of people meeting together regularly to help themselves and one another to use those principles effectively in their daily living. Without the group, one could scarcely expect to get hold of the spirit and the force which are the operative and curative reality. Thus several groups, patterning themselves more or less after AA, have tried successfully to practice these steps by meeting together on the basis of their common problem. Gamblers, people with weight problems, ex-convicts, smoking addicts, drug users, epileptics — these and more have found answers in AA-type mutual effort. For those who haven't located a specific problem which they could help others to solve at the same time they are solving (with the help of those others) their own, perhaps the advice would be — find one!

These are the steps, as interpreted by one and only one AA member, speaking for himself alone:

1. We admitted we had not been very good managers of our own lives; that by following our self will ("self will run riot") we had not achieved the satisfaction or contentment we had sought.
2. We came to believe that by giving up our own attempts to control, and by trusting to a universal force tending to life and to good, which included but was greater than

our own individual wills, we could achieve the sense of balance and belonging we had sought.

3. We made a decision (often repeated every morning until it became second nature) to abandon our own selfish wills, in the spirit of "Not my will but thine be done" (although many of us were not Christians or believers at all), and to turn our wills and our lives over to the care of this universal impersonal (personal) power, which we came in time to trust greatly as a benevolent force; whereas we had learned previously that we could trust our own naked wills to accomplish little but grief and obstacle and unsuccess.

4. We cleared the decks by writing as honestly as we knew how a long inventory of our whole lives, trying to face up to everything negative we had done, but also trying to see justly the good we had done and the good qualities we have. We did this not with a view to writhing in remorse or self-pity, nor to enjoy roseate dreams of past glories and strong points, but rather to find out what those strong points were, and what defects of character had led us astray in the past. Our ultimate intention was to submit those defects to the healing power of our universal principle or force, manifested in the group.

5. Further, in order to clear our lives for present living free of guilt and hang-ups and left-overs from the past, we related this story of our lives, good and bad, to one trusted sympathetic person — an old friend, or relation, minister, doctor, psychiatrist, counselor. We tried hard to tell everything we had not dared to tell anyone before. When this often longish session was over, we usually burned the manuscript we had written and tried to dismiss these negative aspects of the past from our minds and our lives along with our feelings of guilt once for all.
6. Having discerned something of the errors inherent in our past actions and in our characters, we did not work directly to overcome these handicaps. Rather we placed our trust in the life-force to remove them

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SERENITY from page 5

for us, if only we would learn to let go and let the benevolent power work in our lives especially trusting ourselves.

7. In all humility, we tried to make ourselves receptive to the workings of this life force, by practicing quietness and openness of mind and spirit, tried to free ourselves at least for a few moments every day from distracting thoughts and feelings — confident that by letting go entirely we could also let go of our defects and errors.

8. We made a list of all debts left hanging in the past — people we had injured, if any; obligations incurred and not yet discharged — anything tying us to the past or preventing us from looking every man and woman squarely in the eye. While we might not have been able to take action immediately, we became willing to rectify these snarls from the past whenever and wherever it might become possible to do so.

9. If digging up the past would upset ourselves or anyone else — we were told "Forget it!" at least for the time being. Otherwise, we tried wherever possible to make amends directly, even to the extent of paying a small sum regularly on outstanding debts, which were too big to handle all at once, or at least to communicate frankly with the people we were obligated to about lapses we had been trying to ignore or postpone rectifying.

10. We continue this sort of examination of conscience — without strain, without guilty feelings, but forthrightly (many of us every day). Whenever we noticed we had made a mistake or done something too selfish or too stupid, we took prompt steps to get it cleared up, either by an immediate apology, or by an explanation or tacit act of confession at least, or by whatever method was required to solve and dispose of the snarl.

11. We tried to practice for at least a few minutes every day (a minimum to begin with, then five, then ten, etc.) the art of being quietly alone with ourselves, trying to let our thoughts and feelings simmer down, trying to offer ourselves to the benevolent influence of the universal life. We tried in one way or another to listen in the spirit of Isaiah to be receptive to the influence called by the Quakers the "inner light", by

other Christians "the holy spirit", and which non-believer have called variously the voice of reason, the truth at the center of the universe (Einstein), repose, letting go. AA calls this, when applied to groups, the Group Conscience. We strove in this "prayer and meditation" session to free ourselves more and more of the bonds of self and selfishness, and to make our energies available to help others directly or by whatever constructive work lay at hand which seemed suited to our talents. Although we might work hard, an almost effortless success often meant we were probably on the right track, especially if this work was accompanied by a deep sense of inner satisfaction.

12. As a result of working out the preceding steps, we came to realize that in following our own wills we would likely get nowhere; that in putting ourselves at the disposal of people whom we could help, or of constructive unselfish work, we would get somewhere worth getting. We tried to help others with our same problem whenever and wherever possible and suitable, and we tried to practice in all our affairs this principle of placing the general welfare ahead of our own individual selfish interests.

MAY MEETING

The Cascade-Sierra Mountain Group is holding its 11th Annual Conference on May 18 in Susanville, CA. The conference is scheduled to begin at 3:30 p.m. and dinner will be served. The center, where the meeting will be held, is located seven miles East of Susanville in Lassen County on the Old Litchfield Road (County Road Number 215; turn-off on the Reno (Nevada) and Susanville Highway).

Marathon Meeting

Several San Francisco groups will sponsor a "Marathon Meeting" Memorial Day weekend. These groups are: Anonymous Group, Mite Owl Group, Participation Group, New Hope Group, Valencia Group, and Valencia Beginners.

The marathon will begin Friday, May 24 at 8:00 p.m., and will run continuously until midnight Sunday, May 26. It will take place at the Industrial Club, 3198 - 16th St., San Francisco. There will be coffee, food and soft drinks around the clock.

Letters

Responding to the "non-smoking" plea, we have a very small group, "The Discovery Group of AA" which meets Wednesdays at 1:00 p.m. at the St. Helena Hospital and Health Center in Pope Valley. The Center has a current program to help people aid themselves of the smoking habit.

As a group, we are each moderate to heavy smokers, however, none of us has yet felt any discomfort or resentment or even loss at the hour plus spent without our crutch of Tobacco. I am still smoking, but have started to think about stopping.

We have enjoyed having several visitors from other areas who have been through the "Smoker's Clinic." We would certainly enjoy any and all who would like to explore with our small group the "Sharing Experience" of sobriety and its great joy.

Pauline H.

Dear Editor:

Hope this reaches you in time for publication. I think the Sunset Group is 30 years old. Our historian died several years ago and her documents disappeared.

Paraphrasing the remark attributed to Mark Twain concerning a premature account in an obituary column, he wrote, "your report concerning my death is greatly exaggerated." It has been reported to some of our members that misinformed wags and wits have broadcast the news that Sunset Group is defunct.

We wish to set the records straight. Sunset Group is very much alive. To refresh a few memories: Sunset Group is the second oldest San Francisco Group to the original San Francisco Fellowship group founded more than 30 years ago at 134 Bush. Further, Sunset has never missed a meeting in more than a quarter of a century, even when regular meeting nights fell on Christmas, New Years, Thanksgiving or what have you.

Meetings at Sunset are held every evening at 7:30. They're discussion meetings. Emphasis is based on communication. And this meeting place is in the parish hall of St. John's Church, near the corner of 5th Avenue and Irving in San Francisco. Join us in the wake for the "Grateful Dead."

Bill S., Secretary

Peninsula All Groups

Ernie B. of San Francisco Monday Beginners will be the speaker at the May 4 meeting of Peninsula All Groups. The host group will be San Carlos Monday Beginners. Other speakers and host groups will be:

May 11—Nellie J., Menlo Monday; Menlo Monday.

May 11—Jack H., Santa Rosa; Menlo Park Monday.

May 25—Mike J., San Francisco Fellowship; Brisbane, Sunday.

These meetings are in St. Matthew's Church, Baldwin Ave. and El Camino Real, San Mateo, at 8:30 p.m. Doors open at 7:30 p.m.

SAN QUENTIN TOUR

By Jim B.

Once a year the members of our AA Fellowship, inside the walls of San Quentin Prison, send out an invitation to their friends in the San Francisco Bay Area. The invitation to visit the "facility", share a meal, and attend an AA meeting is carried to the outside by members of the Hospital and Institution Committee. On February 19, 1974, over two hundred "outsiders" accepted this invitation.

I was one of the visitors, and I've been asked to write about this Anniversary event. It seems a difficult task.

Oh, the tour of the facility was interesting; the old walls and a recitation of its history, the gas chamber and the "big yard" with its pigeons and emptiness. The furniture, factory, the laundry, the botanical garden were all interesting. The talk by the Chaplain — a good man — and the run down on inside educational opportunities were interesting. The dining hall was big, real big, with big murals and the food was good and courteously served. The AA meeting was in a big hall and there were many people mingled and it was AA and any difference between inside and outside melted away. Then we were outside again.

You walk away, and glance back over your shoulder and you can't write about that kind of feeling. It's an experience!

But I know I'm glad I went. It helps me stay sober and eases my loneliness.

H and I BroadSides

By JERRY G., GENERAL CHAIRMAN
HOSPITALS AND INSTITUTIONS COMMITTEE

The Hospital and Institution Committee is an organized committee; isn't that a mind-blower to begin with? When I was first introduced to the H & I format, I didn't think there was anything in AA that was organized, *per se*, and for that I was very happy. Then I read the preface to the H & I Pink Book "How It Works." It said in part, "...our committee is organized, in an endeavor to avoid confusion and duplication." My immediate reaction was one of sorrow. I liked the looseness of the AA program, the freedom from rules and regulations.

Having been acquainted with the H & I Committee for some time, I'm convinced it is the only possible way this committee could function. It is really remarkable how efficiently it does operate. I know some will question this, and say there is room for improvement. I'm sure it could be improved upon and, no doubt, will.

Consider the broad area the committee covers! In California it covers approximately 240 meetings a month, involving about 400 H & I people, carrying the message to 875 inmates and patients a month. This committee operates very efficiently; in my mind, there is no question about its being organized.

How are we organized? Organized to the point of having elected and

appointed people for specific assignments. The General Chairman is elected, while co-chairmen for hospitals, co-chairmen for institutions, secretary, treasurer and literature librarian are all appointed.

Area Chairmen are elected by each specific area. The Northern California H & I Committee comprises 13 areas. Area Chairmen play an important part in the success of the Committee as a whole.

The area Chairman's responsibilities are many. He is responsible for all the facilities in his area being covered. He is responsible for ironing out any problems regarding H & I meetings within facilities. He initiates and conducts meetings. He attends General Meetings to report on his Area. He selects a Coordinator for each facility in his area. The Coordinator's job is to be sure his facility has a meeting on the assigned date. The person selected to cover a particular meeting for each week or month is the Contact Chairman. When it comes to H & I Committee success, the Contact Chairman is, undoubtedly, the most important individual. He is the guy or gal who carries the message to the alcoholic who is confined.

And this, my friend, is the sole purpose of the Hospital and Institution Committee!

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alcoholism. We need it to provide, in keeping with our Twelfth Step, a permanent haven for all alcoholics who, in the ages ahead, can find an AA that rebirth which brought us back to life.

"We need it because we, more than others, are conscious of the devastating effect of the human urge for human power and prestige which we must insure can never invade AA. We need it to protect AA against disintegration while preventing overintegration. We need it so that Alcoholics Anonymous, and Alcoholics Anonymous alone, is the ultimate repository of its Twelve Steps, its Twelve Traditions and all its services. We need it to insure that

changes within AA come only as a response to the needs and the wants of all AA, and not of any few. We need it to insure that the doors of the halls of AA never have locks on them, so that all people for all time who have an alcoholic problem may enter these halls unasked and feel welcome. We need it to insure that Alcoholics Anonymous never asks of anyone who needs us what his or her creed is, what his or her social position is."

G. Dewey S., San Mateo, Cal. has 34 years in A.A.

365 days X 34 years — 12410 days.
That is a lot of 24 hours.

Alcoholism Therapy at The AOA

At the 51st Annual Meeting of the American Orthopsychiatric Association held in San Francisco April 8-12, AA maintained an information booth for distribution of some literature as well as maintaining an additional means of "promotion via attraction." As an added plus to the booth, Barbara C. offered her services to a workshop at the conference entitled "Family and Couple Therapy of Alcoholism."

The majority of the audience were in the fields of clinical psychiatry or social work. Very few had any direct relationship with alcoholism — either an alcoholic family member or spouse. As a matter of record, about 20 percent of the group traditionally drank about three drinks a year.

Barbara C. began by discussing Alanon, How It Works, Successes and Types of Meetings. Alcoholics Anonymous was next discussed as a good way to get started on the way to sobriety and in a positive fashion, but the discussion went further into the motives of alcoholics "who wanted to go past AA and others who get locked into AA."

AA therapy was not discussed for more than 10 to 15 minutes, but members of the conference did observe that alcoholics who attend meetings regularly "find themselves with an openness and accessibility to people which most other non-AA people do not have."

Other aspects of this particular workshop were role-playing and descriptions of alcoholic situations; a family sculpture was acted out in a chess-like structure.

The moderator, David J. Berenson, believes that alcoholism, rather than being a disease, is an emotional state. He also believes that recovered alcoholics feel more competent than workers in the mental health field in dealing with alcoholism by leaning on the fact that "they have been there."

"The Smiths were really hard drinkers. In fact, they had their water cut off on Monday and didn't discover it until the following Saturday.

Silver Dollar

SAN FRANCISCO ALANO CLUB

414 GRANT AVENUE, near Bush Street

ENTERTAINMENT CALENDAR

DANCES—PARTIES—GAMES—PRIZES—FRIVOLITY

FUN—FELLOWSHIP

Donation—\$1.25

SATURDAY, MAY 4—

First-of-the-Month Dance — to tunes by Bill Gryder's Velvet Four — per Pete: — the band really sounds great now — Come and hear it for yourself and bring your friends.

SATURDAY, MAY 18—

Mid-Month Dance — Come and enjoy dancing to music by Bill Gryder's Velvet Four — Fine prizes round out the evening 8 Top this off with AA Fellowship and what more can you ask?

SATURDAY, MAY 25—

AA Birthday Dance — Share the excitement of AA Birthdays with your Fellow AA friends 8 fine records — and Cake and Coffee — No donation for the Birthday Night Event.

We'll be there to give you a warm welcome! Come and visit with old friends — and meet new friends — at our dances.

PLEASE — NO CHILDREN — THANK YOU!

SEQUEL by Arthur K.

In the April Issue of GOOD NEWS, I told about the 12th Step call to Ray C. (name and initial fictitious, but the facts of the matter are true). What Vince F. and I had done was what we were told about 12th Step calls. Both of us had telephoned Ray C. a number of times, and he had told us that he would be at such and such meeting that evening, but Lo and Behold, no Ray. He just wasn't turning up.

One of the first indications that something fishy was going on is that he told both of us that he had been asked back to his old job, and was going to be busy. First of all, he was too weak to work, and that was obvious, and secondly, it seemed funny that 6 or 7 days after his "last drunk" that things were that together. It just didn't fit.

Moreover, other members of three groups were receiving telephone calls from him, and they asked me as well as Vince what was going on? That is, Ray would telephone a person (he had amassed a number of telephone numbers) and ask him to come over to his apartment and then would sit and talk with them. It seemed as if he wanted AA to come to him.

Someone said at a meeting the other evening that "AA is for people who want it, not those who need it,"

and that stuck in my craw. So I telephoned Ray three nights ago. He was drunk, his speech was slurred, and he wasn't making much sense. To make a long story short, he began blaming me for his drinking. Having played the same game myself before, I was well aware of what was happening, and cordially told Ray that he could telephone me when he was sober. I do, incidentally, intend to telephone him within the next few days, when I am calmer — or should I. Personally, I feel slightly guilty that Ray didn't take to the program as quickly as I did or as others have in the past, and I know this isn't true.

It would be interesting to hear from readers of GOOD NEWS what they would do in my case. I am perfectly aware that Ray lets himself get Hungry, Tired and Lonely, and that the program works as it has for hundreds of thousands of others, but what is it that I am doing or not doing that is not as helpful as it could be.

We look forward to hearing from you.

NOTICE

The Northern California Council of AA informed Good News that the conference to be held September 13, 14 and 15th, 1974 will go on as scheduled at Squaw Valley.