



Good News



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By the Northern California Council of Alcoholics Anonymous

No. 7

Dear Friends in AA -

Being given the opportunity to serve in Alcoholics Anonymous is a most cherished reward of sobriety. I wish to thank the NCCAA for this opportunity.

It is necessary for me to resign as Editor of the Good News. (My company is transferring me to Virginia for six months).

I wish to thank personally our secretary, Marilyn W. for her loving guidance and support, Dean K. of Oakland who has provided the paper with excellent AA reading in abundance, Joyce M. of Berkeley for her work on our mailing lists (what a job!), Marty W. of Oakland for helping put the paper together for the past 3 issues, the people from the Wednesday Night Eden Book Study group for spending many evenings getting the paper ready for mailing, and last but certainly not least, Jack M.'s patience.

Your support as readers has been most gracious. To think I could have missed all this is most humbling.

May the person who takes over when I have left off continue to have your love and assistance.

I will miss you and yours and the conferences.

Keep the Good News alive!
Love in AA.

Your Editor,
Gloria P.

ABSCAM TO SEX SCANDALS:
BOOZE IS THE VILLAIN

(Submitted by Dean K., Oakland)

"What can I get you to drink, Congressman? So glad you could come by. Please come over and meet some of my good friends. We need to discuss a little business with you for just a minute."

It is a typical late afternoon for the harried member of Congress, a veteran representative from a Sun Belt State. He has not yet left the marble halls of the Rayburn House Office Building, but is plunging into his third reception - a lavish spread sponsored by a trade association with ties to this district. A gin and tonic appears, the 5th drink he has been offered this day. The congressman takes a deep sip and moves toward the group of businessmen. Later, looking back on the afternoon, he says:

"You're just a piece of meat in this business. People are always pulling, pulling at you to do something for them. A man needs to get

off this treadmill, and alcohol is often the easiest way to escape."

The congressman is being unusually candid about heavy congressional drinking, a subject many prefer to avoid. Yet alcoholism, a major medical and social problem, is particularly serious among members of Congress. The relentless and conflicting pressures of their jobs combined with the Capitol Hill tradition of continual "social" drinking to create an atmosphere that is unusually conducive to alcoholism.

"I'm surprised we don't have more alcoholics in Congress," Rep. Tony Coelho, D-Fresno, says. "There are so many opportunities for booze around here."

Former Rep. Wilbur Mills, D-Ark., and former Sen. Herman E. Talmadge, D-Ga., are two prominent lawmakers who have sought medical help for alcoholism in recent years. Other congressmen recently have blamed alcohol abuse for their involvements in homosexual acts and in bribetaking in the Abscam scandal.

Contributing to the problem for congressmen is the fact that liquor is too close at hand. Whereas 20 years ago lawmakers had to travel to a downtown hotel or a Georgetown cocktail party, they now have opened up their reception rooms and other facilities on Capitol Hill to party-throwing lobbyists. Whatever the proportion of alcoholics on Capitol Hill, few say that congressional alcoholism is a trivial health problem.

"The difference is that if you have an alcoholic in Congress, the

results of that disease are transmitted to more people than in any other capacity I can think of," said Harold Hughes, a former Democratic senator from Iowa.

Ten years ago, largely through the forceful initiative of Hughes, a non-drinking alcoholic, Congress passed legislation requiring every federal agency to establish an alcohol counseling and rehabilitation program for its employees. The nation's lawmakers, however, did not include themselves.

The most organized effort to address alcoholism in Congress is a chapter of Alcoholics Anonymous that gathers weekly in a room near the Capitol rotunda.

But many members of the Congress who worry about their drinking are reluctant to go to AA. Some think that going to an AA meeting is an admission that their drinking is out of control and they must stop drinking - an admission they are not ready to make. Many worry that attending meetings will become public knowledge and that the stigma of alcoholism will ruin their political career. The chief Capitol physician, Dr. Freeman H. Cary, refused to discuss the question of alcohol in Congress. A spokesman said that members of Congress with such problems are referred to specialists elsewhere.

But one middle-aged congressman, who asked not to be identified, is skeptical: "I've been fighting alcohol all my life," he said. "Several times I've gone to the Capitol physician and said I thought I had a drinking problem. They treated

it as a non-problem. They just give you tranquilizers and tell you 'good-bye'."

In this Capitol the cocktail party is an extension of the business day and many people drink heavily to anesthetize personal unease, experts say. "Nine out of ten Congressmen drink....I can tick off the guys in the House who don't", former Rep. Thomas L. Ashley, D-Ohio, said. The great majority of these drinkers, of course, are not alcoholics. Experts point out that alcoholism is common in many sectors of Washington life, in the military, in the top levels of the executive branch, among foreign service officers.

Unlike most of these others, however, the congressional alcoholic has no one to tell him to shape up and seek treatment for his alcoholism or risk losing his job. "Congressmen are self-employed. They don't have quality control in their lives. They're not like journalists with deadlines to meet, or factory workers with clocks to punch, or airline pilots with medical examinations to pass every six months," said Dr. Joseph Pursch, former head of the alcoholism section of the Long Beach Naval Hospital, where military, congressional and other top-level alcoholics have been treated.

Some congressmen concede that their high position often blinds them, their friends and their families to their growing predicament with alcohol abuse. "I didn't believe I was an alcoholic," said Wilbur Mills of the period before his alcoholism became evident to the entire country. "Members of Con-

gress couldn't be alcoholics. I had seen alcoholics down and out on Ninth Street. I wasn't one of those.

In the end a congressman sliding into alcoholism may have to rely on his colleagues to warn him. But an unwritten congressional code works against such confrontation. "The House and Senate don't lend themselves to close friendships. The attitude is that the guy got here on his own--he's one of only 435 people in the country. Who the hell am I to rivet him on a social personal problem?" Ashley asked.

Because even the powerful hesitate to speak frankly to the powerful, the behavior of the congressional alcoholic must often become truly scandalous before action is taken.

"Public figures tend to be the last ones to seek help," Rep. Barry Goldwater, Jr., R-Los Angeles, said. "Any time a member of Congress seeks medical assistance, whether for alcoholism, psychiatry or whatever, it gets printed in the press. The congressman doesn't want to be branded, so he stays in the closet.

By Bryce Nelson
(Los Angeles Times)

IMPORTANT ↓

MOVING ???

Please send us your address change. The Post Office does notify us of your new address (for 25¢ each return) if you have given it to them, but in the meantime you will miss getting the issue sent to you, as they only return the address label.

AN ARMY OF ANONYMOUS GIVERS

(An excerpt from Try Giving Yourself
Away by David Dunn)

A letter in my mail one morning opened my eyes to the fact that right in our own communities all of us have an example of the wonderful effectiveness of self-giving. The letter in question read:

It was ten years ago that I first read your book, but I sort of tossed it aside the same as I had other "insprational" books. At the time I was searching for a way out of a terrible drinking problem. I went through twelve years of hell before I surrendered. Your book played a great part, believe me.

Then, when I came into Alcoholics Anonymous, I suddenly saw the tie-in: that we must give of ourselves in order to receive, and the more we give the more we receive.

I immediately went back to your book and it opened up a new day to me. I have given away many copies since, and I never can keep one myself!

Certainly the members of Alcoholics Anonymous are a band of dedicated givers of their time, their experience, and their understanding. To which they add faith and hope and courage--three of the greatest gifts one man or woman can give to a fellow human being.

THE STEEPLE CLOCK HAD COLLECTED A COATING OF SMOKE AND DIRT, AND A STEEPLE JACK WAS HIRED TO CLEAN IT. HE HAD PLACED A TALL LADDER AGAINST THE BUILDING AND WAS COMPLETING THE JOB WHEN A DRUNK HAPPENED BY.

THE DRUNK TOOK ONE LOOK AT THE GUY ON THE LADDER, TURNED TO A PASSERBY AND EXCLAIMED, "BOY, THAT GUY IS SHURE NEARSIGHTED!"

JUDGE: "HOW COULD YOU SWINDLE PEOPLE WHO TRUSTED YOU?"

DRUNK: "DID YOU EVERY TRY TO SWINDLE ANYBODY WHO DINNIT TRUST YOU?"

both from →

-SQUIRREL CA
FARGO,

NOTE: These two ENCLOSURES
should be taken out and kept...
one for the occasion...
the other to help you & maybe
Somebody else.

EDITOR.

NCC CORNER

The NCC Fall Conference will be in Redding, October 9-11, 1981 and we have another dynamic program featuring workshops on "Your Central Office" and "Recovery". Our speakers are: Friday Kick-off - Phil P., Newport Beach, CA, Saturday evening - John C., Brownwood, TX, and Dottie S., North Hollywood, CA.

Remember, Delegates, be sure to attend your Zone meetings in September (listed in this issue).

The Redding Fall Conference Host Committee is working hard to bring you the BEST and let's show our appreciation by giving our BEST in attendance.

See you all in Redding, October 9-11, 1981.

With AA Love, Merilyn W., Secty.

ZONE K - Stockton

Delegates will meet September 12th (Saturday) at 10:30 a.m. in Manteca at 185 Alameda St. Manteca Fellowship is hosting the meeting. Each group is entitled to two voting Delegates.

Anyone interested in knowing more about the workshops of our Northern California Council of AA and matters affecting our NCC Conferences is urged to attend.

Catherine S.
(Zone K Chairman)
Stockton

COMING ATTRACTIONS

Sept. 6 ANNUAL BAY AREA AA PICNIC
Hidden Valley Ranch
(Stanford off Mission)
Fremont (Mission San Jose)
10-11 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Sept. 11,12,13
14th ANNUAL 22nd DISTRICT CONVENTION
Santa Maria Valley Fairgrounds
Speakers, Beef Bar-B-Q,
Marathon, Alanon Luncheon,
H&I (Inmate Speakers)

Oct. 18 MYRTLEDALE GROUPS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS ANNUAL OKTOBERFEST
Calistoga Fairgrounds
3:30 p.m.



THE SIMPLICITY OF RECOVERY IS OFTEN DELAYED
BY THE CONFUSION OF INTELLIGENCE!

"INTERGROUPER"
CENTRAL FLA.

GOOD NEWS FINANCIAL STATEMENT AS OF 08/15/81

Balance in bank as of 1/15/81	\$	104.12
Add: Revenue - Subscriptions/Donations	\$1,961.25	
NCC Contributions	75.00	2,036.25
		<u>\$2,140.37</u>
Less: Expenses - Printing	\$1,214.87	
*Postage - Bulk Mail.....	100.00	
Postage - 1st & 3rd Class	290.38	
Mailing Labels.....	54.61	
Bank Charges, print checks.....	34.60	
Supplies	57.82	1,752.28
		<u>1,752.28</u>
 Total	\$	<u>388.09</u>
Balance in Bank as of 08/15/81		<u>388.09</u>
Cash on Hand (Donation).....		<u>50.00</u>
	\$	<u>438.09</u>

*There is a small balance in Bulk Mail account.

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Write it on your heart that
every day is the best day in the year.
He is rich who owns the day, and
no one owns the day who allows
it to be invaded with fret and
anxiety. Finish every day and
be done with it. You have done
what you could. Some blunders
and absurdities, no doubt,
crept in. Forget them as
soon as you can, tomorrow
is a new day; begin it well
and serenely, with too high
a spirit to be
cumbered with your old
nonsense. This new day
is too dear, with its hopes
and invitations, to waste
a moment on the
yesterdays.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

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