



# Good News



SEPTEMBER-  
OCTOBER

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By the Northern California Council of Alcoholics Anonymous

1982

## Who Is a Member of Alcoholics Anonymous?

by Bill W.

Reprinted in part from Grapevine, August, 1946

The number of membership rules which have been made (and mostly broken) are legion. If all of these edicts had been in force everywhere at once it would have been practically impossible for any alcoholic to have joined Alcoholics Anonymous. About nine-tenths of our oldest and best members could never have got by.

In most cases we would have been too discouraged by the demands made on us. Most of the early members of A.A. would have been thrown out because they slipped too much, because their morals were too bad, because they had mental as well as alcoholic difficulties. Or, believe it or not, because they did not come from the better classes of society. The way our "worthy" alcoholics have sometimes tried to judge the "less worthy" is, as we look back on it, rather comical. Imagine if you can, one alcoholic judging another.

At one time or another most Alcoholics Anonymous groups go on rule making benders. Panhandlers begin to panhandle. Members get drunk and

sometimes others get drunk with them. Those with mental difficulties throw depressions or break out into paranoid denunciations of other members. Gossips gossip, and righteously denounce the local Wolves and Red Riding Hoods. Newcomers argue that they aren't alcoholics at all, but keep coming around anyway. "Slippees" trade on the fair name of A.A. in order to get themselves jobs. Others refuse to accept all of the twelve Steps of Recovery Program. Some go still farther, saying that the "God Business" is bunk and quite unnecessary.

Under these conditions our conservative program-abiding members get scared. These appalling conditions must be controlled, they think, else A.A. will surely go to rack and ruin.

At this point, the Group enters the rule and regulation phase. Charters, by-laws and membership rules are excitedly passed and authority is granted committees to filter out undesirables and discipline the evil doers. Then the Group Elders, now clothed with author-

ity, commence to get busy. Recalcitrants are cast into the outer darkness, respectable busybodies throw stones at the sinners.

"The only requirement for membership is an honest desire to stop drinking. We are not allied with any particular faith, sect or denomination, nor do we oppose anyone. We simply wish to be helpful to those who are afflicted."

The Elders soon discover that the rules and regulations aren't working very well. Most attempts at enforcement generate such waves of dissension and intolerance in the Group that this condition is presently recognized to be worse for Group life than the very worst ever did.

Of course this is not the universal state of affairs throughout A.A. If a member persists in coming to meetings drunk he may be led outside; we may ask someone to take him away. Though he may be thrown out of a club, nobody thinks of throwing him out of A.A. He is a member as long as he says he is. We do not wish to deny anyone his chance to recover from alcoholism. We wish to be inclusive as we can, never exclusive.

Every older member

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## CNIA Delegate Report

Individual and group participation in service has been the main thrust of California Northern Interior Area General Service Committee over the first half of this year. According to figures out of New York General Service Office, and our own records, there has been approximately sixty new groups registered in New York from CNIA since the first of the year.

We have also concentrated on service sponsorship both with the individual and the sponsorship of a facility, such as a treatment center. It is necessary that we let the Treatment Facility know what we do as well as what we do not do, in the message carrying process. Our sponsorship of the individual coming to us from treatment centers is certainly one of the more overlooked areas of need.

Workshops on Service in many of the Districts are having an influence on our area growth. An active GSR either following or pushing the DCM, is a healthy condition. We can also say that not to have an "ac-

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## Editor's Note .....

Because so much space in this issue is devoted to the NCC Conference program, some regular features had to be omitted. All will be back next month. Do continue to send us all your group news so that it reaches the San Francisco Central Office before the fifteenth of the month. All contributions welcome!

## AA Program For Fall Conference

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 15, 1982

- 2:00 PM REGISTRATION - Exhibition Hall Lobby  
 3:30 PM EARLY BIRD A.A. MEETING - Exhibition Hall  
 Chairperson: Jim M., Sacramento, CA  
 8:30 PM KICK-OFF MEETING - Exhibition Hall  
 Chairperson: Pat J., Stockton, CA  
 Definition of A.A.: Dee O'M, Stockton, CA  
 Chapter 5: Les H., Vallejo, CA  
 Traditions: Robert H., Placerville, CA  
 Speaker: Bob E., Dana Point, CA  
 10:30 PM A.A. Discussion Meeting - Exhibition Hall  
 Chairperson: Mary E., Sacramento, CA

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 16, 1982

- 9:00 AM REGISTRATION - Exhibition Hall Lobby  
 9:30 AM GENERAL SERVICE SPEAKER MEETING - Exhib.Hall  
 Chairperson: Gene B., Oakland, CA  
 Reader: Judy S., Vallejo, CA  
 Speaker: Doc C., Redding, CA  
 10:00 AM Spanish Language Meeting - Sutter Room  
 11:00 AM WORKSHOP - "The Group" - Exhibition Hall  
 Chairperson: Annette F., Fresno, CA

### LUNCH BREAK

- 1:00 PM Spanish Language Meeting - Sutter Room  
 1:00 PM HOSPITAL & INSTITUTION OPEN MEETING - Ex.Hall  
 Chairperson: Percy F., Sacramento, CA  
 Purpose of H&I: Jessica V., Sacramento, CA  
 Traditions: Sam B., San Leandro, CA  
 Non A.A. Speaker: Jerome Lackner M.D., Sac.  
 A.A. Speaker: Joe C., Redwood City, CA  
 2:30 PM N.C.C.A.A. OPEN MEETING - Exhibition Hall  
 3:30 PM YOUNG PEOPLES MEETING - Exhibition Hall  
 Chairperson: John S., Los Gatos, CA  
 Definition of A.A.: Jerry H., Le Grand, CA  
 Traditions: Debbie L., Atwater, CA  
 Chapter 3: Terri A., Sausalito, CA  
 Speaker: Pat M., San Jose, CA  
 7:30 PM "THE SAGA OF SUSIE SOUSE" - Exhibition Hall  
 Performers: Alameda All Groups  
 (Written and Directed by Mary L.)  
 8:30 PM OPEN SPEAKER MEETING - Exhibition Hall  
 Chairperson: Jerry N., San Jose, CA  
 Invocation: Fr. John Hannan, St. Paul  
 Catholic Church, Sacramento, CA  
 Welcoming Address: Phillip Isenberg, Mayor,  
 Sacramento, CA  
 Definition of A.A.: Glen K., Clovis, CA  
 Chapter 5: Don D., Sacramento, CA  
 Traditions: Rosie G., Ft. Bragg, CA  
 Speaker: Tom G., Winnipeg, Canada  
 10:30 PM DRAWING: Exhibition Hall  
 10:45 PM DANCE: Metropolitan Rooms  
 10:45 PM A.A. Discussion Meeting - Exhibition Hall  
 Chairperson: Donna A., Woodland, CA

- SUNDAY, OCTOBER 17, 1982
- 10:00 AM HOSPITAL & INSTITUTION & GENERAL SERVICE  
MEETING - Exhibition Hall  
"Service - What's It All About?"  
Moderator: Bill S., Stockton, CA  
Purpose of H&I: Sam A., San Jose, CA  
Traditions: Betty C., Rocklin, CA  
Panelists: (H&I) Pat S., Delhi, CA  
(G.S.) Marge S., Los Altos, CA  
(H&I) Wil M., Alameda, CA  
(G.S.) Marge K., Broderick, CA
- 10:00 AM WORKSHOP - "Steps 1,2,3, The Ego Deflators"  
Nevada Room  
Chairperson: Ilene S., Salinas, CA
- 12:30 PM OPEN SPEAKER MEETING - Exhibition Hall  
Chairperson: Stan K., Sacramento, CA  
Invocation: Fr. John Shankland, St. Lukes  
Episcopal Church, Galt, CA  
Definition: Bobbi S., Willits, CA  
Chapter 5: Walt J., Manteca, CA  
Traditions: Richard E., Montgomery, CA  
Speaker: Hugh D., Chatsworth, CA

### Al-Anon Program For Fall Conference

- THEME: Progress through Practice  
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 15, 1982
- 5:00 PM Registration - Exhibition Hall (J Street side)
- 8:30 PM Progress through Practice - Placer Room  
Chairperson: Joanne L., Watsonville, CA
- SATURDAY, OCTOBER 16, 1982
- 8:30 AM Registration
- 9:00 AM Alathon(Continuous Al-Anon)-Placer Room  
Chairperson: Pauline S.
- 9:15 AM Anonymity - Sacramento Room  
Chairperson: Lisa B., Redding, CA
- 9:30 AM Carrying the Message - El Dorado Room  
Chairperson: District 12 Panel
- 10:30 AM Alateen Sponsorship - Sacramento Room  
Chairperson: Marilyn R., San Leandro, CA
- 12:00 PM Luncheon & Speaker Meeting - The Cathedral,  
1017 11th Street  
Chairperson: Earthel N., Rancho Cardova, CA  
Speaker: Maurice D., Inglewood, CA
- 3:15 PM Informed Group Conscience - El Dorado Room  
Chairperson: Peggy K., San Jose, CA
- 8:30 PM Inside Al-Anon - Placer Room  
Chairperson: Rhonda R., Tracy, CA
- SUNDAY, OCTOBER 17, 1982
- 8:30 AM Registration
- 9:00 AM Institution Workshop - Sacramento Room  
Chairperson: Louise K., San Carlos, CA

### CNIA Report

cont'd

tive GSR," is a very unhealthy position. In some of our large Districts, the DCM cannot possibly make the meetings. We are in the process of a survey for re-districting, and action from the GSR and the DCM is requested, in letting your Area Committee know how conditions are -- what changes are recommended, if any.

D.G."Doc"Campbell  
CNIA Area Delegate  
Redding, California

### Public Information Committee Formed

Area General Service representatives, Delta Intergroup delegates and interested A. A. members met in Stockton in September to organize a Public Information Committee.

The session was called by Russell B. of Manteca, DCM, and a panel outlined the need for an active and visible PI Committee. The "do's and don'ts" of carrying the message to the public were pointed out and the importance of having a Central System for taking requests for speakers and avoiding duplication of effort was stressed.

The group concluded the committee's main function is to recruit public speakers to carry A.A.'s message. Past problems along this line have been:

1. Usually only a few individuals participate and a "closed corporation" is

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**Conference** cont'd

- 9:00 AM Why C.A.L.? - Placer Room  
Chairperson: Jan W., Fresno, Ca,  
Mary A.-T., Capitola, CA
- 10:30 AM Spiritual Meeting - El Dorado Room  
Chairperson: Carol A., Santa Rosa, CA  
Speaker: Mary, Pete & Diana P., Fresno, CA
- 12:00 PM Exchange Meeting between current & coming  
Conference Committees
- 12:30 PM A.A. Speaker Meeting - Exhibition Hall

**Alateen Program For Fall Conference**

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 15, 1982

- 5:00 PM Registration
- 8:00 PM Meeting Friends, New & Old  
Chairperson: Robyn B., Redding, CA
- SATURDAY, OCTOBER 16, 1982
- 9:00 AM Releasing Resentments  
Chairperson: Jeff A., San Jose, CA
- 10:45 AM Facing Fears  
Chairperson: Emilio H., San Jose, CA
- 12:00 PM Lunch
- 2:00 PM Speaker Meeting  
Chairperson: Jeff B., Redding, Ca  
Speakers: Rosalyn C., Castro Valley, CA  
Jeff A., San Jose, CA
- 3:15 PM Making Amends  
Chairperson: Rhonda R., Tracy, CA
- 4:30 PM Pre-conference Planning Meeting
- 8:30 PM Inside Al-Anon  
Chairperson: Rhonda R., Tracy, CA
- SUNDAY, OCTOBER 17, 1982
- 9:00 AM Registration
- 9:30 AM Attitude of Gratitude  
Chairperson: Jeannie M., Olivehurst, CA
- 10:30 AM Spiritual Meeting - Let Go and Let God  
Chairperson: Gordon S., Tracy, CA  
Speakers: Becky, Stockton, CA  
Greg, Hayward, CA
- 12:30 PM AA Speaker Meeting - Exhibition Hall

**Public Info** cont'd

doing this kind of work.  
The aim is to "open it up."

2. Some members have been going out on their own to talk to groups. They go as representatives of A. A., but do not go through proper channels.

3. At present there is some loss of PI calls from the Answering Service, and a system is needed to keep

track of calls for follow through.

The panel, referring to the PI handout, noted the importance of "A.A.'s Movement-Wide Public Information Policy":

"In all public relationships, A.A.'s sole objective is to help the still-suffering alcoholic. Always mindful of the im-

portance of personal anonymity, we believe this can be done by making known to him, and to those who may be interested in his problem, our own experiences as individuals and as a fellowship in learning to live without alcohol.

We believe that our experiences should be made available freely to all who express sincere interest. We believe further that all efforts in this field should always reflect our gratitude for the gift of sobriety and our awareness that many outside A.A. are equally concerned with the serious problem of alcoholism."

The "don'ts" of public service information service include: Don't talk down to students; try to be on their level, whatever it is; don't go into a drunkalog; don't make your experience dramatic or exciting; don't give statistics; don't give a false or "guessing" answer to any question; don't try to sell A.A. (public awareness of it is your only purpose); don't go into unnecessary details, and, don't attempt to answer medical or psychiatric questions.

The panel also pointed out that information from the committee must get back to groups so members become involved.

Delegates named to the new committee are Helen S. Bob H., Ron C., Willie J., Judy J., Dick H., Walter C. Michael R., and Jeannine S. Alternates are Dave H. and Floy G.

Bill W. cont'd from pg. 1  
 shudders when he remembers the names of persons he once condemned; people he confidently predicted would never sober up; persons he was sure ought to be thrown out of A.A. for the good of the movement. Now, that some of these very persons have been sober for years, and may be numbered among his best friends, the oldtimer thinks to himself, "What if everybody had judged these people as I once did? What if A.A. had slammed the door in their faces? Where would they be now?"

That is why we judge the newcomer less and less. If alcohol is uncontrollable to him and he wishes to do something about it, that is enough for us. We care not whether his case is severe or light, whether his morals are good or bad, whether he has other complications or not. Our A.A. door stands wide open, and if he passes through it and commences to do anything at all about his problem, he is considered a member of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Bill W.

### **CNIA Meet in Sonora**

CNIA met in Sonora, California, on August 14th, at 10 AM, at the Mother Lode Fellowship Hall, 193 South Shephard Avenue. The discussions on re-districting in the Sonora-Jackson area will surely prove to be helpful in future Local and Area con-

siderations. This large area is actually growing too fast for one DCM to cover. I sincerely hope that the open expression on the subject of Treatment Facilities and the A.A. Group will also bring about a better understanding of the problems involved when the goal of either entity becomes so involved in self that it cannot appreciate some of the problems of the other. Good luck and good thinking to Sonora and Vicinity!

"Area Accents", Sept. '82

### **California Northern Interior Area Secretaries Note**

A few years ago the CNIA officers of General Service initiated the plan of traveling to various and outlying districts for their meetings. The main purpose was to reach the areas that found it difficult to get to the Area Assemblies, to better acquaint them with General Service and stimulate interest in Service, so the DCMs and GSRs could better serve their districts and groups and carry the message of Service. At the time the idea was formulated, the attendance at the General Service Assemblies was between 25 and 30, today it is closer to 100, proving it has been time well spent and rewarding.

The current officers are still busy traveling with the hopes of reaching new districts still not familiar with General Service.

This year we have had the privilege of having district meetings in Placerville, Roseville, Visalia, Susanville and Sonora. At Susanville (Dist 213), we shared in their Intergroup Camp-Out at Eagle Lake. What a beautiful 3-day A.A. weekend of sharing! It should be noted two years ago the district had not had a DCM in years and now they have a DCM plus their own Intergroup Central Office - Congratulations!

Our meeting in Sonora (Dist 233), was quite rewarding, with the registration of many new GSRs, groups that previously were not registered with the General Service Office in New York. District 233 has been concerned with the large area for one DCM to cover, resulting in a discussion of redistricting. Following the guidelines of the A.A. Service Manual, it was resolved they should elect a DCM for the proposed new district and present themselves at the Fall Assembly in November. As delegate, "Doc" Campbell, mentioned in the September Area Accents, this should be helpful in future Local and Area considerations.

My two plus years as Area Secretary has been a very rewarding and learning experience, not to mention the many new friends I have met. I am looking forward to 1984, to further broaden my knowledge of General Service.

Dorothy Dimoree  
 Secretary  
 CNIA

## Our Primary Purpose

Many A.A. groups today seem to be forgetting that Our Primary Purpose is to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers -- Tradition Five. Refer also to page 564 of the Big Book and page 150 of the 12 by 12. There is another reason for Our Primary Purpose. Most of us realize we can't keep this beautiful gift from God unless we give it away. It's our spiritual obligation to carry the A.A. message to those suffering alcoholics who don't know there is a way out. Bill W. and Dr. Bob said when we do 12 step work we are taking out insurance against a slip.

How many of us can honestly say today that we have been sticking to our primary purpose? In April and May 1982, Box 4-5-9 and the Quarterly Report from the General Service Board in New York printed two articles that are becoming a great concern for the survival and welfare of A.A. More and more people are coming into our fellowship with a dual addiction. This is not a new problem. The article in Box 4-5-9 "tells it like it is". The book "Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers" relates on page 32 about the large doses of drugs Dr. Bob took to stop the

morning jitters. Bill W. tells in the November, 1945 Grapevine how he almost killed himself with chloral hydrate. Although both drugs and alcohol are chemicals, our primary purpose is to help the Alcoholic recover. There are the fellowships of Narcotics Anonymous and Pills Anonymous for those who have those problems. From my own personal experience with talking to other A.A. members, my sponsors and our A.A. service workers, many of our good old timers and some of the newcomers are leaving A.A. groups. They leave because it is getting more and more difficult to find a good A.A. meeting where it is not diluted to the point where our "Common Problem" is becoming a phase of the past. Any person with a drug problem is certainly welcome to attend A.A. but please, those of you with a dual addiction, remember, we can't be all things to all people.

In the pamphlet "Problems Other Than Alcohol" Bill W. is quoted thus: "A drug addict with a genuine Alcoholic history is eligible for A.A. membership". It concludes, however, that "there is no possible way to make non-alcoholics into A.A. members". What will eventually happen to the beautiful fellowship that Bill W. and Dr. Bob started for us? A.A. will surely collapse, and so shall we! How can we help that alcoholic that perhaps this very night is stumbling

out there in the dark? That human being needs my hand and yours to be guided into our A.A. fellowship. Some old A.A. halls still have that beautiful picture, "WE CARE", portraying an extended hand.

This is not the only problem that is starting to defeat our primary purpose. What about groups that are practicing group therapy, psychiatry, marital counseling, and allowing non A.A. literature to be used in our halls? Why don't we, as trusted servants, share our strength, hope and experience? Let's leave the other things to doctors, ministers, priests and other qualified people.

Many topics are being discussed in open meetings that should be talked about in private with a trusted A.A. friend or sponsor.

So please, let's each of us remember our primary purpose -- sobriety, and helping other alcoholics to achieve sobriety in A.A.

In closing I'd like to say that I can speak of my own experience. I almost left the fellowship about 3 years ago from some of these reasons. I'm so very grateful to God that He sent a trusted servant from our A.A. fellowship to tell me that all A.A. groups didn't forget our primary purpose. I'm so very grateful to God that that person was knowledgeable in the A.A. program, because I'm sure I would have left A.A. and event-

**Primary Purpose** cont'd

ually would have started drinking. Today that trusted servant is one of my beloved sponsors. By the grace of God and A.A. today I'm still in A.A. for our primary purpose. I pray that I never forget to give back to some other human being what has been so freely given to me, and that one day at a time, with God's help, A.A. and my sponsors knowledge, I will continue to live a sober life and be able to help a newcomer achieve sobriety by never forgetting "The Primary Purpose of Alcoholics Anonymous"!

Susan K.  
Modesto, Ca.

**Deadline the 15th**

A deadline means just that! The Good News deadline is the 15th of every month. Any mail received in the Central Office after 5 p.m. on the 15th cannot be included in the next issue, nor can any news be telephoned in after that time.

**California's Northern Coastal Area Election Assembly**

The CNCA Election Assembly will be November 13, 1982 at I.E.S. Hall, 1401 East Santa Clara St. San Jose. The time has come for the panel 31 officers to rotate and a new panel of officers No. 33 to be elected.

It is important that all qualified General Service Representatives, District Committee Members, District Chairpersons, and Area Officers register, as registered voters will be segregated and a count maintained.

The guest for the day and our evening speaker will be our newly elected Pacific Regional Trustee, Natalie S. from Washington. She will be introduced at the sharing session at 10:30 AM followed by a brief business meeting and a break for lunch. The election proper will commence at 1:45 PM and continue until all officers have

**Humility**

Humility is perpetual quietness of heart. It is to have no trouble. It is to be fretted or vexed, irritable or sore; to wonder at nothing done against me. It is to be at rest when nobody praises me, and when I am blamed or despised, it is to have a blessed home in myself where I can go in and shut the door and kneel to my Father in secret and be at peace, as in a deep sea of calmness, when all about is seeming trouble.

been elected. A potluck dinner will be served at approximately 5:30 PM and the speaker will begin at 7:00 PM.

Every year the California Northern Coastal Area and the California Northern Interior Area exchange officers to provide the necessary assistance. This years friends and officers from CNIA is headed up by "Doc" C. (Thanks friends)

Lejeune D.

*Good News*

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