



Good News



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Published Bi-Monthly in Stockton, California
By The Northern California Council of Alcoholics Anonymous

Nov.-Dec.
1983

CONFERENCE INSPIRES HOPE & RECOVERY

I knew I was in the right place when I saw Bart D. walking around the biggest empty room in town, "waiting for the sound man..." I'd heard that before! Out in front the lady from the station wagon, loaded with plants, was headed for the almost-empty stage. In the back you could hear the sounds of the table and chair movers. Where dull boxes had been, a banquet table appeared in all the vivid colors of our literature. Real food for the hungry. Someone grabbed my arm: "This is our speaker for tonight. She can't get into her room yet." The microphone shrieked a welcome of sorts. It looked right, and it sounded right as soon as someone called, "Is there any coffee yet?" One "of us" heard and within minutes it began to smell right--the coffee was ready, so was everyone!

FROM BARRIO TO DEN MOTHER

From there on out, it was "up from ashes" as Ruth S. of Hacienda Heights detailed her descent into the world of alcohol and drugs, how she "died inch by inch, piece by piece" and how, after finding the program of Alcoholics Anonymous, started to recover "little by little, inch by inch".

She found herself a rebel "even before I ever took a drink". "I didn't know East Los Angeles was a ghetto until I was in my thirties--that's how slick I was!", she related.

The message, interspaced with humor, nevertheless conveyed an incredible and vivid picture of the nightmare of our disease. It also portrayed the miracle of recovery.

Ruth joined her first gang at age eleven and was initiated with a fifth of white port. "Between the top and bottom of that bottle, I fell in love--I found an instant cure for everything," she said.

"It didn't get wonderful overnight," she explained. "God bless my home group--for they tolerated me.

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NORTHERN INTERIOR ELECTION - NOV. 12

The California Northern Interior Area will hold its Election Assembly on Saturday, 12 November. Area officers and our delegate to the General Service Conference, which meets in New York each April, will be chosen. District 19 is hosting the day-long event in the cafeteria at Yuba College in Marysville. The meeting starts with registration at 9:00 AM and call to order at 10:00 AM. All new and old GSR's and Alternates should be there to let their groups' wishes be represented. Everyone else is more than welcome. Lunch, at a reasonable price, will be served on the premises. The actual election will be during the afternoon session, followed by the speaker, Natalie S. from Washington, our Pacific Region Trustee.

Take 99 north from Sacramento to Marysville. Use the North Beale Road exit and follow posted directions (AA's can do that.)

Terry D.
Dist. 19 DCM
(916)674-7061 Yuba City

RIGHT ON GOD'S TIME

Eyes sparkling with humor and good will, silver-haired Jim W. of Fort Worth told his story:

Referring to his drinking days, Jim told us how, even then, he used to meditate. "I don't do it that way anymore," he explained. "It's just you, God and the commode."

Describing how alcohol took over every facet of his life, the Texan told how it cost him jobs, relationships and peace of mind. "It's hard courtin' and drinkin'" he said. "It's hard getting a job when you're vibratin' like I was!" He left his hometown, Fort Worth, a step ahead of the law after caging a fast one-hundred dollar loan from his family. His marriage, too, was somewhat rocky. He and his bride suffered through nine days without an air conditioner (he just never got around to fixing it) and he knew he was in trouble when he awoke to find her pointing a loaded 45 to his forehead--a little upset with his procrastination and other character defects. Jim's life continued downhill.

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THE DOOR MAKER FINDS AN OPEN DOOR

"Most of you have never seen me before--in a little while you will know me very intimately." And we did, before he finished.

John A., who lives in Laguna Beach and manufactures doors for a living, described how alcohol closed the door of life to him, but Alcoholics Anonymous was the golden key that opened it to horizons beyond his expectations.

"We here in these rooms are the lucky ones--lots of people who have the disease don't have a chance," he explained. "Pride is a commodity which we can't afford the luxury of." John described the terrible toll his drinking took--not only on himself but on his family. "The last year of my drinking, I couldn't function without liquor," he said. It dawned on him, one day after coming to an AA meeting, that, "I was no longer hooked on liquor, that I was free. And that's why I like to be a newcomer."

John remembers how it was. "It's hard for us to see where we are in relation to our liquor." He referred to a recent twelve-step call where the caller had the shakes, wet the floor, but "told me, 'I don't think I'm an alcoholic--I have an ulcer.' That's denial."

John, an AA version of pianist-comedian Victor Borge, had us in stitches at times, despite the gravity of his message. "I love laughter in AA," he said. "Anything we have laughed at here today was the deepest tragedy when it occurred--but it (laughter) makes us look back and forgive ourselves."

Near the end, when everything else had failed, he found sobriety in our fellowship. "It happened for me that day (after a talk with his sponsor). It was a spiritual experience. "I told my wife what happened to me--that I don't have to drink anymore." She said, "Your eyes look different." "I haven't had a drink in twenty-one years since that time," he said.

The fourth and fifth steps are important to John. "We have to admit fault without reservation--as long as we can pin it on someone else, we cannot progress," he said.

Sharing and caring also are vital: "They shared their experiences heart to heart. They didn't judge (me) and didn't point the finger. That loving care is the most valuable commodity we've got. "I know those years in front of me will be the best years of my life as long as I practice the principles of this program."

SPANISH SPOKEN HERE

The sound may have seemed "different" to some people, but the ideas were the same. No specific speakers were planned ahead of time but many new Spanish-speaking friends appeared for the Stockton Conference from San Francisco, San Bruno, Sacramento and elsewhere, and in any language, they talked the program. The longest meetings were on Friday and Saturday running from 2:30-8:00 Friday and 12 to 8:00 on Saturday, with an average attendance of about 20 people at any time, proving that AA sounds good in any language.

Efran T.
Stockton

ON AND ON

Our Marathon man reports some very gratifying--maybe amazing things. First, twenty-four individual speakers showed up when they were supposed to--what do you mean irresponsible and disorganized? That provided quite an anchor for 1,200 or so people who took part between 3:00 PM Friday and noon on Sunday. The "average" glimpsed in the room at various times was probably never less than 50. Obviously the Marathon has turned out to be a very appealing idea. Thanks to all those involved.

AL ANON CONFERENCE

I love reports I can really get excited about! The Alanon Conference at the Holidome (Oct. 7,8,9,-Stockton) went really well. Participation was up and the speakers were nothing less than dynamite!

Every year we have a very popular, successful luncheon and this year we decided to try adding a Breakfast. We were so pleased, we hope we will be able to plan to keep it as a regular event. I can't say enough in the way of thanks to all the people who helped make the Al-Anon Conference the success it was.

Mary W.
Al Anon, Stockton

The Stockton Conference was about to become history. But there was one thing left to do: "Outstanding job, Steve, Shawn and your crews." They just shrugged. Are they really that humble?...or just so tired they don't realize what a great job they did here?

COASTAL AREA "LINK"

In Step Twelve, the legacy of Recovery is explicitly linked to the legacy of Service. For example, in those instances when all else seems to fail working with another alcoholic has been found to sustain and strengthen sobriety, thus saving the day. And, since carrying the message is our premier service, perhaps we may refer to Step Twelve as the wellspring of all AA services.

This step, sincerely practiced, may well be said to have a double effect, blessing him that gives and him that takes. Maybe it could be characterized as a paradox of unselfishness -- of altruism in harmony with enlightened self-interest. One can't but recall Bill W.'s remark to the effect that a Twelfth Step call was one drunk talking to another, because the one talking needed the message too.

Carrying the message to the suffering alcoholic is AA's single purpose. However, in order to carry out this "but one primary purpose", it has been deemed necessary to establish ancillary services such as steering committees, district committees, etc. Apropos of this, we read the following on page 140 of Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age:

"An AA service is anything whatever that legitimately helps us to reach fellow sufferers - - - Regarding any particular service we need only ask one question: 'Is this service

H & I BROADSIDES

Thanks to all the people who gave of their time and enthusiasm to man our H&I table with literature and information at our Northern California Conference held in Stockton last weekend. Also, we have to thank Janeen S., Stockton, for personally seeing that there was no lapse in manpower, in spite of her selling a lot of raffle tickets. Thanks again, Janeen.

At 9:30 Saturday morning, we had a terrific turnout for the H&I Committee meeting, chaired by Pat S., Modesto. Everything went smoothly even though our non-alcoholic speaker did not show (that's different). We lucked out because Jack W., a real old timer was visiting from Oregon. Jack was a member of H&I over 25 years ago and filled the gap beautifully.

Our last Northern California General Meeting for 1983 was held in Oakland on Oct. 16. Acting secretary, Mary R., hopefully will become a permanent asset to our committee. Bill S., treasurer for the past 4 years, resigned in the spirit of rotation. Thanks to Bill and we'll see him at the S.F. Central Office. Sam B., San Leandro, is the new treasurer. Gordon S. and Lucy M. filled the 2 vacancies on the Finance Committee.

From Area 51, Vivian H. reported the 1st meeting ever at Juvenile Hall will be Dec. 22, 1983. It has taken 4 years to get permission to hold a meeting there. A meeting will open in another lock-up ward at Napa State Hospital the first of 1984.

Area 53's Lucy M. reports that she has such good people that they do all the work, not a slow one in the bunch, making her task very easy. (Anything open besides Finance for Lucy?)

Surprise! California Northern Coastal Area Delegate to N.Y. World Service, Bill M. and Alternate Diane O. were at the meeting. Also Bruce N. (N.Y. World Service, H&I) who is moving to Oakland. Bruce reports good things working at the Federal level.

THINK PINK FOR H&I

Bill S.

Our experience and group strength is our hope.

really needed?' If it is not, then let it be eliminated. But if it is needed, then maintain it we must or fail in our mission to those who want and seek AA".

Is it not commonly accepted that all legitimate services are in the spirit of Step Twelve? And do they not therefore elicit its blessings? Perhaps this explains the often repeated statement that people in service don't drink. Trusted servants are said to lead by example. They stand in the circle of winners with whom we are encouraged to stick.

Doctor Bob once summed up the program in two words, love and service. Perhaps we could list among the qualities of AA leadership a spirit of love and service--illuminated by an informed conscience; a dedication to communication, so that what for many is the greatest story of alcoholic recovery ever told, may not become garbled.

Frank B.

San Francisco

LEARN FROM THE MISTAKES OF OTHERS. YOU CAN'T LIVE LONG ENOUGH TO MAKE THEM ALL YOURSELF.

UNITY, A THEME FOR AA

Let it begin with you. Your group and your trusted servants, that it may spread throughout the fellowship with understanding and cooperation to carry the message which is our Primary Purpose.

How do we get there from here?

You have heard it so many times it is like background music, "Get Involved".

How do you start?

Begin by attending your group's business meetings. Honestly, they are important to a healthy group. Help your fellow members elect and instruct trusted servants.

A group needs a representative and an alterante

for every facet of service. Once you have elected these people to represent you, help them by providing time for reports of their activities. Ask questions, give them your support and your ideas. Find out what it is all about, be informed. They cannot represent you unless they know what you want.

Your group needs a General Service Representative, an N.C.C. Representative, a P.I. and a C.P.C. Representative, a delegate to Central Office or Intergroup, and alternates for each of these. Some of these may be familiar to you, and you may question the value of so many representatives. I can only suggest you take some time and attend some of the workshops that are being held in this area.

Your G.S. Rep. - your voice and link to AA as a whole.

Your H. & I. Rep. - your image to the public. The AA program is not anonymous, the members are.

Your C.P.C. Rep. - your guide to professionals who must deal with the alcoholic.

Your Central Office or Intergroup delegate is the link to the everyday workhouse of AA. Your tele-service, your literature, your meeting schedules, and much more.

Those same services that are being carried on in the traditional manner by those few dedicated members who accept the responsibility for us all. It is quite a load to carry. They do need your help.

Goldie F.

RUTH S. cont'd

They said 'Keep coming back'. "One day I came to a meeting and I came to believe, sitting way back. A wonderful man climbed up here and I had this moment of clarity for I knew this man was not lying and I felt there was hope for me." The hope ripened into faith, trust and sobriety. There was no middle of the road for me--it took me some years in AA to figure out who I was running from--it was me," she said. "My famous cry through life, until I got through the doors of Alcoholics Anonymous, was 'I'm going to straighten up my life tomorrow'. The other was 'If only they would leave me alone'". But she didn't and they didn't.

"Alcohol did not leave my life until I crawled through the doors of AA. I protected my alcohol with my life because alcohol was my life," she said.

When her youngsters were taken from her, when a judge told her: "A woman like you should never have children--and we will see to it you never see these children again!", and when she later found herself in her bathroom with a loaded gun to her head, she knew she had reached bottom. "I screamed: 'God help me!'" That turning point occurred ten and a half years ago.

From a jail, filled with self-loathing, fear and hate, Ruth became a sober winner in our fellowship, a Girl Scout den mother,--even a vice-president of the PTA. Ruth now was in the "mainstream". The current there is not always placid but the rewards are great: "I no longer could run--even when it was painful. I had to walk through it. The only difference is that now I walk through it with my Higher Power."

JIM W. cont'd

The "Twelve-Stepper" who called on him looked like a "deacon-type guy". The visitor later became his sponsor and was a stubborn one. "I'll pick you up (for a meeting) in thirty minutes," called the deacon. "But it's RAINING out there," whimpered Jim. "Did you ever go out for a drink when it was raining?" countered the deacon. "I'll be ready" replied the subdued Jim. Time went on, white-knuckle sobriety. Suddenly, one morning, Jim was driving to work when "God moved into that car with me as my friend, for the first time." Sobriety and serenity became part of Jim's life. "I know that you and I didn't get here on our own," he said. "You and I have been put together by God, Himself. You and I are right on time--wherever you and I are today--we're right on God's time."

COMINGS AND GOINGS

SUNDAY BREAKFAST?

Sunday Morning Speaker-Breakfast Meetings of the Fremont Fellowship, 3909 Washington Blvd., Fremont, CA. (Irvington-over Round Table Pizza) has a great line-up for November. After Breakfast (at 9 AM) the speakers (at 10:30) for November will be-Nov. 6, Wally D., Fremont-Nov. 13, Paula B., Santa Rosa,-Nov. 20, Dorcas O., Fremont-Nov. 27, Judy and Al A., Fremont. (490-9822 & 9895).

PLAN AHEAD

Delta Intergroup reports that the Annual Christmas Luncheons (the week between Christmas and New Years Day) will take place again this year at Stockton's Midtown Fellowship, 424 W. Harding Way. Each day will be sponsored by a different group with Potluck provided at noon just before the daily 1:00 meeting. All welcome-it's a great holiday tradition!

Not to forget UNITY:

Delta Intergroup is also busy planning the 6th Annual Unity Day at Ripon Community Center, 4th & Walnut, Ripon, CA., on Jan. 29, 1984. There will be meetings, several local speakers, a featured speaker, Johnnie H., Lakewood, CA., a dinner and dance with live music. There will be a "small" registration donation, and the dinner toll will be separate. Stay tuned as all the "particulars" are finalized. Al-Anon will be holding a concurrent function in the adjacent building. We will keep you up to date.

FLETCH'S TERRITORY

Calling all AA's who want to stay "dry"! The Auburn "Dry" Diggins Group is having a Pot Luck/Speaker Meeting on November 17. It's their 38th anniversary and Jack L. from Pacheco will speak at 8:00. The "diggin' in" starts at 6:00 PM.

Now for the scoop of the year: The Sacramento Area Spring Fling is set for February 17, 18 and 19 and the speakers will be Cindy A. from Tucson on Friday at 8:30, Ron N. from San Diego at 1:00 and Dr. Paul O. from Claremont at 8:30 (both on Saturday) and a special Sunday, Bob E..., from Los Angeles at 10:30AM. Remember folks, you heard it first in the GOOD NEWS.

Just one other thing. Wife #1 says it would be nice if I won the \$100.00 Spring Fling Money Tree on Saturday night and, of course, I never argue with a higher power...

PASSED OUR WAY . . .

"Napa Joe", Joe B., passed away Saturday, July 2, 1983. He was seriously injured in an automobile accident March 10, 1983. He has touched many of us and we miss him.

DREAM ON

Sorry we couldn't get this news to you earlier but while GOOD NEWS was in the mail, we all missed the 22nd Annual Hawaii AA Conference in Honolulu, Hawaii, Nov. 3-6. Does that sound like something that should be mentioned in "the promises"?

GOOD NEWS CORNER

From our staff, thanks to all of you who took the time to stop by the GOOD NEWS table at the Stockton Conference. We know you are out there but we like to put real faces with names and to hear your questions and reactions in person.

Also, welcome to new subscribers to the GOOD NEWS. We are glad to add you to the numbers of those who want to share, learn and inspire ALL the GOOD NEWS from ALL over Northern California.

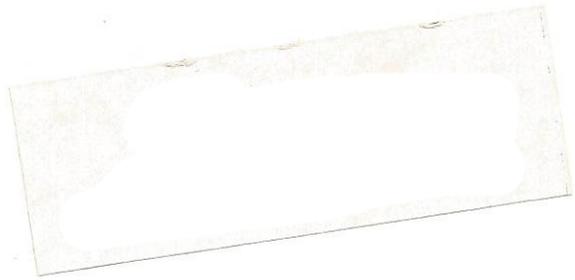
Since we all know this is a program of participation, we can't miss this opportunity to encourage you to encourage your group to keep in touch. We want you to be represented and reflected in the NEWS - as well as receivers of it. There are 10's of 1,000's of stories of recovery and inspiration, 1,000's of active groups, and we all want to know as much about you and yours, as you want to know about others. Let us hear from you!

CONFERENCE EPILOGUE

The look and feel and report of results of "Conference Success" seems so effortless-but-do you know why? The first Pre-Conference Meeting for Monterey (that's in March) was announced at the Stockton Conference (that was October) and it already took place (that was Sunday, Oct. 30!).

Problem: Get everything done for Monterey by March.
Solution: Lots of people to do lots of things.

Do you want to be part of the? Of course not, you want to be part of the solution! GET INVOLVED EARLY.



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Publication to; Editor
P.O. Box 5521
Stockton, Ca 95205