



Good News



Est.
1948

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

November-December
1986

The Redding Fall Conference

The 39th Fall Conference took place October 10 - 11 - 12. Diversity was characteristic. For example, recovery was expressed through such formats as participation, speaker, speaker-discussion, workshop and open-speaker meetings. In addition, there were sessions for the NCC Steering Committee, for group delegates, for H & I and for General Service. Not the least important were the arms length meetings over coffee and dining. All of this was sweetened by friendships renewed, by a

comfortable setting and the ambience of the Sacramento River glimmering in the gentle warmth of Indian summer.

Gayle D. (San Francisco) noted her impressions of the Early Bird meeting. With her permission, they are recapped as follows:

The speaker opened the meeting for general participation and one lady voiced gratitude for the ability to love, for her growing teen-agers born during sobriety. One member credited AA for his learning to live,

for the return of his wife (with an assist from Alanon).

Another lady expressed gratitude for God's gift of sobriety, for her release from negative thinking, for the 24 hour program, for her relations with loved ones. She observed that conferences were reminders of the beautiful family we belong to in A.A.

One member recalled the first Redding conference and told of his six-year-old daughter born in sobriety.

Someone else explained that stopping drinking but not changing attitudes did not work. However, he began to work the program and now has glimpses of a "fourth dimension."

Another denied he was a grateful alcoholic but said he was grateful "this ex-drunk does not have to drink any more." Looking for loopholes, he ended up discovering that the first 164 pages of the Book do work. He said the program has given him everything he sought in the bottle.

A seventh person admitted to early rebellion blocking acceptance of the recovery program. Yet — others' examples helped to overcome his attitudes. Conferences became a part of life. Exposed to service, he became active and learned to stop judging and to do something. This involvement has brought him "a sense of belonging through service."

The next sharer recounted going from jail to A.A. He found a conscious contact with God. His life is worth living. Employed by a jail, he, in his words, "carries the message — God gives the gift of sobriety —

Contact Service Committee

Since the Contact Service Committee is still in its infancy, many people have been asking questions about it. I would like to use this opportunity to answer one that is asked most often, namely "Why isn't this service performed by H & I (or some other existing committee)?"

In H & I's case, the committee would not be able to engage in this without a major revision of its charter, a very difficult process. Its charter limits the H & I committee's responsibilities to within the walls, period. Individual members of the committee are free to, and frequently do, engage in contact service. It does not seem advisable to change the charter in this regard since similar committees in other areas have been generally unsuccessful in incorporating this service into their other activities. Which brings us to the second and most important reason.

In A.A., single purpose committees work best. Even General Service with its seeming hodgepodge of responsibilities works this way. Anything that does not fall within its pri-

mary purpose, the General Service Conference process, is referred to a Special Purpose subcommittee (PI/CPC, Literature, Grapevine etc.). Any time a committee is given a secondary purpose the activity in that is sporadic at best.

In most places where contact service is working it is organized similarly to the local equivalent of our H & I committee, usually as separate subcommittees of the same parent committee.

Since we are still a very new committee, there are still a lot of "holes in our map." If you would like to help, and we would sure appreciate any, you are invited to either attend our monthly meeting (4th Saturday, Oakland Central Office) or write us at:

Northern California Contact
Service Committee
P.O. Box 6853
San Mateo, CA 94403

Rick
Chairman, NCCSCAA
San Mateo

(Continued on Page 2)

Coastal Area Link

In the Big Book, after penning certain declarations, Bill W. wrote: "Are these extravagant promises? We think not. They are being fulfilled among us — sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. They will always materialize if we work for them." (page 84)

He did not number these declarations nor did he define them as "The 12 Promises." If one were to examine the Book for other promissory statements, he might come up with a total of more than twelve. Take, for example, the following:

Page 13: "My friend promised when these things were done I would enter upon a new relationship with my Creator; that I would have the elements of a way of living which answered all my problems."

Page 58: "Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path."

Page 89: "Life will take on a new meaning. To watch people recover, to see them help others, to watch loneliness vanish, to see a fellowship grow up about you, to have a host of friends — this is an experience you must not miss."

Page 100: "If you persist, remarkable things will happen . . . Follow the dictates of a Higher Power and you will presently live in a new and wonderful world, no matter what your present circumstances."

Page 152: "There you will find release from care, boredom and worry. Your imagination will be fired. Life will mean something at last. The most satisfactory years of your existence lie ahead. Thus we find the fellowship, and so will you."

Ibid: "You are going to meet these new friends in your own community . . . you will make lifelong friends. You will be bound to them with new and wonderful ties, for you will escape disaster together and commence shoulder to shoulder your common journey. Then you will know what it means to give yourself that others may survive and rediscover life. You will learn the full meaning of 'Love thy neighbor as

AN A.A. MEETING . . .

1980's Version of a Twelfth Step Call

We've all seen the classic picture of "The Man on the Bed" (Available from the Grapevine) which shows two A.A. members carrying the message. Many of us visualize this situation when we think of Twelfth Step work or carrying the A.A. message to the alcoholic who still suffers. Chapter 7 in the Big Book ("Working With Others") is a detailed, comprehensive account of how to call on the man or woman who may want to stop drinking. Very often A.A. members are called upon to carry the message as the book describes it. Frequently, however, because of the efforts of our Public Information Committees or judges or treatment facilities, the newcomer may show up at one of our meetings without ever having met one of us in the way that the man on the bed did.

thyslf."

Page 153: "The practical answer is that since these things have happened among us they can happen with you. Should you wish them above all else, and be willing to make use of our experience, we are sure they will come. The age of miracles is still with us. Our own recovery proves that!"

Page 164: "Our book is meant to be suggestive only . . . we know only a little. God will constantly disclose more to you and to us . . . The answers will come, if your own house is in order . . . See to it that your relationship with Him is right, and great events will come to pass for you and countless others. This is the Great Fact for us."

The effect of promises believed in is joyful hope. Hope is to be found in Bill W.'s writings. No matter how severe certain passages may seem to be, they are always balanced by the total context of these writings, by such statements as, "Do not be discouraged."

(The above quotations were reprinted from the pages indicated, from *Alcoholics Anonymous*, 2nd Edition, with permission of A.A. World Services, Inc.)

Frank B., Lakeport

The newcomer sitting next to me or at the end of the table at my home group meeting may know absolutely nothing about A.A. The welcome we extend to him (applause in some communities) is only a beginning. Thrusting my phone number at him is helpful but still not enough. Spying a court card and assuming that he probably doesn't want what we have, is unfair. My sponsor often nudges me at the end of a meeting and says, "Go over and talk to that new woman." I'm writing this as much to nudge me as I am to nudge you. After a few years of carrying the message by writing, service on service committees, and speaking at microphones, I don't want to lose sight of the reason for it all — to tell the new person who reaches out to us that he never has to take another drink if he doesn't want to.

Barbara W., Eureka

REDDING FALL CONFERENCE

(Continued from Front Page)

we develop an attitude of gratitude."

Among the thoughts expressed, the following reflect the alcoholic's difficulty with semantics. This member had trouble with the word, gratitude, preferring the word, blessing. For him, being a drunk was a blessing because it gave him the opportunity to understand spirituality and a God of one's own understanding, to experience a "fourth dimension of consciousness."

A vacationer from Boston discovered the Redding conference. In three weeks he'll be sober a year.

Finally, a man told of starting to drink at age nine, of entering A.A. forty one years later. he remarked how his crisis (ill health) became opportunity. He expressed gratitude for that opportunity.

(Please be advised that, prior to the next conference to be held in Redding in the Fall of 1988, there will be structural additions to the auditorium. This will provide room, for example, for the marathon meetings held, this Fall, at the Alano Club.)

Bad Language

I am not a prude. I spent four years in the U.S. Navy, and I know and have used all manner of profanity along with the best of them, including a few choice phrases in foreign languages. However, I find myself disappointed and displeased at some of the really foul language I often hear at A.A. meetings.

Many, perhaps most, of us have used this type of language in our drinking days, particularly if we reached the point where we sought out "lower companions" and got into the habit of using such language because we felt it would help our acceptance into that society. However, in A.A. we don't need any crutches to be accepted — the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking — and profanity and obscenities at A.A. meetings should be kept to a minimum.

I cannot object strongly to use of such language for dramatic effect in our telling of what we used to be like, because, indeed, we were like that. However, as we climb out of the gutter, and describe how we did this and what we are like now, if for no other reason than dramatic effect, we should leave the things of the gutter, including the gutter language behind us.

I also cannot object strongly to the use of florid language by someone for whom such language is a part of their daily life. For example, I do not expect the teamster, the merchant seaman, or the newcomer from skid row or even prison to express feelings and thoughts in terms of "gee whiz," or "heck," or "golly". I can't help but think here of an old story which I have always liked. A construction worker was hailed before his foreman by a little old lady who accused him of shouting obscenities in public. The worker was asked by his foreman to explain himself. The worker said: "Well, my partner, George, was tearing off shingles from the roof of this house with a crowbar, and I was working on the

ground below him. I heard a noise, looked up, and saw that George had dropped the crowbar and it was coming at me. I jumped to one side, and the crowbar missed me by inches." The foreman asked what happened then. The worker said: "I looked up at George, and said, 'My goodness, George, you ought to be more careful. You might have injured me seriously.'" Although the humor in this story has to do with honesty and credibility, the fact of the story is that there are times when a situation almost demands some profanity. On the other hand, I do not like to hear alcoholic attorneys, or doctors, or just plain folks using language in an A.A. meeting which they would not use in their everyday life with clients, patients, or other just plain folks. Such use seems to me to be artificial, undesirable, and damaging to A.A.

In the above two paragraphs I have carefully said "I cannot object strongly . . .". Even under the circumstances I described, the use of such language is often unnecessary and objectionable. We make a great point, and rightfully so, of telling newcomers that A.A. is a spiritual program — that not only do we not drink alcohol anymore, but we also have made a great change for the better in most aspects of our lives. It is very confusing, at the least, to a newcomer if these high-flown statements are salted and peppered with language from the gutter. It makes it hard for the newcomer to really believe that we have changed if we describe our changed life in gutter terms. "Our public relations policy is one of attraction rather than promotion . . ." says Tradition 11. How can we attract if we use language which is repulsive to some of those we are trying to attract, and confusing to others? In this matter, as we do in many things, let's just keep in mind our old reliable motto: Easy Does It.

Don G., Sunnyvale

24 Hour "Wait and See" Plan

Let's talk about what I call the "24 HOUR WAIT AND SEE PLAN". Early in A.A. some sage of the bottle told me never to take any drastic action on anything until I had waited 24 hours. With a good deal of indignation (righteous of course) I informed him that there were some things that required immediate action. He opined that this was doubtful and went on to explain in the sneaky way good A.A. people have, that it had always worked for him when he was able to let it. He cited me a few instances in his life that sounded as if his lack-of-action had made his life more tolerable.

Since the only thing that I, or anyone, will buy with enthusiasm is the dream of a better life, I decided to try the formula. It has worked in a positive and gratifying manner every time I have been able and smart enough to apply it to any situation. Here is the formula as given to me:

When something happens in your life that seems to demand instant and drastic action, wait for 24 hours before you do a single thing. If, after 24 hours, the situation still demands positive and drastic action, then by all means take it.

However, in the 24 hours you will have been able to think the entire situation over, plan your actions, contemplate your procedures, and be armed with everything you need to come out winner. That's the formula.

Here's the kicker. Each time that you are able to wait this 24 hour period, you will be cool, calm and collected, and invariably the drastic action that seemed indicated at the exact moment you thought of it — fades away. You'll find yourself thinking "Wouldn't I have been foolish to lash out over so trivial a thing?" And you'll feel good about your lack of action.

The "24 Hour Wait and See Plan" permits you to keep on living as you should without the necessity of getting upset, livid with rage, filled

(Continued on Page 4)

Focusing on Alcoholics

Thank you for the timely and informative articles on the addict/alcoholic topic. Of particular interest is the February '86 reprint of the announcement, "From the (Narcotics Anonymous) Trustees — Some Thoughts on Our Relationship to A.A.". In part, it is stated that, "Both fellowships have a 6th Tradition for a reason — to keep from being diverted from our primary purpose. So each 12 Step Fellowship can focus on 'one thing and one thing only so it can do that one thing supremely well', each must stand alone, unaffiliated with everything else. We each have a separate, unique primary purpose. The focus of A.A. is on the alcoholic and we ought to respect their right to adhere to their traditions and protect that focus. If we cannot use language consistent with that, we ought not go to their meetings and undermine the atmosphere . . ."

In the August '86 issue something

was mentioned about the attitude" . . . rather than adopting the A.A. philosophy let's have A.A. adopt ours . . ."

The July-August '86 "Good News" carried an article that stated in part, "Any implication that A.A., or that we, as alcoholics, have a solution to other addictions is a violation of Tradition Five."

And so it goes, on and on. But does the foregoing valuable info filter down to the group level? Is it assimilated? Is it utilized?

Some groups are composed of quite a few so-called newcomers. The secretary may have a month or two or three of sobriety. So the groups go along as best they can. The life and death factor obliges other groups to direct their attention explicitly to recovery. The point being that, subject to the common

welfare and group autonomy, no one who desires to stop drinking may be told what to say, think or do.

Accordingly, some may have the notion that the plight of "The Washingtonians" is already in place at the group level. Whilst at the other extreme, others may have the idea that the addict/alcoholic matter has been embodied in the Fellowship throughout its lifetime without causing any irreparable damage, so it may be assumed that its resiliency will carry it harm free into the future.

How do others view the situation? What's happening in the groups? Does anyone have anything to share? Perhaps this Newsletter can serve as a forum of up-to-date knowledge about the addict/alcoholic controversy and its resolution, if any.

From time to time we hear it said that alcoholism and drug addiction are quite similar. A physiological similarity. A detoxification similarity. A recovery similarity.

We have a choice. "We have something stronger than our human personalities to rely on". We have principles that, after having been filtered through the world's finer minds and hammered out on the anvil of experience, have come to us gratuitously.

For about a year a weekly traditions meeting was held at 90 - 9th St., in San Francisco (06). It was deactivated for several months and then re-activated at the Alano Club where it continued for several years until the Club closed. Hopefully it won't be too long before others feel moved to re-activate this most worthwhile meeting.

"Great suffering and great love are A.A.'s disciplinarians: we need no others." (Tradition Nine)

From a letter to the
CNCA Newsletter by
Herb J. (06), San Francisco

— Used with permission of AAWS

1986 Events

NOVEMBER

- 6-9: 25th ANNUAL HAWAIIAN CONFERENCE. Westin Ilikai Hotel, \$50.00 fee in advance required. Send check to: 25th Annual Hawaii Conference, P.O. Box 23434, Honolulu, Hawaii, 96822.
- 7-9: HIGH SUMMIT CONFERENCE, Yosemite Park, Yosemite, Ca.
- 7: "SHARE TOGETHER" DINNER and A.A. MEETING, Dominic's Harbor Restaurant, 507 Francisco Blvd., San Rafael, 6:30 p.m.
- 8: The CNCA ELECTION ASSEMBLY, Hall of Flowers, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, Start 9:00 a.m.
- 15: CNIA ASSEMBLY
- 15: A DAY OF SOBRIETY, Campbell Community Center, Winchester & Campbell Ave., Campbell, Ca. - 1:00 p.m.
- 27-30: LAS VEGAS ROUNDUP, Riviera Hotel, Las Vegas, Nev.

DEADLINES FOR MATERIAL

Dec. 10 . . Jan.-Feb. issue
Feb. 10 . Mar.-April issue
April 10 . May-June issue
June 10 . . July-Aug. issue
Aug. 10 . Sept.-Oct. issue
Oct. 10 . . Nov.-Dec. issue

24 HOUR "WAIT AND SEE"

(Continued from Page 3)

with resentment, or getting the inner shakes.

Remember you have a "LEVEL" on which you live most comfortably. Don't let anyone bait you into leaving your "LEVEL" to climb "DOWN" to theirs.

Paul G., Mill Valley, Ca.

Helping the Suffering Alcoholic

At meetings and in the Big Book were constant reminders that only by working with other alcoholics could we keep our sobriety. For a long time, I believed that in order to do "proper" 12th step work, one had to be working with alcoholics who had not yet found our A.A. program.

I felt totally uncomfortable with the thought of helping people who were still drinking. Therefore, I attended an H & I meeting to see if I could do 12th step work with institutionalized alcoholics. After learning what was involved and some of the conditions that I would be exposed to, I decided that it was not for me. I rationalized that no one in "that condition" could possibly identify with anything I could share. As it turned out, that was a cop out. I was too afraid to get involved. I was comfortable in the haven of my regular meetings and did not want to upset my routine. Yet, in the back of my mind was the feeling of that I was not doing my share. I was not "12 stepping" anyone.

Finally, I learned (a long educational process) that helping the alcoholic who still suffers means anyone, whether that person is still drinking, in jail, in a hospital or a 10 year member of Alcoholics Anonymous. Because my sobriety had been so comfortable, I did not realize that a person who had several years in the program could qualify as a suffering alcoholic.

I learned that doing 12 step work could include driving other A.A. members to a meeting, even when it is inconvenient; sponsoring someone whom you may not even like; honest sharing at meetings even when you feel you have nothing helpful to say; speaking at meetings no matter how nervous you are; greeting a newcomer after a meeting even if you prefer to socialize with your friends; and most important, setting an example to all alcoholics inside and outside the program by staying sober and practicing the A.A. principles in all our affairs.

Until I am willing to make a com-

C.N.C.A. Archives Committee

From time to time our Librarian receives requests from various Central Offices for the delivery to them, respectively, of all archival material relating to their particular locale. The idea being that members will be in easy reach of memorabilia of importance to them.

That's a great idea, one the Committee has been fostering for many years. More specifically, the Committee policy is to get archival material back to the related Districts if, as and when the District Archivist is prepared to receive same.

Five or six years ago we commenced to speak at length with A.A.'s viewing our displays with the idea in mind that they might find themselves to be attracted to archival activities. Also, as time went on, we asked that hosts of a display occasion provide one or two local A.A.'s to sit at the display table, again having in mind that persons attracted to archival activity might emerge. In addition, there was a time when Area Officers spoke at length about the archives whilst visiting the many districts in our area.

Yet, notwithstanding the foregoing, the present archivists just sort of appeared on the scene as a result of having interest, time and willingness. And while everything hasn't always come up roses, we have been fortunate to have a continuity in our Committee that has made it possible for our activities to move along at a modest, achievement oriented tempo.

Our founding Committee members had the idea that if not today then tomorrow or next year or next century. KEEP IT SIMPLE. EASY DOES IT. So our pace hasn't been all that dramatic.

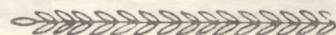
mitment to do H & I work or the traditional 12th step calls (and I truly admire those who do), I am satisfied to know that there are other ways of helping the suffering alcoholic.

Karl S., Pacifica

Now Central Offices have shown an interest in our history. They are to be applauded. Hopefully, for starters, they will bring letters, photos and old meeting books out of their files and put them on display. And perhaps change the display from time to time.

But there is a kicker in the process. Will anonymity be preserved? Has permission been received from persons party to the proposed display furnished permission? Questions like this might be worked out, for the benefit of all concerned, with the District Archivist. And as the activity comes within the guidelines furnished by the G.S.O. Archives Committee we will, subject to Committee review, be pleased to furnish additional memorabilia to enlarge the particular collection.

Herb J. (06), San Francisco



MUSTARD SEEDS OF WISDOM

In These Days We Need More Than Ever Before

- More thinking and less drinking.
- More work and less talk.
- More self-forgetfulness and less self-glorification.
- More constructive criticism and less of the kind that tears down instead of building up.
- More copying of kindly deeds and less imitation of fads and follies and foibles.
- More solid education and less, or rather no fads in schools.
- More real recreation and less dissipation.
- More reality and less sham.
- More study clubs and less social clubs.
- More helpful conversation and less gossip.
- More emphasis on manners and morals and less on money.
- More sincerity and less smartness.
- A greater desire for social usefulness than for social prestige.
- To make the world better day by day.

DO YOUR HONEST SHARE!



Francis Burke
P.O. Box 373
Lakeport, Ca. 95453
May 87

BULK RATE
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 11
Ripon, Ca.

GOOD NEWS
P.O. Box 5106
Modesto, Ca. 95352

Subscribe to
GOOD NEWS

Mail subscriptions to GOOD NEWS P. O. Box 5106
MODESTO, CA. 95352

Individual subscriptions

In U.S. - \$3.50/year
Outside U.S. - \$5.00/year

Enclosed find \$ _____ for _____ subscriptions to
GOOD NEWS to be mailed to:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____