



GOOD NEWS



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'55 YEARS—ONE DAY AT A TIME'

Two Views of AA '90 World Convention

By PERRY O., SARATOGA

Alcoholics Anonymous has many conferences, forums and large get-togethers, but there is only one "Convention" held every five years in celebration of sobriety around the world.

We attended the 1985 Convention in Montreal and had eagerly registered for this, the ninth, as soon as the forms became available last fall. It turned out to be an incredible and almost indescribably wonderful experience. Imagine thousands (45,000?) of alcoholics from all over the world, all sharing the same disease and its solution, descending upon the beautiful city of Seattle, enjoying its scenery, ferry boats and hospitality and sharing with members of our Fellowship from...who knows where?

Of the innumerable pleasant memories, two stand out:

First, the genuine hospitality offered by the host cities and its citizens, and in particular, by the host committee of local AA's - everywhere present - in the airport, on street corners and at every assembly and meeting site - hundreds of AA's in distinctive cowboy hats and green vests, always available, cheerfully answering any and all questions and just being friendly.

Secondly, the sharing of experience, strength and hope by the AA's from Eastern Europe. It began with the flag ceremony in the King Dome

(See Two VIEWS, Page 3)

By BARBARA M., EUREKA

I've been told since the beginning that all God's kids belong to Alcoholics Anonymous but nowhere has that been so apparent as it was in Seattle when we celebrated 55 years of sobriety-one day at a time.

I attended a meeting on Friday morning about carrying the A.A. message to minorities and saw in the room faces of every color. A lesbian woman spoke at the floor mike about the invisible minorities. I spent time with friends who were accompanying a man in a wheelchair and a blind woman. Another friend assisted the Italian delegation.

My Spanish-speaking sponsor spent the weekend participating in Spanish language meetings. We were all able to see the team of signers carry the message to the hearing-impaired A.A. members at the big meetings at the Kingdome. While hosting the Hospitality Suite I met A.A. members from Ireland and later spoke on a panel with a man from England.

There wasn't a dry eye in the house when the flags from the Soviet Union and other Eastern European countries were introduced during the flag ceremony Friday and most of us cheered a little extra for the flags from the countries of our ancestors.

Unlike most big conventions attended only by the well-to-do, the 1990 International Convention of

(See Two VIEWS, Page 3)

Fall Meet Is Hosted By Sacramento

The 43rd Annual Fall Conference of the N.C.C.A.A. will be held on October 19, 20, and 21, 1990 in Sacramento. Outstanding speakers have been chosen for this event. Bob L. from Glendale, CA will open the festivities on Friday night, while Terry F. from Vista, CA will speak at the Young People's Meeting on Saturday afternoon. Ray V. from Flower Mound, Texas takes over on Saturday night while John M. from Dallas, Texas closes the Conference on Sunday.

A dance is planned for Saturday night with music provided by a local D.J. The dance will run from 10 p.m. until 1 a.m. with registration badges required for admission.

English speaking Marathon meetings will be held from Friday afternoon through Sunday at 11:30 a.m., excluding speaker meetings and the hours of 11:30 p.m. through 8:00 a.m. Continuation Marathon meetings will be held at Group 1 downtown during that time period. See your program for address and directions. The Spanish speaking Marathon meetings will run through the same times but will continue through the speaker meetings.

The Host and Hostess Committee has done a lot of work to pull this one off but we all need to help with an outreach program to get many people to this Conference. The facility will be expensive and we need

(See SACRAMENTO, Page 3)

FLETCH SEZ . . .

Hi alkie of all shapes and sizes,

The other day I was honored to be asked to chair a meeting in my home-away-from-home group, Roseville's Tuesday Night Group. Just so happens that this was Thursday, but some of us are still searching for those last few cards that make up a full deck, uh huh, sober and crazy so to speak. Well anyway, I was told I could chair if I promised not to mention that city in Washington that starts with S. Yep, you got it. You know alkie, that's a heck of a lot harder than it seems. I mean, who can ever forget that flag ceremony when that gent from Russia so proudly waved his country's flag to a standing ovation—almost equalling that of the USA. Or who can forget the look on that lady's face—she had a red badge on, one of our friends from Al-Anon—as she held on to her daughter's shoulder and turned to me on Sunday morning and said, "It really does work, doesn't it?" Or who can forget getting into town on Wednesday, getting lost and never getting quite found again till I left on Sunday. That's in spite of those 3,000 beautiful folks with green vests and white hats there just 'cause they knew I needed help! But I know I won't forget that pretty blonde I met standing in line (stand-

ing in line was one of the best parts) waiting for something or other. She said she had met alkie from all over the world and with that she turned to an older man, looked at his name tag and said, "Sir, what language do they speak in Maryland?" Well, there we have it, we were represented by 75 countries and Maryland.

Now, I know I wasn't going to mention S—— or the fact that I'm still on a high the likes I haven't seen since Montreal; in fact, I was going to tell you all about my 4,000 mile motorcycle trip through the great Northwest and through six beautiful National Parks...but ya know alkie, somehow it pales by comparison, and I just know I'll forget parts of that trip someday.

Luv ya, Fletch

P.S. I know by the third weekend in October I'll have stopped talking about "you know what." By then I'll be on to something else that's solid AA, fun, and exciting. You bet! The NCCAA conference in Sacramento. See ya there!!!

Moved Lately? Tell Us!

Each month we have a number of newsletters returned to the Good News mail box with the notation: "RETURN TO SENDER POST DUE = \$.25. In order to obtain your new address, the staff has to pay the postal clerk an additional 25 cents to obtain the newsletter with your new address label on it—providing you have left a forwarding address with the Post Office. We need your assistance in keeping the Good News coming to you without added charges and additional time. If we resend the copy to your new address, our lean budget is then almost 50 cents per copy poorer. It adds up to a considerable amount with each issue. Please help us by sending your new address to Post Office Box. 64090, Sunnyvale, CA 94088-4090. Thanks.

LEADERSHIP

A study of the 12 Concepts reveals that, for effective leadership, each element of World Service should be endowed with a traditional Right of Decision. Hence, we accept the following statement: "Trusted servants...are expected to exercise leadership, and leadership is not simply a matter of submissive house-keeping. Of course, leadership cannot function if it is constantly subjected to a barrage of harrasing directives."

This study reveals that AA's future is based upon good leaders and upon the proper ways of choosing them; that, due to rotation, our search for them is continuous; that our service-structure base is composed of GSRs, DCMs and delegates—the primary representatives of group conscience. It emphasizes the GSRs as the electors of DCMs and delegates. Thus, we should choose the best qualified candidates for the office of GSR.

Our study moves us to value: the facility of good leadership for originating policy; for never passing the buck; for recognizing when majorities are wrong; for standing firm on issues when they are an informed minority; for distinguishing when compromise is good and when it is not; for reacting well to criticism; for prudent vision of the future, albeit within the emotional disposition of "One Day at a Time."

Finally, our study reminds us that: while we do not lionize service leaders as a special, elite class, we do realize how our talents vary and that we should select the best available talent for each service job.

Frank B. Napa, CA

GOOD NEWS

Newsletter of the

Northern California Council
of Alcoholics Anonymous

Articles of interest to our readers are welcomed and may be mailed to the editor at:

Post Office Box 64090,
Sunnyvale CA 94088-4090

Deadlines for Material

December 10 for January-February
February 10 for March-April
April 10 for May-June
June 10 for July-August
August 10 for September-October
October 10 for November-December

The editor wishes to thank Stan G. of Isleton for contributing his file cabinet to Good News.

The Mystery of the Secret Twelve

We all know the Steps and the Traditions—but what's this we hear about the Concepts? Have you discovered the secret portion of the AA

program yet? Not many members have, you know. I knew that it was a secret the first time I heard it mentioned. It was at our monthly intergroup meeting. Someone used the word "Concepts"—a code, obviously. From the blank looks of most of those in attendance, I could tell it was a secret we were not privileged to know. My suspicions were doubly confirmed when the knowing member declined to commit himself further. I could tell by his smug look that he was among the select few.

Two Views of Seattle . . .

As Perry Sees It

opening night with 50,000 to 60,000 in attendance, as AA's from each represented country carried his or her flag to the podium. The place erupted in a standing ovation when the Soviet flag came forward. And the sharing continued in huge (3,000+) meetings at Seattle Center where they told their stories, describing in a general way what it used to be like, what happened and what it's like now, just like we do. We heard from Juliet, the first AA in Rumania (whose story is in the July Grapevine)...from Moscow's Sasha...from the first two members in Turkey...from AA's who had journeyed from Bulgaria...from Hungary...It was spellbinding.

I came away awed and more grateful than ever to be a member of this fantastic worldwide Fellowship, and entirely ready for the next International Celebration of Sobriety which

. . . and Barbara

Alcoholics Anonymous included those who arrived by first class jet or luxury automobile as well as those who came by bus, bicycle, or thumb. We carried our belongings in backpacks and designer luggage. We slept in penthouse suites of big hotels and sleeping bags under the stars. We wore shorts, jeans, and linen suits.

All God's kids came to Seattle and once again the Language of the Heart transcended our differences. No one who attended left untouched by the experience.

Intrigued by this mystery, I went to my sponsors, who seemed to know everything. I asked, "What are Concepts?"

(Continued on Page 4)

**PLEASE!!!
PRE-
REGISTER!!!**

Sacramento . . .

(Continued from Page 1)

as many people as possible to pre-register. This will help provide "Up Front" money that the Convention Center requires.

The adjoining Hyatt Regency is the host hotel and is holding a block of rooms for us. Please mention N.C.C.A.A. when registering at your favorite hotel as we get credit for hotel rooms filled. Parking will be available.

Everybody—pre-register, show up and bring a friend! We all need to get behind this one! See you there!

Financial Statement

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA COUNCIL OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS Financial Statement 1/1/90 to 6/30/90

Balance on Hand as of 1/1/90		\$14,711.16
Adjustment for Expense Items (1989)	\$61.89	
San Jose Conference Income (1990)	\$14,508.63	
Redding Conference Income	\$7,593.02	
Sacramento Pre-Registration	\$110.00	
TOTAL INCOME		\$22,273.54
EXPENSES		
San Jose Conference Expenses (1990)	\$9,188.43	
Redding Conference Expenses	\$6,855.28	
Sacramento Pre-Conference Expenses	\$1,391.46	
Oakland Pre-Conference Expenses	\$900.00	
Chairman's Expenses (Alex M.)	\$137.06	
Treasurer's Expenses	\$154.00	
Coastal Secretary's Expenses (Diane O.)	\$82.00	
Coastal Secretary's Expenses (Paula D.)	\$36.00	
Interior Secretary's Expenses (Linda M.)	\$47.70	
Phone Expense	\$227.73	
NCCAA Expense (Seattle Conference)	\$80.91	
San Francisco Central Office	\$150.00	
Delegate Ribbons	\$88.07	
Good News	\$75.00	
Cash Drawer	\$25.00	
TOTAL EXPENSES		\$19,438.64
Balance on Hand as of 6/30/90		\$17,546.06

Contact Service Committee Has Formed

For an alcoholic just released from prison, even routine tasks may seem impossible. Driving in traffic, or just making a telephone call, can be frightening or confusing to someone who has been behind bars. Often, the newly released AA inmate never makes it to his first meeting on "The Outside." Something similar can happen with residents of other institutions, or recovery houses, when they return to their home communities. Without any support in the first crucial hours or days after release, these AA's often fail to make the transition to Alcoholics Anonymous at large.

AA Contact Service Groups are forming all across the country, to help inmates and patients bridge this gap. Contact Service volunteers serve as temporary sponsors to these new AA's.

Typically, an AA on "The Inside" writes to Contact Service a few weeks before release, and asks for help. In an exchange of letters (sometimes through an intermediary, like a parole officer) Contact Service will establish the new person's release date and destination, and introduce them to a Contact Service Volunteer. On release day, the volunteer will meet the new man or woman at the door of the institution, and help them get to an AA meeting in their new home town. There are a number of things that Contact Service will not do, of course. We do not feed people, or provide housing. We have no budget, beyond a small amount for postage.

Usually, a volunteer's work is done in a few hours, and consists of an automobile ride, some helpful conversation, and an AA meeting at the end. In everything we do, we are guided by the 12 steps and 12 traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Contact Service has just begun. It could be a few years before we are operating everywhere. However,

Contact Service is already at work, in the Northern California Coastal Area. Letters to our Post Office Box, asking for help, are flowing in.

CNCA Contact Service is prepared to work with members of AA who are currently living in institu-

tions and treatment centers in our area. This includes people who plan to locate outside of the area. We can be reached at the address below.

CNCA CONTACT SERVICE
P.O. Box 9090
Stanford, CA. 94309

Mystery of the Secret 12

(Continued from Page 3) "Oh. That has to do with the service manual," one sponsor replied. "It's part of the politics of AA, for the socialites and the status-seekers."

My other sponsor told me that it had to do with being something called general service. Not long afterward, I was elected general service representative (GSR) for my group. Have you ever been to an AA election? "Elected," I found out, is the polite AA word for "railroading."

At the very first GSR meeting, I was given a booklet entitled The AA Service Manual. I casually opened it and thumbed through the pages, looking for the code. I couldn't find it, at least not readily. As a matter of fact, the booklet looked like a Roberts' Rules of Order for AA. My first lead had run into a dead end, and I was stuck in something called general service.

A few weeks later, I walked into our local intergroup office. "Hi," said the phone volunteer. "Look, I've been cleaning out some shelves in here, and I thought you might be interested in this, being a new GSR and all." Word travels fast through the AA underground. He handed me a booklet. I glanced at the cover as I took it. There on the cover were the words Twelve Concepts for World Service. Concepts! I tried to look cool. Obviously, he didn't know what he had given me.

"Gee, thanks. You never know when you might need a spare copy," I said, still being cool. In the words of another AA, terminal coolness seems to be an ailment that some of us are afflicted with. You know—"I'd rather die than be uncool." Have you ever tried to make your legs walk casually when you wanted to run?

As soon as I got to my car and drove around the block so I wouldn't be seen, I opened the booklet, looking for the code. What a letdown. It seemed to be filled with a lot of legal mumbo jumbo. I stuck the booklet on the shelf in the place reserved for AA books. You know where. It's that spot that's hardest to reach.

A year later, I was again elected/railroaded. This time, it was to serve as DCM (district committee member). Was I in for a shock! Those new GSR's acted as if I was supposed to know what service was all about. They thought I knew the code. What code? I couldn't even find it. Of course, I couldn't tell them that (still cool).

I went to my shelf that night, got the service manual and the Concepts booklet, wiped the dust off them, and began to read. I began with the service manual, planning on being bored. What I discovered instead, in the beginning of the manual, was the priceless experience, strength, and hope of our co-founders and early members. The meaning of a "group conscience" working under the auspices of our "ultimate authority—a loving God" began to take root in what had once been the barren soil of "contempt prior to investigation."

(Continued on Page 5)

Mystery of the Twelve . . .

(Concluded from Page 4)

The Concepts booklet was equally inspiring. Here were the very grass roots of our Society, preserved for all future generations. Ours, I found, was indeed a very democratic society. We held strongly to the Concept of equal responsibility, equal vote. We made certain that the minority opinion was always given the opportunity to be heard. Our leaders were indeed "trusted servants," and AA's experience bore that out in allowing them their "Right of Decision." We had faith in our fellow alcoholics and in God, too. The checks and balances between the board of trustees and the Conference were obviously a carefully contemplated ideal that was squarely based upon mutual trust and a belief that a loving God presides over us.

I had discovered the secret code. It wasn't a secret code at all. It was, and is, a vital part of our program. (These days, new GSR's should catch on faster than I did, now that the service manual and the Concepts are published in one booklet.) If the Concepts are a mystery to some, it's because too few of us have taken the time to discover a very important third of our program.

Recovery is the base of our triangle, but it takes the two uplifted sides - Unity and Service - to make the whole triangle that is AA. When I look at the AA logo, I am always reminded that, at one time, I was flat on my back like the horizontal part of the triangle. Others came to help me, and we reached together toward God, joining hands in recovery. Then we discovered that God had always surrounded us with his love, just as the circle surrounds the triangle.

A concept is a thought, an idea, a visualization of what can be. When Bill and Bob and all our early members gave us the Third Legacy experience we know today as the Twelve Concepts for World Service, they knew exactly what they

were doing. They gave us their dream and trusted us to make it a reality. A bell is not a bell until it's been rung. A song is not a song until it's been sung. A dream is only a dream until we act upon it and make it a reality. "And for that: I am responsible."

C.C., West Palm Beach, Fla.

Reprinted from the Grapevine.

Upcoming Conferences

- SACRAMENTO—October 19-21, 1990
- FRESNO—March 1991
- OAKLAND—June 1991
- REDDING—October 1991
- MONTEREY—March 1992
- SANTA ROSA—June 1992
- SAN JOSE—October 1992

COMING EVENTS

September 8
Sat. 9 AM - 9 PM

C.N.C.A. Summer Assembly of
General Service
National Guard Armory
1500 Armory Dr. Santa Rosa

October 12 - 14
Friday - Sunday

4th Annual Rally "Sobriety
By The Sea" Pre-registration:
\$15.00 per person, \$10.00 One
day, \$20.00 both days per
person at the door.
Cultural Center
1001 Front
Crescent City, CA

October 19 - 21
Friday - Sunday

Please Pre-Register

43rd Annual Conference of
N.C.C.A.A.
Registration \$5.00 per person
Sacramento Convention Center
Sacramento, Calif.

November 1 - 4
Thursday - Sunday

29th Annual Hawaii AA
Conference 1990
Registration \$65.00 per
person includes registration,
Banquet, Dances and Sunday
Breakfast. Late Registration:
\$75.00 after October 15, 1990
Sheridon Waikiki Hotel
Honolulu, Hawaii

November 16 - 18
Friday - Sunday

7th Annual Yosemite AA Summit
Conference. Pre-Registration ONLY:
\$10.00 per per person AT DOOR
Deadline for registration October 31.
Yosemite National Park
Curry Pavilion, Curry Village

November 22 - 25
Thursday - Sunday

24th Annual Las Vegas Roundup of AA
Registration \$15.00 per person
Riviera Hotel
2901 Las Vegas Blvd. S.
Las Vegas, Nevada

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