



GOOD NEWS



Est.
1948

Published BI-Monthly in Sunnyvale, California
By the Northern California Council of Alcoholics Anonymous

NOV. • DEC.
1991

New GSO Pamphlet Eases God Out

The Twelve Steps Illustrated pamphlet is now available at most Central Offices. Approved by the General Service Conference last April, this latest addition to our literature is intended to be an easy-to-read pamphlet for alcoholics with very limited reading ability. It is likely, however, to be of interest and concern to the whole membership.

The pamphlet devotes one page to each Step. The text of the Step is printed at the top. Beneath it is a large illustration. And at the bottom of the page, one or two lines purport to give the meaning of the Step in very simplified language.

The illustrations are in a comic-book style similar to that previously used in the pamphlet *Is AA for Me?* They attempt to depict actions and attitudes which are intensely personal and often internal. How well or poorly they succeed is a question for individual judgement and taste to decide.

The words at the bottom, however, pose some very serious questions for all of us. They can easily be viewed as a major rewriting of the Twelve Steps. For it is not just a matter of smaller and easier words. The content has been altered and reduced in a way that can hardly be anything else than a deliberate policy decision.

The most striking change is that
(See PAMPHLET, Page Three)

Council to Elect New Chairperson at 1992 Spring Conference

It was with a heavy heart that Chairman Alex McE. announced at the Redding conference that he would not seek reelection in Monterey next year. He will be missed by those of us who have worked with him these past years.

Perhaps it would be well for us to review the duties of the Council Chairperson of N.C.C.A.A. as stated in the Purpose and Structure Handbook.

The Council Chairperson is elected at the Spring Conference of the EVEN number years, and serves a two (2) year term. This office is restricted to no more than two (2) consecutive terms. (4 years)

It is recommended that the Council Chairperson have a minimum of 5 years continuous sobriety and a Service background.

The Council Chairperson should have the time available to perform the duties of conducting the business of the Council in presenting the three Conferences each year, and work closely with the Treasurer and Secretaries.

The Council Chairperson may delegate any, or all, of the Chairperson responsibilities to one or both of the Secretaries, or in cases of necessity to any responsible AA member. The Council Chairperson shall, however, assume full responsibility for any functions so delegated. If the Chairperson is unable to assume the duties of the Council, one of the Secretaries will act as Chairperson until a special election can be held.

ELECTION PROCEDURES

The Steering Committee of the
(See ELECTION, Page Five)

New Address For S.F. Inter-County Fellowship of AA; N.C.C.A.A. Mailing Address to Change January 1, 1992

After ten years at the same location at 1046 Irving Street the S.F. Intercounty Fellowship (Central Office) will move to new and larger quarters. Their new address will be 1540 Market Street at Van Ness. With the move will be a new phone number-(415) 621-1326. No need to fear losing contact as the new number will be referred when you call for six months.

This is important to N.C.C.A.A. as we have used this as a permanent mailing address for years for mailing our pre-registrations and other correspondence.

Starting January 1, 1992 all N.C.C.A.A. correspondence, including Pre-Registrations for Conferences should be addressed to:

1540 Market Street
San Francisco, CA 94102

Hospital & Institution Corner

The Hospital & Institution Committee of Northern California wishes to express its gratitude to the members of Alcoholics Anonymous. Your generosity allows us to continue to take literature into facilities that the H&I Committee serves. As of October 1, 1991, the H&I Committee of Northern California has purchased \$201,556.40 in literature since December 1, 1990 to take into these facilities. It is amazing how those pennies, nickels, dimes and quarters add up.

The story of H&I is truly a Cinderella tale of its own. H&I of Northern California had its start in 1942 when Alcoholics Anonymous was first invited into San Quentin by Warden Duffy. The Hospital & Institution Committee hopes to have some of the actual photos of this meeting and Warden Duffy reproduced and displayed at the Spring '92 Monterey Convention. Since that moment H&I has grown to cover all the major prisons in Northern California. Many of these facilities now have bi-weekly meetings in their facilities and have been helpful in supporting inside AA meetings put on by inmates.

H&I would like to extend an invitation for everyone to attend the 20th Annual Hospital & Institution

Conference to be held at the Airport Hilton in Oakland, California on April 24, 25, and 26, 1992. The Convention is not downtown but instead near the airport. Hotel reservations can be made by calling 1-800-HILTON. Rates are \$89.00 single, \$99.00 double, \$109.00 triple and \$119.00 Quad. The theme of the '92 H&I Conference is "Let It Begin With Us." Pre-Registration is a \$5.00 donation and can be sent to: Conference Registration, P.O. Box 4144, San Leandro, CA, 94579-0144.

I personally cannot express the joy and the feeling I receive when I see an inmate or patient at an AA meeting outside. The tears and warmth, not to mention the gratitude, that these former inmates or patients express is the high that service is all about. To watch this person change and "make it" on the outside is what Alcoholics Anonymous is all about. How often I have wished that I did not have to use an evening or a Sunday to do an H&I meeting. But I have never once regretted it after walking out of that facility or institution. The gratitude, the joy, and most of all, the sparkle in the eye of that inmate or patient when they begin to believe that AA can work for them is the reward of H&I.

If you wish to be a part of the H&I Committee please attend your local Area Meeting and ask "What can I do?" That is the very place where I received my first AA message when I believed that I was different and that nothing would work for me.

Submitted by — DAVE P.
Santa Rosa, CA

REMEMBER: There is no problem in your life which a drink will not make worse!

On Listening

Many say that if you go to enough meetings you'll hear your own story. This could occur when listening to a particular speaker. Or it could result from bits and pieces taken from various talks. A payoff is the newcomer's acceptance of personal alcoholism. Another payoff is the gift of hope: "What they can do I can do."

One speaker I recall is Neil C. He urged continuous meeting-attendance. His reasoning was somewhat as follows: You might hear a speaker explain something. And it may sound like Greek. Other speakers might just add to the confusion. But someday you'll hear a speaker who makes complete sense. You will grasp what previously had been obscure. And sobriety will become stronger and make more sense.

Father Barney used to compare sobriety to a ball game. The batter's aim is to get on the base paths. He gets on first. That's physical sobriety. He reaches second. That's mental sobriety. Then he's advanced to third. That's emotional sobriety. Finally he comes home on moral sobriety.

I recall Eddie F. who brought AA to El Salvador. He characterized alcoholism as an emotional illness. That helped to alleviate a little bit of my guilt. At this point it is well to recall that many regard our illness as spiritual, physical and emotional (mental).

I never heard Father Ralph in person but I did read his biography. He had attended meetings for nearly a year before he spoke up. Then, in 1944, a question was raised as to what a speaker should own up to at a meeting. One voice replied that a speaker should reveal all the moral details of his life, and, everything else whether alcohol related or not. Immediately Father Ralph voiced disagreement. "Ours is not a public (See LISTENING, Page Three)

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

New Pamphlet Eases God Out

(Continued from Page One)

God has disappeared; and along with God, the words "as we understood Him," which Bill W. called the "ten-strike" that made Alcoholics Anonymous accessible to any alcoholic. They are gone. In their place is a "Higher Power," a phrase which does not appear in the original Steps and which is certainly not simpler language.

This new version of the Steps also omits the idea of defects of character and shortcomings. The notion seems to be that it is only external incidents, the data of the drunkalogue, that ought to be examined. The need for a *moral* inventory is not presented.

The pronoun *we*, which had expressed so simply and perfectly our common experience and our common purpose, has given way to *I* in the simplified modern rendition. And the past tense, reporting what our earliest members had actually done to get sober, is now a timeless and tentative present.

Here is an example. The Sixth Step shows a man bent under the weight of chains. The words at the bottom are: "I want to be free."

Now, it may be that some members will welcome these changes and consider them to be an improvement. But even they may grant that a little discussion before publication would not have been amiss. What is at stake here is the central core of the program of Alcoholics Anonymous. We know that the Twelve Steps, as we received them from the founding members, have

transformed our lives and the lives of *millions* of alcoholics around the world. We do not know of a single alcoholic anywhere who has sobered up by means of these new, simplified steps.

And it was not as if the pamphlet had to be cobbled together in a hurry to meet an urgent need. The idea for it came out of the 1988 General Service Conference. It has been in the works for three years. But in all that time, no one working on it has

seen fit to consult the membership at large. The Twelve Steps, it seems, are none of our business.

Those who think otherwise are urged to come and see for themselves. Get a copy of this pamphlet. Read it. Think about it. Discuss it in your group. Late as it is, let us ask what is going on here?

JOHN P., PALO ALTO

From the Intergroup Newsletter of Santa Clara County. (With Permission)

The Easy-to-Read Steps

1. The bottle has me down. My life is a mess.
2. There is help.
3. I let a Higher Power take over.
4. I need to look at my life.
5. I admit all I did wrong.
6. I want to be free.
7. I ask a Higher Power to help me be free.
8. I ask: Who did I hurt? How can I fix it?
9. I try to fix things if I can.
10. I check up on myself. I am honest.
11. I ask a Higher Power for help to live the right way.
12. I live by these Steps and get better. I try to help other alcoholics.

(Reprinted with permission of AA World Services Inc.)

**Are you ready for
Monterey? Coming
March 27 — 29, 1992**

On Listening

(Continued from Page Two)

confession," he said. This would seem to uphold the Big Book statement that our stories reveal in a general way what we were like.

FRANK B., NAPA, CA

From the GRAPEVINE — February, 1952

Northern California Council

Apparently an unique phase of AA activity is the Northern California Council. The Council meets four times each year for serious business, for knowledge of new approaches to AA, for renewal of old acquaintances . . . and for making a bit of sane and sober whoopee.

Conceived at a meeting of the Oakland Alano Club on March 23, 1948, the first Council was attended by interested AAs from most of the counties of the North. Since that first meeting the Council has been held in Sacramento, Stockton, San Jose, Vallejo, Santa Rosa, Santa Cruz, San Mateo, Monterey-Pacific Grove, Oakland and San Francisco.

On two occasions it has been called upon to make arrangements for special events . . . Bill's visit last Fall for the General Service Conference Assembly, to elect a delegate to the Conference. Then again in October, 1951 to arrange for a meeting held, "in gratitude for the Lasker Award." Although this is a loosely knit organization, it is constructed so that calls such as these can be answered quickly and effectively.

The loose structure of the Council

consists simply of a representative selected by each participating group. These men and women conduct the discussions and the business of the Northern California Council.

At the beginning and in line with the early-day thinking in San Francisco, the Council meetings were closed to AAs only. During the past five years, however, the trend has changed toward open meetings so that now, at the annual meetings more than 3,000 AAs and their families and friends have been reported as those present. Attendance at the quarterly sessions has run up to more than 400.

The format of The Northern California Council is simple. An overall topic is usually chosen for each Council. Speakers are selected from the cities participating, who

give their interpretations of different phases of the chosen subject. One of the outstanding features of the meeting is an hour's discussion of group problems. At times this has become quite hectic as members throw their views and problems out for discussion. Each group participating sends two official delegates, who are the only speakers recognized at the discussion sessions.

The fifth Annual Conference will be held next month in Sacramento, in conjunction with the Assembly called to select the delegates and the committee for Panel Two of the General Service Conference.

(This article tells it like it was and was found and submitted by Bill S., Stockton, CA)

A Friend of Bill W.

With the holiday season fast approaching, I am reminded of how it used to be. I always planned a happy and sober day but it usually ended in a drunken one.

At our house, after the turkey was put into the oven, I had to do the next important thing, setting up the bar before the family and guests arrived. Every time I passed the bar, I had to sample a bottle to make sure the contents were O.K. You guessed right, by the time the family and guests arrived, I was feeling no pain!

First we had to have cocktails and when dinner was served, we had to have wine, no dinner is complete without it. Following dinner, we had our after dinner drinks and then I got down to some serious drinking. Sometimes I would end the day in a "blackout" or more often get in

a fight with my wife, which gave me another excuse to drink some more.

A few years back, I found out that I didn't have to spend my holidays like that. I found Alcoholics Anonymous and today I spend them with my AA family and friends. I go to meetings and Alkathons and find that I enjoy them much more than the way I previously spent my holidays. I recommend this new way to all; it is a better way to celebrate a happy holiday.

Submitted by HAROLD L. Rocklin, CA



N. C. C. A. A. CONFERENCE DATES

1992 Conferences

MONTEREY • Mar. 27, 28, 29,
SANTA ROSA • June 26, 27, 28
SAN JOSE • Oct. 16, 17, 18,

FRESNO - March 1993
OAKLAND - June 1993
STOCKTON - October 1993
MONTEREY - March 1994
OPEN - June 1994
MODESTO - October 1994

MARK YOUR CALENDARS
Please Pre-Register

TWELVE TIPS ON KEEPING YOUR HOLIDAY SEASON SOBER AND JOYOUS

Holiday parties without liquid spirits may still seem a dreary prospect to new AAs. But many of us have enjoyed the happiest holidays of our lives sober—an idea we would never have dreamed of, wanted, or believed possible when drinking. Here are some tips for having an all-around ball without a drop of alcohol.

1. *Line up extra AA activities for the holiday season.* Arrange to take newcomers to meetings, answer the phones at a clubhouse or central office, speak, help with dishes, or visit the alcoholic ward at a hospital.

2. *Be host to AA friends, especially newcomers.* If you don't have a place where you can throw a formal party, take one person to a diner and spring for the coffee.

3. *Keep your AA telephone list*

with you all the time. If a drinking urge or panic comes—postpone everything else until you've called an AA.

4. *Find out about the special holiday parties, meetings, or other celebrations* given by groups in your area, and go. If you're timid, take someone newer than you are.

5. *Skip any drinking occasion you are nervous about.* Remember how clever you were at excuses when drinking? Now put that talent to good use. No office party is as important as saving your life.

6. *If you have to go to a drinking party and can't take an AA with you, keep some candy handy.*

7. *Don't think you have to stay late.* Plan in advance an "important date" you have to keep.

8. *Go to church.* Any church.

9. *Don't sit around brooding.*

Catch up on those books, museums, walks, and letters.

10. *Don't start now getting worked up about all those holiday temptations.* Remember—"one day at a time."

11. *Enjoy the true beauty of holiday love and joy.* Maybe you cannot give material gifts—but this year, you can give love.

12. *"Having had a..."* No need to spell out the Twelfth Step here, since you already know it.

(From MIRUS, Minneapolis, MN)

Council to Elect in '92

(Continued from Page One)

Council will sit as a Nominating Committee for the purpose of accepting nominations for the Election. The roll will be called of all Steering Committee Members, who may or may not place a nominee. After the roll of the members has been called, the nominations are considered closed. The Nominating Committee will then discuss the qualifications of the nominees and select a slate of nominees, recommended to be at least (3) three. Those nominees selected will then be voted for at an election held at the N.C.C.A.A. Open Delegates Meeting of the same annual Spring Conference.

All registered N.C.C.A.A. Delegates are eligible to vote in this election. Fifty-one percent (51%) of the total vote will elect. Balloting will be by secret ballot. If after two (2) ballots, no nominee has fifty-one percent (51%) of the total vote, the nominee with the least votes will be eliminated and voting will continue until one nominee has fifty-one (51%) of the total vote cast.

CHRISTMAS - THEN

'twas the night before Christmas and all through the house
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse.

We reached for the bottles we'd hid on the shelves,
For those were the presents we'd bought for ourselves.
We never had money to spend for a gift,
We needed it all for that holiday lift.

Now that was our Christmas before finding A.A.,
We were drinking our cheer in the usual way.
And all Christmas Eve the joint would be rocking,
'Tho we knew fully well what we'd find in our stockings.
We followed a pattern that seemed to be right,
Wasn't Christmas the time when people got tight?

CHRISTMAS - NOW

That Christmas is past and a new one draws near,
But with its approach we hold nary a fear.
For thru A.A.'s pattern we've found a new way,
To know a real Christmas truly happy and gay.
The tree will be brilliant, the lights bright and clear,
And not from a bottle will come Christmas cheer.
But straight from our hearts a true warmth will glow,
Reflected by love for the friends that we know.
So to you "Merry Christmas" full of genuine cheer,
May the green light be yours in the coming new year.

PAUL GARDNER, Mill Valley, CA 1988

C.N.C.A. Delegates Report

There was a wonderful feeling of unity at our Fall Assembly in Calistoga on November 2. After lots of discussion of items on our business meeting agenda, each decision was made by a substantial majority. I didn't agree with all the decisions that were made, but by allowing the process to work, I was comfortable with what happened. This is the essence of the group conscience process—all points of view are heard, the majority opinion is encouraged following the vote, and decisions are made by substantial unanimity. This often takes longer, but the resulting sense of unity makes it worth the time and energy.

The presentations on medallions provided background on what may turn out to be one of the hot topics for the 1992 General Service Conference (we'll be discussing a motion about medallions at the November Area Committee Meeting). The focus is on whether it is in keeping with our singleness of purpose to produce medallions with the circle and triangle logo—don't be sidetracked by questions of logistics.

I am especially grateful to those people who participated in the workshop to answer the questions asked by the Conference Grapevine Committee.

Six of our Past Delegates attended the Assembly and seemed to be busy talking to people all day. They are a part of our link to the past in the California Northern Coastal Area. If you haven't made use of their experience and friendship, I urge you to do so.

Fliers for PRAASA in Portland March 6-8, 1992 have arrived. I'll bring them to the Area Committee Meeting. Additional fliers and information are available by calling Ray L. (503) 281-0568 or Ardy K. (503) 255-8103 or by writing PRAASA Registration P.O. Box 347, Portland, OR 97207-0347.

At the end of the month, I'll be submitting names of 8-10 people who'd like to be readers, panelists, or round-table moderators at PRAASA. Let me know if you're

willing. If I have too many names, I'll draw "from the hat."

Agenda topics for the 1992 General Service Conference will probably be discussed at the next meeting. (See DELEGATES, Page Seven)

Northern California Council of Alcoholics Anonymous

1991 FINAL OAKLAND CONFERENCE FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Pre-Registration (330)	\$1,653.60	
Registration (1414)	<u>\$7,074.00</u>	
TOTAL REGISTRATION (1744)		\$8,727.60
Raffle	\$1,495.23	
Literature	\$295.60	
English Speaking Marathons	\$570.90	
General Service Meetings	\$127.13	
NCCAA Meetings	\$27.00	
H&I Meetings	\$25.62	
Early Bird Speaker Meeting	\$45.96	
Friday Night Speaker Meeting	\$452.98	
Young Peoples' Speaker Meeting	\$277.45	
Saturday Night Speaker Meeting	\$1,134.13	
Sunday Morning Speaker Meeting	<u>\$312.40</u>	
		<u>\$4,764.40</u>
TOTAL INCOME		\$13,492.00
EXPENSES		
Printing	\$1,656.08	
Mailings	\$362.39	
Speaker/Committee Travel	\$1,499.60	
Speaker/Committee Dinner	\$364.17	
Speaker/Committee Lodging	\$1,521.83	
Insurance	\$1,956.00	
Sign Language Interpreters	\$205.00	
Convention Center	\$6,857.68	
Registration	\$22.13	
Raffle	\$284.60	
Flowers & Decorations	\$184.63	
Band	\$300.00	
Literature	\$425.86	
Ashtrays	\$78.65	
TOTAL EXPENSES		<u>\$15,718.62</u>
REVENUES LESS EXPENSES		(\$2,226.62)

Delegates Report (from Page Six)

ably not be available in any structured format until after the 1st of January. I'll pass them on to you as soon as they're available to me. Until then, this is an opportunity to tell the groups about the spiritual and material qualities of self-support. The basket is the place where money and spirituality can mix. Not all our members know about the services provided by the General Service Office and our Central Offices. G.S.R.'s can talk about this. The General Service Office and our Central Offices/Intergroups may have to further cut back on essential services because of lack of funds-or they may have to further rely on sales of literature thus moving away from the spirit of the Seventh Tradition. Many groups report that they have little money left to disburse to G.S.O., Central Office, C.N.C.A., and district after paying group expenses, but what about individual members? As I wrote a check last week for \$75.00 for a self-indulgence, I had to ask myself how that compared to what I put in the basket at my home group every month. When we make our personal budgets, what priority do we give to supporting Alcoholics Anonymous?

I'll see you in Oakland on November 23 (the 4th Saturday). Don't forget to mark your calendar for December 21 (the third Saturday.)

*With love from your trusted servant,
BARBARA M., Panel 41 Delegate, Eureka, CA*



HUMOR

A drunk was walking along the street with one foot in the gutter and the other on the curb. A passerby called out to him: "What's the matter with you, Bud? You've got one foot in the gutter! You must be drunk to be walking that way."

"Thank God!" cried the drunk. "I thought I was lame."

An old man fainted while walking down the street.

"Call a doctor," said one bystander.

"Give him a drink of whiskey," said a little old lady.

"Give him some air," suggested another.

"Give him a drink of whiskey," repeated the old lady.

Finally, the old man sat up and shouted, "Will you all shut up and listen to the old lady!"

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