



GOOD NEWS



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By the Northern California Council of Alcoholics Anonymous

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Service Makes AA Tick

A coffeepot simmers on the kitchen stove, a hospital sobers the stricken sufferer, general headquarters broadcasts the AA message; our service lifelines span the seven seas. All these symbolize AA in action. For action is the magic word of Alcoholics Anonymous. So it is that every AA service daily proves that so-called "material activities" can lead to magnificent spiritual results.

Once upon a time, all AA meetings were held in homes. There weren't any committees, and nobody put up a cent. We hadn't even a name, and "founders" were unheard of. It was that simple.

Yet we did enjoy one "service"--a valuable one, too. Wives baked cakes and brewed strong coffee for us alkies huddling together in the front parlors, still terrified that our new program might not work after all. Those wifely dispensations of good cheer smoothed the way and so lightened our burden of doubt. Thus, from the very beginning, did such gracious service make AA tick.

By and by, meetings got big. Our front parlors couldn't hold them. We had to move into halls. Gathering places seldom came free, so we must needs pay rent. Landlords weren't a particle interested in the spiritual advantages of group poverty. So someone passed the hat, and we dropped money into it voluntarily. We grudgingly learned that rent was necessary to ensure sobriety--our spiritual dividend, life itself.

This rent-paying process also produced the first AA "official." The gent we picked to pass the hat soon became our treasurer. Then phone calls had to be answered, letters writ-

ten, literature ordered and distributed. The now familiar group secretary put in his--or--her appearance. Presently newspaper interviews had to be given, preachers and doctors canvassed, hospital arrangements made, banquets set up. Not by anybody, either. Somebody special had to be picked to do these chores. That "somebody" became the group service chairman.

Of course this was all quite troublesome, for it marred our sometimes fallible serenity. Squabbling began, dark forecasts of our future were made, and everybody yearned to go back into the parlors. But we didn't because we couldn't. We saw we'd have to have service committees or fail to function, perhaps fall

(See SERVICE, Page Three)

Council Heading North To Redding

(Well, North from Here)

It looks as if the Redding gang is ready for a conference. The slate of speakers looks great, they are all signed up, rooms are reserved, so let's go! Guy J. has promised us great weather for the weekend, lets hope he is right. The way it's been going, we could have rain. Anyway, rain or shine, here we come. June 25 - 27.

Music for the dance Saturday night will be provided by a local D.J. Jim Anderson's "Magic of Music" will be on hand from 10:30 to 1:30 Saturday night so bring your dancing shoes.

Come early to the Early Bird Meeting at 3:30 Friday afternoon. Phil R., another local will speak at that meeting. Hope to see you there for a wonderful weekend!

News From The Chairperson

Since I last shared with all of you three months ago, our eager beavers have been very busy, getting us new zone chairpeople and new group delegates. The phone calls that I have been receiving have kept my insides smiling. We now have 29 zone chairpeople which is wonderful. The updated zone map (See Page Five) tells you which county zones still do not have any representation (12) and which ones technically now belong to the Nevada area (7). Keep up the great work. Thank you.

In the last edition of the GOOD NEWS (March-April), some of my report was inadvertently omitted. Before I continue with the latest news, I will share with you what was not

included in the last issue:

"At our Steering Committee and Open Delegates' Meetings in Fresno, several important business items were passed. Monterey's bid for the 1996 Spring Conference March 8, 9, 10 was accepted. The Finance/Audit Committee was made a permanent standing committee of NCCAA, and a motion to structure bids for future NCCAA Conferences was passed. We will accept bids at March Conferences for the second weekend of March three years hence, at June Conferences for the first or second weekend in June three years hence, and at October Conferences for the first or second weekend in October

(See MORE FROM, Page Three)

Hospital & Institution Corner

We can never address any audience in Northern California without continued thanks for your contributions through the "Pink Cans" to Hospital and Institutions work. At the end of 1992, those contributions were \$20,000 OVER contributions of 1991! THANK YOU!

At our February 21 General Meeting, the budget for 1993 was presented and approved. It comes to just over \$300,000, \$240,000 of which will be spent for pamphlets and books from AA World Services, \$25,000 for 1200 subscriptions to the Grapevine and 400 subscriptions to the Grapevine-like Spanish language magazine from Mexico, \$10,000 for other Grapevine literature, tapes and meeting directories, and the balance for necessary storage and distribution of these items - a total of \$285,500! All made possible by your generosity.

However, we want to make your generosity go as far as possible, so several new ways of doing business have been initiated for trial and - we hope - success. Most are aimed at getting more out of each dollar you all have contributed. We are consolidating mailings in order to use the bulk mail permit we now have. This

will make for a considerable saving in postage—one of the biggest non-literature items in our budget.

A slightly different approach has been that most of the AA books we now purchase are the soft cover ones. First of all, we had asked AAWS for them for easier use in the facilities, and the Conference responded to that plea several years ago. Second, we can buy more of them for the same amount we spent on hard back copies and thus can reach more people with your contributions.

While we're talking about Pink Cans, we urge you once again to be sure to send the monies collected in them to H & I, P.O. Box 192490, San Francisco, CA 94119-2490. This assures that we get it in a timely manner. Please also be certain that there is a valid and current return address on the envelope, on the check, or on an enclosed note so we can credit the proper group and H & I Area with your contribution. Please use a check or money order for this payment.

As always, the increasing requests for AA meetings brought into institutions and treatment centers by H & I continues. We need the help of every sober alcoholic to fulfill this need. Are you doing your part?

*Submitted by Will N.,
Sacramento, CA*

**Support the Pink Cans,
but don't neglect your
Regular Baskets**

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

Deadline Guidelines (Not Set In Stone)

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

Focus

Early Akron AA's were inclined to restrict AA membership to pure alcoholics, that is, to those whose alcoholism had no complications. They soon corrected this attitude and AA is open to any and all alcoholics. It is not restricted to pure alcoholics if there is such a thing. Nevertheless, AA Tradition points to our purity of focus. This focus is upon recovery from alcoholism only.

Our Book describes us as people who normally would not mix. Accordingly, we avoid conflict and division by focusing upon our common problem and its common solution, rather than upon the things that differentiate us. Doctor Dole was a Class A General Service Board Trustee. His medical specialty was heroin addiction. In the October '72 *Grapevine* he said: "The source of strength in AA is ... its extraordinary focus on the specific mission of helping alcoholics, the Fifth Tradition. If AA were to abandon this precept ... it would destroy the Fellowship. The Fifth Tradition ... limits our goal to what we can do uniquely well." Some years ago, *Narcotics Anonymous* quoted Bill W. in their publication, *NEWSLINE*, as follows:

"One of AA's greatest strengths is its ... focus on ... one thing only." They went on to say that "The AA ... alcoholic related language, and the NA approach ... don't mix very well ... When our members identify as 'addicts and alcoholics,' or talk about ... 'clean and sober' ... the NA message is blurred. Each ... fellowship must stand alone ... The focus of AA is on the alcoholic, and we ought to

(See Focus, Page Three)

Good News Policy The Good News is the newspaper of the Northern California Council of Alcoholics Anonymous and therefore is a vehicle for you, the members and supporters of the Council to express your views. The views expressed here are those of the writers, and are not intended to represent the opinion of Alcoholics Anonymous or NCCAA as a whole, nor do they necessarily reflect the views of the staff of the Good News.

If you would like to contribute articles to the Good News, we welcome your participation. The guidelines are as follows: "It (Good News) reports the activities of the Council, Hospital and Institution Committee, General Service, and other articles of interest to AA members. News is written about the conferences for the benefit of members unable to attend. News of activities of the Groups in Northern California may also be included."

Point of View

The Fresno Conference from a member: Having been a member of Alcoholics Anonymous for many years and been in another State for several years, being home with NCCAA was an exhilarating experience for me. Many old friends and faces and many new. Being part of the Host Committee working registration was really fun, again greeting people as they came in.

I was happy to see Bart and Marilyn still doing the taping. Past and present treasurers and delegates, eating and laughing, drinking coffee and enjoying all the speakers and activities.

The GOOD NEWS I'm sure will keep me in touch even if I can't make it to all the conferences in the future. I do know the work, the energy, the service involved. I enjoyed being one of the trusted servants.

The thing I remember most was the Sunday morning speaker talking about a person who passed thru his life briefly and has never run into him again. I've been looking for that same person for many years. I doubt these people we will see again because I believe for that brief time of our lives, "We were entertaining an angel" - God doing for us what we could not do for ourselves. Keep coming back, because I plan to.

Submitted by Tory S., Fresno

Focus

(Continued from Page Two)

respect their perfect right to protect that focus. If we cannot use language consistent with that, we ought not go to their meetings and undermine the atmosphere."

Probably most of us anonymously, practice AA principles in all our affairs; in our other-than-alcohol problems. But we do not, in AA forums, introduce these other things as primary purposes. Within AA we observe a purity of focus.

FRANK B., Napa, CA

Service Makes. . .

(Continued from Page One)

apart entirely. We'd actually *have to organize services in order to keep AA simple.*

Hospitals, we early found, disliked drunks. We had been noisy nuisances who ducked paying bills and seldom got well. Yet we quickly saw that many an alcoholic might never get a real chance with AA unless hospitalized. What could we do?

At first, we went in for home "tapering." But instead of "tapering off," our new clients usually "tapered on"—and right back into the bars again. Some groups tried to organize "AA hospitals" with MDs on call. This carried matters too far; it put our groups straight into serious business. All these early attempts were busts. We finally learned that each AA group ought to be *primarily a spiritual entity, not a business corporation.* Then individual AAs and their friends began to set up rest homes and drunk farms as private enterprises. This worked a lot better, but still it wasn't enough.

At length the medics began to come to our aid. Agreeing with our hard-earned conclusion that doctoring ought to be the affair of doctors, they commenced to help us make hospital connections. Our first attempts to cooperate with hospitals in *(See . . . AA Tick, Page Four)*

More from the Chairperson

(Continued from Page One)

three years hence. At the conference where the bid is presented, NCCAA bid forms must be filled out and any pertinent hotel and convention center information included and copies given to the Chairperson. New conference sites must be inspected by the Chairperson at least three months before the conference where the bid is to be presented."

There were several interesting items of business discussed at our April 25 Steering Committee Meeting in Stockton. (The tape selection committee also met and chose some terrific speakers for the June 1994 Conference in Monterey. They are all available and have accepted). These items of business will be discussed more in Redding, both at the morning Steering Committee Meeting and at the afternoon Open Delegates' Meeting. First of all, there now appears to be a strong feeling among Steering Committee members that we do not need a Finance Committee but that a yearly review of our Treasurer's records is prudent. David K. will discuss his ideas for accomplishing this at our meeting in Redding. We will continue to dis-

cuss, with input from Faye R., guidelines for using an interpreter for the hearing impaired at our conferences. George M. will report on his committee's efforts to prepare an NCCAA inventory, and Dianne J. will update us on her committee's preparations to revise the *Purpose, Structure, Functions Booklet.* Carole D. will present her recommendation that we adopt the Third Legacy Procedure in the election of the NCCAA Chairperson and Treasurer, and we will hear bids for the 1996 Summer Conference. Last but not least, San Mateo is ready to host the 1995 Summer Conference on June 2, 3, 4 at the new Conference Center in South San Francisco, using the Ramada Inn next door as the host hotel. Several of your officers have visited these sites and do recommend that they be accepted. I especially want to thank Bob F. and his San Mateo County Zone Committee for all the love and time and energy that they have put into preparing this bid. They have met and overcome numerous obstacles.

In my last report for the GOOD NEWS, I asked some questions about group delegates and zone chairpeople. *(See CHAIRPERSON, Page Five)*

...AA Tick

(Continued from Page Three)

city areas often led to damaging confusion. Anybody sponsored anybody, and those hospital bills still didn't get paid. Cocksure AAs told doctors how to run wards. This easygoing lack of head or tail in our hospital relations didn't keep AA simple at all. Confusion was general until some hospitals bluntly told metropolitan AA groups that responsible members with whom they could consistently deal would have to be named--or else. Nobody, said the hospitals, could possibly cooperate with an anarchy.

It began to dawn upon AA that *group responsibility would have to reach much further than the meeting hall doorstep* on Tuesday and Thursday nights only. Otherwise, the new man approaching our door might miss his chance, might lose his life.

Slowly, most reluctantly, groups in densely populated areas saw they would have to form associations, open small offices, pay a few full-time

'a damned head tax'

secretaries. Terrific outcries went up. To many, this really meant destructive organization, politics, professionalism, big expense, a ruling officialdom, and government. "Believe us," they argued, "a local central office could cost metropolitan AA members 50 cents a month apiece. That could turn into a damned head tax--what about our AA Tradition of no 'fees or dues'?"

Of course these exaggerated fears never materialized. We have lots of good intergroup associations now, voluntarily supported. The newcomer is getting a better break; the hospitals are pleased. The office of one large association has sponsored and hospitalized 7,000 alcoholics. Prompt interview and phone service is planting the seeds of recovery in other thousands. Local meeting directories are issued, public relations and

dinners set up. We found these last couldn't be carelessly left to anybody who happened to feel like giving interviews or printing up a bundle of tickets and handbills. In short, intergroups do those area chores that no single individual or group could. They unify regions; they make AA tick.

By 1937, some of us realized that AA needed a standard literature. There would have to be a book. Our word-of-mouth program could be garbled, we might be destroyed by dissension over basic principles, and then our public relations would surely go to pot. We'd fall flat on our obli-

'We'd fall flat'

gation to the alcoholic who hadn't yet heard unless we put our knowledge on paper.

But not everybody agreed. Many were badly scared by this proposal. Money in some quantity would be needed, there would be huge disputes over authorship, royalties, profits, prices, and the contents of the book itself. Some truly believed that this seemingly reckless project would blow our little Society to bits. "Let's avoid trouble, let's keep things simple," they said.

Well, we did quarrel violently over the preparation and distribution of that AA book. In fact, it took five years for the clamor to die down. Should any AAs dream that the old-timers who put the book together went about at the time in serene meditation and white robes, then they

'simplified our task'

had best forget it. The inspiration readers now say they find in the volume must have got there by the grace of God only!

Yet see what has happened. Two hundred-thousand AA books circulated in this year 1951, silently scattering our message worldwide, light-

ing the path of progress for nearly every incoming member. Without doubt, that book is the backbone of our unity; it has unbelievable *simplified* our task. Although its preparation was in part a very "material" proceeding indeed, those early labor pains of its creation did help form our Society and cause it to function. The spiritual result in sobriety, happiness, and faith is altogether beyond any reckoning.

This group of headquarters services enables AA to function as a

'they guard--

--they watch'

whole. They guard our Traditions; they issue our principal literature. They watch over our general public relations and so relate us rightly to the world outside. They mediate our difficulties; they guide our policy. Therefore, these indispensable services are AA's principal lifelines to the millions who do not know.

It is this world center of service which constitutes the principal bequest in our recently announced Third Legacy. And it is by the terms of this Legacy of Service that the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous, a representative body of state and provincial (now Conference area) delegates, assumed control and guidance of these principal affairs of AA last April.

That event marked the passing of responsibility for our world services from Dr. Bob, our friends, and myself, to you - the members of Alcoholics Anonymous. Support and guard these assets well; the lives and fortunes of millions, the very survival of AA itself may depend much upon how well you discharge this, your newfound obligation.

Let us make our services respectable; let us rank them in importance with the Twelve Steps of recovery and the Twelve Principles of AA Tradition. Let us forget our fear of over organization; let us remember that AA as a whole cannot be organized.
(Please See Next Page)

Tick (Continued from Page Four)

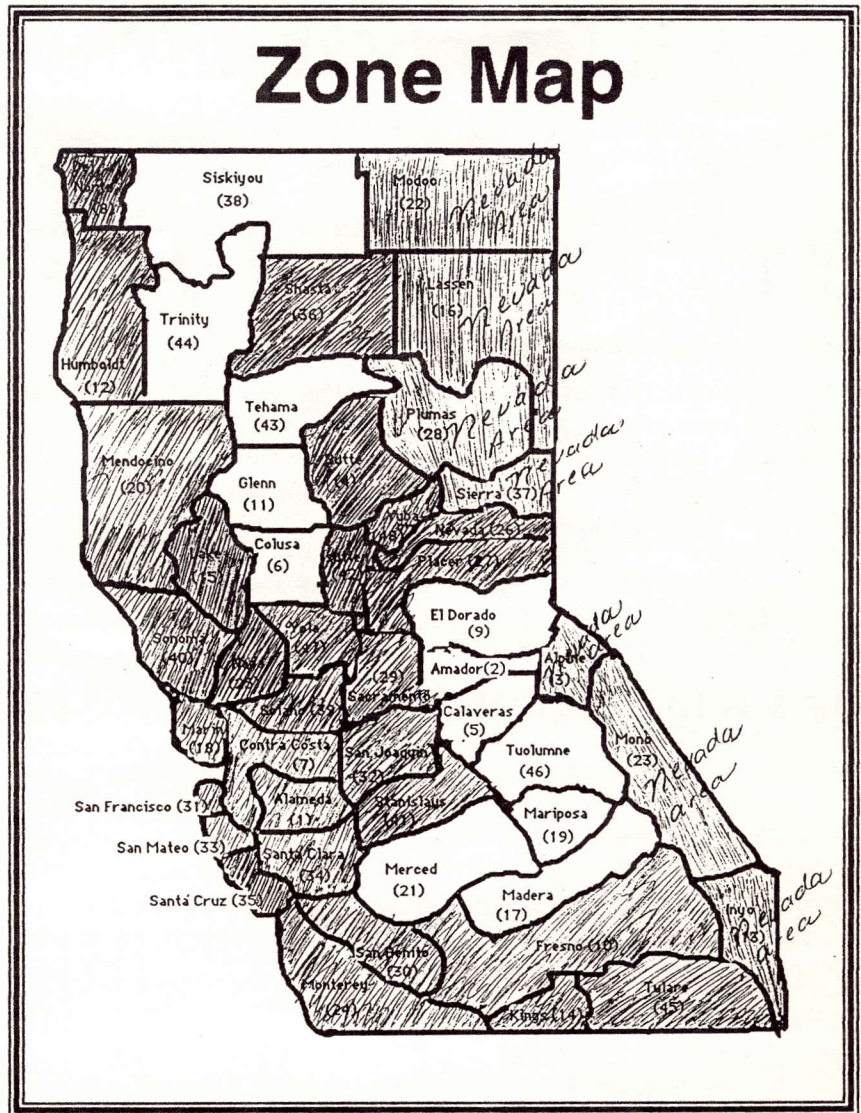
nized, but that we must so organize and support our special services that AA can function. Let us forget our early fears of professionalism, of the accumulation of wealth, of government. Experience, now fortified by our Traditions, has already assured us none of these evils are likely to descend upon us.

Above all, let's change our old attitude about money. Collectively, AA members earn an enormous income because of their sobriety, it's a one-half a billion-dollar bonanza each year. Can we not wisely, gratefully, and humbly reinvest a tiny fraction of this vast sum in those vital services that make AA tick? I think we can, and I think we shall. For in our lives we have seen sobriety produce money, and in our AA services we have seen a little money produce incalculable spiritual dividends. Let's think this all through again.

By our Twelve Steps we have recovered, by our Twelve Traditions we have unified, and through our Third Legacy--Service--we shall carry the AA message down through all the corridors of time to come. Of this, I am happily confident.

By **BILL W., 1951**

From Best of the Grapevine



**NCCAA
CONFERENCE DATES**

1993 Conferences
REDDING - June 25, 26, 27
STOCKTON - October 8, 9, 10

1994 Conferences
OAKLAND - March 25, 26, 27
MONTEREY - June 24, 25, 26
MODESTO - October 7, 8, 9

1995 Conferences
FRESNO - March 10, 11, 12
SAN MATEO - June 2, 3, 4
SACRAMENTO - Oct. 6, 7, 8

1996 Conferences
MONTEREY - March 8, 9, 10

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Chairperson

(Continued from Page Three)

One question that was not included and that may come up during our NCCAA inventory is: *How many zone chairpeople are actually elected by their group delegates?* I suspect very few, if any. AA has grown tremendously in Northern California since the late 1940s when NCCAA began, and new service structures have developed. Do we need to adapt by making any changes in our structure, or do we continue on as we are because our conferences have continued to be successful for 46 years? This is just some additional food for

thought related to the questions I asked and comments I made in our last issue of the GOOD NEWS. I have received some great phone calls in response to my last report. Please let me know what is on your mind.

Finally, Redding is ready for us. Their committee is impressive, and past history tells us that they really know how to put on a conference. It was my pleasure to attend their last two committee meetings and meet with the host hotel people and the Convention Center people. I must tell you that all is very right with the world in Redding. I look forward to seeing you there.

Yours in love and service,

DIANE O., Saratoga, CA

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