



GOOD NEWS



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From the desk of NCCAA's Chairman

New Editor Needed!

Is anyone available to be our new Good News Editor? We need someone who can publish and mail this newsletter 4 times a year and set up the table at the conferences. Please contact our Chairman, Joe C through our website www.ncc-aa.org.

The Next H & I Conference will be in San Mateo County in April of 2008

The H & I Conference Committee wants to thank everyone who attended the Conference in Petaluma in April. The first purpose of the conference is to reach out to the non-alcoholic community to let them know how we can work together to carry the AA message to alcoholics who are confined and can't make it out to a regular meeting. At every H & I Conference we hear non-alcoholics tell us the recovery they have witnessed when an alcoholic recovers as a result of our work. We also heard from 3 members on Saturday afternoon who recovered as a

result of hearing the message while confined.

The H & I Conference is a separate committee from the H & I Committee. This is to ensure that we never mix the Pink Can funds designed to buy literature for the confined alcoholics with money to bring in AA Speakers to our conferences. The two committees work very closely together but remain autonomous. The next H & I Conference will be in the Burlingame area in April of 2008. Anyone interested is welcome to participate.

The H & I Committee is getting ready for their election meeting to be held on June 10th in the San Mateo area. You can get more information by contacting the H & I website at www.norcalhandi.org. The committee wants to thank Marcel A for her work as our chairperson. We have noticed that as we opened our communications with the other AA service committees in Northern California that we have more members involved in this type of twelve step work and our funds to buy literature has done a better job of getting literature to confined alcoholics. We thank everyone who contributes either with their time or money in our single purpose of carrying the message to the confined alcoholics.

Please join us at the H & I Panel Meeting at the next NCCAA Conference at 9:30 on Saturday morning.

Steve M

916-479-2710.

News from California Interior Area

California Northern Interior General Service Area of AA consists of all the AA Groups located, generally speaking, from the west slope of the Sierra to the coastal range, bounded by the Oregon border in the north and including Tulare County in the south. There are approximately 800 Groups listed with the General Service Office, and many more regularly-meeting groups which are not currently listed. There are 27 General Service Districts in the Area, two of which are Spanish-speaking linguistic areas.

CNIA, like all General Service areas, continues the work of the General Service Conference by transmitting information between the Groups and the General Service Office in New York, and the Groups with the General Service Conference as a whole in the United States and Canada. It is also a link to AA worldwide. Very often, General Service is dubbed "the big AA picture," and it is big indeed.

The Area also provides a forum for the Groups to develop services which a single Group or District cannot manage alone. Currently, CNIA is working on a Bridging the Gap Program which will provide one-on-one contact when a newcomer is discharged from a treatment facility or released from a corrections facility. An ad-hoc committee has been formed and has worked diligently for many, many hours to forge a proposal which will be considered by the Area Committee before being forwarded to the Assembly. This is the first time the Area has developed a program for direct 12th-Step work, and it is proceeding very carefully. Another project just newly approved by the Assembly is a CNIA Area website. There is considerable excitement about this, and we look forward to going on-line soon. The Area also helps District and Intergroup Public Information and Cooperation With the Professional Community Committees (PI/CPC) with ideas for carrying the message outside of the AA Community. The Area sponsors excellent workshops to address this important topic.

In addition to developing services, General Service provides the opportunity for Groups and Districts to discuss issues at a local level. Some of the problems encountered by the Groups include rising rent costs, theft at meetings, facilities requiring insurance, and cooperating with non-AA entities. Groups share their solutions and successes with these and other problems, and receive the support and encouragement from knowing they are not alone.

General Service offers many opportunities to serve AA. If your Group is not represented, elect a General Service Representative (GSR) and have a voice in AA as a whole. If GSR is not for you (how do you know unless you check it out?) you may wish to consider some other adjunct service. Currently the CNIA Translation Committee needs bilingual persons (English-Spanish) to translate at Area events as well as translate printed materials. If you can translate verbal or written and you are in the CNIA locale, please contact us. Do you like AA history? The CNIA Archives in Stockton can use some help. Cataloging and preserving documents, organizing the materials in a meaningful way, and looking up requested information are important aspects of archival work.

CNIA thanks NCCAA for the opportunity to share in the Good News newsletter. If you want more information about CNIA, please contact Melody at 209.956.0518.

In love and service,
Melody T., Chair,
CNIA 07

Taking Pictures at A.A. Events: Think Before You Push, Pull or Click

Today, when photographing friends at an A.A. event is as easy as whipping out a cell phone and taking aim, it is just as easy to brush aside A.A.'s Eleventh Tradition, which states, "Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press,

radio, and films." And, in fact, this Tradition has stood many tests of time.

At the 1974 General Service Conference, then delegate Ruth H. of Southeast New York, said, "Recently a local member took a picture of all tables at a personal anniversary meeting, not asking if anyone wished to be photographed.

The celebrant (with many years in A.A.) was snapped with the speakers and cutting the cake, like at a wedding. The photographer, when asked if he had permission from those present to take their pictures, said, 'This is my group and my camera!' " In another instance, Ruth related, a member caught on camera celebrating his anniversary "innocently left the picture on his home coffee table. A neighbor came in, pointed to someone else in the picture and said, 'I didn't know he was in A.A.'"

Because of such instances, Ruth reported, "the topic was brought to our area assembly. Some people said, 'Everybody saw me drunk, so why should I hide in A.A.?' " Many thought, she noted, that newcomers might be scared away or else decide it was all right to come to the next anniversary meeting with camera in hand. After discussion, Ruth said, "the assembly passed a motion that our area committee 'very strongly suggests' no pictures be taken at any A.A. meeting—to protect the anonymity of all present and not frighten away newcomers, since picture-taking violates 'the spirit of the First, Eleventh and Twelfth Traditions.' "

Today, deciding whether or not to photograph members at A.A. events is overall a matter of group conscience. For instance, before and after the closing brunch of the annual General Service Conference, there is much picture-taking—but not during any of the general sessions. The collective experience of A.A. indicates, says a General Service Office staff member, that such a decision be reached only after taking a group consensus. If the group conscience nixes picture-taking, it would be wise to announce the decision, not just once but periodically, to the group as a whole. And in all cases, before a picture is taken of one or more members, it is suggested that permission from them, as well as from the appropriate group officer, be sought first.

Time and again experience has shown that for A.A.s, being in the public eye is hazardous to our personal sobriety—and to our collective survival if we break our anonymity at the public level and then get drunk. Yet “A.A. had to be publicized somehow,” as co-founder Bill W. pointed out (A.A. Comes of Age, p. 129), “so we resorted to the idea that it would be far better to let our friends do this for us”—our seven nonalcoholic trustees among them. They can face the camera head on or use their last names without threat to themselves or the Fellowship. Thus they reach many a suffering alcoholic with the A.A. message, along with the professionals who counsel and treat them.

A section of the Public Information Workbook offers

guidelines on “Carrying the Message Through the Media: Interviews and Anonymity.” It suggests that an A.A. member who appears on radio, TV or the Internet and is identified as such “will find it safer to carefully arrange with the interviewer to use only his or her first name, and to appear in such a way that identification is impossible. The 1968 General Service Conference motioned that a ‘full-face appearance on TV is an anonymity break, even though the name is withheld.’” However, it notes, if an A.A. appears publicly just as a recovering alcoholic, without disclosing A.A. membership, “no question of anonymity arises. The A.A. appears like any other guest, using full name and full-face picture.”

Importantly, “when appearing on interview programs, as an A.A. member and with anonymity protected, explain to the interviewer in advance that A.A.s traditionally confine such discussions to the A.A. program. The member does not speak on or qualify as an expert on the disease of alcoholism, drugs, suicide rates, and so on.” Traditionally, the P.I. Workbook adds, “A.A.s preface their remarks by saying that they speak for themselves, not for the entire Fellowship.” Generally, they stress that “the sole concern of A.A. is the recovery and continued sobriety” of alcoholics who turn to us for help. And “when we speak as A.A.s, we are careful to say that A.A. has no opinion on other issues.” Contemplating our anonymity traditions in the October Box 4-5-9, Feb./Mar. 2007 3 1948 issue of the Grapevine, Bill expressed,

candidly yet tongue-in-cheek, a thought that resonates now: “...we have good friends both wet and dry, right and left. Like most societies, we are sometimes scandalous—but never yet in public. ... Our friends of the press and radio have outdone themselves. Anyone can see that we are in a fair way to be spoiled. Our reputation is already so much better than our actual character!”

Clinton T. Duffy: The Warden Who Reformed The Q

When several thousand Alcoholics Anonymous members met in Cleveland in 1950 for the First International Convention, one of the highlighted speakers was Clinton T. Duffy, then warden of California’s San Quentin Prison. “Warden Duffy had traveled 2,000 miles to be with us at Cleveland,” A.A. co-founder Bill W. wrote. “We soon saw why. He came because he is a great human being. Once again, we A.A.s sat and wondered how far our reputation had got ahead of our character.”

But Warden Duffy, already well known for his groundbreaking work in prison reform, would have considered A.A.’s reputation well-deserved. Though always mindful of his primary responsibility for secure custody, he had immediately begun seeking sound methods for convict rehabilitation when he took over as San Quentin’s warden in 1940. Learning about A.A. soon afterward, he had taken the novel step in the early 1940s of introducing the A.A. program at San Quentin, a

prison famously known as "The Q" in convict slang. "There were formidable problems to solve," Bill W. would say later, "but Warden Duffy took them, and his faith was justified." This was one of the first A.A. programs behind prison walls—quite an achievement because A.A. was then just six years old and the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* had been published only two years earlier. Duffy told the Cleveland Convention that only alcoholics could truly understand the problems of alcoholism: "They, and they alone, would know the road back, because they had made the hectic journey themselves... both ways."

Warden Duffy also said that a convict who has taken part in a prison *Alcoholics Anonymous* program is more than three times as likely to make a success of parole than the man who avoided the program, the *Akron Beacon Journal* reported. He said that these men seldom violate their paroles or commit another crime. Nor were they prone to lose their jobs for absenteeism or laxity either, he added.

Duffy had helped launch the San Quentin program in the face of some skepticism from other prison officials. He had also permitted A.A. members from the outside to come into the prison for meetings, which seemed a daring approach at the time. No meeting in the history of A.A. was held under more tense circumstances than the first one at San Quentin, Duffy remembered. "The outsiders were awed by the surroundings and the inmates were awed by the

'civilians' from the 'free world,'" he said. Duffy had made a welcoming speech, but it was a talk from an outside A.A. member that eased tensions. Duffy attended many of the subsequent meetings when outsiders visited the prison. He was impressed by stories from persons in many walks of life and hearing them explain how A.A. had enabled them to regain self-respect and the respect of fellow citizens as a result of following the program. He also received letters from A.A. members offering to help in any way to rehabilitate an A.A. member from San Quentin. On November 28, 1943, Bill W. visited the San Quentin group as a guest speaker, because he was anxious to observe the progress of this unprecedented step. Warden Duffy received reports from parole officers about former inmates who had been restored to positions of respect in their communities through the aid of the A.A. groups. He said that the unselfishness of A.A. members was an inspiration not only to inmates, but to the prison administration as well. "Their wholehearted cooperation has enabled us to expand the program here in California," he said. He even noted that the first inmate secretary of the A.A. group in San Quentin had volunteered to transfer to Folsom Prison to organize a group there.

That early beginning at San Quentin sparked interest at prisons throughout the country. In 1952, the *A.A. Grapevine* noted that there were 78 prison groups in the United States and one in South Africa. Today, there are an estimated 2,500 such groups in North

America, with at least 65,000 inmates participating.

Warden Duffy was, by training and temperament, the ideal prison official to consider the possibility that A.A. would work behind walls. He was sometimes called a "lifer" at San Quentin because he was born there in 1898; his father was a guard and the family lived on the property. He would marry his childhood sweetheart, Gladys Carpenter, who also lived at San Quentin where her father was captain of the guards.

Duffy grew up knowing prison inmates and developing a concern for their well-being. "In my childhood it was hardly a model prison," he later recalled. "There were too many sadistic guards with too much power to inflict punishment and too many ways to inflict it. There were too many places where men could be left to rot and too few diversions to keep them from rotting," he remembered. "There was too much bitterness, too much hatred, too much helplessness, too much brutality, too much dirt, too much humiliation."

San Quentin was still one of the toughest prisons in the country when Duffy joined the system as secretary to the warden in 1929. He served under several wardens and became known in the corrections system as a competent administrator who could get things done and was respect-

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Birthday Club

Dianne J	San Jose	5/29/84
Laura L	San Mateo	6/10/87
Colleen M	Foster City	7/4/87
Lee P	Ripon	8/11/87
Theresa A	Paradise	4/1/91
Veronica S	Pacifica	4/1/91
Leslie K	Modesto	5/4/92
Gil M	Gilroy	4/21/94
Cindy P	Manteca	5/1/94
Peter M	San Francisco	5/1/95
Ken G	Santa Clara	5/1/96
Miki S	Madera	5/4/96
John D	Burlingame	5/1/00
Sandy H	San Carlos	6/21/01
Ronald D	Magalia	5/4/02
Megan G	Vacaville	6/3/02
Michelle P	Santa Clara	6/8/04
Jeff S	Paradise	7/14/04
Tom P	Meadow Vista	4/1/05
David S	Pleasanton	6/13/06

Congratulations to All !!!

The Birthday Club normally celebrates AA Birthdays every quarter. If you would like to be on the birthday list please come by the Good News table at your next conference and give us your information. This is done at no charge to you.

Have you visited your Web Site yet?

<http://www.ncc-aa.org>

You'll find:

The History of NCCAA - Our "Purpose Structure & Function" - Past issues of the "Good News" A list of Future Conferences - A list of upcoming Speakers - Flyers - Future & Past Programs - Upcoming & Past - Information on our Archivist - Guidelines for Hosting a Conference, A Link to AA General Service - And More...

NCCAA

Good News

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