

Recovery

Times

VOL 27, NO 6 - June 2003

A newsletter from Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office

Take Another Look

If an old friend whom you haven't seen in a while were to pay you a visit he would surely be amazed at the person standing before him. Remarkably, your physical appearance, he can see, is one of good health and proper diet. No trace remains of the gauntness that once lined your face or the perpetually bloodshot eyes that skewed your gaze. Certainly, he detects a new kind of confidence, a definite and unmistakable maturity, about your person.

The conversation that takes place is light and the laughs come easily and often. Your friend is pleased to learn about the good job that you've managed to land and happily surprised that you've decided to attend college classes at night. Yes, there is even a new "certain someone" that you've been seeing regularly though you've been taking it slow for the time being.

"Wow," your friend exclaims, "I guess you're doing pretty well for yourself!" At that observation, your reluctance seems to fall away and you gladly share with him the fact that you've managed to stay sober by way of the program of Alcoholics Anonymous. Now it all makes perfect sense to your friend. You wisely avoid dwelling on the past during the remainder of the conversation but your friend clearly remembers you in the throes of despair and hopelessness that pervaded the years of your drinking. Undoubtedly, an amazing transformation has taken place within you.

As you prepare to say goodbye, your friend is somewhat taken aback when you thank him heartily for this visit. "The pleasure has been all mine," he responds. You explain that with this little get-together you may have averted a bout with the "stinking thinking" that at times can threaten the quality of your sobriety and life in general.

Though your friend may not be entirely capable of understanding your meaning, you take a moment to laugh at yourself before explaining that only recently you had been complaining to a fellow AA that "nothing good ever happens for me." Of course, you now realize that this statement absolutely the farthest thing from the truth. In fact, this kind of thinking is most dangerous for it is nothing short of the manifestation of the disease of alcoholism itself. Your friend can tell that you are very serious when you further elaborate that alcoholism's main weapon is this insidious thought process that every alcoholic carries within in which its sole purpose is to convince us to give up on our hopes and dreams and turn once more to a life of drunkenness.

This visit with your friend has turned out to be yet another blessing in a very long list of miracles that you cannot recognize until you are ready. You may have dismissed them as insignificant occurrences at their point of inception but it is only when they are illuminated, as in the case of a friend's observation, that we are awakened to the fact that all of us practicing the principles of AA are indeed accumulating miracles every minute of the time that we stay sober.

A.M.S.

In This Issue...

***Upcoming Events**

***Service Committee Schedule**

***Intergroup Minutes**

***Happy Birthdays**

NOTICE TO OUR READERS

In this month's issue of the Recovery Times, the Contributions Summary is provided as a page insert within the newsletter. The editors are revamping the newsletter layout. Look for more "new looks" in the upcoming months.

Upcoming Events

- June 19-22 Desert Pow Wow
 Renaissance Esmeralda Resort
 Indian Wells, CA
 Info: Kathy O. - 909-674-3032
 www.desertpowwow.com

- June 27-29 Living in the Steps
 30th Annual AA Roundup
 Lancaster, CA
 Info: Peggy O 661-940-0606

- August 1-3 11th Annual Foothill Roundup
 at Occidental College, LA
 Info: Call Central Office, 988-3001

- August 1-3 29th Annual Madd Dog Daze
 Rancho Mirage
 Info: Steve L., (760) 346-3316

- August 28-31 The Great Outdoor Beaver Meeting
 Beaver, Utah
 Info: Call Dot or Gerry, 818-341-7107

Registration forms for the events above are at the
 Intergroup Meeting OR at Central Office

SERVICE COMMITTEE SCHEDULE

- *****
- June 16, 2003 **SFV H&I**
THIRD MONDAY
 8PM Business Meeting
 Get Acquainted Workshop, 7pm,
 5657 Lindley Ave.

- July 7, 2003 **G.S. Districts #11, 16, 17**
FIRST MONDAY
 6pm, 11455 Chandler Blvd, N. Hollywood

- July 1, 2003 **G.S. Districts #2**
FIRST TUESDAY
 6:30pm, 4011 Dunsmore,
 La Crescenta

- July 2, 2003 **G.S. District #1**
FIRST WEDNESDAY
 6:30pm, 7552 Remmet,
 Canoga Park

- July 9, 2003 **SFV Board of Directors**
 7pm, Central Office

- July 11, 2003 **G.S. District #7**
SECOND SATURDAY
 Agua Dulce Woman's Club
 33201 Agua Dulce Cyn Rd
 Sharon G. (661) 951-0372

- July 14, 2003 **SFV Intergroup**
SECOND MONDAY
 6:30pm Orientation
 7pm Business Meeting
 Knights of Columbus Hall
 14450 Valerio Street, Van Nuys

Service Opportunities Alcoholics Anonymous in the San Fernando Valley

PUBLIC INFORMATION COMMITTEE -

Provides information to the general public about what A.A. does and does not do. Could always use volunteers, especially young people and Spanish speaking A.A.'s for health fairs and to speak at various schools and businesses. Contact Central Office (818) 988-3001.

HOSPITAL AND INSTITUTIONS COMMITTEE -

Carries the message of Alcoholics Anonymous into hospitals, prisons & treatment facilities to those who are unable to get out to meetings. Meets the 3rd Monday of the month 8:00 PM @ St. Innocent's Church, 5657 Lindley Ave, Tarzana, CA. Info: Sarah G. (818) 894-9921.

TREATMENT FACILITIES / CPC COMMITTEE -

Meets the last Sunday of the month 4-5:00 PM 6531 Laurel Cyn, North Hollywood. Contact: Jeri B. (818) 846 9115

SAN FERNANDO VALLEY INTERGROUP -

Elected Intergroup representatives maintain and develop policies for Central Office, and inform other IG Reps about Alkathons & fund raisers, etc. Meets second Monday, monthly, Knights of Columbus Hall, 14450 Valerio St., Van Nuys, CA. Contact: Central Office at 988-3001.

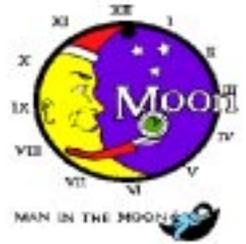
SAN FERNANDO VALLEY CONVENTION -

Planning and executing all phases of our annual convention, at the Burbank Hilton, Feb, 2004. Committee meets every 3rd Tuesday of each month; 7 PM at St. Innocent's Church, 5657 Lindley Ave, Tarzana, CA.



CENTRAL OFFICE

GUIDELINES FOR PUBLICATION OF ARTICLES



All articles published in the Recovery Times will be reviewed by a committee of three (3) members. Articles must therefore be received by the 10th of the month for consideration of publication in the following month's issue. Guidelines for publication are as follows:

- 1) No use of profanity.
- 2) Primary content must pertain to alcoholism, the recovery from the disease of alcoholism, the 12 Steps or the 12 Traditions.
- 3) The committee reserves the right to edit all articles submitted.

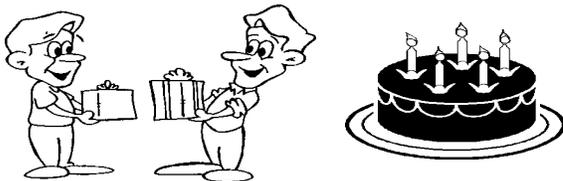
As stated in each issue of the Recovery Times: "RECOVERY TIMES presents the experience and opinions of members of A.A. (and occasionally others) on the subjects bearing on the disease of alcoholism. Opinions expressed herein are not to be attributed to Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole, nor does publication of any article imply endorsement of its content by the San Fernando Valley Central Office or Alcoholics Anonymous. Articles from A.A. World Services, Inc. (AAWS, Inc.) and the A.A. Grapevine, Inc. (as well as other publications) appearing herein are reprinted with permission. The names ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS and BIG BOOK are registered trademarks of AAWS, Inc."

Opposing views and rebuttals to articles published are also welcomed.

Submit correspondence to:

SFVCO Newsletter Committee
7417 Van Nuys Blvd., Suite E
Van Nuys, CA 91405

Your Birthday Gift to Central Office



Many A.A. members share their birthdays with those who need the same help and opportunity that A.A. gave to them.

By sending a donation to Central Office you share your birthday with Recovery Times readers. Send a dollar (\$1.00) a year - or \$1.00 for each year of your sobriety - or send as much as you wish to give to celebrate your birthday. The amount doesn't matter - it's the "counting" that counts.

May your special day be filled with joy from morning until night, and may the "24's" that lie ahead be especially glad and bright.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

MAY 2003

Diane D.	23 years
Stew D.	23 years
Emily P.	16 years
Robbyn K.	10 years
Benita R.	3 years
Howard R.	10 years



Thoughts on Emotional Sobriety from BILL W.

I think that many oldsters who have put our A.A. "booze cure" to severe but successful tests still find they often lack emotional sobriety. Perhaps they will be the spearhead for the next major development in A.A. -the development of much more real maturity and balance {which is to say, humility) in our relations with ourselves, with our fellows and with God.

Those adolescent urges that so many of us have for top approval, perfect security and perfect romance - urges quite appropriate to age seventeen - prove to be an impossible way of life when we are at age forty-seven or fifty-seven.

Since A.A. began, I've taken immense wallops in all these areas because of my failure to grow up, emotionally and spiritually. My God, how painful it is to keep demanding the impossible, and how very painful to discover finally, that all along we have had the cart before the horse? Then comes the final agony of seeing how awfully wrong we have been, but still finding ourselves unable to get off the emotional merry-go-round.

How to translate a right mental conviction into a right emotional result, and so into easy, happy and good living -well, that's not only the neurotic's problem, it's the problem of life itself for all of us who have gotten to the point of real willingness to hew to right principles in all our affairs.

Even then, as we hew away, peace and joy may still elude us. That's the place so many of us A.A. oldsters have come to. And it's a hell of a spot, literally. How shall our unconscious -from which so many of our fears, compulsions and phony aspirations still stream - be brought into line with what we actually believe, know and want!! How to convince our dumb, raging and hidden "Mr. Hyde" becomes our main task.

In the first six months of my own sobriety, I worked hard with many alcoholics. Not a one responded. Yet this work kept me sober. It wasn't a question of those alcoholics giving me anything. My stability came out of trying to give, not out of demanding that I receive.

Thus, I think it can work out with emotional sobriety. If we examine every disturbance we have, great or small, we will find at the root of it some unhealthy dependency and its consequent unhealthy demand. Let us, with God's help, continually surrender these hobbling demands. Then we can be set free to live and love; we may then be able to Twelfth Step ourselves and others into emotional sobriety.

Reprinted with gratitude from The Last Drop, February 2001.

WHAT IS CHARITY?

It is SILENCE - when your words would hurt.

It is PATIENCE - when your neighbor is curt.

It is DEAFNESS - when a scandal flows.

It is THOUGHTFULNESS - for another's woes.

It is PROMPTNESS - when duty calls.

It is COURAGE - when misfortune falls.

Author Unknown

Some Pretty Good Rules ...

Never argue with an idiot. People watching may be unable to tell the difference.

Never look back unless you intend to go that way.

Do not ask the question if you cannot live with the answer.

Many of us thought we were different

"A.A. won't work for me. I'm too far gone." "It's nice for those people, but I'm president of the P.T.A. " I'm too old. Too young. Not religious enough, I'm gay. Or Jewish. A professional person. A member of the clergy .Too smart. Or too uneducated.

At this moment, people all over the world are thinking that A.A. probably won't work in their case for one or several of these reasons. Perhaps you are one of these people.

We in A.A. believe alcoholism is a disease that is no respecter of age, sex, creed, race, wealth, occupation, or education. It strikes at random. Our experience seems to show that anyone can be an alcoholic. And, beyond question, anyone who wants to stop drinking is welcome in A.A.

Our co-founder Bill W., in telling about A.A.'s earliest days, wrote:

"In the beginning, it was four whole years before A.A. brought permanent sobriety to even one alcoholic woman. Like the 'high bottoms,' the women said they were different; A.A. couldn't be for them. But as the communication was perfected, mostly by the women themselves, the picture changed.

"This process of identification and transmission has gone on and on. The skid-rower said he was different. Even more loudly, the socialite (or Park Avenue stumblebum) said the same. So did the artists and the professional people, the rich, the poor, the religious, the agnostic, the Indians and the Eskimos, the veterans and the prisoners.

"But nowadays all of these, and legions more, soberly talk about how very much alike all of us alcoholics are when we admit that the chips are finally down.

"In the stories that follow, you may encounter men and women whose race, age, sexual preference, or any number of other conditions are similar to yours. They came to A.A. and found that Alcoholics Anonymous worked just as well for them as it had for hundreds of thousands of others of us who thought we were "different." We found help, and we found friends with whom we could identify and share our experiences.

We are no longer alone.

Reprinted with permission from the pamphlet Do You Think You're Different? Copyright 1976 by A.A. World Services, Inc.

Traditions? What traditions?

When we first come into AA, most of us tend to focus almost solely on The 12 Steps, hardly paying any attention at all to The 12 Traditions. After a time in AA, many of us come to recognize that the traditions are what insures the group's survival, and without the group, there would be no AA. During its first decade, A.A. as a fellowship accumulated substantial experience which indicated that certain group attitudes and principles were particularly valuable in assuring survival of the informal structure of the Fellowship. In 1946, in the Fellowship's international journal, the A.A. Grapevine, these principles were reduced to writing by the founders and early members as the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous. They are now read at almost every AA meeting. How well do you know them?

- 1) What depends upon AA unity?
- 2) Our leaders are but what?
- 3) The only requirement for AA membership is what?
- 4) Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting what?
- 5) What is Tradition 5, word for word?
- 6) What are three problems which might divert us from our primary purpose?
- 7) Why do we pass the basket at meetings?
- 8) Into what should the AA name never be drawn?
- 9) Upon what is our public relations policy based?
- 10) When and where were the Twelve Traditions accepted at the International AA Convention? .

*Answers: 1) Personal Recovery; 2) Trusted servants; 3) A desire to stop drinking; 4) Other groups or AA as a whole; 5) Each group has but one primary purpose - to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers; 6) Money, Property or Prestige; 7) Because Tradition 7 states that Every AA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions; 8) Public controversy; 9) Attraction rather than promotion; 10) Cleveland, Ohio, 1950. **How did you do?** 10 correct = Elder Statesman, 9 = Old Timer, 8 = Trusted Servant, 7 = Meeting Maker, 6 or less = Newcomer - Keep coming Back!*

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

That stark assertion carries a world of meaning for every member of Alcoholics Anonymous. While it is perfectly true that no AA group can possibly coerce an alcoholic to contribute money, to conform to the Twelve Steps of our recovery program or to the Twelve Points of AA Tradition each AA member is nevertheless, most powerfully compelled, in the long run, to do these very things. The truth is, that in the life of each AA member, there still lurks a tyrant. His name is alcohol. He is cunning, ruthless. And his weapons are misery, insanity and death. No matter how long we may be sober, he always stands at each man's elbow, ever watchful of an opportunity to resume his destruction. Like an agent of the Gestapo he ever threatens each AA citizen with torture or extinction. Unless, of course, the AA citizen is willing to live unselfishly, often placing the welfare of AA as a whole ahead of his own personal plans and ambitions. Apparently no human being can force alcoholics to live happily and usefully together. But Mr. John Barleycorn can and he often does!

A story will illustrate: Some time ago we made a long list of our seeming failures in the first years of AA. Every alcoholic on the list had been given a good exposure. Most of them had attended AA meetings for several months. After slipping and sliding around they had all disappeared. Some said they were not alcoholic. Others couldn't stand for our belief in God. Many had developed intense resentments toward their fellows. Anarchists at heart, they could not conform to our Society. And because our Society did not conform to them, they quit. But only temporarily. Over the years, most of these so-called failures have returned, often becoming magnificent members. We never ran after them; they returned of their own accord. Each time I spot one newly back, I ask him why he has rejoined our fold. Invariably his answer runs like this: "When I first contacted AA I learned that alcoholism is a disease: an obsession of the mind that compels us to drink, and a sensitivity of the body that condemns us to go mad or die if we keep on. I also learned that AA worked, at least for some alcoholics. But I then disliked AA methods, hated some of the alcoholics I met there, and I still toyed with the idea that I could do the job of quitting all by myself. After several more years of terrible drinking, which I found I was powerless to control, I gave up. I returned to AA because it was the only place left to go; I'd tried everything else. Arrived at this point, I knew that I must act quickly: that I must adopt the Twelve Steps of the AA recovery program; that I must cease hating my fellow alcoholics; that I must now take my place among them as a very small part of that great whole, the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous. It all boiled down to a simple question of 'do or die.' I had to conform to AA principles -or else. No more anarchy for me. So I'm back."

This illustration shows why we of AA must hang together "or else hang separately." We are players at a stern drama where death is the prompter to those who falter. Could anyone imagine a more powerful restraint upon us than this?

Yet the history of uncontrolled drinking shows that fear alone has chastened but few alcoholics. Much more than fear is needed to bind us anarchists together. Several years ago, speaking at Baltimore, I ran on at a great rate about the terrible sufferings we alcoholics had endured. My talk must have had a strong flavor of self-pity and exhibitionism. I kept referring to our drinking experience as a great calamity, a terrible misfortune. After the meeting I was approached by a Catholic clergyman who genially remarked, "I heard you say you thought your drinking a great misfortune. But it seems to me that in your case it was your great good fortune. Was not this terrible experience the very thing which humbled you so complete that you were able to find God? Did not suffering open your eyes and your heart? All the opportunity you have today, all this wonderful experience you call AA, once had its beginnings in deep personal suffering. In your case that was actually no misfortune. It was your great good fortune. You AAs are a privileged people."

The Language of the Heart, pgs. 34 -35

**San Fernando Valley Central Office
Intergroup Representatives Meeting – April 14, 2003**

Paul D Chairperson – Meeting opened at 7:05 pm
Treasurer's Report; See Insert

Old Business: Memorial Day Free Picnic will be Monday, May 26, 2003 at Woodley Park- section 2

Birthdays Richard P. 13 yrs, Bob F. 22 yrs, Herb J., 1 yr, Allen S. 13 yrs

Service Committee information see page 2 of the Recovery Times for more information

Motion to adjourn 7:30 PM

The long form of the Intergroup Meeting Minutes for April is available at Central Office or at the Intergroup Meeting.

Prepared and submitted by: Marie B Recording Secretary

First Annual SFV Central Office May Picnic

The first annual SFV Central Office picnic was held May 26 at Woodley Park. Thanks to the 500+ people who came. Sincere thanks to the 5 AA groups and 12 individuals who chose to underwrite the food. Also thanks to everyone who participated in the 7th Tradition.

When we started planning the picnic, it was determined that Central Office would host the affair but the cost would have to be handled through private or group donations earmarked for the picnic. When the money ran out, so would the food.

Needless to say, a great time was had by all. The uncertainty of how many would attend was a major concern. But everything worked out as it always does.

Our plan is to have another picnic next year; we would love to hear your comments. Please call us at 818-988-3001.

Newletter Subscription: If you wish to receive your copy of the Recovery Times at your home, please complete this form and return with a check (\$7 donation to cover delivery cost) to:

San Fernando Valley Central Office
7417-E Van Nuys Boulevard
Van Nuys, CA 91405

Current Information

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ St _____ ZIP _____

New

Renewal

Additional Contribution \$ _____

Moving ???: We need your former address as well as your new address to correct our records. Fill out both forms and mail to the address above.

Former Address

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ St _____ ZIP _____