

Upcoming Events

- Sept. 26-28 17th Annual Gold Country Round-up
Amador County Fairground
Plymouth, CA
Info: Call Damon B., 209-296-8017

- Oct. 10-12 11th Annual Spirit of San Francisco
Ramada Plaza Hotel
San Francisco, CA
Info: Call 415-566-3845

- Oct. 10-12 52nd So. Cal. AA Convention
Riverside, CA
Info: Hotline - (818) 356-1041

- Nov. 27-30 37th Annual Las Vegas Roundup
Las Vegas, NV
Info: call (702) 598-1888

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

SERVICE COMMITTEE SCHEDULE

- *****
- Sept. 15, 2003 **SFV H&I**
THIRD MONDAY
8PM Business Meeting
Get Acquainted Workshop, 7pm,
5657 Lindley Ave.

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

- Oct. 7, 2003 **G.S. Districts #2**
FIRST TUESDAY
6:30pm, 4011 Dunsmore,
La Crescenta

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

- Oct. 8, 2003 **SFV Board of Directors**
6pm, Central Office

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

- Oct. 13, 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 -

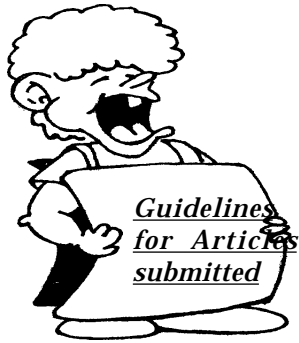
Meets the last Sunday of the month 4-5:00 PM 6531 Laurel Cyn, North Hollywood. Contact: Jeri B. (818) 846 9115

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!

August 2003

Alice A.	17 years
Joan E.	16 years
Lisa M.	16 years
Iris N.	26 years



The "Four Absolutes"

During its first years, Alcoholics Anonymous did not have 12 Steps to recovery.

Rather, Bill W. and Doctor Bob, while leaning heavily on the evangelical Oxford Group, borrowed from religion, medicine and psychology to forge a plan of recovery spread by word of mouth and developed through trial and error.

Early on, AA members used the "Four Absolutes" of the Oxford Group as principles for recovery. The Absolutes were Honesty, Purity, Unselfishness and Love. Those principles can still be heard recited in AA groups in the Cleveland-Akron area. Bill W. pointed out in the book *Alcoholics Anonymous Comes Of Age* that in December, 1938, when he wrote the first draft of our 12 Steps for our text, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, "Our people out there were still active Oxford Group members. In Akron and vicinity they still talked about the Oxford Groups' absolutes: absolute honesty, absolute purity, absolute unselfishness, and absolute love."

(The Dayton Area Intergroup Breakfast speaker in November said her Cleveland home group is the Four Absolutes Group.)

Yet, while indebted to the Oxford Group for support during his early sobriety, Bill W. became increasingly uncomfortable with what he viewed as a dogmatic approach by the O.G.

"This dose (Four Absolutes) was found to be too rich for New Yorkers, and we had abandoned the expressions," he wrote in *AA Comes of Age*.

So his task was daunting when the first 100 AAs agreed it was time to write about their program for sobriety in a book that could reach far more suffering alcoholics than those reached by word of mouth. He had to close a schism between the Akron-Cleveland AAs and the New York AAs, who in 1938, when the book writing began, were the Fellowship.

Bill W. described his dilemma in a July, 1953, Grapevine article titled *A Fragment of History: Origin of the Twelve Steps*. The article can be found in the book *The Language of the Heart*.

Here are some excerpts:

"As we commenced to form a Society separate from the Oxford Group, we began to state our principles something like this:

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol.
2. We got honest with ourselves.
3. We got honest with another person, in confidence.
4. We made amends for harms done others.
5. We worked with other alcoholics without demand for prestige or money.
6. We prayed to God to help us to do these things as best we could.

"Though these principles were advocated

according to the whim or liking of each of us, and though in Akron and Cleveland they still stuck by the O.G. absolutes..., this was the gist of our message to incoming alcoholicswhen our present Twelve Steps were put to paper.

"Having arrived at Chapter Five, it seemed high time to state what our program really was. I remember running over in my mind the word-of-mouth phrases then in current use. Jotting these down, they added up to the six named above. Then came the idea that our program ought to be more accurately and clearly stated. Distant readers would have to have a precise set of principles. Knowing the alcoholic's ability to rationalize, something airtight would have to be written. We couldn't let the reader wiggle out anywhere....

"I split the word-of-mouth program up into smaller pieces, meanwhile enlarging its scope considerably. Uninspired as I felt, I was surprised that in a short time, perhaps half an hour, I had set down certain principles which, on being counted, turned out to be twelve in number. And for some unaccountable reason, I had moved the idea of God into the Second Step, right up front. Besides, I had named God very liberally throughout the other Steps. In one of the Steps I had even suggested that the newcomer get down on his knees.

"When this document was shown to our New York meeting, the protests were many and loud. Our agnostic friends didn't go at all for the idea of kneeling. Others said we were talking altogether too much about God. And anyhow, why should there be Twelve Steps when we had done five or six? Let's keep it simple, they said.

"This sort of heated discussion went on for days and nights. But out of it all there came a ten-strike for Alcoholics Anonymous. Our agnostic contingent... finally convinced us that we must make it easier for people like themselves by using such terms as 'a Higher Power' or 'God as we understand Him.' Those expressions, as we so well know today, have proved lifesavers for many an alcoholic. They have enabled thousands of us to make a beginning where none could have been made had we left the Steps just as I originally wrote themLittle did we then guess that our Twelve Steps would soon be widely approved by clergy of all denominations and even by our latter-day friends, the psychiatrists.

"This little fragment of history ought to convince the most skeptical that nobody invented Alcoholics Anonymous.

"It just grew — by the grace of God."

It could be inferred the 12 Steps replaced the "Absolutes," but, for me, Honesty, Purity, Unselfishness and Love are shorthand for the Steps.
Bill F.

SALLY'S STORY

My name is Sally, and I am an alcoholic. When I attended my first A.A. meeting, I had many years of alcoholic drinking and several years of prescribed tranquilizers under my belt. At the first meeting I was deeply struck by the honesty, the variety of personalities and the individual gratitude to the A.A. program. By the end of the meeting it was clear to me that “it can be done,” and I hopefully began my recovery in Alcoholics Anonymous.

I attended this A.A. meeting on the advice of my psychiatrist. My mental and emotional anguish was quite severe and the doctor had prescribed a tranquilizer which I was taking according to the prescription. I never did adjust the dosage on my own.

One day at a time, I did not pick up the first drink. Just as other A.As had shared with me, life did begin to take on more meaning and I was so deeply grateful that my alcoholic drinking was behind me. I continued taking my prescribed dosage of a tranquilizer, despite the fact that I heard many A.A. members share their own terrible experiences with tranquilizers, invariably discovering that such medication led to a “slip.”

Six months into sobriety, I had a terrible day at the office and felt severely rejected in every possible way. Overwhelmed by self-pity and anxiety, I tried every conceivable means to get rid of my resentments. But I was unable to grasp any insight I had gained from therapy, nor did anything I ever heard at an A.A. meeting penetrate. At the end of the day, I found myself in the restaurant where I had done much of my drinking and ended up having several martinis.

The fact that I drank again was a stunning blow to me. I did not really want to drink, but I did want to relax. The next evening, at a meeting of my home group, I looked around the room and it occurred to me that everyone there was living the A.A. program in an honest fashion—everyone except me. For the first time in my life I truly opened my mind and decided to follow suggestions. I promised myself that I would speak with my psychiatrist about discontinuing the tranquilizers, as I was convinced that somehow this medication had something to do with my relapse.

My psychiatrist was willing to cancel the prescription. During the weeks and months immediately following, I came to see that I had been relying on tranquilizers to give me the bulwark against anxiety that most of my fellow AAs were finding the Twelve Steps. It was apparent to me that although I had been attending many A.A. meetings, reading the literature, and attempting to integrate the A.A. way of life in myself, my own use of tranquilizers had prevented a real surrender. Actually, I had been quite remote and isolated, attempting to control my feelings just the way I had once tried to control my drinking. Discontinuing the use of the tranquilizer was crucial in recovering from the disease of alcoholism. Through the A.A. program, I have learned to live comfortably without mood-altering medication of any kind. Although it has not always been easy to be honest with myself, to reach out to a Higher Power, and to surrender my self-centered will, I feel I am living proof that it is worth it!

BEING THERE

I have heard people in Alcoholics Anonymous say, "I don't know if I was born an alcoholic, but I know that when I started drinking, an alcoholic was born in me." That's how it was with me. I remember being given a glass of wine when I was six or seven years old. It made me smile so much that my cheeks hurt. I spent the next quarter of a century trying to feel that good again. My alcoholism became my primary occupation, and I used my ability to play guitar and memorize folk and county songs to stay intoxicated for days and weeks at a time. Let me sum up the bottom I reached as briefly as possible: I puked on people, places and things from border to border and coast to coast. I once passed out in my own vomit on the steps of the post office. I tried A.A. in 1972, but gave up on recovery after I two or three meetings. My daughter, Melody, was born in February 1976. One year later I tried to control my alcoholism by using bootlegged antabuse that I got from an acquaintance. For the next two years, I stopped drinking during various dry spells, but I abused other drugs daily. On July 11, 1979, 1 had what I pray to God was my last drink.

Since I have mentioned God, let me say that I spent most of my life as an atheist. In 1974, I stopped my heart with an accidental overdose of a drug, and as a result of the grace of God and CPR, I survived. I like to say that when I took that overdose, the brain cells that got destroyed were the ones that told me I was an atheist. But my discovery of the existence of a loving God who granted me life did not help me quit drinking. The Twelve Steps and the Fellowship of A.A. taught me how to use God to change my life.

Since I have become involved in the Fellowship, I have experienced a miraculous change in the way I live and the way I think. At the very first meeting I attended in 1979, I heard a woman say, "If anybody in this circle has young children, and you don't want to wake up one day and realize your child is twenty-one years old and you missed his life, keep coming back." Melody was three years old at the time.

Today she is twenty-two. I have seen her first day of school, watched her participate in Girl Scouts, star in school plays, become a Bat Mitzvah, be confirmed in the faith of her ancestors, graduate from high school and fall in and out of love for the first time. I pray each day that I will continue to see her grow as a person. I have held my son, Caleb, in my arms for the first hours of his life, seen him catch his first fish, score his first birdie on a golf course, become a Bar Mitzvah, and grow taller than I am. I have learned to respect my wife Elaine, who is an amazing mother, partner, friend, companion and constant source of inspiration and affection.

I have also known the blessings of sponsorship, and I ask God each day to help me honor the memory of my beloved sponsor, Joe M., who continues to mentor me long after he has crossed over, his example of manhood is the goal I strive to become, for he was the first man I knew who tried his best to live up to the principles of love, honesty, purity and unselfishness each day of his life.

Prior to meeting him I thought manhood was achieved through physical strength and emotional toughness. I've been blessed with the opportunity to share my guitar playing and folk singing in recovery. Over the years, I've sung songs about what life was like when I was a drinking alcoholic and what it's like now that I'm recovering. I have visited prisons, jails, halfway houses, schools, churches, and A.A. meetings all over Central Florida, where I live.

One of my most cherished memories comes from a time three or four years ago when I sang at a halfway house. Afterward, a man in the group named Ben came up to shake hands. Caleb had come along with me that night, and when I introduced him to Ben, Ben said, "Your dad really helped me to change my life." I think about that moment often. My son could have grown up thinking about his dad as the missing, abusive, selfish brute who caused pain everywhere he went. Through the grace of God and the Fellowship of A.A., my son knows his dad as a man who tries to help others. In the years since 1979, I have experienced so many blessings. The simple fact of my recovery is that each day of my life I am moved to tears of gratitude by the miracle of one more precious day of freedom from the bondage of self.

James P., Temple Terrace, Florida/Permission/Grapevine/August 2001

**San Fernando Valley Central Office
Intergroup Representatives Meeting – July 12, 2003**

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

Old Business:

Birthdays John 1 year, Laurie 2 years.

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 July is available at Central Office or at the Intergroup Meeting.

Next Meeting - August 11, 2003

Prepared and submitted by: Marie B Recording Secretary

GOOD NEWS AND BAD NEWS

There is the story of 2 old-timers who made a pact that when one of them died, he would come back and let the other one know if there was AA in Heaven. Eventually one of them passed on.

About a week later the other guy awoke from his sleep and saw the image of his old friend at the foot of the bed.

All excited - he said, "Well, tell me! Is there AA in Heaven?"

His friend said "I have good news and bad news. First the good news, YES! There is AA in Heaven."

"Well?" was the reply - "What's the bad news?"

His buddy said "Mmm, ah, you're the speaker on Saturday night."

Submitted in memory of Jim L. of Camp Verde, Arizona

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 _____