

# Recovery

# Times

VOL 27, NO 10 - October 2003

A newsletter from Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office

## THE GIFT

I was lying on a cold cement floor, wondering what was going on in my sick and fearful mind. I knew that I had jumped from the floor above. I wanted death but I was not even injured. From somewhere, fate had intervened.

I was sometimes aware that I was in alcohol withdrawal and that I had DTs. I was very alone and very, very sad. What was I going to do?

As day turned into evening, I found that I was shaking, weak, and dehydrated, but I walked unsteadily to the nearest bar. For that drink I would do whatever I had to do.

I sat down at the bar with a stranger who was drinking alone. I sat there for awhile, then from out of somewhere I heard myself asking this stranger, "How in hell can a man quit drinking?"

"If you are serious," he answers, "I know a way." He looked at his watch and said, "Follow me."

We went across the street to a room above a store where there were about a dozen people. To me he said, "This is AA. You stay here." To the AA members he said, "Here's a live one - I'm leaving."

When we think of a gift, there is usually a picture in our mind's eye of a package with a ribbon and a bow, wrapped in some fancy wrap. We handle it, weigh it in our hand, shake it up and down, ponder what it could be. Then, sometimes, gifts come to us silently. Like a shadow they creep upon us so subtly we may be unaware of them until we notice the changes in our lives. At times there are gifts so harsh that we cannot comprehend or understand just why these things are happening.

Whenever I get to feeling sorry for myself, I have only to think of this stranger and of his gift to me. I never saw him again but I learned later that he was from a town some 200 miles south, had been in and out of AA, and was on a slip the night I met him - in a bar I'd never drunk in before. An unseen hand had led me from the very depths of despair to peace and serenity.

In my gratitude, I want to say in print, "Thank you, stranger."

*Keith M., Whitehorse, Yukon (AA GRAPEVINE, Sept., 2000)*

**In This Issue...**

**\*Upcoming Events**

**\*Service Committee Schedule**

**\*Intergroup Minutes Synopsis**

**\*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

- 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
- \*\*\*\*\*
- Feb 6-8            29 Annual S F V A A Convention  
 Burbank , CA  
 Info: (818) 734- 0383*

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

## SERVICE COMMITTEE SCHEDULE

- Oct. 20, 2003 **SFV H&I**  
**THIRD MONDAY**  
 8PM Business Meeting  
 Get Acquainted Workshop, 7pm,  
 5657 Lindley Ave.  
 \*\*\*\*\*
- Nov. 3, 2003 **G.S. Districts #11, 16**  
**FIRST MONDAY**  
 6pm, 11455 Chandler Blvd, N. Hollywood  
 \*\*\*\*\*
- Nov. 3, 2003 **G.S. Districts #17**  
**FIRST MONDAY**  
 6pm, orientation, 6:30pm meeting  
 5000 Colfax (church), N. Hollywood  
 \*\*\*\*\*
- Nov. 4, 2003 **G.S. Districts #2**  
**FIRST TUESDAY**  
 6:30pm, 4011 Dunsmore,  
 La Crescenta  
 \*\*\*\*\*
- Nov. 5, 2003 **G.S. District #1**  
**FIRST WEDNESDAY**  
 6:30pm, 7552 Remmet,  
 Canoga Park  
 \*\*\*\*\*
- Nov. 5, 2003 **SFV Board of Directors**  
 6pm, Central Office  
 \*\*\*\*\*
- Nov. 8, 2003 **G.S. District #7**  
**SECONDSATURDAY**  
 Agua Dulce Woman's Club  
 33201 Agua Dulce Cyn Rd  
 Sharon G. (661) 951-0372  
 \*\*\*\*\*
- Nov. 10, 2003 **SFV Intergroup**  
**SECOND MONDAY**  
 6:30 pm 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 -

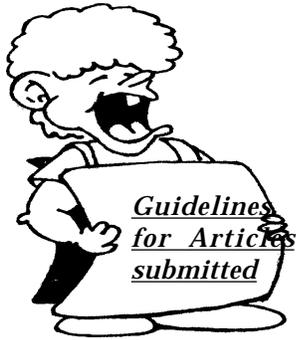
Carries the message of Alcoholics Anonymous into hospitals, prisons & treatment facilities to those who are unable to get out to meetings. Meets the 3rd Monday of the month 8:00 PM @ St. Innocent's Church, 5657 Lindley Ave, Tarzana, CA. Info: Sarah G. (818) 894-9921.

#### 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.

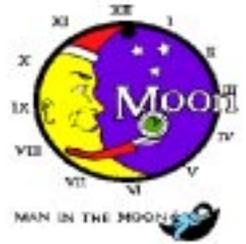
#### SAN FERNANDO VALLEY CONVENTION -

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.

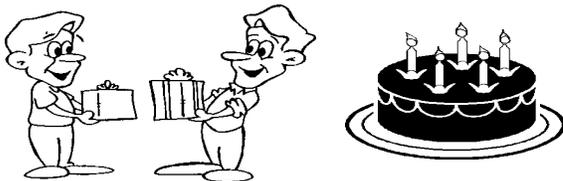
As stated in each issue of the Recovery Times: "RECOVERY TIMES presents the experience and opinions of members of A.A. (and occasionally others) on the subjects bearing on the disease of alcoholism. Opinions expressed herein are not to be attributed to Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole, nor does publication 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**



**M**any 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!**

September 2003

<i>Robin B.</i>	<i>3 years</i>
<i>Joseph B.</i>	<i>8 years</i>



*Restore us to Sanity*  
**WHAT WOULD WE LOSE IF WE EVER COMPLETED THE COURSE  
IN THE AA WAY OF LIVING?"**

It is said there are no graduates in AA. Nevertheless, from time to time, a so called old timer whose life was centered in the program quietly retires from it. This recently happened to a close friend, a man with many twenty-four hours of sobriety, and the epitome of a good solid AA.

We discussed his "Graduation" with him to no avail. He said simply "I have no problem any longer." Since he knows the program as well as I do, or perhaps even better, I did not try to force my opinion on him, I finally accepted his opinion as one of those things I cannot change. But his decision disturbed me.

First I was concerned for his sobriety and his happiness. Obviously, I was unable to do anything about that at the time. Then I began wondering about the validity of his decision. Having been gifted with a few more twenty-four hours of sobriety than he had, I thought. "Is there something wrong with me that I still cling to AA like the life line it has always been?" Maybe I, too, should just quietly drift away.

Life is good now, and I haven't been tempted to take a drink in four years." Eventually, I decided to try this idea on my wife, who has steadfastly seen me through the worst and best of my alcoholism. "I'm thinking of giving up AA," I casually remarked. She gave me a quick glance and said, more clearly than words, "Have you lost your mind?" So I dropped the idea, but it didn't drop me.

My sponsor had advised me never to have an unfinished thought. Accordingly, I was determined to make a decision one way or another and I jotted down what I would be giving up, should I give up AA. I would be giving up....

1. Regular association with my dearest friends.
2. The opportunities to be of help to others.
3. The continuing awareness of, and efforts to rectify, my many defects of character.
4. The joy of seeing the suffering alcoholic reborn, renewed and respected.
5. The daily reminder of my reliance on my higher power.
6. The opportunity to repay some of the debt I owe AA.
7. The inspiration and warmth of frank, personal discussions that I find comfortable only with AA members.
8. The simple ability to enjoy food and beauty, and to eat and sleep normal, and wake up glad to be alive.
9. The ability to face whatever life may dish out.
10. And finally even my sobriety.

Thus the decision was made for me. So I want no graduation. AA is a journey not a destination for my friend, myself and all AA's, I pray for continued participation and never graduation.

*Reprinted from the June 1986 Round About, the official Journal of the AA fellowship in Scotland*

### *Word to the Newcomer*

The program of A.A. is a program of rehabilitation. We have no miraculous cure here. Medicine says there is no cure. Religion claims 2%, for as a rule, the alcoholic has an aversion to religion and the religious people with whom he has come in contact.

We are not reformers or evangelists. We believe in a Power greater than ourselves. We believe we can contact that Power and receive help from it. We reverence it and discard all cheap emotionalism and sentimentality about it. We, through our drinking, have sunk lower and lower in the social scale in manhood, in womanhood -in everything [we] became calloused to the disapproval, scorn and pity of others - found solace and escape through alcohol – became selfish, self-centered introverts, with but one purpose in life, obtaining more and more alcohol.

Realizing these things, we have banded together in groups with others of our kind, with the purpose of gaining knowledge of ourselves and of our problems, and helping each other overcome it. This is an individual program. We have no set rules, which you must follow. It is a program of suggestion only. The proof is all around you that it can be done. We who have succeeded can only tell you how we did it.

At the beginning, we took certain steps, and if your desire to quit drinking is strong enough you will take them too. Most of us had reached the point in our drinking that death or worse was not far from us. A.A. was the only way out.

Thank heaven we had the chance! If you are approaching that point in your drinking we can only hope that you have the courage to face it and follow in our footsteps, and any person you see here or in any other A.A. meeting will go to any length within reason to help you if you sincerely want to help yourself.

Author Unknown, dated circa 1943 (With gratitude to the L.A. County Central Office Archives)

### *Desiderate*

Go placidly amid the noise and haste and remember what peace there may be in silence. As far as possible without surrender, be on good terms with all persons. Speak your truth quietly and clearly; listen to others even the dull and ignorant; they too have their story.

Avoid loud and aggressive persons, they are vexatious to the spirit. If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain and bitter; for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself. Enjoy your own achievements as well as your plans.

Keep interested in your own career, however humble; it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time. Exercise caution in your business affairs; for the world is full of trickery. But let this not blind you to what virtue there is; many persons strive for high ideals; and everywhere life is full of heroism.

Be yourself. Especially do not feign affection. Neither be cynical about love; for in the face of all aridity and disenchantment it is perennial as the grass.

Take kindly the counsel of the years, gracefully surrendering the things of youth. Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune. But do not distress yourself with imaginings. Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness. Beyond discipline, be gentle with yourself.

You are a child of the universe, no less than the trees and the stars; you have the right to be here. And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should.

Therefore be at peace with God, whatever you conceive Him to be, and whatever your labors and aspirations, in the noisy confusion of life keep peace with your soul.

With all its sham, drudgery and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world. Be cheerful. Strive to be happy. |

## ***Keep Coming Back***

Keep coming Back...

Keep coming back even if every fiber of your being says this won't work for you.

Keep coming back even if your friends and family ask why you still have to go to so many meetings after all this time.

Keep coming back even though your business and personal life is prospering.

Keep coming back even though your spiritual life is enlarging.

Keep coming back even if it is only to show a smile to a newcomer ... to let him know you understand.

Keep coming back so that your Higher Power knows you came to believe and you are grateful.

Keep coming back to hold my hand... for us to grow together.

Keep coming back.....

---

---

## ***Twelve Rewards of the Twelve Step Program***

1. Hope instead of desperation.
2. Faith instead of despair.
3. Courage instead of fear.
4. Peace of mind instead of confusion.
5. Self-respect instead of self contempt.
6. Self-confidence instead of helplessness.
7. The respect of others instead of their pity and contempt.
8. A clean conscience instead of a sense of guilt.
9. Real friendship instead of loneliness.
10. A clean pattern of life instead of a purposeless existence.
11. The love and understanding of our families instead of their doubts and fears.
12. The freedom of a happy life instead of the bondage of an alcoholic obsession.

## ***Around The Tables***

Someone said recently that he didn't want to have money again, because money got him drunk. He also said that practicing law again would get him drunk.

That prompted me to remember many "reasons" for my being drunk. It gives me a good excuse not to be married (my husband got me drunk), have children (we all know they make you drink), own a house, mow the grass, plant flowers, or even get up in the morning.

The real reason I got drunk was the grocery store. The prices depressed me. My husband never gave me enough money to buy all the groceries we needed, so it was my husband that got me drunk. Or was it the stock clerks who put the prices on the groceries? Or the manager of the store? Or the president of the chain of stores? Yes, the grocery was the reason I got drunk.

Now, I have a few twenty-four hours in A.A., and I can see that the reason I got drunk was that I drank alcohol.

I know those other things didn't get me drunk, because I do all of them today and I am not drunk today. (It couldn't have been the dog, either, because I have had as many as five dogs at a time in the past few years and I have not gotten drunk.)

Today, I walk through a day with the same chores and with responsibilities even greater than before. I feel all of the feelings, but I am able, with the help of God, to sort them out and work with the uncomfortable ones. I give the Twelve Steps of A.A. credit for that. Most of all, I am able to feel gratitude for the good feelings. And I don't even think of taking a drink.

*T.S., Leesburg, VA/Permission/Grapevine*

**San Fernando Valley Central Office  
Intergroup Representatives Meeting – August 11, 2003**

Paul D Chairperson – Meeting opened at 7:00 pm  
Treasurer's Report; See Insert

Old Business: None

Birthdays Reza B - 3 years, Lloyd W. - 15 years, Robin B. - 3 years, Angela A. - 4 years, Helaine L - 15 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 - September 8, 2003

Prepared and submitted by: Marie B Recording Secretary

## NOVEMBER IS GRATITUDE MONTH

**What if AA had not been there for you when you reached out?**

**Are You Grateful the Hand of AA was there for you?**

**Support Your Central Office during Gratitude Month**

Secretaries, Please read the following to your group:

Remember reaching out for help?

AA was there. You were greeted by a caring fellowship, offered a safe place to be, and the only thing required of you was a desire to stop drinking. Your Central Office is the voice of AA for many who still suffer in our area. Now AA can use your help.

We ask that you show your gratitude to Alcoholics Anonymous today by making a contribution in the provided envelopes. Additional envelopes are available for individual contributions. Please include the name of your home group. Thank You!



**Newsletter 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 \_\_\_\_\_