

# Recovery

Times

VOL 27, NO 12 - December 2003

A newsletter from Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office

## Funny Things Happen . . .

**And when they do, It's great to be able to laugh again**

Among the many things I'd lost by the time I got around to AA was my sense of humor. Now, with fourteen months of dryness and maybe a month or so of sobriety under my belt, some of those things are trickling back.

For example, I'm occasionally caught with a smile on my face. I find it possible to laugh at myself. And I've even found grounds for laughing at AA.

Not that I think AA is any laughing matter - far from it! I take my AA seriously. But once in a while. . . .

About a month ago, I was attending a business convention and I was in a hospitality suite in a swank hotel and the booze was flowing freely and memories of days gone by were somewhat overwhelming, and an AA meeting sure wouldn't have done any harm.

"A plain ginger ale," I said in a stage whisper to the bartender.

I noticed a guy at the other end of the bar watching. He held up his glass in a toast toward me and said "Easy does it."

I tried to focus on his glass, to analyze the color of alcoholic content from afar. It was impossible to tell. "A day at a time," I said as I returned the sweeping motion of the toast.

"But for the grace of God," he replied, and we both started to laugh as though one of us had just come up with the punch line of the evening.

We studied the nametags on each other's lapels. Naturally, they spelled out our names and company affiliations in full. Not much anonymity there.

"I'm Ed F.," I said, playing out the charade to the last. "Bob M.," he replied.

We shook hands and took our ginger ales to a quiet corner. And we had ourselves a real fine little AA meeting.

Ed F., Woodcliff Lake, N.J. (Central Bulletin, Cleveland, Ohio, April 1986)

In This Issue...

\*Upcoming Events

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\*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

Jan. 16-18,2004      14th Annual River Round Up  
 Riverside Resort  
 Laughlin, NV  
 Info: 928-763-4499  
<http://www.rcco-aa.org>

\*\*\*\*\*

Feb. 6-8, 2004      29th Annual SFV Convention  
 Burbank, CA  
 Info: (818) 734-0383  
<http://www.sfvaaconvention.org>

\*\*\*\*\*

Registration forms for the events above are at the  
[Intergroup Meeting](#) OR at Central Office

## SERVICE COMMITTEE SCHEDULE

- Dec. 15, 2003 **SFVH&I**  
**THIRDMONDAY**  
 8pm Business Meeting  
 Get Acquainted Workshop, 7pm,  
 5657 Lindley Ave.  
 \*\*\*\*\*
- Jan. 5, 2004 **G.S. Districts #11, 16**  
**FIRSTMONDAY**  
 6pm, 11455 Chandler Blvd, N. Hollywood  
 \*\*\*\*\*
- Jan. 5, 2004 **G.S. Districts #17**  
**FIRSTMONDAY**  
 6pm, orientation, 6:30pm meeting  
 5000 Colfax (church), N. Hollywood  
 \*\*\*\*\*
- Jan. 6, 2004 **G.S. Districts #2**  
**FIRSTTUESDAY**  
 6:30pm, 4011 Dunsmore,  
 La Crescenta  
 \*\*\*\*\*
- Jan. 7, 2004 **G.S. District #1**  
**FIRSTWEDNESDAY**  
 6:30pm, 7552 Remmet,  
 Canoga Park  
 \*\*\*\*\*
- Jan. 7 2004 **SFV Board of Directors**  
 6pm, Central Office  
 \*\*\*\*\*
- Jan. 10, 2004 **G.S. District #7**  
**SECONDSATURDAY**  
 Agua Dulce Woman's Club  
 33201 Agua Dulce Cyn Rd  
 Sharon G. (661) 951-0372  
 \*\*\*\*\*
- Jan. 12, 2004 **SFV Intergroup**  
**SECONDMONDAY**  
 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.

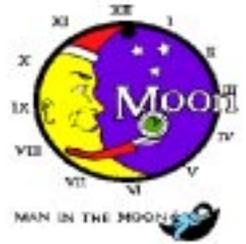
### SAN FERNANDO VALLEY CONVENTION -

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.

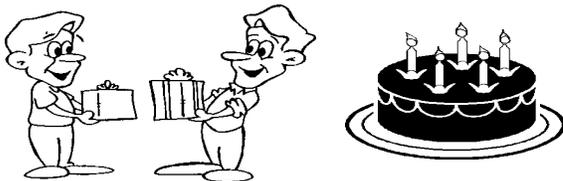
As stated in each issue of the Recovery Times: "RECOVERY TIMES presents the experience and opinions of members of A.A. (and occasionally others) on the subjects bearing on the disease of alcoholism. Opinions expressed herein are not to be attributed to Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole, nor does publication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

November 2003.

Garey G.	6years
Dusty B	14years
Melanie H.	16years
Darin L	16years
Sarah M.	16years



## *General Service: Why is it Important?*

Several years ago it would have been difficult for me to answer this question, but now that I've been a trusted servant in A.A. for a few years and just having returned as your delegate to the General Service Conference, I have a much better understanding of the importance of "general service." I know, some of you may be saying, that service stuff is not for me. I would challenge you to check out a few district meetings or an area assembly, learn more about what it is you belong to, and ask questions about what is happening in the whole of A.A. today not just the confines of the walls of your group. There are people carrying the message all over the world, in areas where they have never heard of Alcoholics Anonymous. Our General Service Structure helps make that possible.

You may be asking, "How does my Intergroup Office fit into this structure?" The Intergroup and Central Offices across the U.S. and Canada are a great way of carrying the message in a specific local area, and provide many services to the A.A. members for Twelfth-Step work. But, their services are confined to a specific locality, the General Service Structure is for the whole of A.A., worldwide, and many areas of the country do not have the benefit or access to Intergroup services. The Intergroup and Central Offices purchase and sell literature to A.A. members and groups. That A.A. literature is published and provided through the General Service Structure.

I can share with you from my experience that I believe any type of service in A.A., whether it be making coffee at my Home Group or serving Area 36 as delegate, has nothing to do with me or even you, it is (or the alcoholic who is still suffering. As I sat at the Conference in New York the words from Bill W., A.A.'s co-founder, came to mind many times - "Carrying the message is our principal aim and the main reason for our existence. An A.A. service is

anything that helps us to reach a fellow sufferer. "And, another important ingredient in the process of "service" to A.A., I help to insure another day of sobriety for myself.

So, what is the difference between service to my group and General Service? General Service is really all the activities that are carried on by your district, area committee, delegates, trustees, the General Service Office (GSO) and the Grapevine. These are the services that affect A.A. as ~ whole, not just your group, but also all the groups that meet everyday of the week in the U.S. and Canada. That is why it is so vitally important that your Group have a General Service Representative (GSR). Your GSR represents the conscience of your group and is your voice at district and area meetings. The GSR also brings back to your group the activities and information happening within this general service structure.

For Example: One of the agenda items that was discussed at the General Service Conference this year was: "Consider requests for anew edition of the Spanish-language Big Book." Last year the Conference Literature Committee considered at length the request for this book and took no action as a widely expressed need (from the fellowship) was not exhibited at that time. This year the Literature Committee unanimously recommended that the development of the Third Edition of the Spanish-Language Big Book, Alcoholicos Anonimos, be approved. The entire 135 members of the General Service Conference unanimously approved this recommendation.

A year ago the Conference did not see a voiced need from the fellowship to print a Third Edition of the Spanish Big Book. Since that time a number of requests came in to GSO specifying the need for new stories in this book to represent the exploding population of Spanish-speaking members in A.A. We may not

*(continued next page)*

## *General Service: Why is it Important?*

have a big need for this book in our area yet, but there is a need in many other areas of the country where new Spanish-speaking districts have formed. I heard delegates, who were representing their groups, districts and areas, express that need at the Conference. It is through the communication process we have established in our General Service Structure, GSR, district, area, delegate to the conference, that the voice of A.A. is heard.

So, to again answer the question posed at the beginning, "Why is General Service important?" The late Bernard B. Smith, nonalcoholic, past chairperson of the board of trustees and one of the planners of our Conference structure, answered this question in his opening talk at the 1954 General Service Conference. He said, "We may not need a General Service Conference to ensure our own recovery. We do need it to ensure the recovery of the alcoholic who still stumbles in the darkness one short block from this room, We need it to ensure the recovery of a child being born tonight, destined for alcoholism. We need to provide, in keeping with our Twelfth Step, a permanent haven for all alcoholics who, in the ages ahead, can find in A.A. that rebirth that brought us back to life."

As the responsibility statement reminds me every time I say it at a meeting, "I am responsible, when anyone, anywhere reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. And for that: I am responsible." I have a responsibility to help keep A.A. the program it was when I got sober, and the best way I have been shown how to do that is through service in the General Service Structure.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve A.A.!

Brenda L., Delegate, Panel 53, Area 36,  
Southern Minnesota (MIRUS, Minneapolis, MN)

## *Thoughts While Shaving*

"Isn't it great to be free?" I first heard this remark uttered by Morris G. several years ago and it has stuck in my mind ever since. Isn't it great to be free - from the compulsion to drink!

I have to be awfully rushed in the morning, as I am getting ready for work, not to experience a "flash back" for a few seconds or minutes of what my mornings once were. The terrible shakes. The terrible fears of what the day was going to bring, knowing I was again going to have to have a drink to even get going. And then that first drink to stop the shakes – and I knew another day was already going down the drain. I couldn't get by that day without a drink but I remember thinking, "I'll try again tomorrow" knowing deep down inside that tomorrow would be no different. I was hooked and didn't know what to do about it.

I don't have to live (exist) that way anymore. I'm free and I want to stay free. Life is so much easier this way. It gives me something to look forward to with anticipation and excitement. For me, this is where the 12 Steps enter into my life. I must continue trying my best to live by them. Just being free from the compulsion to drink only keeps me dry. Practicing these 12 Steps in my daily life will help keep me sober and enjoying life as well as "dry". It takes some effort, though, and also involvement in Alcoholics Anonymous.

To be really "free" involves more than just freedom from the compulsion to drink. Am I free from telling lies or from dishonest actions in my daily life, both on the job and at home? Not always, I'm afraid. Then, I'm not as "free" as I would like to think I am by just not drinking.

I suspect the ultimate goal in gaining "freedom" must include freedom from self-pity, resentments, jealousy, envy, complaining or gripping insincerity, criticizing, negative-thinking, and on and on. Wow, what a goal that is! I doubt that any among us will ever gain such complete freedom or, for that matter, believe it even possible. However, working towards it should make each day better than the day before.

As Chapter 5 of the Big Book tells us of the 12 Steps, "Do not be discouraged. No one among us has been able to maintain anything like perfect adherence to these principles. We are not saints. The point is that we are willing to grow along spiritual lines. The principles we have set down are guides to progress. We claim spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection."

To sum up my thoughts concerning my being "free", I must recognize the fact that only if I am willing to lead a better life will this come about one day at a time.

For me, particular attention must be paid to Step 10, "continued to take a personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it." This step will do much toward keeping us on the path to freedom.

Bud G.

## Gratitude

I believe the one imperative to happy, permanent sobriety for any A.A. member is the simple virtue of gratitude. Gratitude is the memory of the heart – that quality which enables a man to double his fortune by sharing it with his brother. It is the golden tray on which we give to man the things we have received from God.

The measure of a good A.A. lies not in what he knows, but what he does. Not in how he thinks, but what he feels. The assessment of a good A.A. is made not in the brilliance of his mind, but in the charity of his heart. His stature is not gauged by how high he will reach to receive, but how low he will stoop to serve.

A good A.A. is thankful not only for what he has got, but he is grateful for what he can give. He strives not for cleverness, but for wisdom. He would rather be right than popular. A good A.A. uses not the toughness of his mind, but the gentleness of his touch in bringing hope to the sick alcoholic. For he knows that if ever the lamp of his charity burns dim, the light of another alcoholic may go out forever.

We who, when we came into A.A., were not trusted by man in the most trivial affairs of life, now are trusted by God in one of the most important missions on earth, trusted by Him to preserve and pass on this mighty miracle of sobriety to the alcoholic who still suffers.

6 Austin R. (Between-Us, Milwaukee, WI)

## Shorts

"I am a firm believer in both guidance and prayer. But I am fully aware, and humble enough, I hope, to see there may be nothing infallible about my guidance.

"The minute I figure I have got a perfectly clear pipeline to God, I have become egotistical enough to get into real trouble. Nobody can cause more needless grief than a power-driver who thinks he has got it straight from God." As Bill Sees It, p. 38

"Sobriety and a plan for living that produces a personality change and a spiritual awakening are imperative. Through A.A., many receive the needed change and awakening just by trying to live by A.A. principles and associating with A.A. people. We do this by going to many A.A. meetings with an open mind and a desire to live the good-feeling life without chemicals - liquid or otherwise."

Big Book, p. 459

"If you would be loved, love and be loveable."  
Ben Franklin



*Held Over for One More Month*

Rule #62: "Don't take yourself too damn seriously."

Help us! Think of a caption for the photo!

Give it a try - let your imagination fly.

In the **January 2004** issue, we will post some of the submissions so you can see what some of the other wonderfully wacky people are thinking.

**San Fernando Valley Central Office  
Intergroup Representatives Meeting – Oct 13, 2003**

Paul D Chairperson – Meeting opened at 7:00 pm

Treasurer's Report; See Insert

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

Old Business: None

New Business: First vote to move meeting location.

Birthdays Ron- 4yrs, Debbi- 19yrs, Joi- 2yrs Sarah- 19yrs, Henry- 3yrs, Bob- 2yrs, George- 1year

*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 - November 10, 2003*

*Prepared and submitted by: Jennifer J. Recording Secretary*

## DECEMBER 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 \_\_\_\_\_