

Recovery

Times

VOL 28, NO 3 - March 2004

A newsletter from Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office

"Nearly" Sober

This stuff won't hurt you!" reasoned my friend Ted. "Read the words out loud so you can get it through your thick head - 'nonalcoholic'!"

My friend put the ice-cold beer in my hand. It looked and felt like so many other real beers I had downed. A hot wind blew over my farm with the odor of hay that had just been put in the bam. I looked at the label on the bottle and read "0.5% alcohol." How in the world could such a little bit of alcohol hurt me? Didn't I have three years of sobriety? Surely this minuscule amount of liquor would be not match for the mighty bulwark of sobriety I had built up inside me.

(Unfortunately I hadn't been to an AA meeting in more than a year.) Calming my justifiable fears, I inhaled the first one, coming up for air only once. I had another later, feeling pretty good about here was a way that I could be old circle of friends.

Within six months I was an alcoholic. I am allergic to alcohol. Within two weeks of picked up on my drinking right before.

The next two years were don't soon forget. My sobriety, "precarious." Two to three back out there. I lost numerous good jobs, as well as a marriage of eight years.

Something happened in March 1992. My Higher Power once again re-stored the gift of sobriety in my life. The past 17 months have proven the faithfulness of my favorite promise over and over; God is doing for me what I cannot do for myself. I covet the fit now and maintain it with many meetings and close sponsorship.

I have an allergy of the body and mind called alcoholism. When I leave the "sleeping giant" alone, I am safe. When I awaken it with the smallest amount of alcohol, the physiological craving takes over. Total and complete abstinence remains my only hope of recovery over this incredibly patient disease.

Rick R., Grandview, MO

Reprinted from the *Grapevine*, May 1994



myself. At last, I thought, socially acceptable in my

in a treatment center. I am even the smallest amount of drinking "near beer," I had where I left off three years

a roller coaster ride I hope I as the Big Book states, was months dry and then I was

In This Issue...

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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

- March 26-28, 2004 19th Annual Ventura Co. AA Roundup
"Serenity by the Sea"
Oxnard, CA
Info: Cherly G., 805-389-0344

- April 8-11, 2004 27th Annual San Diego Spring Roundup
Manchester Grand Hyatt,
San Diego, CA
Info: John L., 619-660-0550
Email: johnlutz@finsvcs.com

- April 16-18, 2004 16th Indian Wells Valley AA Roundup
Ridgecrest, CA
Info: www.freewebs.com/iwvroundup

- April 24-25, 2004 31st Annual Golden Empire Roundup
Bakersfield, CA
Info: Central Office, 661-322-4025

- April 23-25, 2004 23rd Annual So. Cal H&I Conference
Marriott Hotel
Irvine, CA
Info: 714-839-2658

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

SERVICE COMMITTEE SCHEDULE

- March 15, 2004 **SFVH&I**
THIRDMONDAY
8pm Business Meeting
Get Acquainted Workshop, 7pm,
5657 Lindley Ave.

- April 5, 2004 **G.S. Districts #11, 16**
FIRST MONDAY
6pm, 11455 Chandler Blvd, N. Hollywood

- April 5, 2004 **G.S. Districts #17**
FIRST MONDAY
6pm, orientation, 6:30pm meeting
5000 Colfax (church), N. Hollywood

- April 6, 2004 **G.S. Districts #2**
FIRST TUESDAY
6:30pm, 4011 Dunsmore,
La Crescenta

- April 7, 2004 **G.S. District #1**
FIRST WEDNESDAY
6:30pm, 7552 Remmet,
Canoga Park

- April 7, 2004 **SFV Board of Directors**
6pm, Central Office

- April 10, 2004 **G.S. District #7**
SECONDSATURDAY
Agua Dulce Woman's Club
33201 Agua Dulce Cyn Rd
Sharon G. (661) 951-0372

- April 12, 2004 **SFV Intergroup**
SECONDMONDAY
6:30pm Orientation
7pm Business Meeting
St. Innocent's Church
5657 Lindley Ave. Tarzana, CA

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, 5657 Lindley Ave, Tarzana, CA. Contact: Central Office at 988-3001.

SAN FERNANDO VALLEY CONVENTION -

Volunteers are welcome to participate in the planning of the 2005 Convention. The Committee meets the 3rd Tuesday of each month (except February and March); 7 PM at St. Innocent's Church, 5657 Lindley Ave, Tarzana, CA. Convention planning meetings will begin in April, 2004.



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.

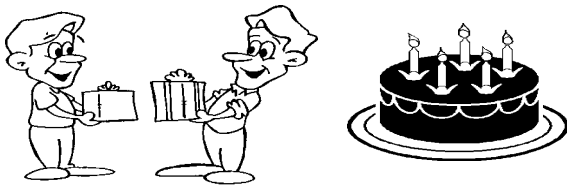
As stated in each issue of the Recovery Times: "RECOVERY TIMES presents the experience and opinions of members of A.A. (and occasionally others) on the subjects bearing on the disease of alcoholism. Opinions expressed herein are not to be attributed to Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole, nor does publication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

February 2004

Bonnie H.	13years
Hal S.	32years



But Don't A.A. Groups Use the Lord's Prayer?

The practice of ending meetings with the Lord's Prayer, once almost universal, is still common in many areas. Where it still exists, the leader normally asks attendees to join in only if they choose to. North American groups today have found a variety of ways to close their meetings. Use of the Lord's Prayer is rare in Spanish groups in the U.S. and groups outside the United States. Many recite the Serenity Prayer or A.A.'s responsibility Statement; others use some other informal prayer or phrasing, or simply a moment of silence. And whatever the specific wording, the group conscience makes the decision.

Groups that continue to close with the Lord's Prayer are following a custom established in the Fellowship's earliest days, when many of the founding members found their support in meetings of the Oxford Groups. The practice of closing with the Lord's Prayer very likely came directly from those meetings. At the time, there was no A.A. literature, and so the founders leaned heavily on Bible readings for inspiration and guidance. They probably closed with the Lord's Prayer because, as Bill W. explained, "it did not put speakers to the task, embarrassing to many, of composing prayers of their own." Meeting formats became more inclusive once A.A. began to spread throughout North America and then the rest of the world, and it became obvious that the program of recovery could cross all barriers of creed, race, and religion.

In *Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age*, the Rev. Samuel Shoemaker, one of the nonalcoholic friends who was instrumental in shaping the Fellowship in the very beginning, reflects on the founders' fundamental decision not to define a set of beliefs. He says (pages 263-64): "A.A. has been supremely wise, I think, in emphasizing the reality of the experience, and acknowledging that it came from a higher Power than human, and leaving the interpretation part pretty much at that.... If A.A.'s had said more, some people would have wanted them to say a great deal more, and define God in a way acceptable and congenial to themselves. It would have taken only two or three groups like this, dissenting from one another, to wreck the whole business.... So they stuck to the inescapable experiences and told people to turn their wills and their lives over to the care of God as they understood Him. That left the theory and the theology. . . to the churches to which people belong. If they belonged to no church and could hold no consistent theory, then they had to give themselves to the God that they saw in other people. That's not a bad way to set in motion the beginnings of a spiritual experience."

How Group Conscious Are You?

I BELIEVE THAT IF A GROUP has “a group conscience” it can take an inventory, and I am part of that inventory. My inventory includes my own behavior toward my group and each individual member, toward other groups, and toward AA as a whole.

I first ask myself: Am I a good AA member?

Then: What is my inventory as part of my group?

Do I...

1. Attend meetings only when “I need a meeting” or feel like it?
2. Always refuse to hold any office at any time, even when I could? Shun responsibility, refuse to run errands, make coffee, wipe a cup, empty ashtrays, set up chairs, and ignore anything that needs doing by refusing to notice - always manage to “let some body else do it”?
3. Neglect to talk to newcomers or, worse, listen to them? Drift off to certain little cliques of personal friends after meetings - or just “beat it,” always with good reasons, too tired, too busy — TV more often than not?
4. Turn down, or over to someone else, all Twelfth Step calls, when I could have gone? Refuse to speak or to find someone in my place, before non-AA groups or students, without good reason?
5. Give up after a time or two re-contacting the sick alcoholic? Use the not ready,” “not honest” routine? Try to carry the alcoholic instead of the message? Forget that I go to see the sick alcoholic not because he is an alcoholic (only he can say he is or isn't) but because I am?

Do I...

6. Make no effort to attend other meetings, help other groups get started, or give a lift to an older group? Encourage other groups to visit us, or am I (pardon the expression) a tight little island?
7. Show no interest in our Traditions, General Service, or worldwide AA? Have I grown tight with my money when I do not have to be, not realizing that the pamphlets and other services to help other alcoholics “grow not on trees”?
8. Indulge in criticism, resentment, or self-pity toward the group, a member, or members? Complain of boredom, repetition, the speakers, the chairman? Am I becoming part of the problem instead of part of the solution?
9. Criticize a member to other members behind his back with no chance for him to defend himself? Criticize slippers? Take people's moral inventory?
10. Do these things behind the group's back without trying to help the situation in any way?

..Do I?

M., Fort Collins, Colorado.

Reprinted with permission from the AA Grapevine, January, 1961.



A Viewer-with-Alarm

“I went through several fruitless years in a state called ‘viewing with alarm for the good of the movement’”. I thought it was up to me to be always ‘correcting conditions.’ Seldom had anybody been able to tell me what I ought to do and nobody had ever succeeded in

effectively telling me what I must do. I had to learn the hard way out of my own experience.

“When setting out to ‘check’ others I found myself often motivated by fear or what they were doing, self-righteousness, and even downright intolerance. Consequently, I seldom succeeded in correcting anything. I just raised barriers of resentment the cut off any suggestion, example, understanding, or love.”

Bill W. Letter. 1945

***Chop Wood, Carry Water
Make Coffee, Clean House
Stay Sober***

Nowadays, it seems the only unpardonable sin is intolerance. Disapproving of any other kind of wrongdoing is being judgmental - being intolerant.

Perhaps this is an outgrowth of the various self-realization and human potential movements that have softened our spine in the name of "feeling good" about ourselves. I sense these silly notions seeping into the Fellowship. An ever-so-tolerant idea of the sixties- "You do your thing and I'll do mine"- translates into, "You work your program your way, and I'll work my program my way." The implicit assumption is - as long as you go to meetings and don't drink, you can do whatever you please. Any opinion on working the program is justified, provided the person giving the opinion doesn't appear to be intolerant. So-called sponsors (loath to be intolerant) calm their eager-to-get-started sponsees with statements like: "Easy Does It," or "do a step a year."

(I've actually heard this. If these newcomers follow this dangerous advice, they will wait nine years before the promises come about, and twelve years before have a spiritual awakening.)

Our mistake is in supposing alcoholics are better than they are. We are selfish and self-centered, and unless we change, we will continue to act in selfish and self-centered ways. Just not drinking and going to meetings will not change this. Cleaning house will. Making direct amends will. Doing twelfth step work will. Service will. And we must have the backbone to tell newcomers to take all these actions, and more: "If you won't take a coffee commitment, you won't get better." "The Big Book spells out how to work with this program. If you continue to work it your way, you won't get better."

Haven't any of us been tempted to blurt out these simple, plain spoken truths? What stops us from saying things like this? Are we afraid of appearing intolerant?

Just for Today, Tucson, AZ

A "slipper" and a very sober old-timer were sitting together.

The "slipper" was obviously jumpy.

The old-timer asked, "What's the matter?"

"I'm in agony," the other replied, "I've been drinking."

"Could have been worse," the old-timer replied.

The "slippers" eyes bugged. "How could it possibly be worse?"

The old-timer replied, "It could have been me."

**San Fernando Valley Central Office
Intergroup Representatives Meeting – January 12, 2004**

Sarah G. 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: Agreed to move C/O picnic to weekend before Memorial Day weekend. We will sell tickets for \$1.

The Almost Memorial Day - Almost Free Picnic will be held at Woodley Park-Sunday, May 23rd

Birthdays Michael 2yrs, Steve 2yrs, Michael F. 15yrs Don D. 9 yrs, Melinda 4 yrs,

Motion to adjourn 7:30 PM

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

Next Meeting - February 9, 2004

Prepared and submitted by: Jennifer J. Recording Secretary

LEADERSHIP

Somewhere in our literature there is a statement to this effect: "Our leaders do not drive by mandate, they lead by example." In effect we are saying to them, "Act for us, but don't boss us." A leader in A.A. service is therefore a man or woman who can personally put principles, plans and policies into such dedicated and effective action that the rest of us want to back him up and help him with his job. When a leader power-drives us badly, we rebel; but when he too meekly becomes an order-taker and he exercises no judgment of his own—well, he really isn't a leader at all.

Good leadership originates plans, policies, and ideas for the improvement of our Fellowship and its services. But in new and important matters, it will nevertheless consult widely before taking decisions and actions. Good leadership will also remember that a fine plan or idea can come from anybody, anywhere. Consequently, good leadership will often discard its own cherished plans for others that are better, and give credit to the source.

The Service Manual/page 39/Permission/ A.A. World Services

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

Current Information

Name _____

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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.*

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Address _____

City _____ St _____ ZIP _____