

# Recovery Times

A newsletter from Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office

VOL 28, NO 7 July 2004

## ***Can Other People Do AA for Us?***

In the middle and late 1980s. I was one of several AA members who organized and presented secretary workshops in Santa Clara County. There seemed to be a great need. New secretaries were coming to Intergroup and General Service meetings and calling the Central Office to say that they needed guidance. They were not sure how to go about choosing a chairperson for their meeting. They didn't know what they were supposed to do with the money they collected. They were worried about how best to handle disruptive people. They didn't know what announcements they should be making. They were shaky on the Traditions.

We swung into action. We started holding workshops every three months at the various Alano Clubs and anywhere else someone wanted one. There was an outline for a one-hour presentation on four basic topics, followed by a fifteen-minute period for questions and answers.

Enlightenment ensued.

After a few years, the workshops were discontinued, as often happens with such things. And then, four or five years ago, they resumed and have been held fairly regularly ever since.

Now, it is a hard thing, surely, to feel that something you helped start, something that has generally been regarded as a success, is not such a great idea after all. But I have felt just that doubt for quite some time. I will try to tell you why.

It is certainly not because the need is not genuine. To this day, there are appallingly ignorant secretaries conducting some of our meetings. Why would there not be, when service work is increasingly for those who don't duck fast enough, and when we speak, only half in jest, of railroading people into AA jobs? Even if that were not true, many secretaries are fairly new in the Fellowship, and few of us, I suppose, first come to AA with a firm grasp of what it's about and of how things get done. We need to learn. We need some help. And any help is better than none.

But consider this: is it not odd to have a complete stranger, a person who may never have attended your meeting, telling your secretary how to conduct it? Is that the best we can do? Is there anything we have overlooked? Does it matter?

It matters very much to me, because what we are overlooking and allowing to slide into oblivion, I think, is the very idea of an AA group, the basic unit of AA life and service. If our experience shows anything, it shows that individual alcoholics tend to drink, and that alcoholics in AA groups tend to stay sober. Or is that wrong?

When we set up our various service committees years ago, it was not to retrace groups, but to

*Continued on Page 4*

# Calendar Events

## Upcoming Events

### **20th Annual South Bay Roundup**

July 1-5, 2004

Torrance Marriott, Torrance, CA

Info: 310-354-7660, or

[www.southbayroundup.org](http://www.southbayroundup.org)

### **12th Annual Foothill Roundup**

June 30-31, August 1, 2005

Flintridge Prep., 4543 Crown Ave.

La Canada / Flintridge

[www.foothillroundup.org](http://www.foothillroundup.org)

### **53rd Southern California Convention**

September 24 - 26, 2004

Town & Country Hotel, San Diego, CA

[www.aasocal.com](http://www.aasocal.com)

### **First Santa Clarita Valley A.A. Convention**

October 22-24, 2004

College of the Canyons

[www.scvaaconvention.com](http://www.scvaaconvention.com)

### **2005 International A.A. Convention**

June 30 - July 4, 2005

Toronto, Ont

Registration forms available in August 2004

[www.alcoholics-anonymous.org](http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org)

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

## SERVICE COMMITTEE SCHEDULE

- July 19, 2004 **SFV H&I  
THIRD MONDAY**  
8pm Business Meeting  
Get Acquainted Workshop, 7pm,  
5657 Lindley Ave.  
\*\*\*\*\*
- August 2, 2004 **G.S. Districts #11, 16  
FIRST MONDAY**  
6pm, 11455 Chandler Blvd, N. Hollywood  
\*\*\*\*\*
- August 2, 2004 **G.S. Districts #17  
FIRST MONDAY**  
6pm, orientation, 6:30pm meeting  
5000 Colfax (church), N. Hollywood  
\*\*\*\*\*
- August 3, 2004 **G.S. Districts #2  
FIRST TUESDAY**  
6:30pm, 4011 Dunsmore  
La Crescenta  
\*\*\*\*\*
- August 4, 2004 **G.S. District #1  
FIRST WEDNESDAY**  
6:30pm, 7552 Remmet  
Canoga Park  
\*\*\*\*\*
- August 4, 2004 **SFV Board of Directors**  
6pm, Central Office  
\*\*\*\*\*
- August 14, 2004 **G.S. District #7  
SECOND SATURDAY**  
Agua Dulce Woman's Club  
33201 Agua Dulce Cyn Rd  
Sharon G. (661) 951-0372  
\*\*\*\*\*
- August 12, 2004 **SFV Intergroup  
SECOND MONDAY**  
6:30 pm Orientation  
7pm Business Meeting  
St. Innocents Church  
5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana

## Valley Events

As of publishing time - no valley events  
have been submitted

*CALL OR COME to CENTRAL  
OFFICE TO FIND OUT WHAT'S  
GOING ON. YOU MAY ALSO  
CHECK THE WEB SITE*

## Special Events CENTRAL OFFICE

The price of the Big Book ( hard cover and soft cover ) will be \$1.00 higher starting July 1, 2004. This is an increase by World Services.

# Service Opportunities & News

## Service Opportunities 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, St. Innocent's Church, 5657 Lindley Ave, Tarzana, CA. Orientation 6:30pm, Meeting at 7:30pm. 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.

## Central Office News

### San Fernando Valley Central Office is On the Web

The SFV Central Office website is now available for Internet browsers. On the website, you can find a map to our office in Van Nuys, a listing of upcoming events in the Valley, service organization information and links to other cool A.A. websites. Our meeting schedule is also accessible on the website. Meetings are listed by day, Sunday through Saturday. Check it out: <http://www.sfvaa.org>

### Do you have an article for the Recovery Times?

Email it to us at: [sfvaanews@sbcglobal.net](mailto:sfvaaews@sbcglobal.net)

### **San Fernando Valley Central Office Intergroup Representatives Meeting June 14, 2004**

Sarah G. Chairperson – Meeting opened at 7:00 pm  
Treasurer's Report; See Insert  
*Service Committee information - see page 2 and 3 of the Recovery Times for more information*  
Old Business: Picnic was great. We fed 260 people  
New Business: .None

Birthdays Josh - 13 yrs, John - 3 yrs, Regina - 13 yrs,  
Doug - 17 yrs.

*Motion to adjourn 7:30 PM*

*The long form of the Intergroup Meeting Minutes for June is available at Central Office or at the Intergroup Meeting. These minutes are pending approval on July 12, 2004*

*Next Meeting - July 12, 2004*

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

## **HAPPY BIRTHDAY!**

**June 2004**

<b>Craig G.</b>	<b>5 years</b>
<b>Clint H.</b>	<b>13 years</b>
<b>Tony R.</b>	<b>17 years</b>
<b>Doug R.</b>	<b>17 years</b>
<b>Kathy B.</b>	<b>18 years</b>
<b>Anna W.</b>	<b>18 years</b>
<b>Linda V.</b>	<b>22 years</b>
<b>Helen D.</b>	<b>30 years</b>
<b>Bob O.</b>	<b>36 years</b>
<b>Learning to Live</b>	
<b>Men's Stag</b>	
<b>Birthday Gift</b>	

### 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.

## *Can Other People Do AA for Us? (continued from front page)*

make them more effective by providing a few common tools, such as a meeting directory and a single telephone for the whole area. I doubt if anyone foresaw then what it would come to. But now we have a Suggested Order of the Meeting and A Suggested Plan for Contributions to AA Services in our meeting directory. No thought required. It's all been laid out for you.

I grant that these are only suggestions, that they have not been imposed on anyone, and that groups have asked for just such guidance. Providing it is surely better than the paralysis that would result from withholding it.

What a wonderful thing it is, though, to be part of a group that takes care of its own affairs! I wish I could share that experience more than any other I have had in AA, and make people believe that it is worth the time and trouble. Sitting down with people you know and like—most of them, anyway—to talk about the needs and hopes of your group and about sharing responsibility is part of the secret joy of AA. Older members offer their experience of what has worked or not worked in the past. Newer people learn about the Twelve Traditions in the best way possible, by seeing them used as practical tools in solving problems and making sound decisions. Bad situations don't fester until people stop attending and the meeting dies. Getting active doesn't mean taking on the whole burden because no one else is doing anything; it means doing your small part in something that has real vitality and sense of purpose. That purpose, defined in Tradition Five, is something that belongs to "each group."

And there is another reason why the experiment of belonging to a home group should be essayed even by the dubious. Tradition Two tells us that the ultimate authority for what we do in AA is "a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience." That is a portentous statement that will mean different things to different people, of course, but I hope everyone has given it some thought.

To me it means that when AA members come together to seek what is best for AA and to form a genuine group conscience, a loving God may in some sense be present among them. I am not necessarily talking about something beyond human comprehension, a mystical experience. It is a perfectly human experience, although perhaps a rare one.

When we begin to listen to one another, really listen, and believe that other people love and care for Alcoholics Anonymous as much as we do; when we ease our own notions down from that high pedestal where they usually reside and try to believe that good ideas can come from any source, maybe even from that guy at the other end of the room who hasn't said anything sensible in his last eighty-five tries, then something truly transforming may occur.

I have been there once or twice when it did. I have not only felt my own heart lighten as the ponderous need to be right and to be acknowledged right simply fell away, but I have even seen it spread like a benign contagion across a whole room, as hostility and wrangling ended and everyone knew that at least for that day, we had found our answer. The seeking is more than the finding. That is why I believe that predigested suggestions and ready-made answers, however convenient and however expedient, are diminishing AA and impoverishing us all.

—John G., Reprinted from the *Santa Clara County Intergroup Newsletter*

## A Phone Call Away

I may not be a shining example in society but I am a miracle. People no longer lock their car doors or pull their children close to them as I walk by and sometimes they even smile at me.

When drinking cravings would hit, a moment used to seem like forever and the transporter beam on "Star Trek" wasn't quick enough to get me where I was going.

Today I can take my time, enjoy life and the rewards are much greater and longer lasting than alcohol could ever give me. Getting sober was a hard decision and learning to live life sober seemed to be impossible at times. AA has helped me get over my greatest fear which was being alone. It has made it possible for me to meet other people like myself. The Big Book supplies me with instructions on how to reach my goals and on how to live life on life's terms.

R L.

## Sharing Experience, Strength & Hope

I viewed drinking whiskey as a manly thing that most of my role models did. Yet I was fired from my first job - a paper route - for being drunk. As I reached my forties, alcohol quit working to make me feel good and getting drunk wasn't fun anymore. It was just something I did. I was running out of excuses for my actions and the consequences were becoming more than what I cared to accept.

Eventually I went to an AA meeting and I started to listen and understand some of what people were saying. They said "fake it until you make it" and I gave myself permission not to drink "one day at a time". I have a belief that a power greater than me does exist and I became willing to surrender myself to this power which has made change possible. My Higher Power allows me to be as happy as I allow myself to be. R. L.



### Co-founder Quotes

*It may be possible to find explanations of spiritual experiences such as ours, but I have often tried to explain my own and have succeeded only in giving the story of it. I know the feeling it gave me and the results it has brought, but I realize I may never fully understand its deeper why and how.*

*AA Comes of Age, p. 45*

### Humility

*"The attainment of greater humility is the foundation principle of each of AA's Twelve Steps. For without some degree of humility, no alcoholic can stay sober at all.*

*Nearly all AA's have found, too, that unless they develop much more of this precious quality than may be required just for sobriety, they still haven't much chance of becoming truly happy.*

*Without it, they cannot live to much useful purpose, or, in adversity, be able to summon the faith that can meet any emergency."*

*—Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, p. 70*

## Humor Me

A guy stumbles up to another guy in a bar and offers to buy him a beer. The second guy says, "Thanks . . . Hey, do I know you from somewhere?"

The first guy drains his beer and says, "I dunno. Where you from?"

The second guy says, "I'm from Ireland."

"No kidding," says the first guy, "I'm from Ireland too."

The second guy says, "Well, I'm from Dublin."

The first guy says, "HOLY MOLEY, I'M FROM DUBLIN TOO!"

The second guy says, "What school did you go to? I graduated from St. Mary's in '69."

"Incredible! I graduated from St. Mary's in '69 too."

Another guy watching from the bar says to the bartender, "What's going on there?"

"Not much," says the bartender, "The O'Malley twins are drunk again."

### The Texan's Dare

A Texan walks into a pub in Ireland and clears his voice to the crowd of drinkers. He says, "I hear you Irish are a bunch of drinkin' fools. I'll give \$500 American dollars to anybody in here who can drink 10 pints of Guinness back-to-back."

The room is quiet and no one takes of the Texan's offer. One man even leaves.

Thirty minutes later the same gentleman who left shows back up and taps the Texan on the shoulder.

"Is your bet still good?", asks the Irishman.

The Texan says yes and asks the bartender to line up 10 pints of Guinness. Immediately the Irishman tears into all 10 of the pint glasses drinking them all back-to-back.

The other pub patrons cheer as the Texan sits down in amazement.

The Texan gives the Irishman the \$500 and says, "If ya don't mind me askin', where did you go for that 30 minutes you were gone?"

The Irishman replies, "Oh...I had to go to the pub down the street to see if I could do it first".

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### You Might Be An Alcoholic If:

...you loose your car at least once a week.

...you think alcohol abuse is spilling your drink.

...you buy your morning drink with a roll of pennies.

...on the way to the bathroom, someone's always stepping on your hands.

...you don't have any friends, just drinking buddies.

...selling beer cans seems like a weekly bonus.

...you celebrate getting out of jail by getting drunk.

### Resolving Fear

Fear somehow touched about every aspect of our lives. It was an evil and corroding thread; the fabric of our existence was shot through with it. It set in motion trains of circumstances which brought us misfortune we felt we didn't deserve. But did not we often set the ball rolling ourselves?

The problem of resolving fear has two aspects. We shall have to try for all the freedom from fear that is possible for us to attain. Then we shall need to find both the courage and the grace to deal constructively with whatever fears remain.

*Big Book pp. 67-68 & Grapevine Jan. '62*

## INTO ACTION

A.A. is more than a set of principles; it is a society of alcoholics in action. We must carry the message, else we ourselves can wither and those who haven't been given the truth may die. ("As Bill Sees It", p. 13)

I desperately wanted to live, but if I was to succeed, I had to become active in our God-given program. I joined what became my home group, where I opened the hall, made coffee, and cleaned up. I had been sober about 3 months when an old-timer told me I was doing twelfth-step work. What a satisfying realization that was! I felt I was really accomplishing something. God had given me a second chance. A.A. had shown me the way, and these gifts were not only free—they were also priceless!

Now the joy of seeing newcomers grow reminds me of where I have come from, where I am now, and the limitless possibilities that lie ahead. I need to attend meetings because they recharge my batteries so that I have light when it's needed. I'm still a beginner in service work, but already I am receiving more than I'm giving. I can't keep it unless I give it away. I am responsible when another reaches out for help. I want to be there—sober.

From AA "Daily Reflections"

**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 \_\_\_\_\_