

Recovery Times

A newsletter from Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office VOL 28, NO 11 Nov. 2004

What Goes Around, Comes Around

During the waning years of the Depression in a small Idaho community, I used to stop by Mr. Miller's roadside stand for farm fresh produce as the season made available. Food and money were still extremely scarce and bartering was used extensively.

One day Mr. Miller was bagging some early potatoes for me. I noticed a small boy, delicate of bone and feature, ragged but clean, hungrily appraising a casket of freshly picked green peas. I paid for my potatoes, but was also drawn to the display of fresh green peas. I am a pushover for creamed peas and new potatoes. Pondering the peas, I could not help overhearing the conversation between Mr. Miller and the ragged boy next to me.

"Hello Barry, how are you today?"

"H'lo, Mr. Miller. Fine, thank ya. Jus' admiring' them peas ... sure look good."

"They are good, Barry. How's your Ma?"

"Fine. Gittin' stronger a lla' time."

"Good. Anything I can help you with?"

"No, Sir. Jus' admiring' them peas."

"Would you like to take some home?"

"No, Sir. Got nuthin'to pay for'em with."

"Well, what have you to trade me for some of those peas?"

"All I got's my prize marble here."

"Is that right? Let me see it."

"Here 'tis. She's a dandy."

"I can see that. Hm m m m m, only thing is this one is blue and I sort of go for red. Do you have a red one like this at home?"

"Not zackley ... but almost."

"Tell you what. Take this sack of peas home with you and next trip this way let me look at that red marble."

"Sure will. Thanks Mr. Miller."

Mrs. Miller, who had been standing nearby, came over to help me. With a smile she said, "There are two other boys like him in our community, all three are in very poor circumstances. Jim just loves to bargain with them for peas, apples, tomatoes, or whatever. When they come back with their red marbles, and they always do, he decides he doesn't like red after all and he sends them home with a bag of produce for a green marble or an orange one perhaps."

Continued on Page 7

Calendar Events

Upcoming Events

2005 River Roundup - Laughlin

January 14 - 16, 2005

Riverside Resort, Laughlin, NV

(800) 864-1606

www.rcco-aa.org/Conventions.html

30th Annual San Fernando Valley Convention

January 28 - 30, 2005

Burbank Airport Hilton

Burbank, CA

www.sfvaaconvention.org

2005 International A.A. Convention

June 30 - July 3, 2005

Toronto, Ont

Registration forms are now available

Info: www.aa.org

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

SERVICE COMMITTEE SCHEDULE

- Nov. 15, 2004 **SFV H&I
THIRD MONDAY**
8pm Business Meeting
Get Acquainted Workshop, 7pm,
5657 Lindley Ave.

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

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

- Dec. 7, 2004 **G.S. Districts #2
FIRST TUESDAY**
6:30pm, 4011 Dunsmore
La Crescenta

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

- Dec. 8, 2004 **SFV Board of Directors**
6pm, Central Office

- Dec. 11, 2004 **G.S. District #7
SECOND SATURDAY**
Agua Dulce Woman's Club
33201 Agua Dulce Cyn Rd
Sharon G. (661) 951-0372

- Dec. 13, 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.

Book Sales will be closed Nov 25

CALL OR COME TO CENTRAL OFFICE

TO FIND OUT WHAT'S GOING ON.

YOU CAN ALSO VISIT OUR WEBSITE:

<http://www.sfvaa.org>

Special Events

CENTRAL OFFICE

**November is
GRATITUDE MONTH.**

'When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the Hand of AA always to be there. And for that, I am Responsible.

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 third Monday of the month 8:00 PM @ St. Innocent's Church, 5657 Lindley Ave, Tarzana, CA. Info: Central Office (818) 988-3001.

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 the 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 third 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

San Fernando Valley Central Office Intergroup Representatives Meeting October 11, 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: None
New Business: .None

Birthdays Sarah G. - 20yrs, Ron A. - 15yrs, Debbi M. - 20yrs, Paul D. - 4yrs, Bob C - 3yrs, Richard W. - 13 yrs

Motion to adjourn 7:30 PM

The long form of the Intergroup Meeting Minutes for October is available at Central Office or at the Intergroup Meeting. These minutes are pending approval on November 8, 2004

Next Meeting - November 8, 2004

Prepared and submitted by: Jennifer J. Recording Secretary

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

October 2004

Anonymous	8 years
Olivia M.	18 years
Linda K.	22 years
Debi McG.	20 years
Kay W.	18 years

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.

My Favorite Part of the Big Book (at this moment)

When the topic of this article was suggested, a few of us were standing around after a meeting. Reacting to the idea of a favorite part of the big book, a person whose sobriety I admire suggested his favorite was the part between the blue covers.

Having only been in the program 14 months, I can think of lots of chapters, paragraphs, phrases or even words that could be considered favorites. But I have not been around long enough, nor can I now imagine how I would ever be able to narrow things down to one favorite part. In fact, I believe I have only scratched the surface of the impact the Big Book will have on me. Since I believe it is divinely inspired writing, I also believe it will be able to speak to me wherever I am in my progress.

And if I could name a favorite, what would make it so? My first way of deciding would naturally be how it makes me feel. But my sponsor has been attempting to show me that how I feel is no longer the most important and overriding thing in my life, at least, that is, if I want to quit being miserable. The book, I have been reminded, suggests a program of recovery, not a philosophy for my understanding, agreement and approval. Even though it makes me feel indescribably good to read certain passages, I've been taught that it's my actions that will eventually cause a "spiritual experience" resulting in a "profound alteration" in my "reaction to life" (Appendix II). I have been told to go to meetings, read the big book, work the steps with a sponsor, and get involved in service and learn to apply the spirit of service and the other principles in my daily life. That more or less describes what I've learned about the Unity, Recovery and Service on my desire chip. I've been blessed to understand that I am being given the educational variety of spiritual experience. As a result of working the program in my faltering way, I have come to believe I am finding a power greater than myself that works in my life. The book expresses this so beautifully in so many places, e.g. Pg. 25.

Having said all that, I guess my favorite part of the book at any point in time might be that which I need to hear the most to get me back on the beam.

Lately, that's about fear. So page 67-68 is my current favorite part, because it describes the solution to my problem.

I still get hit by a "hundred forms of fear" (p. 62). But 99 of them are generated in my head, not by outside circumstances. My life has not been threatened or in danger. The fact of the matter is, my life has never been so good. What I discover in my daily life is that fear dominates my defects, sometimes by a narrow margin over the others. But many times it is no contest; fear is the big honcho. Here's a short list: fear of not being liked, accepted, or approved, fear of being rejected, fear of looking bad in front of or to others, fear of failure, fear of success. Most of the time they can all be summed up in a fear of things not going the way I want them to go. These are all very familiar, long-time accomplices of mine.

But now I have tools. I now realize all these fears are selfish, self-centered, and in my head, not actually existing in reality. And now after having listed them and asking myself why I have them I can read this paragraph:

"Perhaps there is a better way – we think so. For we are now on a different basis; the basis of trusting and relying upon God. We trust infinite God rather than our finite selves. We are in the world to play the role He assigns. Just to the extent that we do as we think He would have us, and humbly rely on Him, does He enable us to match calamity with serenity." (p. 68)

The next paragraph also talks about faith. I realize that faith is the answer to my fear. When I get into fear, I am not trusting. When I fear, I doubt that the Creator of the universe might possibly have a better idea than mine. But I can always turn back to my Creator, ask for the fear to be removed, and ask for direction. The idea of "trusting and relying" is a big leap for me and takes faith from a nice idea to what I hope is an action. Only a couple of weeks ago did I realize in an entirely new way that I can actually think about what God as I understand Him would have me do, then go do it and leave the results to Him.

The last sentence about fear on p. 68 says, "At once, we commence to outgrow fear." I have heard in meetings that "commence" means to begin. And growing is a lifelong process. So I have just begun a lifelong process of outgrowing fear by looking to my Higher Power, and learning to trust and rely upon Him.

It appears that my favorite part of the Big Book is the one I am currently using to help me stumble on to the next right thing.

Matt M. of San Antonio

Just Pedal

At first I saw God as my observer, my judge, keeping track of things I did wrong, so as to know whether I merited heaven or hell when I die. He was out there sort of like a president. I recognized His picture when I saw it, but I really didn't know Him.

But later on, when I met God, it seemed as though life were rather like a bike ride. But it was a tandem bike, and I noticed God was at the back, helping me pedal.

I don't know when it was that He suggested that we change places, but life has not been the same since.

When I had control I knew the way. It was rather boring, but predictable. It was the shortest distance between two points.

But when He took the lead He knew delightful long cuts, up mountains and through rocky places at breakneck speeds. It was all I could do to hang on! Even though it looked like madness. He said "Pedal!"

I worried and was anxious and asked, "Where are You taking me?"

He laughed and didn't answer and I started to learn to trust. I forgot my boring life and entered into the adventure. And when I'd say, "I'm scared," He'd lean back and touch my hand.

He took me to people with gifts that I needed: gifts of healing, acceptance and joy. They gave me gifts to take on my journey, and we were off again.

He said "Give the gifts away; they're extra baggage, too much weight."

So I did to the people we met, and I found that in giving I received, and still our burden was tight.

I did not trust Him, at first, in control of my life. I thought He'd wreck it, but He knows bike secrets, knows how to fly to shorten scary passages.

And I am learning to shut up and pedal in the strangest places, and I'm beginning to enjoy the view and the cool breeze on my face with God as my delightful constant companion.

And when I'm sure I just can't do any more. He just smiles and says, "Pedal!"



Co-founder Quotes

A.A. in Two Words

"All A.A. progress can be reckoned in terms of just two words: humility and responsibility. Our whole spiritual development can be accurately measured by our degree of adherence to

these magnificent standards.

"Ever deepening humility, accompanied by an ever greater willingness to accept and to act upon clear-cut obligations – these are truly our touchstones for all growth in the life of the spirit. They hold up to us the very essence of right being and right doing. It is by them that we are enabled to find and to do God's will."

*From "As Bill See's It",
page 271*

Remembering (and Regretting) the Past Department Beer Troubleshooting

Symptom: Feet cold and wet.

Fault: Glass being held at incorrect angle.

Action: Rotate glass so that the opening points toward the ceiling.

Symptom: Feet warm and wet.

Fault: Improper bladder control.

Action: Stand next to nearest dog and complain about house training.

Symptom: Beer unusually pale and tasteless.

Fault: Glass empty.

Action: Get someone to buy you another beer.

Symptom: Opposite wall covered with fluorescent lights.

Fault: You have fallen over backwards.

Action: Have yourself tied to the bar.

Symptom: Mouth contains cigarette butts.

Fault: You have fallen forward

Action: See above.

Symptom: Beer tasteless, front of your shirt is wet.

Fault: Mouth not open or glass applied to wrong part of face.

Action: Retire to the restroom and practice in mirror.

Symptom: Floor blurred.

Fault: You are looking through the bottom of an empty glass.

Action: Get someone to buy you another beer.

Symptom: Floor moving.

Fault: You are being carried out.

Action: Find out if you are being taken to another bar.

Symptom: Room seems unusually dark.

Fault: Bar has closed.

Action: Confirm home address with bartender.

Symptom: Taxi suddenly takes on a colorful aspect and textures.

Fault: Beer consumption has exceeded personal limitations.

Action: Cover mouth

Symptom: Everyone looks up at you and smiles.

Fault: You are dancing on the table.

Action: Fall on someone cushy looking.

Symptom: Beer is crystal clear.

Fault: It's water, someone is trying to sober you up.

Action: Punch him/her.

Symptom: Hand hurts, nose hurts, mind unusually clear.

Fault: You've been in a fight.

Action: Apologize to everyone you see, just in case it was them.

Symptom: Don't recognize anyone or the room you are in.

Fault: You have wandered into the wrong party.

Action: Ask them if they have free beer.

"Sobriety is the most important thing in your life without exception. You may believe your job, or your home life, or one of many other things come first. But consider, if you do not get sober and stay sober, chances are you won't have a job, a family, sanity, or even life. If you are convinced that everything in your life depends on your sobriety, you have just so much more chance of getting sober and staying sober. If you put other things first, you are only hurting your chances."

What Goes Around, Comes Around *(cont'd from page 1)*

I left the stand smiling to myself, impressed with this man. A short time later I moved to Colorado, but never forgot the story of this man, the boys, and their bartering.

Several years went by, each more rapid than the previous one. Just recently I had occasion to visit some old friends in that Idaho community and while I was there I learned that Mr. Miller had died. They were having his viewing that evening and knowing my friends wanted to go, I agreed to accompany them.

Upon arrival at the mortuary we fell into line to meet the relatives of the deceased and to offer whatever words of comfort we could. Ahead of us in line were three young men.

One was in an Army uniform and the other two sported nice haircuts, dark suits and white shirts ... all very professional looking.

They approached Mrs. Miller, standing composed and smiling by her husband's casket. Each of the young men hugged her, kissed her on the cheek, spoke briefly with her and moved on to the casket. Her misty light blue eyes followed them as, one by one, each young man stopped briefly and placed his own warm hand over the cold pale hand in the casket.

Each left the mortuary awkwardly, wiping his eyes.

Our turn came to meet Mrs. Miller. I told her who I was and mentioned the story she had told me about the marbles. With her eyes glistening, she took my hand and led me to the casket.

"Those three young men who just left were the boys I told you about. They just told me how they appreciated the things Jim "traded" them. Now, at last, when Jim could not change his mind about color or size ... they came to pay their debt."

"We've never had a great deal of the wealth of this world," she confided, "but right now, Jim would consider himself the richest man in Idaho."

With loving gentleness she lifted the lifeless fingers of her deceased husband. Resting underneath were three exquisitely shined red marbles.

Moral: We will not be remembered by our word, but by our kind deeds.

Author Unknown

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

Current Information

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ St _____ ZIP _____

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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

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Address _____

City _____ St _____ ZIP _____