

Recovery Times

A newsletter from Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office VOL 28, NO 12 Dec. 2004

It Ain't Heavy, It's My Bundle

My life is almost perfect. I have two grown sons who are wonderful. I have a well constructed house, a nice dog, and a husband who treats me like a queen. In fact, on days I feel well, I don't even think of being sick. I have Hepatitis C, a liver disease. Recently, my health has gotten worse, and I have been struggling to accept the fact that I'm not well.

This reminds me of the story about a man who was given the opportunity to switch burdens with someone else. He entered a room where other people had exchanged their loads of care for others. After he put his own bundle down and looked around, he realized that some bundles were too awkward to carry or some too large and that his bundle of care was the only one that seemed to fit. So he picked up the same bundle of care and went on his way.

I think that guy must have been in AA. He knew that God doesn't always give us what we want. He gives us what we need. Maybe I need an illness. Maybe, it's part of my lesson here on this earth to learn how to live happily with the limitations of my disease. Maybe, it was the only way God could slow me down long enough to get me to use some of the talents He gave me, like writing. Some days I'm a maniac, but maybe I would be a raving maniac without my illness.

At any rate, I'm blessed to be a part of the program of AA. Every time I walk into a meeting, there is someone who has it worse than me. My best friend recently went through chemotherapy for ovarian cancer. Her suffering made me realize I was lucky to have my particular bundle of cares.

Maybe, that is how the program works. We hold each other up during the times we can't stand on our own and through that process we are made humble enough to know that we only have this day, this hour, this minute. Then, for a moment, we are brought into a peaceful acceptance of what God has given, what he has taken away, and what He has left us. Today, I will happily carry my own bundle.

(Dawn K, reprinted from The Groupvine, Coachella Valley)

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

21st Annual High Desert Convention

March 11 - 13, 2005

Victorville, CA

760-961-1491

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

- Dec. 20, 2004 **SFVH&I
THIRDMONDAY**
8pm Business Meeting
Get Acquainted Workshop, 7pm,
5657 Lindley Ave.

- Jan. 3, 2005 **G.S. Districts #11, 16
FIRSTMONDAY**
6pm, 11455 Chandler Blvd, N. Hollywood

- Jan. 3, 2005 **G.S. Districts #17
FIRSTMONDAY**
6pm, orientation, 6:30pm meeting
5000 Colfax (church), N. Hollywood

- Jan. 4, 2005 **G.S. Districts #2
FIRSTTUESDAY**
6:30pm, 4011 Dunsmore
La Crescenta

- Jan. 5, 2005 **G.S. District #1
FIRSTWEDNESDAY**
6:30pm, 7552 Remmet
Canoga Park

- Jan. 5, 2005 **SFV Board of Directors**
6pm, Central Office

- Jan. 8, 2005 **G.S. District #7
SECONDSATURDAY**
Agua Dulce Woman's Club
33201 Agua Dulce Cyn Rd
Sharon G. (661) 951-0372

- Jan. 10, 2005 **SFV Intergroup
SECONDMONDAY**
6:30 pm Orientation
7pm Business Meeting
St. Innocents Church
5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana

Valley Events

As of publishing time,

no valley events had been submitted.

**TO FIND OUT WHAT'S GOING ON
YOU CAN:**

COME TO CENTRAL OFFICE

CALL US AT 818-988-3001

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT

<http://www.sfvaa.org>

Special Events

CENTRAL OFFICE

Our Literature Room will be

CLOSED

for literature sales
on the following days:

Christmas Eve Friday Dec. 24

Christmas Day Saturday Dec. 25

New Year's Eve Friday Dec. 31
(for inventory)

New Year's Day Saturday Jan. 1

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: Call C.O. (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 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 November 8, 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: 4 Board positions filled by election
*Birthdays Whitney -1yr, Allison 6yrs, Dennis -8yrs
Rosanne - 9yrs, Erica - 9yrs, Dawn - 9yrs, Glen- 10trs.*

Motion to adjourn 7:30 PM

The long form of the Intergroup Meeting Minutes for November is available at Central Office or at the Intergroup Meeting. These minutes are pending approval on December 13, 2004

Next Meeting - December 13, 2004

Prepared and submitted by: Jennifer J. Recording Secretary

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

November 2004

Michael L.	1year
Barbara B.	2 years
Anonymous	6 years
Violet C.	10 years
Ron A.	15 years
Buzzard	16 years
Sarah M.	17 years
Melanie H..	17 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.

Tradition Six

An AA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the AA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose. The sixth of our Twelve Points of AA Tradition is deemed so important that it states at length the relation of the AA movement to money and property.

This Tradition declares in substance that the accumulation of money, property, and the unwanted personal authority so often generated by material wealth comprise a cluster of serious hazards against which an AA group must ever be on guard.

Tradition Six also enjoins the group never to go into business nor ever to lend the AA name or money credit to any “outside” enterprise, no matter how good. Strongly expressed is the opinion that even clubs should not bear the AA name; that they ought to be separately incorporated and managed by those individual AAs who need or want clubs enough to financially support them.

We would thus divide the spiritual from the material, confine the AA movement to its sole aim, and ensure (however wealthy as individuals we may become) that AA itself shall always remain poor. We dare not risk the distractions of corporate wealth. They have become certainties, absolute verities for us.

Thank God, we AAs have never yet been caught in the kind of religious or political disputes which embroil the world of today. But we ought to face the fact that we have often quarreled violently about money, property, and the administration thereof. Money, in quantity, has always been a baleful influence in group life. Let a well-meaning donor present an AA group with a sizable sum and we break loose. Nor does trouble abate until that group, as such, somehow disposes of its bankroll. This experience is practically universal. “But,” say our friends, “isn’t this a confession of weakness? Other organizations do a lot of good with money. Why not AA?”

Of course, we of AA would be the first to say that many a fine enterprise does a lot of good with a lot of money. To these efforts money is usually primary; it is their lifeblood. But money is not the lifeblood of AA. With us, it is very secondary. Even in small quantities, it is scarcely more than a necessary nuisance, something we wish we could do without entirely. Why is that so?

We explain that easily enough; we don’t need money. The core of AA procedure is one alcoholic talking to another, whether that be sitting on a curbstone, in a home, or at a meeting. It’s the message, not the place; it’s the talk, not the alms. That does our work. Just places to meet and talk, that’s about all AA needs. Beyond these, a few small offices, a few secretaries at their desks, a few dollars apiece a year, easily met by voluntary contributions. Trivial indeed, our expenses!

Nowadays, the AA group answers its well-wishers saying: “Our expenses are trifling. As good earners, we can easily pay them. As we neither need nor want money, why risk its hazards? We’d rather stay poor. Thanks just the same!

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A Different AA Preamble

Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship designed and administered by a bunch of ex-drunks whose only qualification for membership is that we finally realized that we can't hold our liquor and we want to stop trying to impossibly learn how to hold it successfully. A. A. has no rules, dues or fees, nor anything else that any sensible organization seems to require.

At meetings the speaker starts on one subject and winds up talking about something entirely different and concludes by saying he doesn't know anything about the program, except that it works. The groups are often broke, yet always seem to have money to carry on. We are always losing members but seem to grow. We claim A. A. is a selfish program but always seem to be doing something for others.

Every group passes laws, rules, edicts, and PR announcements, which everyone blithely ignores. Members who disagree with any thing are free to walk out in a huff, quitting forever, only to return as though nothing happened and are greeted accordingly.

Nothing we discuss in A. A. is ever planned in advance yet great results are born from the things we share with each other and our lives get better.

How can we survive like this?

Perhaps it's because we have learned to live and laugh at ourselves and with each other. God made us. He made laughter too. Perhaps He is pleased with our disorganized efforts and makes things right no matter who pushes the wrong buttons.

Maybe He is pleased with our simple yet sincere efforts to do what's right for ourselves and others. Maybe He is pleased with our trying to be nobody but ourselves. We don't know how it works, but it does and members keep receiving their dividend checks from their A. A. investments.

It is wise to be sober, and it is much easier, my friend, to stay sober then to get sober.

Anonymous—New Reporter, Washington D.C.



Co-founder Quotes

Anonymity

"Since our Tradition on anonymity designates the exact level where the line should be held, it must be obvious to everyone who can read and understand the English language that to maintain anonymity at any other level is definitely a violation of this Tradition."

"The A. A. who hides his identity from his fellow A. A. by using only a given name violates the Tradition just as much as the A.A. who permits his name to appear in the press in connection with matters pertaining to A.A."

"The former is maintaining his anonymity above the level of press, radio and films, and the latter is maintaining his anonymity below the level of press, radio and films-whereas the Tradition states that we should maintain our anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films."

Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers, pp 264-265

How Many Meetings Are Too Many?

I was sober ten, maybe twelve months when I started feeling that maybe it was time to cut back on my meetings. I had done ninety meetings in ninety days and continued to go to approximately seven meetings a week. Fortunately, I had been trained by my wanderers group, and my sponsor, to tell people when I had thoughts like this. So I did. I mentioned it to a number of AA's, and I will never forget the response of one person. He said, "How many meetings do you think you should go to?"

I paused and said, "Probably five." He said simply, "Then why don't you go to six?" Thinking that there was some factual basis for this number I enquired, "What's so special about six?"

He said, "Well, all your best thinking got you into the treatment center, a physical, mental and emotional wreck, so why don't you try someone else's thinking for a while?" I was a little stunned by his response and certainly my ego and pride took a well needed beating. Even so, I have hung onto that simple, powerful suggestion and have widened its use to many parts of my life today.

Lately, while doing my prayer and meditation, I have received a wave of thoughts that have to do with the idea my friend raised to me regarding my meeting schedule. I have shared them at many meetings which is something I really like to do. Instead of repeating how I used and understood the steps a long time ago, I try to talk about what the steps mean to me today and how I use them in my life. When I read the Big Book and the Twelve and Twelve, it is a joy to experience how the meaning and depth of what I read and learn changes as I do. There is a joke brought up from time to time that goes like this: "Someone keeps changing the words in the Big Book because every time I read it, the words are different." Everyone who hears this understands.

Back to my wave of thoughts. He was correct. All my best thinking got me to the treatment center a total wreck. And boy, I thought a lot while I was out there. I tried many solutions. Working out, going to church, going to doctors, reading books, newer Higher Powers (gambling, for example, etc.). I am convinced today, that many people around me were doing what my friends do for me in A.A today. Namely, they were suggesting to me that I try something different. Rick, why don't you try not drinking so much? Rick, you probably need some help, why don't you get it? Rick, you are wrecking your life as well as others' lives around you, can't you see that? Ah ha! Rick, can't you see that? Can't you hear what we are telling you? The answer was – No!!! I could not. Alcohol filled all those places that allowed me to see and hear the truth. I couldn't see the insanity. I couldn't hear the correct suggestions people were giving me. I was going down my path and doing what I thought was right. And since I was the smartest person in the world and the controller of my destiny, why should I pay attention to what others were telling me?

God has been with me always. I asked him to step aside and let me run the show. He did. When I was in the hospital beaten to submission, done trying to follow my path any longer, He gently stepped in and opened my eyes and ears. Then he sent me to learn a new path. The right path. He sent me to Alcoholics Anonymous. He gave me a new way of living and a handbook on how to deal with life on its own terms, The Twelve Steps. Now when I am at the tables I listen to my professors. When I am in church I can hear what the message is. When I am doing insane things I can see it, especially when others bring it to my attention. I have been given a special gift from God. I can see it more clearly every day and I am grateful. Thank you God and thank you A.A

Rick H, Roselle, III.

The Beauty of Tradition Ten

Sobriety in AA is the first thing in my life that has really worked. I'm grateful to fellow AAs who've shown me how not to drink on a daily basis, and to alcoholics I've never met who established our Steps, Traditions and Concepts for World Service. When I live these principles to the best of my ability, they keep me sober and in touch with the God of my understanding.

I'm especially grateful for Tradition Ten, where it is suggested that AA groups never get involved in the messy business of debating outside issues. The wonderful "extra" implied by this Tradition is that I, as an individual alcoholic, am free to simply enjoy sobriety in AA, without having to defend my position on any outside issue.

You see, I grew up in the sixties. I lived with my parents (one alcoholic, one social drinker) who were closely associated with a small, left-wing private college in the Northeast. It was a school where expressing your opinions was very important. On campus, where I hung out as a thirteen-year-old, I heard lots of angry rhetoric about Vietnam, civil rights, and a lot else. My parents brought the same kind of political anger home with them, and challenged me to come up with informed positions on the same issues. I was only an eighth-grader; but I was expected to engage in adult-style discussions. If I didn't have an opinion on the issue at hand, I was considered a failure or a non-thinker.

Looking back, it was probably great training for a future alcoholic. I got very good at hiding the things I was truly ashamed of (especially the amount I drank), using a smoke screen of vaguely directed political opinion.

As my disease progressed, I was often broke, unemployed, hungover, and in need of a place to stay. Usually my parents would take me in, and for months at a time I'd live at home, trying to get my act together. Deep down inside I knew I was sick and crazy from the booze. But at the time, dealing with it was too frightening. It was easier to engage my parents in a petty debate over some global issue beyond our control than to draw attention to the real reason I was out of work.

Today, I'm sober and grateful for what it was like, what happened, and what it's like now. I'm even grateful to my parents, who put up with me as an active alcoholic while also living with their own illnesses. But I'm especially grateful to the alcoholics who founded this Fellowship and gave us the guidelines by which we run our groups. Tradition Ten frees AAs to concentrate on what we have in common — recovery, unity, service — rather than waste time debating outside issues. Angry debate of things over which we have no power can only serve to split us.

Matt E, Brooklyn, N.Y. The Home Group: Heartbeat of AA,

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 _____