

Recovery Times

A newsletter from Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office

VOL 29, NO 2 Feb. 2005

One Member's Experience: A Sense for Service

I remember the day vividly. Things were going great with five months dry, a home group and all, but I felt instructed to head back to my tavern and try a little experiment. Thus began my descent into my true bottom. Halfway through it was my good fortune to have a life-changing conversation with my higher power.

"Steve, about this relapse of yours? What kind of a service commitment did you have when you felt compelled to take that drink?"

"Well, I, uh, didn't actually have a commitment. But I did sit in the front row and..."

"Not good enough, Steve. Now, get back to that meeting and get involved — get really involved — and leave your little compulsion to me."

And so it was that I came to service in AA as the cornerstone of my sobriety. My emphasis on service started with the understanding that "my little compulsion" could return out of the blue without warning. I returned to my home group knowing that through the various group positions my isolation would be gone. With more than fifty regular members I learned to be quick on the draw when positions opened up. While working my way through these, I began to explore the larger Fellowship.

"You needn't go out of your way looking for commitments," my higher power told me. "Hold yourself in readiness and they'll find you."

Indeed they have found me over the years, inside and outside the Fellowship, starting with being drafted by my alma mater rehab to facilitate groups to presently sitting on an advisory board related to my medical problem. I'm especially fond of a night long ago in Buffalo where I was at my mother's side as she lay comatose on life support. I'd mentioned to a local AA that I would miss the monthly H&I business meeting back home. He invited me to the regular rehab meeting he carried into my mother's hospital. I had only to walk to a different wing to honor my commitment.

Around this time yet another serendipitous transition occurred when I was recruited by the chairwoman of the management committee of a meeting room in the Mission. While we sat together one night at a General Service meeting, she spontaneously made the connection that my construction experience met the need for the open position. It turned out to be a four-year run.

Finally, following a group inventory, my home group last year called for an IFB Rep. The silent pause was deafening so I was quick to volunteer. So here I am, once again wrapped in that blanket of spiritual, charitable condition -giving of one's time to the Fellowship.

By Stephen R.

Calendar Events

Upcoming Events

33rd ANNUAL, CALIFORNIA YOUNG PEOPLES CONVENTION

RESIDENCE INN OXNARD
Oxnard, California
March 11, 12 & 13, 2005
Info: Candy (805) 816-5628

40th AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL CONVENTION

Perth, Western Australia
March 24-28, 2005

20th ANNUAL, VENTURA COUNTY ROUNDUP

Oxnard, California
April 15, 16 & 17, 2005
<http://www.vcroundup.com>

24th Annual Southern California Hospital and Institutional Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous

April 29, April 30 & May 1, 2005
DoubleTree Hotel, Orange, California
More Info: Email: rtaylor3@verizon.net;
Telephone: AA (714)979-8524 Al-Anon (714)545-7810

Desert Pow Wow

Indian Wells, CA
May 26 - 29, 2005
Esmerlada Renaissance
<http://www.desertpowwow.com>

21st ANNUAL SOUTH BAY ROUNDUP

Torrance, California
May 27 - 30, 2005
TORRANCE MARRIOTT
<http://www.southbayroundup.org>

2005 International A.A. Convention

June 30 - July 3, 2005
Toronto, Ont
Registration forms are now available
<http://www.aa.org>

Registration forms for the events above
can be obtained at the Intergroup Meeting
or at Central Office

SERVICE COMMITTEE SCHEDULE

- Feb. 21, 2005 **SFV H&I
THIRD MONDAY**
8pm Business Meeting
Get Acquainted Workshop, 7pm,
5657 Lindley Ave.

- March 7, 2005 **G.S. Districts #11, 16
FIRST MONDAY**
6pm, 11455 Chandler Blvd, N. Hollywood

- March 7, 2005 **G.S. Districts #17
FIRST MONDAY**
6pm, orientation, 6:30pm meeting
5000 Colfax (church), N. Hollywood

- March 1, 2005 **G.S. Districts #2
FIRST TUESDAY**
6:30pm, 4011 Dunsmore
La Crescenta

- March 2, 2005 **G.S. District #1
FIRST WEDNESDAY**
6:30pm, 7552 Remmet
Canoga Park

- March 9, 2005 **SFV Board of Directors**
6pm, Central Office

- March 12, 2005 **G.S. District #7
SECOND SATURDAY**
Agua Dulce Woman's Club
33201 Agua Dulce Cyn Rd
Sharon G. (661) 951-0372

- Mar. 14, 2005 **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 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

This month we are moving the book warehouse across the hall, upgrading the point of sale system and starting the general office clean-up. The hours for book sales will remain the same.

Don't forget that the bookstore is closed for inventory on the last Friday of every month. Thank you for all your support.

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 January 10, 2005

Richard W. 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: Ken – 3 yrs, Terry – 3 yrs, Steve – 3 yrs,
Laura – 5 yrs, Carol – 12 years, Marie – 25 years.

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. These minutes are pending approval on February 14, 2005

Next Meeting - February 14, 2005

Prepared and submitted by: Dawn H. Recording Secretary

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

January 2005

John S.	1 year
Michael L.	3 years
Laura B.	5 years
Brian M.	14 years
Marie B.	25 years

Reseda Speaker

Solutions By The Steps

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.

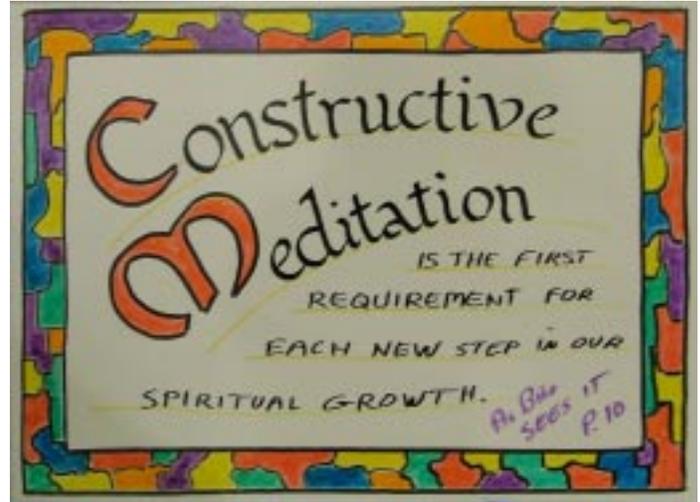
By sending a donation to Central Office you share your birthday with Recovery Times readers. Send a dollar (\$1.00) a year - or \$1.00 for each year of your sobriety - or send as much as you wish to give to celebrate your birthday. The amount doesn't matter - it's the "counting" that counts.

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.

San Fernando Valley Central Office - Recovery Art

I have been a phone volunteer at the San Fernando Valley Central Office in Van Nuys for a number of years. Immediately after arriving for my shift, I always check out the latest artistically-delivered recovery message on the whiteboard between the refrigerator and coffee pot. It recently occurred to me that I had no idea how these messages are created.

Now the mystery has been solved.



Al W. is a Central Office volunteer who works phones on Sunday nights. In addition to his phone duties, Al takes the time to create these colorful and inspirational messages on the whiteboard.

You have probably heard the statement that no matter how many times you read the Big Book, you can always find something that you never noticed before. A few years back, I found one of my favorite Big Book lines on Al's board:

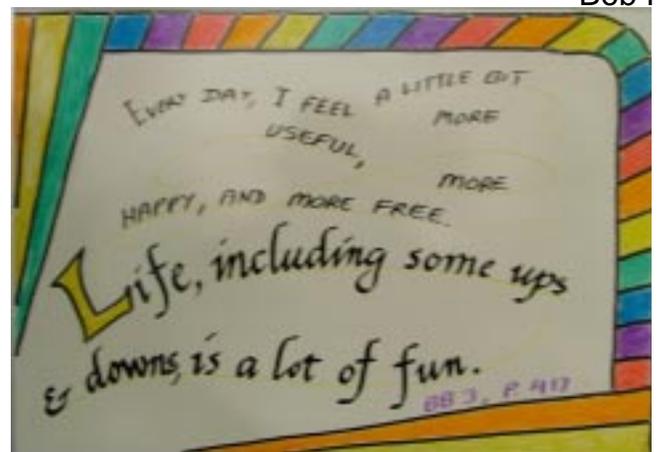
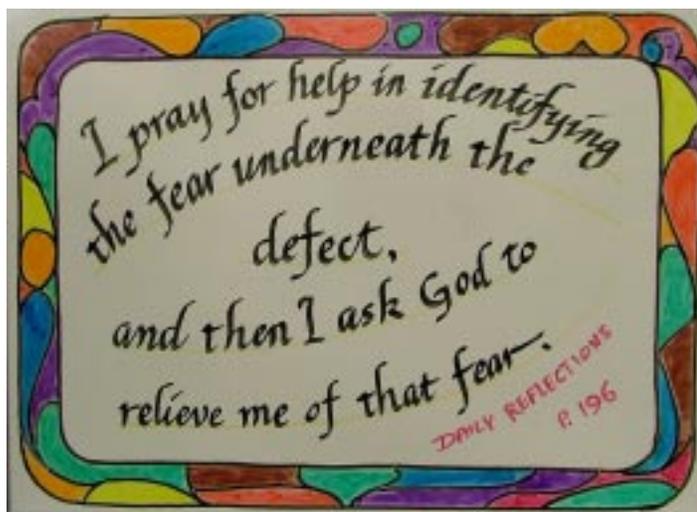
However intelligent we may have been in other respects, where alcohol has been involved, we have been strangely insane.

I noted the reference, grabbed a Big Book and sure enough found it on page 38.

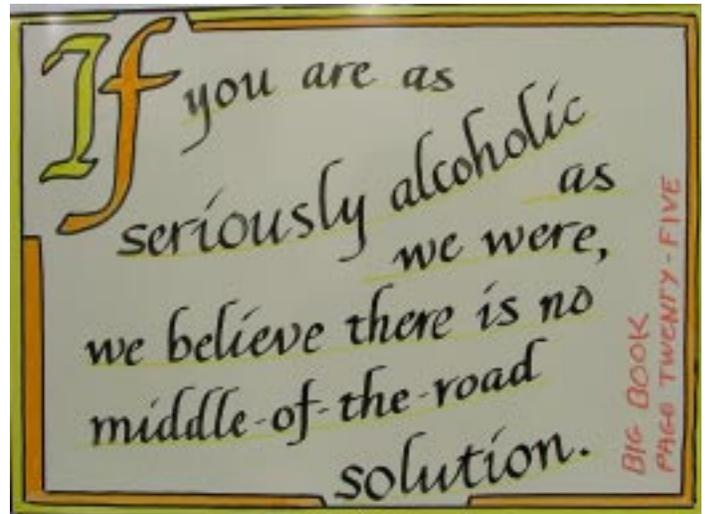
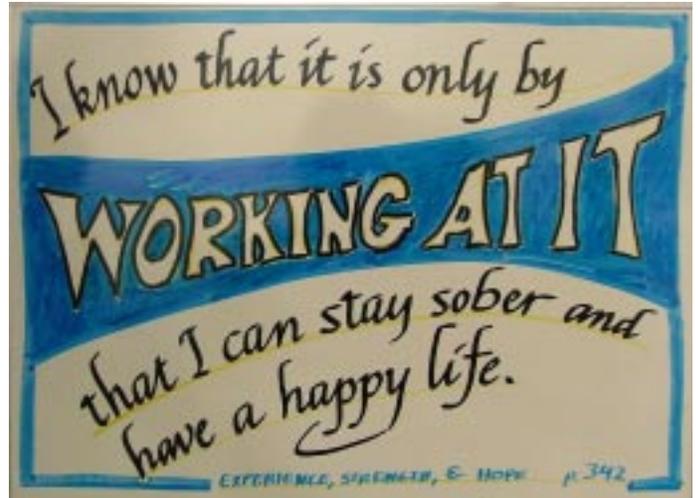
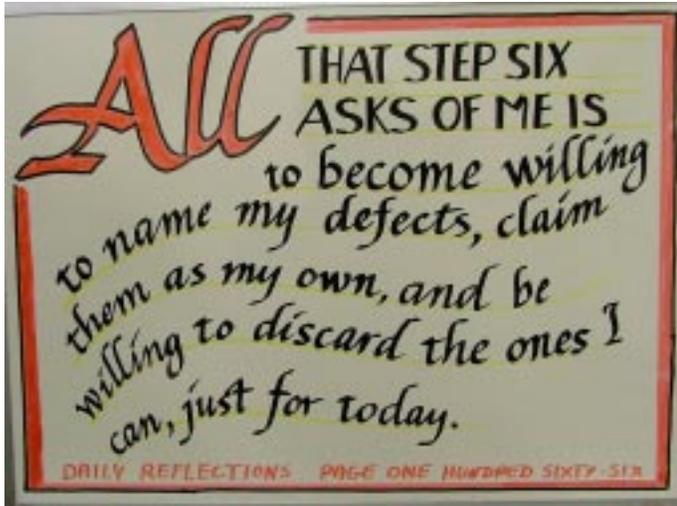
The next time you visit Central Office to purchase literature or visit with the staff, check out Al's latest work of recovery art.

And we will be featuring more of Al's creations in upcoming issues of the Recovery Times.

Bob R.



More AI W. Recovery Art



Co-founder Quotes

The fact is that most alcoholics, for reasons yet obscure, have lost the power of choice in drink. Our so called will power becomes practically nonexistent. (Big Book, page 24)

There is a solution. Almost none of us liked the self-searching, the leveling of our pride, the confession of shortcomings which the process

requires for its successful consummation. But we saw that it really worked in other, and we had come to believe in the hopelessness and futility of life as we had been living it. When, therefore, we were approached by those in whom the problem had been solved, there was nothing left for us but to pick up the simple kit of spiritual tool laid at our feet. We have found much of heaven and we have been rocketed into a fourth dimension of existence of which we had not even dreamed.

(Big Book, page 25)

Traditions Isn't Really a Dirty Word

Nobody wants to talk about the traditions. “Not all that politics and stuff.” “Let’s talk about recovery.”

Really?

What do we talk about when we take a newcomer to a meeting? Visualize a newcomer fearful and worried as he is being carted off to his first meeting.

The sponsor tells him, “We’re going to help you recover from alcoholism with a twelve-step program. First you’ll admit you are powerless. Then you’ll surrender to God, take a moral inventory and confess your faults.”

The new person fumbles for the door handle. His mind is saying, “Surrender to God, confess my faults? What are you? Some kind of religious nut? Let me out of here!”

No, the A.A. sponsor talks soothingly about things like anonymity, no dues or fees, no bosses in A.A., no membership requirements except a desire to stop drinking. It’s a simple attempt to make the newcomer feel comfortable and protected.

For the most part we talk traditions to new members before we broach the sensitive issues in the steps.

It’s funny. We all seem to think that A.A. will be around forever, but we have nothing to prove it. There are no buildings, towers or monuments. Our groups are month-to-month tenants out of the generosity of churches and public buildings. Our offices are one-year-leases. The clubhouses are not allied with A.A. We’d like to have prudent reserves, but have a tough time getting people to put at least a dollar in the hat. Groups are not organized with charters and bylaws. Leaders are elected for six-month to two-year terms, and resign at will. Meeting formats tend to be loose and unstructured. No one polices members to make them conform to rules and regulations.

How does it work? Simple! The traditions. It is the quiet commitment of A.A. members who realize that, “Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.”

It is a combination of experience and knowledge that knows that groups will survive and grow if they continue to follow the traditions and carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

They have learned that the traditions not only protect the integrity of Alcoholics Anonymous, but may be the most practical guidelines we have for living comfortably in the world around us.

How do we get all this information? We talk about traditions.

A Majority of One . . .

A recovering alcoholic is shipwrecked miles out to sea. He winds up on an uncharted, deserted island and has to make the best of it.

Five years later, he finally spots a ship out on the horizon and stokes up his bonfire to get its attention. The captain of the ship, another recovering alcoholic, sees the fire and immediately changes course towards the island. Meanwhile, he grabs his binoculars and studies the situation. He sees a guy waving and running frantically up and down the beach, beard hanging down to his knees. He also spots three small structures at the edge of the trees.

The castaway is rescued, taken below, given a meal and some time to rest, then sent up to see the captain. "So... you glad to be rescued?" "Oh, yeah, you bet. I've been praying for years for somebody to come along."

"How long were you on the island?"

"Five loooooong years!" "All by yourself?"

"Yes. All alone for five long years."

"Well," observes the captain, "It looks like you didn't do too bad for yourself. I saw three huts on the island. Did you build them?"

"Oh, yes!" he said proudly. "Built 'em with my own two hands! See the one on the right? That was my house, my home. That's where I lived! And the one on the left, that's my home group!"

"Your home group? You're by yourself for five years and you built yourself a home group! That's fantastic! What a strong statement of faith and dedication to your program. I'm proud of you! What a testimony of experience, strength and hope.

"..But what about the hut in the middle?"

"Uh," the rescued alcoholic frowned, "That's my old home group; I didn't like the way they ran things!"

Submitted by Tim W. Santa Barbara

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 _____