

# Recovery Times

A newsletter from Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office VOL 29, NO 8 August 2005

## SPONSORSHIP

### THE CHAIRMAN TACKLES A TOUGH QUESTION

*The chairman had just opened the regular weekly closed meeting when Doc slipped quietly into the room. His lips were white and his hands trembled as he lit his cigarette. "Ole Bill just hung himself in the jail," he muttered. "Fine sponsor I turned out to be."*

*The chairman eyed Doc, "I had another topic in mind to kick around tonight, but on the strength of Doc's sad report, and his personal reaction, perhaps we'd better give some thought to the subject of sponsorship. . .*

*"Let's see, Doc. You've been dry eight months. Ole Bill was your first pigeon and you went all out for the old boy. You gave him the wet-nurse treatment, and good. Net result—two months sobriety, a bad slip and an alcoholic's death for Ole Bill. . . For you, Doc, a sense of frustration and defeat. But don't loose sight of the thrill you had in helping another alky try to regain his rightful place in life. That he failed to benefit from your enthusiasm and sincere effort to help, doesn't make you a failure as a sponsor, Doc.*

*"You assumed your responsibility. You fulfilled your obligation to AA and showed your gratitude for your sobriety. You did the job of sponsoring Ole Bill in the way you thought best. Each case is different and has to be treated accordingly. But there are certain basic thoughts pertaining to sponsorship. . . With your permission I'll act as Mr. AA Anthony and try to give you my opinions to your questions on this most important AA activity. . . Let's have 'em."*

*"Give us a couple reasons how sponsorship should NOT be used."*

*"First—for personal satisfaction; second—to increase the membership role of the group, and third—by the member who's doing the sponsoring not to 'play God.' In other words, the only reason for bringing another alcoholic into AA is for the prospect's own gain."*

*"How does one become a sponsor?"*

*"He answers a Twelfth Step call and his prospect looks to him for guidance and help in working the Program. Or, you may be asked to take over some newcomer who is not getting along too well with his present sponsor, or some member of AA may say, 'I'd like you to be my sponsor.' "*

*"Can a man sponsor a woman, and vice versa?"*

*"Yes. Many successful recoveries have been recorded with man and woman sponsorships. Usually the initial call is made by a man-and-woman team, for the obvious sake of propriety."*

*"How soon after a person has come on the AA Program can they become a sponsor?"*

*"I've heard of persons being dry one day and going on a Twelfth Step call, with excellent and enduring results for both parties."*

*"What are some of the important things to find out about a prospect?"*

*"As soon as possible learn if he *has* a drinking problem. Does he know he has a problem? Does he *want* to do something about this drinking? Does he honestly want help—for himself, not because of the pleadings of family and boss."*

*continued on page 7*

# Calendar Events

## Upcoming Events

### **31st ANNUAL RAFTERS ALCATHON**

August 5 - August 7, 2005  
24307 Railroad Ave.  
Newhall, CA

### **31st ANNUAL MAAD DOG DAZE**

August 5 - August 7, 2005  
Cathedral City, CA  
Info: Chris M. (760) 200-1114  
email: maaddog411@aainthedesert.org

### **50th ANNIVERSARY PACOIMA GROUP ALCATHON**

August 12 - August 14, 2005  
12502 Van Nuys Blvd.  
Pacoima, CA

### **30th ANNUAL GREAT OUTDOOR BEAVER MEETING**

September 1 - September 4, 2005  
Beaver, UT  
Info: Dusty B. & Laura B. (818) 342-4840  
email: jojopelli@socal.rr.com

### **54th SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA A.A. CONVENTION**

September 30 - October 2, 2005  
Riverside, CA  
Info: SCAAC Hotline (949) 929-7007  
Website: www.aasocal.com

### **44th ANNUAL HAWAII CONVENTION**

October 18 - 25, 2005  
Honolulu, HI  
Info: (209) 536-1404

### **2nd ANNUAL SANTA CLARITA VALLEY CONVENTION**

October 21 - 23, 2005  
Santa Clarita, CA  
Website: www.scvaaconvention.com

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

## SERVICE COMMITTEE SCHEDULE

- Aug. 15, 2005 **SFV H&I  
THIRD MONDAY**  
8pm Business Meeting  
7pm Get Acquainted Workshop  
5657 Lindley Ave.  
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- Sept. 5, 2005 **G.S. District #11  
FIRST MONDAY**  
6pm new GSR orientation, 6:30pm meeting  
315 W. Vine St., Glendale  
\*\*\*\*\*
- Sept. 5, 2005 **G.S. District #16  
FIRST MONDAY**  
6:15pm meeting  
15950 Chatsworth (church), Granada Hills  
\*\*\*\*\*
- Sept. 5, 2005 **G.S. District #17  
FIRST MONDAY**  
6pm new GSR orientation, 6:30pm meeting  
5000 Colfax (church), N. Hollywood  
\*\*\*\*\*
- Sept. 6, 2005 **G.S. District #2  
FIRST TUESDAY**  
6:30pm, 4011 Dunsmore, La Crescenta  
\*\*\*\*\*
- Sept. 7, 2005 **G.S. District #1  
FIRST WEDNESDAY**  
6:30pm, 7552 Remmet, Canoga Park  
\*\*\*\*\*
- Sept. 7, 2005 **SFV Board of Directors**  
6pm, Central Office  
\*\*\*\*\*
- Sept. 10, 2005 **G.S. District #7  
SECOND SATURDAY**  
Agua Dulce Woman's Club  
33201 Agua Dulce Cyn Rd  
Sharon G. (661) 951-0372  
\*\*\*\*\*
- Sept. 12, 2005 **SFV Intergroup  
SECOND MONDAY**  
6:30 pm Orientation  
7pm Business Meeting  
St. Innocents Church  
5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana

## Valley Events

**TO FIND OUT  
WHAT ELSE IS GOING ON**

**YOU CAN:**

**COME TO CENTRAL OFFICE  
CALL US AT 818-988-3001  
VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT  
<http://www.sfvaa.org>**

## Public Information Event

Great Opportunity to be of Service!!!  
Join us every 2nd or 3rd Thursday  
Afternoon from 1:30pm - 3:30pm for a  
Public Information Panel for Parolees  
Panel meets in North Hollywood and  
needs members of A.A. to help carry the  
message to the suffering alcoholic  
**Call 818-988-3001**  
**For More Information**

# 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 each month 8:00 PM at St. Innocent's Church, 5657 Lindley Ave, Tarzana, CA. For more information, contact Central Office at 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 7:00pm. 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:sfvaanews@sbcglobal.net)

### **San Fernando Valley Central Office Intergroup Representatives Meeting July 11, 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 George - 5 yrs, Laurie - 4 yrs,

Derek - 4 yrs.

*Motion to adjourn 7:30 PM*

*The long form of the Intergroup Meeting Minutes for  
July is available at Central Office or at the Intergroup  
Meeting. These minutes are pending approval on  
August 8, 2005*

*Next Meeting - August 8, 2005*

*Prepared and submitted by: Dawn H., Recording  
Secretary*

## **HAPPY BIRTHDAY!**

**July 2005**

**Susan S.                      24 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.*

## PEACE OF MIND IN PRISON

I WAS INTRODUCED to AA at the age of twenty-one, but felt I was too young to be an alcoholic. This went on for about six years around the program, before I finally beat myself enough and spent about six good months in AA. Then something happened that I didn't like. I let self-pity creep in, and I picked up a drink. I planned a one-night drunk, forgetting the meaning of the First Step: that we can't plan anything as far as alcohol is concerned after the first drink.

Four days later, I was still trying to figure how to get off the drunk. Alcohol wasn't doing anything that I wanted it to do. I wanted to drink myself into oblivion, and I couldn't accomplish that. So I wanted to stop drinking, but I was afraid to. I was in a real derelict status—couldn't work, sleep, bathe, or eat. I managed to get off that one by substituting pills for booze—yellow jackets, black beauties, speed, LSD. In two months' time, I returned to booze on an experimental basis, trying to see whether I could control my drinking with the insight I thought I had gained from using LSD. The minute I picked up a drink, alcohol took over.

After four days of uncontrollable drinking and popping pills, I ended up killing a man I had never met before—over nothing. Before that, I had refused to carry any sort of weapon, even a pocketknife. Because of my attitude while drinking, I knew I could be dangerous and didn't want to take any chances. This time, while drunk and in a blackout, I had bought a fishing knife to go fishing. As it turned out, I did go. On the way back, I was involved in a car accident, evidently had an argument with the man in the other car, and stabbed him to death.

I never knew anything about what had happened until the next day, when the police raided the place where I was staying and arrested me. They had been looking for me all night, and I didn't know anything about it. As a matter of fact, when they raided the place, I thought it was a narcotics raid. When they informed me of my rights and charged me with murder, I was the most surprised person there. At first, I thought they were kidding me. I had spent many a night in jail for being drunk, without remembering that I had been arrested. Well, it turned out that they weren't kidding. I was sentenced to life in prison for my action.

While awaiting trial, I made a decision: Either this could be my bottom, or I could drink again and use substitutes for the next fifteen years or more, taking the chance that something else might go wrong that I had no control over. Today, a little over fourteen months later, I thank God that I made the decision to turn my life and will over to the care of God as I understand Him. I have gained a completely new way of life. Thanks to AA, the Twelve Steps and Traditions, and my Higher Power, I have been able—one day at a time—to rise above self-pity, resentment, self-centeredness, and my shallow old way of life. Today, I have a little sobriety and self-respect. I like myself. I try to add a little to life, instead of seeing what I can grasp out of it. I try to pass on some of the things I have gained in the program, and I will continue to thank God and AA for peace of mind and soul.

As they say, the program is simple but not easy. But the rewards do outweigh the pains associated with ego deflation and ending false pride. I try not to project myself into the future, but place it in God's hands, where it belongs. I also try not to dwell in the past, as it isn't in my power to change that, either. Just for today, I try to do my best to carry out God's will for me and to accept whatever He has in mind for me.

R. L. H.. Massachusetts , Grapevine, Feb. 1971

## WE FORGOT TO DUCK – AN OLDTIMER'S STORY

THE question of persons, who after two, three, even five or more years of continued sobriety in A.A., “having trouble,” came up in a discussion meeting recently. How to avoid the “trouble” is an important question.

It seems to boil down to something like Jack Dempsey's reply to a questioner, after Gene Tunney had flattened him, who asked, “What happened?” The “Mauler” answered, “I forgot to duck!”

We, too, forget to duck. We get out of practice. We learn early in A.A. that we should practice the Program continuously. That slip doesn't occur when we take the first drink—it may have happened a day, a month or a year before we take the first drink. Indeed, I have observed cases where everyone but the chap himself saw it coming. Strangely enough, no one can talk to the “slipper.” Usually he has been on the Program longer, dry longer and has all the answers.

However, he has fast grown away from the very simple Program he learned when he first came in. That is kindergarten stuff to him. Through the habit of not drinking, he feels that he is safe.

In spite of his knowing, “once an alcoholic always an alcoholic,” he is forgetting the 10th Step. Envy has slipped into his thinking. Jealousies and resentments lurk within him—The fellows at the office or shop are picking on him again—The wife doesn't understand him anymore—Other A.A.s are running, or trying to run, the group—The speakers are boring—He resented the fact that he couldn't drink with the other fellows at the company outing—People don't appreciate his staying sober.

These and a thousand other little things may be the slip he didn't catch soon enough.

We are never going to reach perfection. The above-mentioned things are insidious, but we can strive to keep them out of our thinking. They are our weeds. Unless we remove them, they will choke out our correct thinking to a point where we will get into trouble.

Years ago I was taught by those who preceded me that I must ever be on guard—that I'd always be an alcoholic—Thank God I've always remembered it.

When we find envy, jealousy, resentments, creeping into our thinking, let's weed them out. The simple way, it seems to me, is to review our actions each day. Check where we could have been a little more understanding, or tolerant to someone else—whether the time we blew up was really as important as we tried to make it. Let us try to recapture the wonderful feeling we had when we first came into A.A.

We'll usually find, as always, that the fault is within us. So let's talk the misunderstandings out. Let's give the other fellow the word of encouragement that he needs. It is good to get away by ourselves and think things through, honestly, humbly, as we'd advise a newcomer to do.

I'd like to see the ideas of others regarding this subject published in The A.A. Grapevine. It will help you to write it. It may help someone who needs it and certainly it will help the newcomer to realize that this is a continuous Program. To get full benefit out of it we must live it continuously—not just give lip service.

Dick S.  
New York, New York  
Grapevine, Sept. 1948



### Co-founder Quotes

#### The Shape of Things to Come

In the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* there is a chapter called “A Vision for You”. Wandering through it recently, my eye was caught by this startling paragraph written a short five years ago. “Someday we hope that every alcoholic who journeys will find a Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous at his destination. To some extent this is already true. Some of us are salesmen and go about. Little clusters of twos and threes and fives of us have sprung up in other communities through contact with our two large centers—” *Rubbing my eyes I looked again. A lump came into my throat. “Only five years,” I thought. “Then but two large centers—little clusters of twos and threes—travelers who hoped one day to find us at every destination.”*

*Could it be that only yesterday this was just a hope—those little clusters of twos and threes, those little beacons so anxiously watched as they flickered, but never went out.*

*And today—hundreds of centers shedding their warm illumination upon the lives of thousands, lighting the dark shoals where the stranded and hopeless lie breaking up—those fingers of light already stretching to our beach heads in other lands.*

*Now comes another lighted lamp—this little newspaper called “The Grapevine”. May its rays of hope and experience ever fall upon the current of our A.A. life and one day illumine every dark corner of this alcoholic world.*

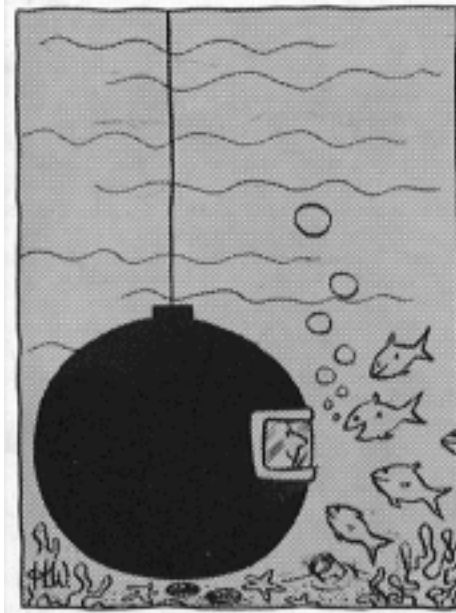
*The aspirations of its editors, contributors and readers could well be voiced in the last words of “A Vision for You”. “Abandon yourself to God as you understand God. Admit your faults to Him and your fellows. Clear away the wreckage of your past. Give freely of what you find, and join us. We shall be with you, in the Fellowship of The Spirit, and you will surely meet some of us as you trudge the Road of Happy Destiny. May God bless you and keep you—until then.”*

*Bill W.  
Grapevine, June 1944*

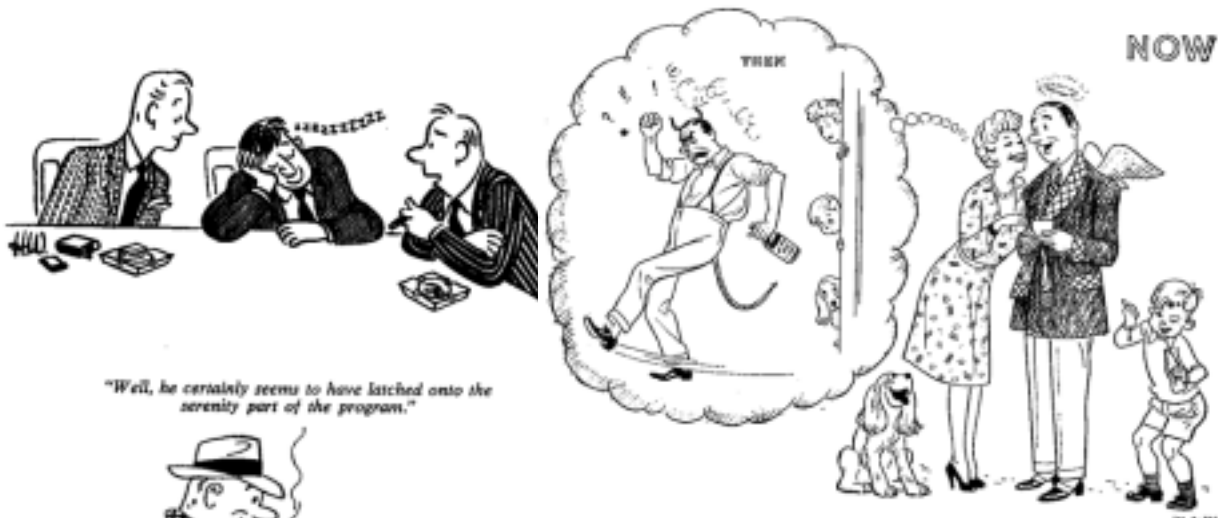
# CARTOONS FROM THE GRAPEVINE



And the "lil woman gets so sore that she actually buys me a bottle and sez: "Go ahead. Drink yourself to death!" And I sez: "What—on one bottle?"



"When this guy takes the geographical cure, he doesn't fool around."



"Well, he certainly seems to have latched onto the serenity part of the program."

"But the Spiritual Angle, Sweet . . . I Don't Get It"



"Now my brother John. . . He's a guy who really NEEDS A.A."

# SPONSORSHIP (cont'd)

*"Should you dig into his personal life?"*

"Absolutely. Get to the root of his marital, financial and employment situations, his age, domestic relationships and drinking habits. Assure him you're not prying, but you want to help straighten out his problems, and talking them over with someone who understands how he collected them, will release him from his alcoholic loneliness."

*"Does a person's education, intelligence, background, age or quantity of liquor consumed, have any bearing on whether or not he is an alcoholic?"*

"Experience has taught us—no."

*"Is hospitalization always necessary?"*

"No. However hospitalization affords an opportunity for drying out, and time to clear away the cobwebs. Physical condition will usually answer your question."

*"What's the best way to gain the confidence of your prospect?"*

"Qualify yourself as just an ordinary person, who had a drinking problem, but found happiness and regained self respect in a new way of life offered by following the AA Program."

*"Should you pitch right into your own personal drinking story?"*

"In most cases you will want to relate at least part of your drinking life. But do so in a manner that will describe you as an alcoholic, rather than the main character in a series of drunken parties and incidents. Give him the true picture."

*"He's tried all the usual means for controlling drinking, and is skeptical about AA being able to do any more than the others?"*

"Show him how you too tried various so-called controlled drinking plans, all to no avail. Tell him how you learned through AA that you drank from compulsion, that you had a disease, now recognized as alcoholism."

R.G.M., Grand Rapids, Michigan

Grapevine, May 1950

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**Newsletter 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 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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