

Recovery Times

A newsletter from Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office VOL 30, NO. 8

AUGUST 2006

The “Cured” Alcoholic

Further proof that the first drink makes life unmanageable

SOMETIMES at a closed meeting you can get a good discussion started by throwing out the question, “Just when did you realize that your life had become unmanageable?” The other night we had such a discussion and when my turn came I told this story:

I had been about three years in AA and doing fine, or so I thought. At least my wife had stopped calling me a rotten, drunken bum. For anybody raised on “white lightning” out of a Mason jar, the idea that you don’t have to have liquor was quite an education and I had latched on to this idea right off. I felt good and was doing pretty well in business when, after three years of sobriety, my wife up and left me. This happens sometimes in AA and when it is one of the things we cannot change we have to just ask for the serenity to accept it and this I now know. But then it was one hell of a sock to my ego and I just hadn’t been working our Twelve Steps every day; not all of them and not steadily.

We had a fine family ruckus about dividing the property and finally I got up on my high horse and said with great dignity that rather than demean myself by squabbling about it, she could have the whole works. So she took it.

My business had gone into a slump and I felt I had to get away from our town so I took a job with a firm that had never had a representative in the field before. It was a pioneering job of establishing contacts over the territory. This had me traveling and away from home, and then I got the smart idea that I was a cured alcoholic. I know I’m not the first alky to get this delusion but I got it and I started out to prove it. My first day on the road I had two double shots of bourbon at the hotel bar, then went upstairs and fell asleep. Next morning I felt great. Well, I had it made for sure now, because I had heard the old-timers at the AA meetings assure me that “it’s the first drink as does it” and “one drink leads to a drunk” and so on and so on. Well, here I was, fine as frog’s hair in the spring, and I’d had two doubles the night before and didn’t get falling-down-drunk. What’s more, I put the two doubles on the swindle sheet as a midnight snack.

I was just too scared of being tabbed as an alcoholic ever to risk a drink in the daytime. If I took some business contact to lunch I’d get him to order a drink and then I’d have a Coke, explaining that I’d had more than sufficient the night before. None of them ever insisted I take a drink of liquor—they were just too glad to get a few free ones themselves, I guess. Anyhow, I got a bottle of good bourbon and stuck it in my suitcase, just for emergencies. That night I poured about four fingers in a tumbler, got into bed, read a couple of trade magazines for a while and then went to sleep. Now I really had it made. I put the bottle on the expense account as “entertainment.” I figured I needed to be entertained as much as the next fellow.

Around AA I had heard a lot about Vitamin B-1, so I got some 100-milligram tablets at a drug store. Before I measured out my four fingers every night, I would swallow a couple of vitamin pills

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Calendar Events

Upcoming Events

39th Annual District 22 Convention

August 25 - 27, 2006
Veterans Memorial Building, San Luis Obispo, CA
Info: 805-801-0057
Email: tommykeo@gmail.com

31st Annual Great Outdoor Beaver Meeting

August 31 - September 3, 2006
Beaver, UT
Info: Greg K. 818-890-0110, Russ 661-269-5349,
Joe C. 213-792-7715,
Email: jojopelli@gmail.com

55th Annual Southern California AA Convention

September 22 - 24, 2006
San Diego, CA
Info: 805-990-1964
Website: www.aasocal.com

3rd Annual Santa Clarita Valley Convention of AA

October 20 - 22, 2006
Valencia, CA
Info: 661-310-0384
Website: www.scvaaconvention.org

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

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>

SERVICE COMMITTEE SCHEDULE

- August 21, 2006 **SFV H&I
THIRD MONDAY**
8PM Business Meeting
7PM Get Acquainted Workshop
5657 Lindley Ave.

- Sept. 4, 2006 **G.S. District #11
FIRST MONDAY**
6PM New GSR orientation, 6:30PM meeting
315 W. Vine St., Glendale

- Sept., 4, 2006 **G.S. District #16
FIRST MONDAY**
6:15PM meeting
15950 Chatsworth (church), Granada Hills

- Sept. 4, 2006 **G.S. District #17
FIRST MONDAY**
6PM New GSR orientation, 6:30PM meeting
5000 Colfax (church), N. Hollywood

- Sept. 5, 2006 **G.S. District #2
FIRST TUESDAY**
6:30PM, 4011 Dunsmore, La Crescenta

- Sept. 6, 2006 **G.S. District #1
FIRST WEDNESDAY**
6:30PM, 7552 Remmet, Canoga Park

- Sept. 2, 2006 **SFV Board of Directors**
6PM, Central Office

- Sept. 9, 2006 **G.S. District #7
SECOND SATURDAY**
Agua Dulce Woman's Club
33201 Agua Dulce Cyn Rd
Sharon G. (661) 951-0372

- Sept. 11, 2005 **SFV Intergroup
SECOND MONDAY**
6:30PM Orientation
7PM Business Meeting
St. Innocents Church
5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana

The All Services - Almost Free Fall Festival

will be held
Sunday, October 1, 2006
11am to 3pm
at Woodley Park

(Japanese Garden Entrance)

Picnic Area #1 (different site this year!)

Tickets available in September.

Speaker, Food, & Fellowship.

The Valley Central Office will be

CLOSED

for literature sales on

Monday,

September 4, 2006

for the Labor Day Holiday.

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 (Get Acquainted Workshop, 7:00 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 6:30 PM, Meeting at 7:00 PM. Contact: Central Office at 988-3001.

SAN FERNANDO VALLEY CONVENTION -

Volunteers are welcome to participate in the planning of the 2007 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

San Fernando Valley Central Office Intergroup Representatives Meeting July 10, 2006

Michael F. 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: Derek - 5 yrs.
Motion to adjourn 7:25 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 14, 2006
Next Meeting - August 14, 2006
Prepared and submitted by:
Dawn H., Recording Secretary

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

July 2006

Jeannine T. 24 years

**Learning to Live
Men's Stag 326 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.

Guzzler's Guide to the Fast Buck

THE ACTIVE alcoholic's greatest problem has always been how to lay his hands on drinking money. Over the years, we've heard some rare accounts of ways to promote a buck, and here are a few of them. (Naturally, we rule out the obvious ones, like robbing the kids' piggy bank or stealing the rent money.)

One of our group's members was a past master at mooching. He once chiseled his priest out of \$10, in the dead of night, on the pretext that his sister was dying in another city and he needed bus fare at once. The aftermath was that he had to attend Mass in a strange church for the next several months until the padre cooled down. During another drought, he worked the same trick on the owner of a small loans outfit, first daubing saliva on his cheeks in lieu of tears, then rousting the man out of bed at midnight to the tune of \$30.

This same member had a beautiful system with the loan companies. With some mangy furniture as collateral, he borrowed \$50 from Ace Loans. When the note came due, he clipped Easy Credit for \$75 on the same furniture, paid Ace their \$50 plus interest, and had money left to drink on. Then, when Easy Credit wanted their \$75 back, he put the arm on Eagle Finance for \$100. Settling with Eagle later on was no problem; he went back and got \$125 from Ace Loans, where, of course, he had now established his credit. When the balloon finally went up, he owed around \$3,000, borrowed on furniture never worth more than a few hundred. Sounds incredible, but he could charm a bird out of a tree.

One time, the night before deer-hunting season opened, this same chap bought (on credit, naturally) a complete outfit: clothing, gun, knife, compass, the whole works. At two AM, when, like the stag at eve, he had drunk his fill, he put on his red apparel, took a cab to the outskirts of town, and went to sleep against a tree. With the dawn came a raging hangover and thirst, so, with great alacrity and an empty wallet, he thumbed his way back to the saloon and began to sell his hunting outfit to patrons of the bar, piece by piece and dirt-cheap. And at day's end he was broke again and minus his hunting gear, but still owing for it.

Another of our old-timers had a fund-raising scheme that elevates his hair when he thinks of it now. He and a drinking partner would drive to another town where nobody knew them, visit a tavern, and wait until an obviously plastered patron left to drive home. They would follow him in their car, crowd him to a stop on a dark street or road, and "arrest" him for drunk driving. The befuddled victim usually would plead for a break, whereupon, with seeming reluctance, they would accept a "fine" from him and promise to square the violation quietly. An insanely dangerous game, but who says drinking alcoholics are sane?

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Guzzler's Guide to the Fast Buck (cont'd)

Some years ago, when another of our members was still on the sauce, he ran up against a fellow drinker who must have been a pretty good promoter. On the morning after a binge in a town about fifty miles away, our man found an electric guitar on the back seat of his car. It took him several weeks and considerable sleuthing to find out that it was his own property, acquired by purchase in a tavern, and that he paid more for it secondhand than it was worth new. The odd part of it all is that from kindergarten on he's had an unblemished record of F's in Music. Not only can't he play a note, but he's tone-deaf.

We know still another chap who had a foolproof method of getting free drink's directly, without having to hustle the money. He did it with alarm clocks. Most weddings in these parts occur on Saturdays, with a reception in the evening at a rented hall. Our friend would buy a cheap alarm clock, gift-wrap it, get dressed in his best, and make the rounds of these halls on Saturday night. Some weeks he'd draw a blank, but most times he'd find a party in progress. Making sure first that beer and whiskey were on tap and plenteous, he'd barge in, hand his gift to the totally strange bride and groom, and head for the refreshment stand. If he behaved reasonably well, no one would throw him out, and for a \$1.98 clock he could drink all evening, listen to the music of the band, and even have a free lunch at the close.

There's no doubt about it! If all the ingenuity and deep thought wasted by alcoholics on promoting a drink had been channeled into more fruitful fields, even the common cold might have been licked by now.

J. G. T., Negaunee, Michigan



Co-founder Quotes

Any number of alcoholics are bedeviled by the dire conviction that if ever they go near A.A. they will be pressured to conform to some particular brand of faith or theology. They just don't realize that faith is never an imperative for A.A. membership; that sobriety can be achieved with an easily acceptable minimum of it, and that our

concepts of a Higher Power and God—as we understand Him—afford everyone a nearly unlimited choice of spiritual belief and action.

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In talking to a prospect, stress the spiritual feature freely. If the man be agnostic or atheist, make it emphatic that he does not have to agree with your conception of God. He can choose any conception he likes, provided it makes sense to him. The main thing is that he be willing to believe in a Power greater than himself and that he live by spiritual principles.

The “Cured” Alcoholic (cont’d)

and this improved my appetite and kept me from feeling shaky. And I needed them because the tumbler allowance had sneaked up to the brim. I figured as long as it was in one glass it was still one drink and I had been told that “one drink leads to a drunk” and here I was having a sociable drink with myself every night with no one the wiser. The office was beginning to wonder at my increased appetite—my expenses for “food” had taken a mighty sharp upgrade but they didn’t complain, or not yet.

Then I remembered that I had heard speakers say, “The normal drinker has three drinks or so and then toddles off home and to bed.” Well, I figured that this meant that as long as I only took two or three drinks at bedtime I was cured and was a normal drinker. So three tumblers of bourbon it was. This made quite a hole in a fifth but I always had the good old expense account.

Nobody ever saw me staggering around, either. I did my drinking in bed where I had no place to fall but back. I started waking up and finding the light still burning but I figured that it was the active life I was leading on the road and all the vitamins I was gobbling down that made me sleep so soundly.

I still managed to get up early in the morning without much trouble. If I felt sort of beat I would take half a benzedrine tablet and this gave me a little send-off. If I took a drink in the morning it would mean I was an alcoholic and I had to prove that I was a cured case.

Well, I never was much of a lothario type—generally by the time I was liquored up enough to make any sort of a pitch I was too drunk for any little old gal to take me seriously. But I had one long jump to make and I had to break up the trip by a stop-over. I put up at a motel, washed my face and then moseyed over across the highway to a little restaurant for dinner.

It was a quiet-looking spot and the waitress was what we would call down in Dixie a “real peart” looking gal. She wasn’t bold-acting at all but I got a feeling that she was lonely, just as lonely as I was. I “picked up talk” with her (I’d had a couple of special belts out of the fifth I carried in the car for snake bite). Finally I asked, “Where do folks go around here for a pleasant evening?”

She said, “No place, really. There’s a kind of night club on the other side of town.”

Well, it turned out that she wouldn’t mind stopping in there when she got through work only we had to be careful on account of the boss didn’t approve of the girls dating the customers of the restaurant. I wound up with, “I’m checked in right across the road. I don’t want to get you into any trouble. When you quit work why don’t you come over and tap on the door and we’ll see what-all’s doing down the road.”

She said, “Maybe I will.” But I knew she was giving the matter her serious consideration. I didn’t leave too big a tip—nor too small a one, either. I took one last look at the bow of her apron and ambled back across the highway. I had an hour and a half to kill. A shower took ten minutes and ten more to shave. Then I dug my best suit out of the trunk of the car. I found a clean shirt with French cuffs and put in my cuff links. I tried several ties until I found one that looked just right—not loud and not stuffy. I still had an hour of loneliness ahead of me. This called for a little “jump-steady.” I went back to the bourbon.

When I woke up, the dawn was breaking all red and rosy through the window. I was lying across the bed, dressed in my finery, and the bottle was empty. Across the street the restaurant was closed up tighter than a corset. Opportunity may have knocked but I was “out.” And right then and there I realized all over again that my life sure enough had become unmanageable.

L. B.
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Distilled Sprits

(from the Grapevine)

To rely on my own power and intellect in order to live successfully does not work because I am going against the way my creator intended for me to live. The functioning of an electrical appliance such as a refrigerator is a good comparison. Refrigerators are designed to work only when they have the necessary power flowing through them. If I take a refrigerator home and ignore the fact that it has a cord and a plug to be placed in an electrical outlet, things will go sour and I will be very disappointed with the performance of this appliance. Like the fridge, I was never intended to function properly on my own power.

Anonymous, Winnipeg, Manitoba

A bird comes into the world in a shell and then breaks out and becomes free to fly. Humans, on the other hand, come into the world free and then build a shell around themselves. When I was drinking, I was afraid to let others know how much I drank, how I felt, or what I was doing or thinking. When I came to AA, I began to break that shell of isolation by admitting I was powerless over alcohol. I broke more of the shell when I did a Fourth Step, talked about the things I'd done which I was ashamed of, and asked God's help in removing my defects and making amends. There is still part of a shell that I recognize from time to time. But I'm thankful for the Steps and the principles given me by AA to help me become the happy, joyous, and free person God wants me to be.

Sherry G., Riverdale, Michigan

Barb said that when she came to her first meeting, she was really in a fog. The people at that meeting understood and told her to "come toward the voices." Her First Step was somewhat shaky and uncertain but each subsequent Step took her to higher ground and soon she had left the fog behind. Now, almost eight years later and well along the Road of Happy Destiny, she reminds us to keep talking, so that other newcomers can find their way out of the fog.

Tom R., Hinsdale, Illinois

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Moving ???: <i>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.</i>	Former Address Name _____ Address _____ City _____ St _____ ZIP _____
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