

Recovery Times

A newsletter from Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office

VOL 30, NO. 9

SEPT 2006

Bill Wilson's Letter to Dr. Carl Jung January 23, 1961

The following is the text of the letter dated 1/23/61, written by Bill Wilson to the eminent Swiss psychologist & psychiatrist Dr. Carl Gustav Jung. Bill considered it a long overdue note of appreciation for Dr. Jung's contribution to A.A.'s solution for alcoholism. The Big Book refers to part of the story on pages 26 & 27.

My dear Dr. Jung:

This letter of great appreciation has been very long overdue.

May I first introduce myself as Bill W., a co-founder of the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous. Though you have surely heard of us, I doubt if you are aware that a certain conversation you once had with one of your patients, a Mr. Rowland H., back in the early 1930's, did play a critical role in the founding of our Fellowship.

Though Rowland H. has long since passed away, the recollections of his remarkable experience while under treatment by you has definitely become part of AA history. Our remembrance of Rowland H.'s statements about his experience with you is as follows:

Having exhausted other means of recovery from his alcoholism, it was about 1931 that he became your patient. I believe he remained under your care for perhaps a year. His admiration for you was boundless, and he left you with a feeling of much confidence.

To his great consternation, he soon relapsed into intoxication. Certain that you were his "court of last resort," he again returned to your care. Then followed the conversation between you that was to become the first link in the chain of events that led to the founding of Alcoholics Anonymous.

My recollection of his account of that conversation is this: First of all, you frankly told him of his hopelessness, so far as any further medical or psychiatric treatment might be concerned. This candid and humble statement of yours was beyond doubt the first foundation stone upon which our Society has since been built.

Coming from you, one he so trusted and admired, the impact upon him was immense. When he then asked you if there was any other hope, you told him that there might be, provided he could become the subject of a spiritual or religious experience - in short, a genuine conversion. You pointed out how such an experience, if brought about, might remotivate him when nothing else could. But you did caution, though, that while such experiences had sometimes brought recovery to alcoholics, they were, nevertheless, comparatively rare. You recommended that he place himself in a religious atmosphere and hope for the best. This I believe was the substance of your advice.

Shortly thereafter, Mr. H. joined the Oxford Groups, an evangelical movement then at the height of its success in Europe, and one with which you are doubtless familiar. You will remember their large emphasis upon the principles of self-survey, confession, restitution,

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Calendar Events

Upcoming Events

55th Annual Southern California AA Convention

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

12 Traditions Seminar

Sponsored by the SCV Central Office

September 30, 2006, 10 AM — 3 PM
20880 Centre Pointe Parkway
Santa Clarita, CA
Website: www.scv-aa.org

Making Sense of the AA Structure

Sponsored by the Westside Districts of AA

General Service

October 8, 2006, 12 Noon – 3 PM
Olympic H.S. Auditorium
721 Ocean Park (at Lincoln)
Santa Monica, CA

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

SERVICE COMMITTEE SCHEDULE

- Sept. 18, 2006 **SFV H&I
THIRD MONDAY**
8PM Business Meeting
7PM Get Acquainted Workshop
5657 Lindley Ave.

- Oct. 2, 2006 **G.S. District #11
FIRST MONDAY**
6PM New GSR orientation, 6:30PM meeting
315 W. Vine St., Glendale

- Oct., 2, 2006 **G.S. District #16
FIRST MONDAY**
6:15PM meeting
15950 Chatsworth (church), Granada Hills

- Oct. 2, 2006 **G.S. District #17
FIRST MONDAY**
6PM New GSR orientation, 6:30PM meeting
5000 Colfax (church), N. Hollywood

- Oct. 3, 2006 **G.S. District #2
FIRST TUESDAY**
6:30PM, 4011 Dunsmore, La Crescenta

- Oct. 4, 2006 **G.S. District #1
FIRST WEDNESDAY**
6:30PM, 7552 Remmet, Canoga Park

- Oct. 4, 2006 **SFV Board of Directors**
6PM, Central Office

- Oct. 14, 2006 **G.S. District #7
SECOND SATURDAY**
Agua Dulce Woman's Club
33201 Agua Dulce Cyn Rd
Sharon G. (661) 951-0372

- Oct. 9, 2005 **SFV Intergroup
SECOND MONDAY**
6:30PM 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>

The All Services - Almost Free
Fall Festival
has been
CANCELLED
this year
due to scheduling conflicts.
Please unmark your calendars.

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 August 14, 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: Hal - 2 yrs, Tom - 4 yrs, Brian - 6 yrs.
Motion to adjourn 7:25 PM

The long form of the Intergroup Meeting Minutes for August is available at Central Office or at the Intergroup Meeting.

These minutes are pending approval on September 11, 2006

Next Meeting - September 11, 2006

Prepared and submitted by:

Dawn H., Recording Secretary

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

August 2006

Randy H.	9 years
Joan E.	19 years
Linda S.	21 years
Anonymous	24 years
Iris N.	29 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.

Bill Wilson's Letter To Dr. Carl Jung (cont'd)

and the giving of oneself in service to others. They strongly stressed meditation and prayer. In these surroundings, Rowland H. did find a conversion experience that released him for the time being from his compulsion to drink.

Returning to New York, he became very active with the "O.G." here, then led by an Episcopal clergyman, Dr. Samuel Shoemaker. Dr. Shoemaker had been one of the founders of that movement, and his was a powerful personality that carried immense sincerity and conviction.

At this time (1932-34) the Oxford Groups had already sobered a number of alcoholics, and Rowland, feeling that he could especially identify with these sufferers, addressed himself to the help of still others. One of these chanced to be an old schoolmate of mine, Edwin T. ("Ebby"). He had been threatened with commitment to an institution, but Mr. H. and another ex-alcoholic "O.G." member procured his parole and helped to bring about his sobriety.

Meanwhile, I had run the course of alcoholism and was threatened with commitment myself. Fortunately I had fallen under the care of a physician - a Dr. William D. Silkworth - who was wonderfully capable of understanding alcoholics. But just as you had given up on Rowland, so had he given me up. It was his theory that alcoholism had two components - an obsession that compelled the sufferer to drink against his will and interest, and some sort of metabolism difficulty which he then called an allergy. The alcoholic's compulsion guaranteed that the alcoholic's drinking would go on, and the allergy made sure that the sufferer would finally deteriorate, go insane, or die. Though I had been one of the few he had thought it possible to help, he was finally obliged to tell me of my hopelessness; I, too, would have to be locked up. To me, this was a shattering blow. Just as Rowland had been made ready for his conversion experience by you, so had my wonderful friend, Dr. Silkworth, prepared me.

Hearing of my plight, my friend Edwin T. came to see me at my home where I was drinking. By then, it was November 1934. I had long marked my friend Edwin for a hopeless case. Yet there he was in a very evident state of "release" which could by no means be accounted for by his mere association for a very short time with the Oxford Groups. Yet this obvious state of release, as distinguished from the usual depression, was tremendously convincing. Because he was a kindred sufferer, he could unquestionably communicate with me at great depth. I knew at once I must find an experience like his, or die.

Again I returned to Dr. Silkworth's care where I could be once more sobered and so gain a clearer view of my friend's experience of release, and of Rowland H.'s approach to him.

Clear once more of alcohol, I found myself terribly depressed. This seemed to be caused by my inability to gain the slightest faith. Edwin T. again visited me and repeated the simple Oxford Groups' formulas. Soon after he left me I became even more depressed. In utter despair I cried out, "If there be a God, will He show Himself." There immediately came to me an illumination of enormous impact and dimension, something which I have since tried to describe in the book "Alcoholics Anonymous" and in "AA Comes of Age", basic texts which I am sending you.

My release from the alcohol obsession was immediate. At once I knew I was a free man. Shortly following my experience, my friend Edwin came to the hospital, bringing me a copy of William James' "Varieties of Religious Experience". This book gave me the realization that most conversion experiences, whatever their variety, do have a common denominator of ego collapse at depth. The individual faces an impossible dilemma. In my case the dilemma had been created by my compulsive drinking and the deep feeling of hopelessness had been vastly deepened by my doctor. It was deepened still more by my alcoholic friend when he acquainted me with your verdict of hopelessness respecting Rowland H.

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Bill Wilson's Letter To Dr. Carl Jung (cont'd)

In the wake of my spiritual experience there came a vision of a society of alcoholics, each identifying with and transmitting his experience to the next - chain style. If each sufferer were to carry the news of the scientific hopelessness of alcoholism to each new prospect, he might be able to lay every newcomer wide open to a transforming spiritual experience. This concept proved to be the foundation of such success as Alcoholics Anonymous has since achieved. This has made conversion experiences - nearly every variety reported by James - available on an almost wholesale basis. Our sustained recoveries over the last quarter century number about 300,000. In America and through the world there are today 8,000 AA groups.

So to you, to Dr. Shoemaker of the Oxford Groups, to William James, and to my own physician, Dr. Silkworth, we of AA owe this tremendous benefaction. As you will now clearly see, this astonishing chain of events actually started long ago in your consulting room, and it was directly founded upon your own humility and deep perception.

Very many thoughtful AAs are students of your writings. Because of your conviction that man is something more than intellect, emotion, and two dollars worth of chemicals, you have especially endeared yourself to us.

How our Society grew, developed its Traditions for unity, and structured its functioning will be seen in the texts and pamphlet material that I am sending you.

You will also be interested to learn that in addition to the "spiritual experience," many AAs report a great variety of psychic phenomena, the cumulative weight of which is very considerable. Other members have - following their recovery in AA - been much helped by your practitioners. A few have been intrigued by the "I Ching" and your remarkable introduction to that work.

Please be certain that your place in the affection, and in the history of the Fellowship, is like no other.

Gratefully yours,

William G. W.

Co-founder Alcoholics Anonymous



Co-founder Quotes

Facing Criticism

Sometimes, we register surprise, shock, and anger when people find fault with A.A. We are apt to be disturbed to such an extent that we cannot benefit by constructive criticism.

This sort of resentment makes no friends and achieves no constructive purpose. Certainly, this is an area in which we can improve.

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It is evident that the harmony, security and future effectiveness of A.A. will depend largely upon our maintenance of a thoroughly nonaggressive and pacific attitude in all our public relations. This is an exacting assignment, because in our drinking days we were prone to anger, hostility, rebellion, and aggression. And, even though we are now sober, the old patterns of behavior are to a degree still with us, always threatening to explode on any good excuse.

But we know this, and therefore I feel confident that in the conduct of our public affairs we shall always find the grace to exert restraint.

Boogie Through Life

- Don't cry because it's over, smile because it happened.
 - Pain and suffering is inevitable, but Misery is optional.
 - A good exercise for the rear is to bend down and help another up.
 - Life is what you make of it . . . kinda like Play-Doh.
 - The bubbling brook would lose its song if you removed the rocks.
 - Happiness comes through doors you didn't even know you left open.
 - Everything is always okay in the end, if it's not, then it's not the end.
 - If all my friends jumped off a cliff, I wouldn't jump with them. I'd be at the bottom to catch them.
 - A girl on the street is pointing up at the sky. "Look, an Angel!" she yells.
A passerby laughs, "You fool, that's only a cloud."
How wonderful it would be to see Angels where there are only clouds. How sad it would be to see clouds where there are Angels.
 - Here is a test to find whether your mission on earth is finished: If you're alive, it isn't.
 - So be happy. Don't let anything burst your balloon! Boogie through life!
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Twelve Steps to a Slip Know the Danger Signals

1. Start missing meetings for any reason, real or imaginary
2. Become critical of the methods used by other members who may not agree with you in everything.
3. Nurse the idea that someday, somehow, you can drink again and become a controlled drinker.
4. Let the other fellow do the 12th Step work in the group. You are too busy.
5. Become conscious of your AA "seniority" and view every new member with a skeptical and jaundiced eye.
6. Become so pleased with your own views of the program that you consider yourself an "elder statesman."
7. Start a small clique within your group, consisting of only a few members who see eye to eye with you.
8. Tell new members in confidence that you yourself do not take certain parts of the 12 Steps too seriously.
9. Let your mind dwell more and more on how you are helping others rather than on how much the AA program is helping you.
10. If an unfortunate member has a slip, drop him at once.
11. Cultivate the habit of borrowing money from other members, then stay away from meetings to avoid embarrassment.
12. Look upon the 24-hour plan as a vital thing for new members, but not for yourself. You have outgrown the need of that long ago.

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)

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

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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 _____