

RECOVERY TIMES

Vol. 34, No. 5, May 2010

The Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office Newsletter

Note: Central Office will be closed for book sales on Memorial Day, 5-30



Gratitude Turns the Key

When I was sober for a few months, I heard that if I did nothing except Step work each morning for a few minutes, that would be OK. So I did, and it was. Now I know that prayer and meditation are the key to relieving the lifelong fear and dread that had consumed me. And they are the key to removing the rest of my character defects.

Gratitude turns the key. By deciding to promptly thank God for any and every situation that he brings into my life, I short circuit my dangerous faulty thinking. Then I can look past the immediate drama to its acceptance and sometimes, if God grants me the grace, to its approval – not just in words, but genuinely. If I look for the good and I look inside myself, I will always find something of value in the external situation.

Today, I try to look inside first because I've made the decision to trust God's word and the Promises in the Big Book – not sometimes but always. I ask that whatever I find that is not a spiritual value, such as unselfishness, resentment or dishonesty, be removed and I ask for the right thought or action. In this way, God is removing character defects that get in the way of my usefulness to Him.

Then I look for the good in any bad situation and ask that God use it for his purposes, not mine. Either I get a miracle and the situation clears of itself or I find a pesky defect has returned and I'm more ready than ever to work Steps Six and Seven.

In this way, in spite of myself, I have been led to a happy marriage to a kind, loving man who encourages and supports my program of recovery. My once-strained family relationships are now mostly close and joyous and I've cultivated rich friendships with like-minded people. My resentments and terror have given way to peace; my fears are being replaced by faith and my despair is changing to joy.

The Eleventh Step helped me back to the love and trust I had in my youth. But I'm not returning in innocence. I know that life has its heights and its depths and its cycles. That's simply life. Now I'm secure in knowing that a Higher Power loves and cares for me, always, and in all ways.

And now I have faith that no matter what the situation looks like for the moment, there's always some good in it and that it or I will change for the better if I clearly choose it.

Marie N., Puerto Vallarta, Mexico.



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CALENDAR of EVENTS

UPCOMING:

26th Annual Tri-State Roundup
May 13-16, 2010
Laughlin, NV
www.TriState-Roundup.com

AA-LA Roundup
May 28-31, 2010
Burbank Marriott
www.aalaroundup.org

26th Annual South Bay Roundup
May 28-31, 2010
Torrance, CA
www.southbayroundup.org

A.A. Desert Pow Wow
June 3-6, 2010
Indian Wells, CA
www.desertpowwow.com

20th Annual Bike-N-4-Books
June 13, 2010
Woodley Park Picnic Area #2
Van Nuys, CA
www.sfvhi.org

Rocketed Into the Fourth Dimension
June 25-27, 2010
37th Antelope Valley Roundup
Lancaster, CA
(661) 948-4651

7th Annual Mountain AA Conference
July 31-Aug. 1, 2010
Big Bear Lake, CA
www.mountainaaconference.com

THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE:

**RICHARD F.- 50 YEARS,
NORM S.- 41 YEARS
CARL J. – 50 YEARS,
BILL A. - 24 YEARS**



If you know of the passing of a member of our Fellowship, please call us at (818) 988-3001 or email an obituary to: sfvaanews@sbcglobal.net.

SERVICE COMMITTEES SCHEDULE:

SFV H & I: May 17, 2010:

7 p.m. Get acquainted workshop
8 p.m. Business Meeting
5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana, CA

Gen Service, District 11: June 7, 2010

6 p.m. new GSR orientation
6:30 p.m. Business Meeting
315 W. Vine Street, Glendale, CA

Gen Service, District 16: June 7, 2010

6:15 p.m. meeting
15950 Chatsworth, Granada Hills

Gen. Service, District 17: June 7, 2010

6 p.m. New GSRs./6:30 p.m. Bus. Meeting
5000 Colfax, N. Hollywood

Gen. Service, District 2: June 8, 2010

6:30 p.m. Business Meeting
4011 Dunsmore Ave., La Crescenta

Gen Service, District 1: June 2, 2010

6:30 p.m. Business Meeting
7552 Remmet, Canoga Park

SFV Central Office Board Mtg: June 9, 2010

6:30 p.m., Valley Central Office

Gen. Service District 7: June 12, 2010

9 a.m. Business Meeting
Agua Dulce Women's Club
33210 Agua Dulce Canyon Road

SFV Intergroup: June 14, 2010

6:30 Orientation, 7 p.m. Business Meeting
St. Innocent Ch., 5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana

OPPORTUNITIES TO BE OF SERVICE:

Your Central Office needs telephone volunteers for all shifts (especially midnight – 9 a.m.). If you have a year or more of continuous sobriety, you can sign up at the office or online: www.sfvaa.org/involve.html

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES IN THE S.F. VALLEY:



Public Information Committee: Provides information to the general public about what A.A. does & doesn't do. Can use volunteers, especially young people and Spanish-speaking AAs, for health fairs and to speak at schools & businesses.

Hospitals and Institutions Committee: Carries the message of AA into hospitals, prisons, and treatment facilities to those who are unable to get out to meetings. (See Pg. 2 for schedule). For more info, call Central Office: (818) 988-3001.

San Fernando Valley Intergroup: Elected Intergroup reps maintain & develop policies for Central Office and inform the groups about sober events/fundraisers. (See Pg. 2).

San Fernando Valley Convention: Volunteers are welcome to participate in the planning of the 2011 Convention. The Committee meets the 3rd Tuesday of each month (except Feb. & March) at 7 p.m. at St. Innocent Church, 5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana.-

CENTRAL OFFICE NEWS:

The new meeting directory is out! Come get your new copies – hot off the press. If your meeting info changes in any way (location, time, meeting name or type of meeting), please let us know. All meeting updates must be completed in writing and either delivered in person during regular office hours or by mail: Central Office: 7417-E Van Nuys Blvd., Van Nuys, CA 91405.

SFV Central Office is on the Web and Live 24/7: Whether you are reaching out for help from another AA member or surfing the Web, you can find the Valley Central Office any hour of the day or night. Visit us at: www.sfvaa.org for meeting info, upcoming events, service meeting info, and links to other cool AA websites or call to speak with a sober AA member: (818) 988-3001.

A New Look for our Recovery Times: We have updated our look and will be bringing you a variety of submissions from AA authors, worldwide. Submissions are always welcome. Email: sfvaanews@sbcglobal.net or mail to the address on the back of the issue to: Editor, Pat K.

Having a Birthday? Many AA members share their birthdays with those who need the same help and opportunity that AA gave them. By sending a donation to Central Office, your birthday will be posted in Recovery Times. Send \$1.00 per year of your sobriety (or just send as much as you wish to donate). May your birthday be filled with joy from morning till night and may the 24 hours that lie ahead be especially bright!

April 2010 Birthdays:

- Anonymous 23 Years
- Anthony M. 23 Years



- Arnold S. – 32 Years
- Belinda T. – 5 Years
- Bob F. – 29 Years
- David E. – 7 Years
- Jack L. - 29 Years

- **Toni - 10 Years**

Central Office News, cont., IGR Meeting, April 12, 2010

- Hal S., Chair, opened meeting at 7 p.m.
- Treasurer's Report: (See insert).
- Service Committee Info: (See pgs. 2,3)
- H & I: Tom T. reported H & I broke even in March with group contributions of \$3,250.86 and literature expenses of \$3,215.37. Bike-N-4-Books, the annual H & I fundraiser takes place June 13, 2010 at Woodley Park, 6350 Woodley Ave, Picnic Area 3, Van Nuys.
- Old Business: None.
- New Business: None.
- Group Reports:
 - The Burbank Group holds their Spring Fling Dance, Sat. 5/8 from 10 – 2 a.m. after the 8 p.m. meeting
 - Happy Campers at Lake Piru meets at Campsite #130 the 3rd Sat. of every month with an Open Meeting at 8 p.m. Fee: \$10.00 per vehicle.
- Birthdays: Henry – 7 years; Leslie – 14 years, Michael – 25 Years, & Bob F. – 29 Years.
- Motion to adjourn: 7:20 p.m.

The long form of the Intergroup Meeting minutes for April is available at Central Office or the IGR meeting. These minutes are pending approval on May 10, 2010. Prepared and submitted by Dawn H., Recording Secretary.

AA News:

New CPC Videos can be viewed at: www.aa.org/ "AA Cooperation with the Professional Community" is now available on DVD

Three short videos directed to professionals in the legal/criminal justice, medical and employment/human relations fields are now accessible on the AA General Service Office website: www.aa.org. Click on the tab "Information on AA" then click on "AA Videos for Professionals."

Members' Recordings [Are] Bringing the Past Alive

Over 400 talks, a collection of speakers recorded on reel-to-reel or cassette tapes starting in the early day of the Fellowship are being preserved digitally by the Akron AA Archives. AAs may listen to the recordings online or download them as mp3 files by going to the archives section of www.akronaa.org then clicking on "voices."

New Service Piece Created to Help in Explaining AA

A new one-sheet flyer "Alcoholics Anonymous as a Resource for Drug & Alcohol Court Professionals" is now available for CPC committees or professionals through the AA General Service Office. The informational sheet, in English, Spanish and French, addresses topics specifically of interest to drug and alcohol court professionals including cooperation versus affiliation, what AA does and does not do, court and treatment referrals, proof of attendance at meetings, singleness of purpose, problems other than alcohol, and reporting to court professionals and local committees.

BECAUSE THE MOON CAME OUT

I hit bottom when I was arrested for the second time for driving under the influence. My license was suspended for two years, and I was instructed to enter a detox and rehab. That was December 22, 1993. It was my birthday and the best birthday present I've ever gotten. But AA didn't guarantee anything except that I didn't have to hurt from alcohol again. My sobriety hasn't been easy.

For the first two years, I had to get around without driving because of my suspended license. My sponsor dragged me to meetings and I helped him make coffee, set up meeting rooms, run meetings at local hospitals and rehab centers, and greet newcomers. He believed that service was essential to staying sober.

For over two years, I attended meetings, tried to understand the AA program, and did everything I could to become a real member of the Fellowship. But I just couldn't seem to laugh, maintain an interest in life, or feel good about being sober. My doctor (who was aware that I was an alcoholic) referred me to a psychiatrist who diagnosed me with major recurring depression and post-traumatic stress syndrome from my experiences in the Marine Corps.

In April 1996, my oldest son committed suicide. I was completely numb for a week. I didn't attend meetings and isolated in my house. Why I didn't drink I'll never know. When I came out of my initial shock, I went back to my home group and asked why no one had called or cared enough to help me. I started attending other meetings and got to know a man who would become my second sponsor. He took me to meetings and introduced me, and I shared the pain that was pulling me toward a drink. I attended two, sometimes three, meetings a day for many months.

Six months after my son died, my wife and I divorced. We had an eight-year-old son. This seemed like the last straw. How could I handle it? But again I didn't drink. Meanwhile, I became the sole caretaker of my mother, who had Alzheimer's disease.

In April 1997, I had open-heart surgery. I was picked up from the hospital by a person in AA. He and his wife started running to the store for me and my mother, and they fixed us dinner because I wasn't allowed to do anything at all for four weeks. While I was recovering from the surgery, my sponsor called me every night after he got home from his meeting. Sometimes we'd talk for only a couple of minutes and other times it would be longer. But I looked forward to these calls as if I were going to a meeting. When my first sponsor found out about my situation, he too would call (from Pittsburgh) as often as possible.

In December 1997, my mother fell and broke her hip and had to go to the hospital. While in the hospital, her Alzheimer's got worse. She became incontinent and required continuous care, and I soon realized these were things I couldn't deal with competently or safely. I had to break the promise that I'd made to her years before--that I'd never put her in a nursing home.

All during this period, I would say jokingly, "At least my van is running. The engine is as tight as the day I bought it eleven years ago." You guessed it--my van went! I had to use a credit card to pay for a new engine, and then I was more in debt than ever. I haven't been able to work since I became sober, and my financial resources are nil.

This isn't a tale of woe. It's one of hope and the realization that although life can be harsh, I don't have to drink over it. In the old days, any one of these life events would have caused me

Co-Founder Quotes:

"We are only operating a spiritual kindergarten in which people are enabled to get over drinking and find the grace to go on living to a better effect." **Bill W., 1954,** as quoted in **As Bill Sees It**

"There are two or three things that flashed into my mind on which it would be fitting to lay a little emphasis; one if the simplicity of our Program. Let's not louse it all up with Freudian complexes and things that are interesting to the scientific mind but have very little to do with our actual AA work. Our Twelve Steps, when simmered down to the last, resolve themselves into the words 'love' and 'service.' We understand what love is and we understand what service is. So let's bear those two things in mind.

Let us also remember to guard that erring member the tongue, and if we must use it, let's use it with kindness and consideration and tolerance.

"And one more thing: None of us would be here today if somebody hadn't taken time to explain things to us, to give us a little pat on the back, to take us to a meeting or two, to do numerous little kind and thoughtful acts in our behalf. So let us never get such a degree of smug complacency that we're not willing to extend, or attempt to extend, to our less fortunate brothers that help which has been so beneficial to us."

Reprinted from Dr. Bob's brief remarks on Sunday, July 3, 1950, at the First International A.A. Convention in Cleveland, Ohio, with permission of A.A. World Services, Inc.

Because the Moon Came Out, cont.

to drink. Hell, I used to drink because the sun came up or the moon came out. What I've come to learn is that drinking is a choice, and today I choose not to drink. AA has given me tools to use, a Fellowship that loves me, and a place to go when things are running rough.

I'm still in emotional pain every day over my son's death and daily physical pain from my surgery, but I've learned to pray for the courage and strength to carry out God's will. I'm still not optimistic about my life--old habits are hard to break--but I feel things are in God's control and that is comforting. I will endure whatever comes and with God's grace, endure it soberly, one day at a time.

Bob H., Pennsylvania, Copyright © The AA Grapevine, Inc. (Sept. 2001) Reprinted with permission.

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Moving? Please tell us your **former address** along with your **new address** so we can update our mailings:

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Grapevine Humor



1. "We are *not* a glum lot. We are *not*. WE ... ARE ... NOT!"— *Brent G., Gut Level Group, Springville, CA*

2. "If my profound spiritual awakening is not enough of a reason for me to be the greeter, then I'm damned if I know what is."— *James, New Zealand*

3. Winner: Ed explains to the group how restraint of tongue and pen have served him well.— *Fred F., SadBadGlad Group, Albany, NY*

4. "I spent \$30,000 on rehab. And *now* you're telling me it could've only cost a dollar?!"— *Tim D., Atlanta, GA*

5. "And you *will* go to any lengths to get it!"— *Steve C., Glass House Group, Fort Worth, TX*

6. "Wait just a damn minute!" ... *burp* ... "The Big Book never said" ... *hiccup* ... "'don't drink'!!"— *Kelly W.*

7. "And that is precisely why I shall not be attending any more of this group's meetings until you people decide to do things the way I say!"— *Ty M.*

8. "Don't forget--everything is suggested only!"— *Anonymous*

9. "I don't *need* a sponsor; I have myself!"— *Jason L., Ventilators, Wilmington, DE*

10. "Okay, Mr. Chair, I think it's high time we vote on my motion to close the group's meetings with the Serenity Prayer!"— *France L.*

11. "That's the last time someone is going to put Canadian money into the hat!"— *Joe H., Vancouver, British Columbia*

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Grapevine Archives:

[Heard at Meetings. July](#) 1944

Inter Group: "An alcoholic is a man with two feet firmly planted in mid-air."

[Short Takes](#) Jan. 1946

Lest we forget, it's well to remember the old saying that nobody can go from heel to halo in three weeks.

[Short Takes](#) (by The Twelve Stepper) March 1948

Liquor doesn't drown your troubles--it only irrigates them!

[Be Sure](#) (by Dallas A.A. Bulletin) Jan 1949

"LET each of us be diligent about taking the inventory--but be sure it is our own and not the other fellow's."

**San Fernando Valley Central Office
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