

# RECOVERY TIMES

Vol. 34, No. 6, June 2010

## The Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office Newsletter



**Central Office will be closed  
for book sales July 4th & 5th!**

### **Fifth Tradition**

#### **Checklist**

**Each group has but one primary purpose: to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.**

ON MY FOURTH sober AA day, I was sitting alone in one of our musty old meeting rooms, very sad and very broke. All the AAs had seemed very kind in their desire to help, but none of them had mentioned money. And, like thousands of other new members, I believed my biggest problems were financial. Yet not one person had offered a loan.

Then, suddenly, one of those big, handsome, gray-templed, well-dressed old-timers strode in with a friendly smile widening his face. He stuck out his hand and squeezed mine. "If I can help you any way at all, just say so, and I'll do it!" he declared heartily.

Trying to sound as if I were merely asking for a match, I said, "I hope so. You see, I need to borrow two thousand dollars."

His silence was total.

But finally he spoke. "You're in the wrong place," he said firmly. "We don't lend money here, my friend. That's not what this place is for."

I froze, but he went on and on. "We won't help you with a money problem. We won't help you with a family problem or a job or clothes or a medical problem or food or a place to spend the night. All we will do in AA is help you stay sober," he explained. "Then you can take care of these other problems

yourself. You *can* take care of yourself, can't you, if you're sober?"

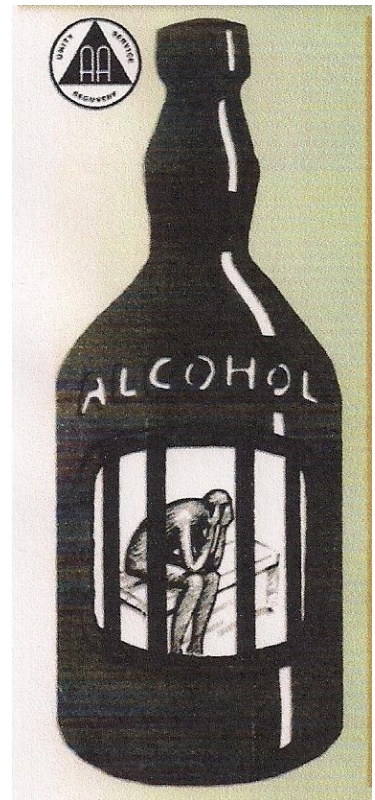
I hated that word "sober." But what could I say? "Certainly," I snapped, humiliated that, in my ignorance of AA "folkways, I had been caught in a *faux pas*, as if someone had found me eating peas with my fingers.

What the man had said made perfectly good sense. I *had* been sober a few days and *could* take care of things. So I put my gradually clearing mind to it, remembered a cousin I had not tapped for months, sent a wire, and got some dough.

To my astonishment and sorrow, I almost instantly found myself drunk.

Within a few hours, my new AA benefactor had given me in very blunt words a sharp summary of Traditions Five, Six, and Seven. And, by getting drunk, I had illustrated perfectly the special sense behind Five.

(Continued., Page 5)



## **CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

### **UPCOMING:**

#### **20<sup>th</sup> Annual Bike-N-4-Books**

June 13, 2010

Woodley Park Picnic Area #2

Van Nuys, CA

[www.sfvhi.org](http://www.sfvhi.org)

#### **Rocketed Into the Fourth Dimension**

37<sup>th</sup> Antelope Valley Roundup

June 25-27, 2010

Lancaster, CA

(661) 948-4651

[onedayeddie@yahoo.com](mailto:onedayeddie@yahoo.com)

#### **20th June Lake Kampvention**

June 25-27, 2010

18410 Slover Ave., Bloomington, CA 92316.

Website: [www.junelakecampvention.org](http://www.junelakecampvention.org)

#### **2010 International Convention of AA**

June 30 – July 4, 2010

Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center

San Antonio, Texas

#### **18<sup>th</sup> Annual Foothill Roundup**

Friday, July 30 – Sun. Aug. 1, 2010

La Canada, CA

[www.foothillroundup.org](http://www.foothillroundup.org)

#### **7<sup>th</sup> Annual Mountain AA Conference**

July 31-Aug. 1, 2010

Big Bear Lake, CA

[www.mountainaconference.com](http://www.mountainaconference.com)



## **THINGS WE CANNOT**

### **CHANGE...:**

**AL GUTHRIE – 45 YEARS**

**JOHN MARSHALL L. – 30 YEARS**

If you are aware of the passing of a member of our Fellowship, please call us at (818) 988-3001 or email an obituary to:

[sfvaanews@sbcglobal.net](mailto:sfvaanews@sbcglobal.net).

## **SERVICE COMMITTEES SCHEDULE:**

### **SFV H & I: June 21, 2010:**

7 p.m. Get acquainted workshop

8 p.m. Business Meeting

5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana, CA

### **Gen Service, District 11: July 5, 2010**

6 p.m. new GSR orientation

6:30 p.m. Business Meeting

315 W. Vine Street, Glendale, CA

### **Gen Service, District 16: July 5, 2010**

6:15 p.m. meeting

15950 Chatsworth, Granada Hills

### **Gen. Service, District 17: July 5, 2010**

6 p.m. New GSRs. 6:30 p.m., Bus. Meeting

5000 Colfax, N. Hollywood

### **Gen. Service, District 2: July 6, 2010**

6:30 p.m. Business Meeting

4011 Dunsmore Ave., La Crescenta

### **Gen Service, District 1: July 7, 2010**

6:30 p.m. Business Meeting

7552 Remmet, Canoga Park

### **SFV Central Office Board Mtg: July 7, 2010**

6:30 p.m., Valley Central Office

### **Gen. Service District 7: July 10, 2010**

9 a.m. Business Meeting

Agua Dulce Women's Club

33210 Agua Dulce Canyon Road

### **SFV Intergroup: July 12, 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](http://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 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month (except Feb. & March) at 7 p.m. at St. Innocent Church, 5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana. -

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## **CENTRAL OFFICE NEWS:**

**Has your meeting changed?** If your meeting info changes, i.e. location, time, meeting name or type of meeting, we want to know. Please provide any meeting updates to us in writing by mail or delivered in person during regular office hours to: Central Office: 7417-E Van Nuys Blvd., Van Nuys, CA 91405.

**Live 24/7 Phone Service:** 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](http://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.

**Having a Birthday?** 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 what you wish to donate).

## **MAY 2010 BIRTHDAYS:**

**Anonymous – 5 Years**  
**Perquita M. – 18 Years**  
**Cheryl M. A. – 27 Years**  
**Eleanor D. – 27 Years**  
**Steve M. – 28 Years**



## Central Office News, IGR Meeting, May 10, 2010

- Hal S., Chair, opened meeting at 7 p.m.
- Treasurer's Report: Brian noted that the group contributions page will be included in the next Recovery Times but was not available for this issue.
- Service Committee Info: (See pgs. 2,3)
- H & I: Tom T. reminded IGRs that Bike-N-4-Books, the annual H & I fundraiser, takes place June 13, 2010 at Woodley Park, Van Nuys.
- Old Business: None.
- New Business: None.

### Group Reports:

- The Burbank Group will host a 50s & 60s dance on Sat. June 12<sup>th</sup> at 10 p.m. after their 8 p.m. meeting at 3217 Winona Ave., Burbank.
- The Pacoima Group has started Potluck Bingo every 3<sup>rd</sup> Sat of the month, 7:30 p.m. at 12502 Van Nuys Blvd, Pacoima, CA 91331.
- Happy Campers at Lake Piru will hold an Open Meeting, June 26 at Campsite #130 at 8 p.m. (Normally, they meet the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sat. of every month). Fee: \$10 per car.

IGRs celebrating birthdays were: Yvette – 1 year, Bryant – 4 years, Bob – 6 years, Lloyd – 7 years, and Scott – 7 years.

- Motion to adjourn: 7:22 p.m.

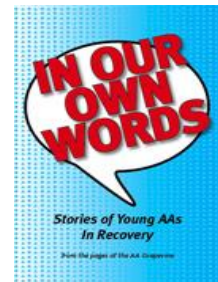
The long form of the Intergroup Meeting minutes for May is available at Central Office or the IGR meeting. These minutes are pending approval on June 14, 2010. Prepared and submitted by Dawn H., Recording Secretary.

## Young People in AA:

AA's Grapevine now has three pamphlets geared to (physically) young members of AA: **"A Message to Teenagers," "Young People and AA,"** and **"Too Young?"** The Grapevine also recently published ***In Our Own Words, Stories of Young AAs in Recovery***. Learn more about alcoholism and young people in the "Youth Enjoying Sobriety" section of the AA Grapevine's Digital Archive.

You can also find stories about young people in sobriety in The Grapevine's special sections on Young People in Sobriety (Sept. 2005 and 2007 issues and March 1998 and 1992 issues).

To find out about sober events and meetings for young people, attend local meetings of [ICYPAA, International Conference of Young People in AA](#), and other YPAA organizations. There are YPAA groups throughout the country and world. On a local level you can find YPAA in your state or city.



The 52nd Annual ICYPAA (International Conference of Young People in AA), will be held Aug. 26-29, 2010, in New York, N.Y. For more information go to: [www.icypaahost.org](http://www.icypaahost.org).

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**(Cont. page 1)** What I needed most was not money, obviously. After getting it, I still had the *drinking* problem that had made me think of approaching AA in the first place.



AA, and the like."

This happened in January 1945, and the first hint of the Twelve Traditions was not to appear anywhere in AA until the July 1945 issue of the *Grapevine*, when Bill W. wrote, "*I would like to discuss in coming issues such topics as anonymity, leadership, public relations, the use of money in*

Therefore, what I encountered in AA during my first few months, before the Traditions were formalized, were customs of AA behavior followed by members who had learned that some AA ways would work, and others would not.

That is the authority of the Traditions in my personal life. I honor them, not solely of their authorship or their having the mystical number twelve or their being adopted by the Fellowship at the First International Convention in Cleveland in 1950. I cherish them because they work. They enable me and my fellow AAs to stay sober, together, and to carry our message to other alcoholics.

But I did not like the Traditions at first, especially when they conflicted with what I wanted. I was a suspicious character, often turning phony operator to get what I wanted. During those first weeks, I kept wondering what "those AAs" were really up to or after, and what I could get out of them.

The real miracle is that most of them acted with extraordinary kindness. No matter what I tried to maneuver out of them, they tried just to give me the message.

In subsequent years, I tried to misuse AA in two ways; that is, I tried to get more out of it than the sobriety message. Once, I wangled a part-time job from a fellow member, then took advantage of him. Coming in late, I would excuse myself by thinking, "After all, we're both alcoholics; he ought to excuse my little weaknesses." He exploited me, too, expecting long hours of unpaid work simply because I was a fellow AA. We began to concentrate on what we were owed, not on what we as AAs owed each other. Neither of us got drunk, but our friendship did not survive.

Another time, I tried to use AA for romance, and really did find balm for a lonely heart with an AA partner. We found romance, all right, but we lost our sobriety.

Years have gone by since I had AA infancy as an excuse for my gimme tendencies. Today, I try to look at the Fifth Tradition as a giver, not as a taker. But the picture is not pretty enough to brag about. It isn't always easy, even now, to keep my personal wants out of the way when I try to carry the message. I want applause as an AA speaker, compliments as a *Grapevine* writer. I want to be a "success" as a sponsor--that is, I want to be the one who sobered somebody up!

I have found I prefer to carry the message to pleasant, attractive, grateful alcoholics who do what I say and give me full credit for their sobriety. Sometimes I wish I did not even have to *carry* the message at all; I wish I could just wait where I am for people to come and pick it up.

On the other hand, I rejoice that I can now participate in so many good ways of fulfilling our primary purpose. I can help put on public meetings and other public-information activities to

carry the message to the alcoholics who are still out there drinking, sick, scared, completely unaware that we want them, and completely wrong in their notion of what our sober life is like. I can be on our hospital- and jail-visiting committees. I can serve on my group's hospitality committee, to welcome the ill-at-ease new man. I can attend or lead beginners meetings. I can help support our local Intergroup office and the AA General Service Office, which reach drunks in places I cannot get to. I can have coffee with the new man after the meeting, instead of running off to chin and gossip with my old friends. Yes, my group (made up of individual AAs, including me) has improved a lot in its respect for our Fifth Tradition--in its ways of carrying the message.

My own AA history has lengthened considerably since I first caught glimpses of the sobriety preserving wisdom in the AA ways of doing things, summed up in our Traditions. But I have recently discovered something else quite wonderful about the Fifth: It does *not* say that AAs should help only newcomers.

I do not agree that the newcomer is *the* most important member at any meeting. In my opinion, equally important are those old-timers who showed me the way, and any middle-timer who may today be suffering. If newcomers are indeed the lifeblood of AA, old- and middle-timers are its skin and backbone. What a bewildered mess we would be in without them!

So in your next meeting, when that Tradition about carrying the message "to the alcoholic who still suffers" is mentioned, please give a thought, not only to newcomers, but also to the alcoholics older in AA who are sitting there. One of them might be me. I still suffer, sometimes. I still need to hear the message, always.

### **Fifth Tradition Checklist**

1. Do I ever cop out by saying, "I'm not a group, so this or that Tradition doesn't apply to me"?
2. Am I willing to explain firmly to a newcomer the *limitations* of AA help, even if he gets mad at me for not giving him a loan?
3. Have I today imposed on any AA member for a special favor or consideration simply because I am a fellow alcoholic?
4. Am I willing to twelfth-step the next newcomer without regard to who he is or what is in it for me?
5. Do I help my group in every way I can to fulfill our primary purpose? Does my group *carry* the message, or do we expect people to come get it?
6. Do I remember that AA old-timers, too, can be alcoholics who still suffer? Do I try both to help them and to learn from them? *B. L.*

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**Co-Founder Quotes:**

"I think that many oldsters who have put our AA "booze cure" to severe but successful tests still find they often lack emotional sobriety. Perhaps they will be the spearhead for the next major development in AA – the development of much more real maturity and balance (which is to say, humility) in our relations with ourselves, with our fellows, and with God.

"Those adolescent urges that so many of us have for top approval, perfect security, and perfect romance – urges quite appropriate to age seventeen – prove to be an impossible way of life when we are at age forty-seven or fifty-seven."

**Bill W., The Next Frontier: Emotional Sobriety, January 1958 (Emotional Sobriety)**



**Expressions Heard Around AA:**

Definition of 'On the Wagon':  
"The wagon is transportation to your next drunk."

"The worst things I've ever been through never happened."

"If it's hysterical, it's historical."

"Normal' is just a setting on a washing machine."

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Got something clever to say? Recovery Times accepts submissions. Email: [sfvaanews@sbcglobal.net](mailto:sfvaanews@sbcglobal.net) or mail to the address on the back of the issue.

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**Current or New Information:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

**New**      or       **Renewal**

**Additional Contribution** \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Old Address:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

# Grapevine Humor



1. "Psst! Mildred ... we told him to *discuss* his bottom, not *show* it!"— David T., *The Third Tradition Group*, Lambertville, NJ

2. "They told me this was a program of change. Anybody have any?"—Gary F., NJ

3. "I was nervous about speaking. Now that I think about it, my sponsor said to 'imagine *them* in their underwear.'"—Steve S., *Laguna Beach, CA*

4. "I hope he does not show us his shortcomings."—Paul S.

**5. Winner: "You gotta give Charlie credit. He must have made that amends to the IRS!"**— Joe H., *Vancouver, British Columbia*

6. "I'm still coming up from rock-bottom. Can't even afford a smoke unless it's second-hand!"— Leslie M., *Pottstown, PA*

7. "Ever try to twelfth-step a cat?"—Mike M., *Watertown, NY*

8. "Aren't you glad I didn't lose everything?"— Van O., *Marietta, OH*

9. "Thirty-two years! And every day is better!"— John H., *Club 24, Cleveland, OH*

10. "Hello, my name is Tom and I am an alcoholic. I was asked to speak on short notice."— Rich B.

11. "OK, *now* I'm ready to go to any length to get what you have."— Joe G., *Cobble Hill, BC*

12. "I'm Jim and I'm an alcoholic. I want to bare all in telling my story."— Jim C.

13. "When they said alcohol strips you of everything, I didn't think they mean *this*, too!"— Anonymous

14. "This will be a *short* meeting."— B. M., *Edmonton, AB*

15. "I do have my pride left, so I didn't lose everything."— John B., *Athens, TX*



*"Resentment is the "number one" offender. It destroys more alcoholics than anything else. From it stems all forms of spiritual disease, for we have been not only mentally and physically ill, we have been spiritually sick." (Page 64, Big Book of AA, 4<sup>th</sup> edition).*



**San Fernando Valley Central Office**

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