

RECOVERY TIMES

Vol. 34, No. 7, July 2010

The Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office Newsletter

Bag of Donuts

Sometimes all it takes is a kind gesture to save a life

In the summer of '73, my family and I had just moved to Los Angeles. With no place to live and no money, we found ourselves staying at a mission on skid row. It was not the best place for an 11-year-old boy. This was the turning point of my life.



Not having any other kids to play with, I would walk the streets, and I met many types of people. Normal people would call them drunks, bums and tramps; I called them my friends and my teachers. The streets were my classroom.

Alcohol was the first step into my new life. I learned how I could afford to eat and drink. I would drink one, two or three bottles of cheap wine a day. My friends called me lucky, although I never felt that way.

After living on skid row for six months, my family transferred to another mission. There were kids like myself, except that I was far more streetwise than even their parents.

I learned at a young age how to manipulate others into doing what I wanted, not realizing what I was becoming and not caring about others' feelings. I was an alcoholic in the making. Things got

somewhat better, and we moved into our own home. But by age 15 I couldn't make it through the day without a drink.

We lived on the Watts and Compton border. My choices were slim; I could join a gang and sell drugs, or I could become a thief. The first three days that I attended school I got jumped. On the fourth day, I was ready. I brought a bike chain with me, and I swung first. I hit one kid on the back of the head and another on his hand. I told them that I lived there now, so they could get used to it, or we could keep doing this every day. They looked at me and each other and said, "It's cool." I have to admit it went better than I thought it would.

I met this older dude, J.C., and his girl, Sue. We hung out and drank. They were the closest I had to real friends. One day I went over to their house, and Sue told me that J.C. was killed robbing a convenience store. I can't remember a lot after that. I drank every day and night for the next six months. I woke up one day sitting in a police substation. I'd gotten popped for stealing a 40-ounce beer, and the judge gave me six months.

By this time I was 17 and had decided not to move back home, so I moved to Hollywood. I met other street kids, and we ran together. I was still drinking every day. I sold pot to support my drinking habit, but also started taking other drugs. Then something unexpected happened.

It was three o'clock in the morning. I had wasted the better part of an hour on the corner of Hollywood and Vine, waiting for my dealer to show, and watching many different types of people come and go: men in women's clothing, a hooker or two, a guy

(Cont. on Page 5)



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

18th Annual Foothill Roundup

July 30 – Aug. 1, 2010

La Canada, CA

www.foothillroundup.org

7th Annual Mountain AA Conference

July 31-Aug. 1, 2010

Big Bear Lake, CA

www.mountainaaconference.com

Mad Dog Daze

Palm Desert, CA

August 6-8, 2010

Regional Forum, Pacific

August 27-29, 2010

Torrance, CA

The Great Outdoor Beaver Meeting,

Sept. 2 – Sept. 5, 2010

Beaver, UT AA

www.greatoutdoorbeavermeeting.com

59th Southern CA AA Convention

Sept. 24-26, 2010

San Diego, CA

www.aasocal.com

Santa Clarita AA Convention

Oct. 15 – 17, 2010

Valencia, CA



THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE:

Wayne U. – 19 Years

Tom Marx – 12 Years

Karen K. – 37 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.

SERVICE COMMITTEES SCHEDULE:

SFV H & I: July 19, 2010:

7 p.m. Get acquainted workshop

8 p.m. Business Meeting

5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana, CA

Gen Service, District 11: Aug. 2, 2010

6 p.m. new GSR orientation

6:30 p.m. Business Meeting

315 W. Vine Street, Glendale, CA

Gen Service, District 16: Aug. 2, 2010

6:15 p.m. meeting

15950 Chatsworth, Granada Hills

Gen. Service, District 17: Aug 2, 2010

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

5000 Colfax, N. Hollywood

Gen. Service, District 2: Aug. 3, 2010

6:30 p.m. Business Meeting

4011 Dunsmore Ave., La Crescenta

Gen Service, District 1: Aug 4, 2010

6:30 p.m. Business Meeting

7552 Remmet, Canoga Park

SFV Central Office Board Mtg: Aug. 4, 2010

6:30 p.m., Valley Central Office

Gen. Service District 7: Aug 14, 2010

9 a.m. Business Meeting

Agua Dulce Women's Club

33210 Agua Dulce Canyon Road

SFV Intergroup: Aug. 9, 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:

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 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 as much as you wish to donate).

JULY Birthdays:

Steve – 1 Year

Gene N. – 12 Years

Paul D. – 17 Years

Roger P. 21 Years

Doug R. 23 Years

Diane D. – 30 Years

Stewart D. – 30 Years

Anonymous - Many Years

Learning to Live Men's Stag: Approximately 390 Years



Central Office: IGR Meeting, June 14, 2010

- Hal S. opened the meeting at 7 p.m.
- Treasurer's Report: Brian said group donations are down but personal donations are slightly up from last year. .
- Service Committee Info: (Pgs. 2,3)

- Executive Secretary's Report: Bob F. said phone volunteers are needed for shifts, especially 9 p.m. – noon on weekends.
 - Service Rep. Reports:
Wayne: District 1 is planning a "Sobriety Fair" in October.
Josh: 2011 S. F. Valley Convention Planning Committee: Next year's theme will be "Love & Tolerance."
 - Old Business: None.
 - New Business: None.
- IGRs celebrating birthdays were:

Judy – 9 years

Dave – 12 years

Josh – 19 years

Motion to adjourn: 7:14 p.m.

The long form of the Intergroup Meeting minutes for June is available at Central Office or the IGR meeting. These minutes are pending approval on July 12, 2010.

Prepared and submitted by Dawn H., Recording Secretary.

Where Did the Twelve Steps Come From?

"AAs are always asking, 'Where did the Twelve Steps come from?' In the last analysis, perhaps nobody knows. Yet some of the events which led to their formulation are as clear to me as though they took place yesterday."

So far as people were concerned, the main channels of inspiration for our Steps were three in number – the Oxford Groups, Dr. William D. Silkworth of Towns Hospital, and the famed psychologist, William James, called by some 'The Father of Modern Psychology.' "

The story of how these streams of influence were brought together and how they led to the writing of our Twelve Steps is exciting and in spots, downright incredible."

Excerpt by Bill W. from Language of the Heart

The Original Six Steps Original AA Steps prior to the printing of Alcoholics Anonymous, first edition. Reprinted with permission from AA Archives.

Akron:

1. Booze has got you down.
2. You have an allergy and obsession and you are hopeless.
3. You better get honest with self and take stock.
4. You need to talk this out with someone – kind of confession.
5. You ought to make restitution for the harm you did.
6. Then pray as best you can, according to your likes.

New York:

1. Admitted hopelessness.
2. Got honest with self.
3. Got honest with others.
4. Made amends.
5. Helped others without demands.
6. Prayed to God as you understand Him.

(Bag of Donuts, Cont., Page 1) begging for change. There was this bag lady pushing her cart; she must have been looking for a place to sleep. I wouldn't sleep in this part of town, but there I was, waiting to buy dope—I wondered which of us was the crazy one. As she passed by me she smiled and asked if I could buy her a cup of coffee. I was pissed that my dealer hadn't shown up yet and without thinking I said, "Hell, no." She smiled and thanked me anyway. "Wait," I said. "I'm sorry. Let's go to the donut shop across the street."

I ordered two large coffees and four donuts, and we sat at a table where she could watch her cart and I could watch for my dealer. "What's a nice kid like you doing in this part of town?" she asked. Before I could answer she said, "Drugs, I bet."



"Why would you think that?" I asked.

"How do you think I got here? Do you think that I was always like this?" She told me that she was an alcoholic and a drug addict. She told me of her home and family that she lost because she couldn't stop using. She said she had been living on the streets for the last two years and for the last three months she had been attending AA meetings and had been sober for six weeks. "That sounds great," I told her. I felt that she could see right through me.

"Why do you seem to be so happy?" I asked.

"I live just for the day and God gives me everything that I need," she said.

The night passed by, my dealer never showed up and I really didn't care; I was feeling kind of good as we said our goodbyes. She told me that she would pray for me. I never saw her again. A few years later I was 25 years old and homeless. My life rotated around liquor stores, barrooms and rundown motels. I couldn't keep a steady job and worked as a day laborer to earn just enough each day for a fifth of whiskey, a loaf of bread and a jar of jam. It wasn't much of a life. I was just getting by.

One night while walking home I passed by a midnight AA meeting. This guy invited me to come in; they had coffee and donuts inside. I thought, What the hell, at least I'll get to eat. There was this guy speaking up front. I thought he talked a good talk, but how could just talking about drinking make me feel better? I told them that I didn't get it, but thanked them for the coffee and donuts.

A couple stopped me at the door. They introduced themselves, handed me a bag of donuts and invited me to come back any time. I kind of got choked up and said OK. Walking home, I started to cry. no one had ever been kind to me before.

But the next day I was back to my same old routine, and I kept living that way for the next 20 years. Today I ask myself what was so hard to understand. I let my fears stop me back then. I was weak and afraid to ask for help.

But better late than never. I have come to a point of my life when I am ready for a change. Change isn't going to be easy and at times my feelings will probably get bruised. now I am building a good strong foundation using the wisdom of my brothers and sisters who came before me, and with the strength of my Higher Power I now have the ability to become a better person. (Cont., Page 6)

Co-Founder Quotes:

"A vast communications net now covers the earth, even to its remotest reaches... nothing matters more to AA's future welfare than the manner in which we use the colossus of modern communication. Used unselfishly and well, it can produce results surpassing our present imagination."

Bill W., The AA Grapevine, Inc., November 1960



Expressions Heard Around AA:

"The only difference between a high bottom and a low bottom alcoholic is the size of the curb."

"When it's doing more 'to you' than 'for you,' it's time to quit."

"Happiness is the by-product of doing 'right' things."

"When I change the way I see things, the things I see seem to change."

"No God, no peace.

Know God, know peace."

(Bag of Donuts, cont.) Why did I tempt fate to the brink of death before I started to see the light? Why did I live with loneliness, self-pity and fear? Why did I blame others for everything that went wrong in my life? I needed to take a good look at myself and start from scratch. I have been attending meetings and listening to others and expressing my feelings.

My life is in the care of a power greater than myself. I don't know if I have changed, but I like the person I am becoming. Medically, my liver is shot. I have congestive heart failure and diabetes. I'm not going to let this hinder me. I have been sober for five months. I am attending meetings, I listen to my sponsor, and I am following the Steps. I am living with my eyes wide open, knowing what I do and doing what is right. I have found serenity and hope and peace of mind.

Dave F. Hutchinson, Kan.

DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO CONTRIBUTE? Recovery Times accepts submissions by email: sfvaanews@sbcglobal.net or mail.



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Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

New **or** **Renewal**

Additional Contribution \$ _____

Moving? What's your **former address** (along with your **new address**):

Name: _____

Previous Address: _____

Grapevine Humor



1. "Get him out of here. He keeps trying to start happy hour with the Serenity Prayer!"
— *Ty M., Oregon*

2. "Ain't he supposed to reach his own bottom?" — *Fred F., SadBadGlad Group, Albany, NY*

3. "Hang on to your hat, Pete. I've seen this before, and you may not be coming back!"
— *Joe H., Vancouver, BC*

4. "Hey! That's alcoholic abuse!" — *Denny C., Atoka Out-of-Towners, Atoka, TN*

5. "You AA people have a strange way of 'taking one for the road.'" — *Paul S., Fountain Hills, AZ*

6. "Now that's what you call carrying the message!" — *Brian B., Canton, MI*

7. "He needs to rewrite his Fourth Step!" — *Diane S., H.E.O.T.R.G., AK*

8. "Looks like I'll have to have a 2-for-1 special to lure him back!" — *Pete S., Plymouth, WI*

9. "Hey, I thought you guys didn't chase drunks!" — *Dawn H., Wausau, WI*

10. "He's having water. You want one with ice?" — *Jeffrey V.*

11. "Hey, Pal...that's the fifth one this week! You're ruining my business!" — *Kevin L., A New Freedom Group, Holyoke, MA*

12. "... and STOP using this as a coaster!" — *Christopher C.*

13. Winner: "Yes, there IS a power greater than myself!" — *Sheri J., Avondale, AZ*

14. "Oh, God, another AA with a control issue!" — *Rick H., Sunapee, NH*

15. "There goes my tip." — *Bill P., Danville, CT*

Significant Dates in AA:

Dec. 11, 1934 – Bill W. takes his last drink and enters Towns Hospital. Bill has a spiritual experience there and the obsession with alcohol is removed.

May 12, 1935 – Bill and Dr. Bob meet for the first time in Akron, Ohio at Henrietta Seiberling's Gate House. It was Mother's Day.

June 10, 1935 – Dr. Bob's last drink. Bill W. and Dr. Bob founded the Fellowship in Akron, Ohio. Thousands of AA's from all over the world gather in Akron each year for AA Founder's Day Weekend.

San Fernando Valley Central Office

7417-E. Van Nuys Boulevard

Van Nuys, CA 91405

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