

RECOVERY TIMES

Vol. 35, No. 1, Jan 2011

The Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office Newsletter

Puppet of Destruction: A promising young woman drinks herself beyond the point of no return



I loved the way alcohol made me feel, plain and simple. Always the exception to the rule, I was terminally unique, or what we like to call an egomaniac with low self-esteem. However, alcohol allowed me to act like everyone else. Once the booze hit my bloodstream, I fell head over heels, tumbling down the rabbit hole to a universe in which I was prettier, funnier, more intelligent and, most importantly, outgoing. The social lubricant I so desperately needed (or so I thought) had found its way into my life. As Bill W. said, "I had arrived."

The affair I had with alcohol was exciting and tumultuous. I lapped up every drop of the glorious feeling of flight the drug gave me. I dipped dangerously close to peaks and tops, and grazed the fields, almost touching the ground. Skimming the water, my stomach would flip, knowing that I was eminently close to danger. And when at last I would escape, unscathed for the most part, the feeling of invincibility was as intoxicating as the drink itself. Alas, this era would not last forever. Nothing does, especially for us alcoholics. Eventually I crashed and burned.

Looking back, there was a line that I knew existed. I knew my father had crossed it. I knew my brother had crossed it. I had fair reason to assume that many others in my genetic line had as well. I asserted that I would be different. If not for the sake of my mother, then for the embarrassment I believed came with being "an alcoholic."

Alcohol was my companion for a fast and furious six years. I don't feel the need to justify my place within the rooms, because I know the true depths to which alcohol took me. How much or how long I drank doesn't matter. What does matter is the shell of a human being that I became. Paying rent, maintaining employment and basically all responsibilities were optional. Fermenting in my filthy apartment for weeks at a time, and struggling within a dark hole of apathy, was not optional. During this time, bringing knives into the bathtub in contemplation of slitting my wrists was a common occurrence. I was in so much pain because I couldn't live with, or without, the very substance that I thought integral to functioning in the world. If I drank, I wasn't a good person. If I didn't drink, I couldn't stand living in my body. I was hopeless. As far as I could see there was no escape. No solution existed. For me, that didn't mark the end.

It was, however, my first realization that I was powerless over alcohol. In taking the first drink, I knew that I became a puppet of destruction, bending to every masochistic whim my disease demanded. And let me just say—it did demand. However, the deepest, blackest, loneliest days of my life still couldn't beat me into submission. And simply stated, not enough pain equals no change for this alcoholic. **(Continued, Page 5)**



CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

SFV AA Convention

Jan. 28 – 30, 2011

Warner Center Marriott, Woodland Hills, CA

www.sfvaaconvention.org

Pacific Region AA Service Assembly

March 4 – 6, 2011, Honolulu, HI

www.praasa.org/2011



THE PASSING OF AA'S -THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE:

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.

Jesse (San Fernando) 18 – 20 Years

SERVICE COMMITTEES SCHEDULE:

SFV H & I: Mon, Jan. 17, 2011:

7 p.m. Orientation/8 p.m. Business Meeting
5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana, CA

Gen Service, District 11: Mon, Feb. 7, 2011

6 p.m. New GSR orientation/ 6:30 p.m. Bus. Mtg
315 W. Vine Street, Glendale, CA

Gen Service, District 16: Mon, Feb.. 7, 2011

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

Gen. Service, District 17: Mon, Feb. 7, 2011

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

Gen. Service, District 2: Tues. Feb. 1, 2011

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

Gen Service, District 1: Wed., Feb. 2, 2011

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

SFV Central Office Board Mtg: Wed., Feb. 9, 2011 6:30 p.m., Valley Central Office

Gen. Service District 7: Sat., Feb.12, 2011

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

SFV Intergroup: Mon., Feb. 14, 2011

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

EDITOR'S MESSAGE:

With the New Year, there is always hope for change. For the alcoholic who has slipped, it means another chance at getting this program to stick. But for those who have days, weeks, months or even multiple years of sobriety, another year is akin to one more day at a time. Yes, we plan for the future, but we take it one day at a time, each 24-hours is taken one minute, one hour and one day at a time.

With 2011 starting anew, we, at Central Office, would like to wish all our A.A. friends a healthy and sober year ahead. Stay close to the program however you can. Remember to be of service and to reach out your hand to a fellow alcoholic in need.

As it says in the chapter "Into Action" (pg. 83 of the 4th edition), "The spiritual life is not a theory. *We have to live it.*" "If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are half way through. We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace."

May you have peace and serenity in 2011!

Pat K.

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

IN THE S.F. VALLEY: Central Office needs telephone volunteers for all shifts (esp. 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



each month at Unit A., 10641 Burbank Blvd., No. Hollywood.

Public Information Committee: Provides information to the general public about what A.A. does & doesn't do. Need 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 A.A. into hospitals, prisons and treatment facilities to those who are unable to get out to meetings. For more info, call Central Office: (818) 988-3001.

San Fernando Valley Young People in AA
Committee Meeting is held the 1st Sunday of

San Fernando Valley Intergroup **Intergroup Reps Needed:**

If your meeting/group does not currently have an Intergroup Rep, please consider appointing someone to represent your meeting. Intergroup reps provide an important service to the group by sharing information on upcoming AA events in the SF Valley. The SFV Central Office coordinates a monthly meeting for all Intergroup reps on the 2nd Monday of each month at St. Innocent Church, 5657 Lindley Ave. in Tarzana. New Intergroup reps should arrive for the 6:30 p.m. orientation, followed by the regular meeting at 7 p.m. **For more info: on serving as an Intergroup rep, call Central Office: 818 988-3001.**

CENTRAL OFFICE NEWS:

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.

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

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).

DECEMBER A.A. BIRTHDAYS:

Liz 5 Years
Pat K. 7 Years
Gilbert 9 Years
Cheryl M-A 28 Years
Ken J. 31 Years



Co-Founder Quotes:

Keystone of the Arch

"Faced with alcoholic destruction, we became open-minded on spiritual matters. In this respect alcohol was a great persuader. It finally beat us into a state of reasonableness."

Big Book of AA, pg. 48



Expressions Heard Around A.A.:

"There are no 'big deals'."

There are no 'mistakes' in life; everything is a learning process."

"Fear knocked on the door and faith answered – and there was no one there."

"God is in the present; not in the past and not in the future."

"A resentment is like peeing in your pants; nobody wants to be around you."

"A.A. is the last house on the block."

Central Office: IGR Meeting Notes of Dec. 13, 2010

Chairman Hal S. opened the meeting with the Serenity Prayer.

Recording Secretary Dawn H. accepted a motion to approve the minutes from November's Intergroup meeting. The minutes were approved as submitted.

- **Treasurer Brian H.** Central Office is in the black \$1,077.60 MTD and in the red \$3,723.32 YTD. With donations from Gratitude Month, he expected YTD totals into the black.

- **Executive Secretary Bob F.** reported that phone volunteers are still needed, especially for the 9PM-12AM/Sat and 12AM-9AM/Sun shifts. Those willing to do 12-step work, including being a contact person for out-of-town guests, are also needed. Interested parties should contact Central Office.

- **New Business:** Hal S. ended his term as Chairman after a great year of leadership. Tom T. is the new Chairman and Cheryl A. is co-chair of Central Office's Board. John M. was elected the new 2nd Alternate for the Intergroup Board of Directors.

- **Internet, Michael F.** reports all is well with www.sfvaa.org.

Intergroup Birthdays:

- Fred – 3 years on 12/7
 - Greg – 4 years on 12/3
 - Kate – 4 years on 12/14
 - Donna – 6 years on 12/1
 - George – 7 years on 12/1
 - Pat – 7 years on 12/22
 - Dennis – 16 years on 12/12
 - Di – 17 years on 12/16
 - Cheryl – 23 years on 12/7
-

Newsletter Subscriptions: If you would like a copy of Recovery Times mailed to you, please complete this form with your new address, and then return it with a \$7.00 check (donation to cover cost & delivery) to: **SFV Central Office, 7417-E. Van Nuys Blvd., Van Nuys, CA 91405**

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

New **or** **Renewal** **Additional Contribution**

Moving? Please give us your **former address** along with your **new address**:

Name: _____

Previous Address: _____

Puppet of Destruction (Continued from Page 1)

Ironically, my bottom was not when I lost my apartment, my job, my boyfriend or the respect of my family. No, I hit the depths of despair when I could no longer feel any emotion at all. I could not get any lower unless I was buried. And in truth, that destination was not far off. I transformed from a young girl, full of talent and promise, to a selfish, self-seeking, walking corpse, preying on those who had one weakness: their love for me. My insides were a rotten and putrid mess, eating me alive, and I could no longer fool those who cared about me into thinking that I was "fine." I was far from fine. I was a zombie, a bag of bones, operated and owned by poison.

In admitting helplessness, the words that I uttered, although falling from my lips, were not my own. Today I know they came from a source outside of, and greater than, myself. My mother was a puddle on the floor, and I couldn't even produce a single tear. I was hollow. I was empty. I was simply not there. For some reason, "I need help" found its way out of my mouth. The very same mouth that had proclaimed its independence from this disease as a child was seeking rescue from it. How had that happened? When had I passed the point of no return? Today I know with certainty that point was when I took my first sip.

I was born an alcoholic. When I was borne into the rooms of AA I became an alcoholic in recovery. Many may scoff at the words "grateful to be an alcoholic." Those people simply do not understand. Being an alcoholic in recovery has opened the door of self-awareness for me. I have a keen knowledge of myself and my disease. I have a library of resources for any problem I may have.

Alcoholics Anonymous is a program of beautiful paradoxes. In the Steps we surrender to win, give in order to receive and find power within our powerlessness. In accepting ownership of our thoughts and actions as powerful tools of intention, married with the notion that we remain powerless over everything else, we carve a direct path to freedom. Alcoholics Anonymous teaches us this. The timeless juxtaposition of finding power within powerlessness is one of the greatest assets of this sober alcoholic.

And I am grateful for it. Copyright © The AA Grapevine, Inc. (Jan 2011).
Reprinted with permission. *Kelly S., West Hempstead, N.Y.*



Grateful Members of AA Sing for the Veterans at the 29th Annual AA at the VA Event

Several hundred members of the fellowship of AA brought the holiday spirit to bedridden veterans at the 29th Annual AA at the VA holiday celebration. The event is put on each year by the AA at the VA Group and is a way for AAs to give back by helping bring cheer to the veterans in Building 22 at the VA in North Hills. This year, several hundred voices were heard singing "Jingle Bell Rock," "Frosty the Snowman," and "Deck the Halls" as the procession of AAs moved down the corridors and into the veterans' rooms. The spirit was joyful and the smiles it generated were priceless as AAs shook the hands of patients and thanked them for their years of service to our country. This simple act of kindness gave many folks a chance to feel loved and for the AAs who participated, it was a way to be of service to others who may not see another New Year.

Save the Date and Participate in “Love & Tolerance 2011!”

The Warner Center Marriott Hotel in Woodland Hills, California, will be the site of the 36th Annual San Fernando Valley A.A. 2011 Convention, which is scheduled to open at **2:00 pm Friday, January 28th and close Sunday, January 30th at noon.** Included in this fabulous and fun 3-day gathering will be various meetings for A.A., Al-Anon, Ala-Teen, and Spanish-speaking participants. “Marathon Meetings” which are free to all attendees—no registration fee required, will be held every hour from 3:00 pm Friday through 8:00 am Sunday.

There are also many social events scheduled, such as the popular Opening Night Show, a Golf Classic (in Burbank), an Al-Anon Luncheon, Ala-Teen Buffet, Dances, and a Saturday evening Banquet and All-Star Show. The Convention concludes on Sunday with a Spiritual Breakfast. **Please note that there are additional fees for most of these events—check the website at www.sfvaaconvention.org for details and a preliminary schedule.**

Registration for the 2011 Convention is \$15.00 in advance, or \$20.00 at the door. Pre-registration can be mailed in via a registration form available at most meetings or at the Central Office. You can also pre-register online at www.sfvaaconvention.org (there is a \$5.00 handling fee for online registration). It is helpful to register as early as possible due to the sheer costs involved in reserving the venue, conducting the events, and guaranteeing rooms for attendees who are planning to stay overnight. To reserve a hotel room, go to: www.sfvaaconvention.org and link to Marriott Reservations or contact Marriott Toll-Free at (800) 736-9712 and use Reservation Code “SFVAA” to get the special rate of \$119 per night for single or double occupancy. Third and fourth room guests are no extra charge..

The Warner Center Marriott Hotel is located at 21850 Oxnard Street in Woodland Hills, between Victory Blvd. and Burbank Blvd. Parking is available at the Marriott Hotel for \$6.00 per day with validation. The Metro also stops at the corner where the hotel is located.

For further information or questions call the Convention Info Line at (818) 734-0383, or send e-mail to info@sfvaaconvention.org. Remember, the “Love and Tolerance” 2011 SFVAA Convention is just a heartbeat away. Hope to see you there! Susan H.

“Why I Love Attending A.A. Conventions”

The speakers are phenomenal and the chance to enjoy a meal with a bunch of your friends is a celebration of sobriety you just can't miss. I have been attending these conventions for 19 years and each year it gets better and better. I never used to have friends. Now I have friends that I can hang out with and just have a good time. It gives me a chance to reconnect with old friends and to spend time with the new friends in my life. It's a lot of fun...we are definitely not a glum lot. We laugh and joke but are deadly serious when it comes to another's survival in sobriety.

I get to see those that helped me along the way and show my gratitude for their help. Throughout the year we trudge the road of Happy Destiny. The conventions are an opportunity to just kick up our heels and have a little fun. There was a time when I could barely tolerate an hour with any group of people. Now I can hang out for 3 days in the company of like-minded individuals and relish the gift that God has given us. *The gift is in the people.* I look forward to and love attending the conventions!

---Anonymous

A.A. WORD SEARCH

Find the A.A.-related words in the puzzle. Words can be read forward, backward, up, down, or diagonally:

HUMBLE

MEDITATION

WILLING

SOBRIETY

AMENDS

SPIRITUAL

INVENTORY

POWERLESS

PRAYER

BIG BOOK

(Thank you Susan H.)

P	G	P	D	I	L	B	D	R	M	M	Y
G	N	M	M	W	Q	Q	R	K	E	L	R
S	I	I	O	S	G	Q	O	D	T	S	O
S	L	V	H	I	I	O	I	R	A	O	T
E	L	R	L	V	B	T	E	C	M	B	N
L	I	P	J	G	A	L	F	K	E	R	E
R	W	A	I	T	E	U	N	P	N	I	V
E	Q	B	I	L	S	B	T	B	D	E	N
W	N	O	B	I	V	F	X	K	S	T	I
O	N	M	K	A	T	K	H	N	R	Y	J



Ham on Wry:

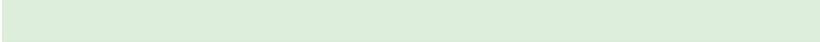
AFTER JOINING AA, I gained quite a bit of weight. A friend told me it was because I didn't get as much exercise as I used to. "But I never exercised while I was drinking," I protested.

"Sure you did," he countered. "The exercise program you were on had a number of routines:

Hitting the bottle Bending the rules Stretching the truth Running into trouble Jumping to conclusions Stepping on toes Dodging responsibility Pushing your luck Carrying a grudge Throwing fits Picking up the pieces." Don A., Arkansas

Distilled Spirits

I have emerged from the world of shadows, the nightmare of confusion, fear, self-deception, loneliness, and pain. Today I feel the heat of a far different source. I have stepped into the sunlight. Marty D., Kentucky Copyright © The AA Grapevine, Inc. (Jan 2011). Reprinted with permission.



San Fernando Valley Central Office

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