

The Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office Newsletter

## The Love This Alcoholic Never Found in the Bars Was Everywhere once she discovered a Power Greater Than Herself

"Here are thousands of men and flatly declare that since they have greater than themselves, to take Power, and to do certain simple revolutionary change in their way collapse and despair, in the face resources, they found that a new sense of direction flowed into they wholeheartedly met a few confused and baffled by the show the underlying reasons why life. Leaving aside the drink question, they tell why living was so unsatisfactory. They show how the change came over them. When many hundreds of people are able to say that the consciousness of the Presence of God is today the most important fact of their lives, they present a powerful reason why one should have faith." **Big Book, Pg. 50-51**



women, worldly indeed. They come to believe in a Power a certain attitude toward that things, there has been a of thinking. In the face of of the total failure of their human power, peace, happiness, and a them. This happened soon after simple requirements. Once seeming futility of existence, they they were making heavy going of

When I was drinking in the bars, I looked for love in the eyes of every man sitting on the barstools. "Was it him or was it him?" I used to wonder as I drowned my sorrows temporarily with the hard stuff until everyone began to look far better to me and I could finally throw caution to the wind and become the social butterfly that I always wanted to be. Back then "love" meant instant gratification.

After a night of drinking, my raging hangovers would make me feel like staying in bed half the day, locking myself in the dark, refusing to take calls from family members who loved me and were concerned about me. Instead, I would try to sleep off the headaches and knife-like eye pain. When that didn't work, I would get in the car and drive to the nearest bar where I would drink the "hair of the dog that bit me," refilling my veins with alcohol to temporarily control the pain of detoxing.

Love to me was a one night stand. If I was lucky, I might get two or three nights out of the same person. But it was unlikely that it was going to last much more than that. For me at that time, one night or two was "good enough." At least it got me through the night and the alcohol made it all possible to repeat that cycle every weekend and sometimes on weeknights.

Valentines Day was especially painful: I could barely face being alone on a weekend night, let alone on a major romantic holiday. I believed that I was one of those "losers" who could never keep a relationship going. In truth, I had no relationship with myself – in fact, I hated looking in the mirror at the person who looked back. To cover my self hatred, I wore a lot of makeup that I was certain "made me beautiful." I couldn't stand being seen without my makeup. I was so frightened of being seen for myself that when a man was with me in bed, I would wake myself up during the night and reapply my makeup, just in case he woke up and looked at me.

*Continued on Page 5*

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS



### **PRAASA**

March 4 – 6, 2011  
Honolulu, HI  
[www.praasa.org/2011](http://www.praasa.org/2011)

### **Sobriety 24/7 in 2011 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Orange County AA Convention**

April 22 – 24, 2011  
Hilton Hotel, Costa Mesa, CA  
[www.oaac.org](http://www.oaac.org)

### **Keep it Simple, San Diego Round Up**

April 21-24, 2011  
Town and Country Resort Hotel,  
San Diego, CA  
[www.sandiegospringroundup.com](http://www.sandiegospringroundup.com)

### **Big Island Bash**

April 15 – 17, 2011  
Hawaii, HI  
[www.bigislandbash.com](http://www.bigislandbash.com)

### **Tri-State 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Round-Up**

May 19 – May 22  
Riverside Resort Hotel & Casino  
Laughlin, NV  
[www.tristate-roundup.com](http://www.tristate-roundup.com)

### **A.A. Desert Pow Wow Renaissance Esmeralda Resort**

June 9 – 12, 2011  
Indian Wells, CA

### **AA Additional Pacific Regional Forum**

August 19 – 21, 2011  
Warner Center Marriott, Woodland Hills, CA



### **THE PASSING OF AA'S – THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE:**

JIM A. – 10 YEARS

Dan S. – 22 Years

Lloyd H. – 31 Years

Joe Frazell – 38 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: Mon, Feb. 21, 2011:**

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

#### **Gen Service, District 11: Mon, March 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, March 7, 2011**

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

#### **Gen. Service, District 17: Mon, March 7, 2011**

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

#### **Gen. Service, District 2: Tues. March 1, 2011**

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

#### **Gen Service, District 1: Wed., March 2, 2011**

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

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

#### **Gen. Service District 7: Sat., March 12, 2011**

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

#### **SFV Intergroup: Mon., March. 14, 2011**

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

"In prayer, it's better to have a heart without  
words, than words without heart." (anon)

## **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](http://www.sfvaa.org/involve.html)

**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 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of each month at Unit A., 10641 Burbank Blvd., No. Hollywood.

### **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 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of each month at St. Innocent Church, 5657 Lindley Ave. in Tarzana. New Intergroup reps please arrive at 6:30 p.m. for orientation; the regular meeting starts at 7 p.m.

For 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](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.

**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:

### **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).



### **JANUARY A.A. BIRTHDAYS:**

Danielle – 1 Year  
Marilyn – 3 Years  
Jimmy J. – 5 Years  
David – 6 Years  
Lisa – 7 Years  
Frances K – 26 Years

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### **Co-Founder Quotes:**



"I kept asking myself, "Why can't the Twelve Steps work to release depression? By the hour, I stared at the St. Francis Prayer..."It's better to comfort than to be comforted." Here was the formula, all right. But why didn't it work?

Suddenly I realized what the matter was. My basic flaw had always been dependence – almost absolute dependence – on people or circumstances to supply me with prestige, security, and the like..."

"Because I had over the years undergone a little spiritual development, the absolute quality of these frightful dependencies had never before been so starkly revealed. Reinforced by what Grace I could secure in prayer, I found I had to exert every ounce of will and action to cut off these faulty emotional dependencies on people, upon AA, indeed, upon any set of circumstances whatsoever. Then only could I be free to love as Francis had. Emotional and instinctual satisfactions, I saw, were really the extra dividends of having love, offering love, and expressing a love appropriate to each relation of life."

**Bill Wilson, "The Next Frontier: Emotional Sobriety," January 1958.**

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### **Central Office: IGR Meeting Notes of Jan. 10, 2011**

**Chairman Tom T.** opened the meeting with the Serenity Prayer.

**Hal S.** read the Serenity Prayer and Tom presented Hal with a plaque thanking him for his service as IGR Chair in 2010.

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

**Treasurer Brian H.** reported that Central Office ended the year in the black with \$8, 446.21 MTD and \$4,722.89 YTD.

**Executive Secretary Bob F., Central Office needs** phone volunteers to cover the 9 pm-12 am shift M-Sat and 12 a.m.—9 a.m. on Sun. 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. IGRs were asked to encourage new IGRs to represent the 300+ groups in the San Fernando Valley. There are currently only 50-60 meetings represented. Orientation for new IGRs begins at 6:30 p.m. prior to monthly IGR Meeting.

**Internet,** Bob reported that everything is going well with the newsletter, Recovery Times, and the [www.sfvaa.org](http://www.sfvaa.org) website.

**H & I Committee** meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday at St. Innocents.

#### **Intergroup Birthdays:**

- Laura – 1 year on 1/5
- Dave 2 years on 1/19
- Tom – 3 years on 1/7
- Laurie – 3 years on 1/25
- Will – 7 years on 1/22
- Karrie – 8 years on 1/20
- Steve – 9 years on 1/23
- Nolan – 20 years on 1/31

**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 too:**

## The Love This Alcoholic Never Found, Continued from Page 1.

looked back. To cover my self hatred, I wore a lot of makeup that I was certain “made me beautiful.” I couldn’t stand being seen without my makeup. I was so frightened of being seen for myself that when a man was with me in bed, I would wake myself up during the night and reapply my makeup, just in case he woke up and looked at me.

When I finally got sober, I was so desperate for love that I threw myself at the first AA man that would have me – a guy with about 2 years of sobriety. I used all the manipulative tactics I could find – asking him to take me to meetings, inviting him in after a meeting, and even asking him to sponsor me. My efforts proved futile and I felt terribly rejected and worthless when, now sober, I had to look at myself for the first time and strip away my protective walls made possible by the alcohol.

Gradually, I worked through some very painful issues that I realized I had carried throughout my life since childhood. I had drunk over all of these memories, dark and scary to a child, but manageable with my newfound Steps of A.A.

As I peeled away the layers that bound me and kept me chained to my worst fears, I started finding I was capable of loving and forgiving myself. I discovered a Higher Power that not only accepted me as I was, flawed and human, but loved me that way. I also found beautiful friends in the program who laughed with me and cried with me when I shared from the heart. Love began to manifest in different forms that I had not experienced before. I started liking family members who used to annoy me, I started feeling compassion for the homeless man who often came into the meeting for warmth and a cup of coffee and a donut. And I started caring about myself and how I treated others.



Since getting sober more than 7 years ago, I have had two loving relationships in my life with two sober men. One was in the program and one was not. While I would have liked them to have lasted longer, I now see that it was necessary for me to grow and to do that, I had to leave those relationships.

I’m still growing and changing and as much as I would like to have a long lasting relationship of love, I know that I can’t make it happen; only God can. And when it’s time for that to happen, I won’t have to try so hard; it will be effortless and it will feel right.

Today, I try to look at Valentine’s Day as a ‘Hallmark Holiday’ and not a stamp of approval if I have a date or a stamp of rejection if I’m dateless. I try not to compare my insides to others’ outsides because I don’t know what goes on behind closed doors and I can’t assume that others have a perfect life. When I’m feeling sad or lonely, I call another alcoholic in A.A., I get into service, or I go to a meeting.

Whereas the love I knew before I got sober was whoever was sitting on the bar stool next to me, today I see love in people everywhere: It’s in the little, old lady walking slowly with a walker, it’s in the eyes of the babies holding onto their mamas, it’s in the gentle winds that blow through the trees, its especially in the smiles on my dog’s faces.

In taking Step 2, I have come to believe that God is with me but he’s also with everyone else around me. If I want to feel love, all I have to do is be loving toward others and I’ll get that back. Whether or not I will have that lasting relationship, I don’t know. Time will tell. But I do know that my Higher Power is stronger and more powerful than a drink and that staying close to my Program is critical to my happiness, my overall health and my peace of mind:

**Step 2:** Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. Anonymous, 2011



## **Lightning strikes twice:** Step Two helps an alcoholic get past his denial and see how alcohol was affecting his life

LIGHTNING never strikes twice in the same place. I have heard that said many times; but according to what I've read, lightning strikes twice each time it strikes. It comes in two flashes, so close together that they seem like one.

Step Two is like that. It uses the words "restore us to sanity." Before I got sober I was working in the field of mental health, doing bilingual counseling, taking people to AA meetings and going back a year later for their anniversaries. How could I, a professional in the fields, need to be restored to sanity? But that bolt, those words, opened up a crack in the armor of my denial. I began to see how alcohol was affecting every area of my life, in an increasingly negative way. It was always getting worse, never better. Yet I kept finding rationalizations to continue. If insanity is being disconnected from reality, then I was certainly insane.

The second part of the flash was more positive. I could be restored to sanity. Countless members of AA had been restored, with the help of a Higher Power in the spiritual program of the Fellowship of AA. So I went back to AA, not for others, but for myself. There I found the proof in a group of reasonably happy people enjoying life in a way I had forgotten could ever exist. Some of them seemed so peaceful and content they seemed better than normal. So I kept coming back, and have been doing so since 1986. The double "whammo" had worked. My prayer life left my head and went back to my heart. My spiritual life became real again and began to slowly grow. The Steps, Traditions, a home group and good sponsorship were a wonderful formula for a happy way of life.

Well, how about now, almost 22 years later? The lightening bolt of my first experience of Step Two has mellowed over the years. Now, almost 80 years old and coming up on 22 years of sobriety, it is easy for me to take sobriety granted, to get complacent. I can start to sound like a know-it-all, at times even pontificate or spout truisms or clichés. This kind of an attitude can easily lead me first to a dry drunk and eventually to a wet one.

I came to believe that what was the solution then is the solution now. AA is a spiritual entity. When I remember that fact and go into action on it, the original awe of Step Two stays alive in a calmer and more peaceful way. Take a look at the phrase "spiritual entity" in the Grapevine's Digital Archive. I think there are 33 entries, most of them by Bill W. and Dr. Bob. The last one is from May 2006, and talks of Tradition Five. I agree with the alcoholic who wrote that. When I put that into practice along with Step Two, all of my character defects are included in the lightning bolt, and become manageable now, one day at a time. If I want to have a reasonably happy and productive life, and an enjoyable degree of serenity, then I have to pray, meditate and do some spiritual reading--in other words, lead a spiritual life. I've never been able to find another way that works. How about you?

*ANONYMOUS, Maryland*

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**Rule #62: Don't take yourself too damn seriously!**

February 2011



**Do you have a funny caption for this cartoon?  
Email it by Feb. 15 to:  
[webeditor@aagrapevine.org](mailto:webeditor@aagrapevine.org)**

**A.A. WORD SEARCH #2:** Find the A.A.-related words in the puzzle. Words can be read forward, backward, up, down, or diagonally.

S S E L R A E F Z Z L M C

**BELIEVE**

B S T I S E O D Y S A E N

**SOUGHT**

V Q G N I N E K A W A Q G

**SANITY**

C U J G S O U G H T R X G

**DECISION**

S A L K N O I S I C E D E

**ALCOHOLICS**

K M F S C I L O H O C L A

**ADMITTED**

J I A S B E L I E V E S I

**HIGHER POWER**

V O Y X Q A G S T M L V W

**AWAKENING**

B O G R I F M K A M C B K

**FEARLESS**

M M A U F P Z F C N Q U Z

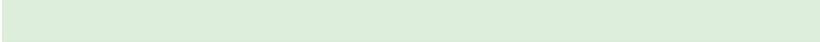
**EASY DOES IT**

U M N O F T R U S V I T Q

R E W O P R E H G I H T W

N T F D E T T I M D A Y Y

*(Submitted by Susan H.)*



**San Fernando Valley Central Office**

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