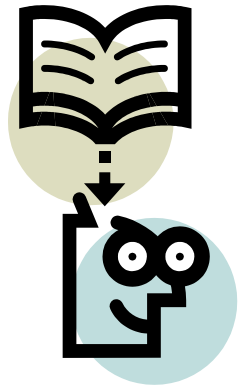


RECOVERY TIMES

Vol. 35, No. 8, Aug. 2011

The Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office Newsletter

TOO SMART FOR A.A.? It took him years to get that he simply needed meetings.



A recent letter to the Grapevine said, "You can't be too dumb for this program, but you can be too smart." This struck a note with me because it told my story exactly. Maybe I should say, "I thought I was too smart." I presently have been sober 37 years and I'm grateful that I dumbbed-down. This is my story:

I started my career working for an electronics company in Cedar Rapids, Iowa after leaving the Navy in the late '50s. My drinking had progressed to a point where my marriage was being affected. I managed to keep my job and suffer through this difficult marriage for several years with controlled drinking. I had become an instructor at this company teaching customers how to use electronics equipment so I was too smart to be an alcoholic. Alcoholics were those who were not smart enough to control their drinking, especially skid-row bums and those without an education. My drinking reached a point where my wife threatened a divorce if I did not do something. My trouble was her, not the drinking! I finally agreed to talk to a couple guys she'd tricked me into seeing. They, of course, were in A.A. and I met them for a discussion. I agreed to go to a few A.A. meetings. I was then in my late 20s. I think I went to about three or four meetings and remember not identifying or fitting in at all. In fact, at the first meeting, I remember saying my name and that I was there to observe only! I would not identify as an alcoholic.

Of course you know the outcome. We went through the divorce and my troubles were gone, right? This was in the mid-'60s and the Apollo Program was in full swing. The company I was working for designed the communications equipment for the Apollo spacecraft. I became the instructor for those using this equipment. Now I was really smart! I couldn't be an alcoholic with these brains. Also, they wanted to transfer me to California to teach the astronauts, flight controllers and engineers. I got rid of my wife and now I got rid of the State of Iowa that caused all my problems.

In 1966 I headed for California and a new life. I was obsessed with controlling my drinking. After all, I was a smart guy, and anyone with my smarts could do that, right? My drinking continued and progressively worsened. I started missing work and getting into trouble on business trips to the space centers in Houston and Florida. I would lose the rental car and get kicked out of bars. I would wake up in parking lots after a fight. I would not be allowed on flights leaving the Los Angeles airport because I was drunk. The only reason I kept my job was because I was protected by the "good ole boy network." I still would not give up! I was too smart to have this happen and, above all, too smart for A.A.



In 1970, I received my third DUI and had to spend time in the Los Angeles County Jail. Wow . . . a smart guy like me? Can't be! I obtained a leave of absence from my company to do the time. I was crushed. This must be a mistake. When I sat down for the interview for my jail job, I said I was an instructor for the astronauts. I figured for sure I would be (Continued on Page 5)



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sizzlin' Hot Summer Night Dance Party Sat., Aug. 13th
10 p.m. – 1:30 a.m.
Burbank Group, 3217 Winona, Burbank
Suggested donation is \$7.00.

Santa Clarita Valley AA Events
August 13, 2011, *Shake, Rattle Rumble Poker Run*
Jack Bones Equestrian Center, Castaic, CA
Enchanting Moonlight Dance & BBQ dinner
AA Gratitude Speaker: 7 p.m. www.scvaaconvention.org
or (661) 310-0384.

65 Anniversary, West Valley Participation
August 15, 2011, 6 p.m.
18355 Roscoe Boulevard, Northridge, CA
Food, Fun & Fellowship: 6 p.m.

2011 Pacific Additional[™] Regional Forum
Aug. 19-21, 2011
Warner Center Marriott, Woodland Hills, CA
www.aaarea93.org.

36th Annual Great Outdoor Beaver Meeting
Sept. 1 – 4th, 2011
Beaver, Utah
davedandd@adelphia.net

Take Your Sponsor to Breakfast
Sept. 24, 2011, 8 a.m. – 10 breakfast
AA Speaker Meeting: 10:30 a.m.
6543 Corbin Ave, Woodland Hill, CA
Tickets: \$10.00 each.

60th So. CA AA Convention
Sept. 30 - Oct. 2, 2011
Westin Mission Hills Resort & Spa
Rancho Mirage, CA (Palm Springs)
www.aasocal.com

24th Annual Inland Empire Convention
Oct. 14 – 16, 2011
Hilton Hotel, San Bernardino, CA
www.ieaac.org

8TH Annual Santa Clarita Valley AA
Oct. 21- 23, 2011
Hyatt Valencia
www.scvaaconvention.org

THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE:

**Rosemary G. XX Years, Shirley M. – 32 Years
Marilyn W – 53 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: Mon, Aug. 15, 2011: 7 p.m. Orientation/
8 p.m. Business Meeting
5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana, CA

Gen Service, District 11: Mon, Sept 5, 2011*
6 p.m. New GSR orientation/ 6:30 p.m. Bus. Mtg
315 W. Vine Street, Glendale, CA

Gen Service, District 16: Mon, Sept. 5, 2011
6:15 p.m. meeting
15950 Chatsworth, Granada Hills

Gen. Service, District 17: Mon, Sept. 5, 2011
6 p.m. New GSRs. /6:30 p.m. Bus. Meeting
5000 Colfax, N. Hollywood

Gen. Service, District 2: Tues. Sept. 6, 2011
6:30 p.m. Business Meeting
4011 Dunsmore Ave., La Crescenta

Gen Service, District 1: Wed., Sept. 7, 2011
6:30 p.m. Business Meeting
7552 Remmet, Canoga Park

SFV Central Office Board Mtg: Sept. 7, 2011
6:30 p.m., Valley Central Office

Gen. Service District 7: Sat., Sept. 3, 2011
9 a.m. Business Meeting
Agua Dulce Women's Club
33210 Agua Dulce Canyon Road

SFV Intergroup: Mon., Sept. 12, 2011
6:30 Orientation, 7 p.m. Business Meeting
St. Innocent Ch., 5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana

**SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES
IN THE SAN FERNANDO 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

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.

Valley Hospitals and Institutions Committee: Carry the message of A.A. into hospitals, prisons and treatment facilities to those who are unable to get out to meetings. Call Central Office if interested.

San Fernando Valley Convention Committee: Volunteers are welcome to participate in the planning of the 2012 SFV AA Convention to be held in Woodland Hills at the Warner Center Marriott. The Committee meets the 3rd Tuesday of every month at 7 p.m. at St. Innocent Church, 5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana.

San Fernando Valley Young People in AA: Committee Meeting is held the 1st Sunday of each month at Unit A., 10641 Burbank Blvd., NoHo.

San Fernando Valley Intergroup: 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 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., Tarzana. New Intergroup reps should arrive at 6:30 p.m. for orientation. Main meeting is 7 p.m. **To serve 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.



HAVING A BIRTHDAY? By sending a donation to Central Office, your birthday will be posted in Recovery Times. By making a \$1.00 donation for every year of your sobriety, you can support Central Office in reaching out to alcoholics all over the county (our phone lines are open 24-hours a day and we receive calls so we receive calls from alcoholics outside of Los Angeles and the Valley). Please send your donation in during the month of your birthday so we can acknowledge you in the correct issue of Recovery

Times. **This month's sober birthday celebrants are:**

Brian H – 11 Years

Jay B. – 16 Years

Diane D. – 31 Years



Heard Around AA:

'A friend is someone who reaches for your hand and touches your heart!'

“To get something you never had, you have to do something you never did.”

“The will of God will never take you where the Grace of God will not protect you.”

“Stay positive even when all else may appear negative.”

Co-Founder Quotes:

“Those of us who have come to make regular use of prayer would no more do without it than we would refuse air, food, or sunshine. And for the same reason. When we refuse air, light or food, the body suffers. And when we turn away from meditation and prayer, we likewise deprive our minds, our emotions, and our intuitions of vitally needed support.

As the body can fail its purpose for lack of nourishment, so can the soul. We all need the light of God’s reality, the nourishment of His strength, and the atmosphere of His grace. To an amazing extent the facts of A.A. life confirm this ageless truth.”

Twelve & Twelve. PP. 97-98

Central Office: IGR Mtg Notes of July 11, 2011

- **Chairman Tom T.** opened the meeting with the Serenity Prayer. **Alternate Recording Secretary Pat K.** accepted a motion to approve the minutes from June’s IGR meeting. Minutes were approved as submitted.
- **Treasurer Brian H.** Central Office is currently in the red <\$1,784.52> MTD and in the red <\$1800.36> YTD. Personal donations are down. A full Treasurer’s Report is in this issue of Recovery Times.
- **Executive Secretary Bob F** said The 4th of July was well-covered by volunteers. The **West Valley Participation** meeting is celebrating its 65th anniversary on Aug. 15, 2011 at 6 p.m. at 18355 Roscoe Blvd., Northridge with a regular A.A. meeting at 7:30 p.m. It is the 2nd oldest club in the Valley. **Take Your Sponsor to Breakfast** holds its 2nd annual event in September. Tickets will be available in August for \$10.00 each. Only 250 tickets will be available; no entry at the door. Phone volunteers are needed at C.O., 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, can contact the office. (818) 988-3001.
- **H & I: Tom T.** said Bike-N-4-Books, held on June 4th raised \$4,000. There is a need for volunteers and panel members to cover jail panels and to staff the “Bridging the Gap” committee, a liaison to alcoholics in hospitals and institutions and the recovery community. H&I Committee meets the 3rd Monday of the month at St. Innocent. Orientation at 7PM, meeting at 8PM. New members are always needed and welcome.
- **San Fernando Valley AA Convention:** The 2012 SFVAAC Planning Committee meets monthly at St. Innocent Church to plan the 2012 AA SFV Convention taking place Jan. 27-29, 2012 at the Warner Center Marriott in Woodland Hills, CA.
- **General Service District 1:** Wayne reported the 2011 Pacific Additional” Regional Forum is Aug. 19-21 at the Warner Center Marriott in Woodland Hills. It is a free event and attendees get to meet representatives from 9 Western States, delegates, GSO reps, Grapevine reps, and more. Volunteers are needed for this event. www.aaarea93.org.
- Bill S. reported on the **60th Annual Southern CA AA Convention** takes place at the Westin Mission Hills Resort & Spa in Rancho Mirage (Palm Springs) Sept. 30 – Oct. 2, 2011. socalconventionchris@gmail.com.
- D.J. - **Life’s in Session** said their Monday night meeting is changing its format Aug. 1st to a 1-hr. speaker meeting.
- David G. - **Sunrise/Sunset group** said their Tues. evening 7 p.m. meeting has moved to 5915 Vineland Ave. in North Hollywood (a sober living house). The meeting is a one hour, Big Book Study from 7 – 8 p.m.

IGR Rep Birthdays:

Roberto – 1 Year Joel – 5 Years

Derek – 10 Years Bill – 25 Years



Too Smart for A.A.? (Continued from page 1)

assigned to the office near the head of the jail to do bookkeeping or give advice. I finally got the word: I was assigned to the kitchen chopping lettuce and cabbage! My ego was shot. Me? A smart guy? Unbelievable!

Finally, the day came when I was to be released. Several of us got caught playing Poker, which was not allowed. The guard said that we would get 30 more days. I was due to be released at midnight and I lay in my bunk that night praying to God to please let me out. If he would let me out, I would quit drinking and shape up. Well, I did get released but my first thought was: I have two hours before the bars close.

My experience in jail did not wake me up. I was in a cell with a wino and tried to convince him to go to A.A. He might have a problem. I continued to drink for two more months and it got worse. The day came when I finally hit bottom and couldn't take anymore. I realized that I was an alcoholic and had to quit: March 9, 1971. I had remarried and my brother-in-law was in the Program. I gave him a call and asked if he was going to a meeting that night. He picked me up and I went to the meeting in La Puente, California that night. It was the beginning of a new life for me.

Now this is the best part. You see, I was too smart for A. A. but in the La Puente A.A. Group, they taught me that you can't be too dumb. What I learned in this group about life and sobriety came from people who were skid-row bums, train hobos, a junkyard worker, a blacktop worker, a gasman, swimming pool worker, etc. I knew nothing about life and how to stay sober. They were my instructors in life and sobriety. That was 37 years ago and I will never forget the people who saved me and my career. "A.A. is a program for alcoholics from Yale or from jail," as the letter writer said. **Gary S., Primghar, Iowa**, Reprinted with permission from the AA Grapevine.

THANKFUL

I AM THANKFUL: FOR THE WIFE WHO SAYS it's HOT DOGS TONIGHT,
BECAUSE SHE IS HOME WITH ME, AND NOT OUT WITH SOMEONE ELSE.

FOR THE HUSBAND WHO IS ON THE SOFA BEING A COUCH POTATO,
BECAUSE HE IS HOME WITH ME AND NOT OUT AT THE BARS.
FOR THE TEENAGER WHO IS COMPLAINING ABOUT DOING DISHES
BECAUSE IT MEANS SHE IS AT HOME, NOT ON THE STREETS.

FOR THE TAXES I PAY BECAUSE IT MEANS I AM EMPLOYED.
FOR THE MESS TO CLEAN AFTER A PARTY BECAUSE IT MEANS I HAVE BEEN SURROUNDED BY FRIENDS.
FOR THE CLOTHES THAT FIT A LITTLE TOO SNUG BECAUSE IT MEANS I HAVE ENOUGH TO EAT.

FOR MY SHADOW THAT WATCHES ME WORK
BECAUSE IT MEANS I AM OUT IN THE SUNSHINE
FOR A LAWN THAT NEEDS MOWING, WINDOWS THAT NEED CLEANING,
AND GUTTERS THAT NEED FIXING BECAUSE IT MEANS I HAVE A HOME .

FOR ALL THE COMPLAINING I HEAR ABOUT THE GOVERNMENT
BECAUSE IT MEANS WE HAVE FREEDOM OF SPEECH.

FOR THE PARKING SPOT I FIND AT THE FAR END OF THE PARKING LOT
BECAUSE IT MEANS I AM CAPABLE OF WALKING AND I HAVE BEEN BLESSED WITH TRANSPORTATION

FOR MY HUGE HEATING BILL BECAUSE IT MEANS I AM WARM.
FOR THE LADY BEHIND ME IN CHURCH WHO SINGS OFF KEY BECAUSE IT MEANS I CAN HEAR.

FOR THE PILE OF LAUNDRY AND IRONING BECAUSE IT MEANS I HAVE CLOTHES TO WEAR.

FOR WEARINESS AND ACHING MUSCLES AT THE END OF THE DAY
BECAUSE IT MEANS I HAVE BEEN CAPABLE OF WORKING HARD.

FOR THE ALARM THAT GOES OFF IN THE EARLY MORNING HOURS
BECAUSE IT MEANS I AM ALIVE.

AND FINALLY, I AM THANKFUL FOR TOO MANY E-MAILS
BECAUSE IT MEANS I HAVE FRIENDS WHO ARE THINKING OF ME. (ANONYMOUS)



PICK UP THE PHONE INSTEAD OF THE DRINK

Have you ever heard the expression “Here’s a quarter, call someone who cares?”

This turn of phrase is really saying, “I don’t want to have to listen to your problems or issues. Tell them to somebody else because I just don’t care.”

Thank goodness that’s not the way it is in the Fellowship of A.A., especially when it involves the possibility of taking that first drink. No, it’s quite the opposite.

When an A.A. member provides their phone number to another member, it’s a sincere offer of caring and support. It’s a source of solace knowing that there’s a compassionate and understanding person who will be there for them at the other end of the line when someone feels like they are at the end of their rope. It’s also a “win-win” situation for both parties when an A.A. member who is struggling with the possibility of taking a drink makes the call to another A.A. member and gives them the opportunity to be of service. This can also be referred to as “Telephone Therapy.”*

Consider the following scenarios:

Member “A” (a regular attendee) spoke up at a meeting one day and asked for some other member’s phone numbers and admitted that she was having a difficult time maintaining her sobriety, and was indeed fearful of picking up the first drink. On one particularly lonely evening when she was certain she would drink again, she instead got out her list of phone numbers, called another member, and spoke with them until her desire to drink had dissipated.



Member “B” (a relative newcomer) had been offered the tools of recovery. She had recently acquired a sponsor, was given phone lists at meetings, but unfortunately experienced the phenomenon of the “500 pound handset.” The phone became too heavy to pick up when the craving arose for a drink. The alcoholic, twisted thinking convinced her that she could handle things on her own, didn’t need to “bother” her sponsor, and could resist the temptation of alcohol’s seductive lure without the aid of another member. Needless to say, it didn’t work out very well. She ultimately suffered a severe relapse that nearly landed her in the hospital and caused her humiliation and remorse beyond her wildest dreams.

You don’t have to navigate the minefield of the battle with the bottle alone when you come into the rooms of A.A. Take full advantage of the tools which have been laid at your feet, one of which is knowing that you can pick up the phone and call another A.A. member (who WANTS to receive your call and truly does care) when you need it most. The tools have been provided so that you can pick THEM up instead of the drink.

-Susan H., L.A. (* You can read more about Telephone Therapy in the book “Living Sober” pgs. 24-26).



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Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Zip: _____

(Please circle): **New** or **Renewal** **Additional Contribution** _____.



Moving? Please give us your former address: _____

Winner: "The more I drink, the more interesting you get."

Larry C., Lost City, WV (Reprinted with permission from AA Grapevine).

A.A. Word Search #8:

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

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

ANONYMITY
 GRATEFUL
 GIVE IT AWAY
 CHANGE
 HUMBLING
 DIFFERENCE
 KING ALCOHOL
 JOURNEY
 RESTORE
 SHARING

(Submitted by Susan H.)

San Fernando Valley Central Office

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