



Deadly Day Dreams

Unrealistic expectations of life and the world fueled her alcoholism

When I first came into Alcoholics Anonymous, I was in grave need of a solution to all of my problems because nothing in my life seemed to be going anywhere. I was flat-lining, running on the same circular path, over and over again, and very exhausted and agitated from constantly participating in this vicious cycle. The culprit, I believed, was my inability to maintain relationships, my lack of friends, my mom, and my job, basically anything besides myself. During the final months of my drinking and self destructive behavior, I was just waiting, either to die, for someone else to die, or to win the lotto. I always felt as though some life altering event would knock some sense into me, however, I was sorely mistaken because no matter what the circumstances were I drank.

I can remember, quite vividly, the first moment I got drunk because it changed my life. What then seemed like an awakening of the true spirit within me has proven itself to be the point which marked the beginning of a nasty fall from grace. I was at a small party where booze was being served. I was 14 years old and very intrigued and somewhat fearful of this powerful substance called beer. Whatever fears I had morphed into excitement and I took that first drink. As the warmth of the booze caressed my insides something within me fell in love. I knew that I was a changed girl, that booze would be the thing I had been waiting for, the answer to my problems, whether they be emotional or physical. It just got me out of myself for a good while, and heaven, knows I didn't like myself.

I was in high school at this time and very awkward. I felt that everyone had something I didn't have, some very great ability to fit in and be liked. I coveted this power and when I discovered that alcohol made me like them, I felt as though I had discovered gold. I took advantage of every opportunity to drink as soon as this fact became apparent to me.

Soon after I began drinking I became a topic of conversation and I liked that. I thought that my peers were talking about me because I was special, not because I was a belligerent drunk. My friends had a lot of trouble putting up with my drinking because they always had to take care of me or watch me. One night, they made a hand-written contract never to drink with me again and they all signed it. I simply laughed it off and continued on my merry way, booze in hand.

I was a binge drinker throughout high school, a student and dancer by day and a crazy drunk by night. A real Jekyll and Hyde affect was apparent within me. Drinking changed me into something different than what I really was; maybe one night it was a vixen or another night an intelligent and insightful girl who found her answers to life within her self-destructive behavior. I thought all of this was very cutting edge and unique. I didn't realize that I was trying to rationalize my drinking by calling it something other than what it was. It wasn't a journey of self-discovery I was embarking on, but that's what my mind liked to call it. Usually the journey would end somewhere around beer number 10 and all that would be left was darkness. I didn't understand that I couldn't stop so I guess I really enjoyed making up any excuse to continue. **(Cont. on page 4)**

CALENDAR OF A.A. EVENTS

32nd Annual So. CA H & I Conference April 12-14, 2012, Doubletree Hotel, Anaheim, CA

29th Annual Tri-State Round up, May 16-19, 2013, Riverside Resort Hotel & Casino, Laughlin, NV, <http://tristate-roundup.com>

A.A. Desert Pow Wow, June 6-9, 2013, Renaissance Esmeralda Resort, Indian Wells, CA, <http://www.desertpowwow.com>

Stepping Stones Alcahthon, June 2013. TBA. Santa Clarita, CA

29th Annual South Bay Roundup, July 4-7, 2013, Torrance, CA, <http://www.southbayroundup.org>

21st Foothill Roundup, July 26-28, 2013, Flintridge Prep. La Canada, CA, <http://www.foothillroundup.org>

39th Annual MAAD Dog Daze Convention, August 2 – 4, 2013, Doral Desert Princess, Palm Springs, <http://www.maaddogdaze.org/location>

35th Annual Ventura County A.A. Convention, August 23-25, 2013, Westlake Village, CA



SERVICE COMMITTEES SCHEDULE:

- **SFV Central Office Board Mtg: Wed. May 8, 2013**, 6:30 p.m., Valley Central Office
- **SFV Intergroup: Mon., May 13, 2013**. New IGRs: 6:30 p.m./Bus. mtg: 7 p.m., St. Innocent Church., 5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana
- **Gen Service, District 1: (1st Wed.) May 1, 2013**, 6:30 p.m. Business Meeting, 7552 Remmet, Canoga Park
- **Gen. Service, District 2: (1st Tues.) May 7, 2013**, 6:30 p.m. Business Meeting, 4011 Dunsmore, La Crescenta
- **Gen. Service District 7: (2nd Sat.) May 11, 2013**, 9 a.m. Business Meeting, Women's Club:33201 Agua Dulce Canyon Road, Agua Dulce, CA
- **Gen Service, District 11: (1st Mon.) May 6, 2013**, 6 p.m. New GSR 6:30 p.m. /Bus. Mtg., 315 W. Vine Street, Glendale,
- **Gen Service, District 16: (1st Mon.) May 6, 2013**, 6:15 p.m. meeting, 15950 Chatsworth, Granada Hills.
- **Gen. Svc., District 17 : (1st Mon.) May 6, 2013**, 6 p.m. New GSRs/6:30 p.m. Bus. Mtg, 5000 Colfax, Noho.
- **SFV H & I: (3rd Monday) April 15, 2013**: 7 p.m. Orientation/8 p.m. Bus. Meeting, 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 or call Central Office: 818 988-3001.

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. See information above.

San Fernando Valley Convention Committee: Volunteers are welcome to participate in the planning of the 2014 Convention. The committee meets on the 3rd Tuesday of every month starting in April.

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: 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. 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. **To serve as an Intergroup Rep, call Central Office: 818 988-3001.**



A.A.CENTRAL
OFFICE: 818
988-3001

MAINTAINS LIVE 24/7 PHONE SERVICE for A.A.s. Visit our website, www.sfvaa.org to find meeting info, upcoming events, service meeting info,

or download a copy of Recovery Times. Want to be of service? Why not answer phone calls to help others? Or call to speak with a sober AA member.

**(Intergroup Rep Board Meeting
Notes: March 11, 2013**

Quotes from our Founders

"MAY WE NEVER FORGET THAT WE LIVE BY THE GRACE OF GOD -- ON BORROWED TIME," 1948, TRADITION FIVE, AA CO-FOUNDER, BILL W.

"Suffering is no longer a menace to be evaded at any cost. When it does come, no matter how grievously, we realize that it too has its purpose. It is our great teacher because it reveals our defects and so pushes us forward into the paths of progress. The pain of drinking did just this for us. And so can any other pain."

AA Co-Founder, Bill W., Nov. 1958,
Editorial, AA Grapevine

Heard Around A.A.

"I don't believe I drank to get drunk, but always to seek in the next drink that peace for which a sick soul seems to thirst."

Los Angeles, Calif., August 1965

"The Steps will speak to my condition wherever I am in sobriety." Riverside, Ill., August 1977, "Turning on the Power"

Spiritual Awakenings

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HOPE: Helping Other People Every Day

HOPE: Hearing Other People's Experience



"There is not a spot where God is not"

Chairperson Andre W. opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. with *The Serenity Prayer*. Mike read "*The Twelve Traditions*". Dawn H., Recording Secretary, accepted a motion for approval of Minutes from February's Intergroup Meeting. The minutes were approved.

Treasurer Brian H. said Central Office is in the black \$1,721.77 MTD and in the black \$8,063.52 YTD. Reflected in this total is a large donation from a single group. Central Office is starting to receive funds toward the computer fundraiser, but participation in this fundraiser is not mandatory - it is voluntary to be decided by group conscience of each group.

Central Office GM: Bob F. reported everything is going well at Central Office. The volunteer staff is currently running well, but due to flu season, Central Office can always use new volunteers. Interested parties should contact Larry at Central Office. It is perfectly acceptable for a single IGR to represent more than one group.

Website: Everything is running smoothly with the www.sfvaa.org website.

Recovery Times: Everything is really great with the newsletter.

Introduction of New Intergroup Representatives: Bill S. welcomed three new IGRs this month: Jim – Pacoima Group, JP – Monday Night Wobblers in Studio City & John – Thursday Night Book Study in Canoga Park. IGRs were reminded to encourage recruitment of IGRs from meetings that are not currently represented. There are currently 300+ groups in the San Fernando Valley, with only 50-60 meetings represented monthly at IGR. Orientation for new IGRs begins at 6:30 p.m. before the monthly IGR mtg.

General Service Report:

General Service **District 1** is looking to increase GSR representation. If you go to a meeting without a GSR, please consider carrying the message about General Services to those groups.

General Service **District 17** is also seeking to increase representation.

Santa Clarita Valley AA Convention: The 10th Annual Santa Clarita Valley Convention is coming up in October. This year's theme is "A Spiritual Experience", and all are invited to participate and support our sister convention. A spaghetti dinner fundraiser will be held April 20th. Details are available on the convention website: www.scvaaconvention.org

Group Reports:

Ala-Nest has relocated to 10824 Topanga Canyon Blvd. in Chatsworth.

H&I's annual fundraiser, Bike-N-4-Books, will be held Saturday, June 1st at Woodley Park. All are encouraged to support this literature fundraiser.

Sunset Group has relocated to the East Valley Adult Center on Van Nuys Blvd., just south of Magnolia. The Thursday night open/mixed meeting is from 7:00-8:30. The Sunset Group is hosting a women's retreat May 10-12 in Santa Barbara. The theme is "Emotional Maturity: A Flight Into Reality."

Unit A has a new meeting Tuesday at 8:00 p.m. The "Happy Pickles." Meeting is a topic participation format. Unit A is hosting a BINGO night on Saturday, April 6th at 8:00 p.m.

IGR Rep Birthdays Sue – 4 years, Trisha – 4 years, John – 7 years, Mary Jo – 10 years, John – 10 years, & Cheryl – 27 years.



Motion to Adjourn: 7:21 p.m. with the Lord's Prayer.

Deadly Day Dreams: Cont. from Page 1:

As graduation was approaching I was full of fear. I wanted to get into schools far away to make an impression on my friends that said, "this girl is willing to try anything." However, as I later discovered in recovery, being full of fear does no good when it's time to get moving. My fear was of the paralyzing type and I had no desire to attempt to go anywhere without some help. That help came in the form of more alcohol, and eventually, a slew of hard drugs.

As my friends moved on smoothly, I seemed to stay in the same place. My life may have looked manageable because I was good at making things seem normal when I wanted to play the 'good guy'. However, once the party started, instead of ending, it continued to progress into a daily ritual of drinking and or drugs.

I can remember always, even as a child, existing only to escape from reality. As a kid, I constantly day-dreamed about anything, fantasizing about how my life might be one day, how everyone would look up to me, and how great I would become. I lived for the moments of bliss that drinking gave me, because without the magical touch of alcohol, I knew these dreams were just wishful thinking. Being normal never appealed to me. I felt that I had to be famous for something obscure. As that idea became less and less realistic, my drinking picked up. I created my own chaotic reality, my own self-destructive and deadly day dream.

I use to feel strange being in Alcoholics Anonymous and having a history with drugs, but today I thank drugs for allowing me to hit a bottom quicker. Eventually, my using became quite apparent to those close to me and I was confronted. It felt like I had been hit by a ton of bricks. People were trying to destroy my secret life, my grand and wonderful life. If you would have seen me then, you would have laughed at the idea that my life was good. My mom and boyfriend were the first to find out that I had problems. They urged me to get help and I grudgingly agreed. I entered an outpatient program—an intense, two-hour-a-day routine that resulted in a graduation certificate. Needless to say, it didn't help matters much. Though I had some periods of sobriety, I continued to go back to any substance that would allow me, even for a split second, to be released from the horrible reality of life.

Eventually I got stable enough to begin school, keep a job, and maintain a very unhealthy relationship, due to a solution in a bottle medication. For a while, it made things seem alright, like I hadn't totally lost it, but eventually I drank again and ended up continuing for a few months. I finally hit a bottom when the meds were taken away from me due to misuse. As I withdrew off the medicine, I can remember how badly I wanted to drink. The desire was so strong that I told my mom, hoping to get her approval, that maybe a few drinks would be a good idea to help me get off the meds. Being the good mom that she is, and a nurse to boot, she was opposed. In fact she had the idea that saved my life - she urged me to go to a meeting.

It was at that first meeting that I found out I was not the only person in the world who felt as though they belonged on some other planet. Not only did my drinking look like theirs, more importantly, our feelings were exact matches. Since coming into AA I have learned the meaning of happiness. I have learned that there is a life out there that's worth living. The 12 Steps of AA have changed my life drastically.

The process for me has been a journey. When I first came into the program, I would get butterflies in my stomach when the word God was mentioned. I remember writing in my diary about how much I loved AA, but the God thing, well, I wasn't so sure if I could buy into that. Nonetheless I began praying because these complete strangers told me that that's how they were staying sober. I got on my knees and began to meet God. I met him in the morning and at night, and then, we started talking more often because I learned that I could reach him whenever and wherever, that he never left me alone, not even during my worst moments.

Deadly Day Dreams: Cont. from Page 4

I went through the Steps with a sponsor and began to feel the warmth of the sun as God removed the clouds that had been causing stormy weather. I learned that I have a disease: alcoholism, and that without a spiritual solution, I am a goner. I wanted to succeed at something for the first time in a long time. For years, I had been coasting down this spiral into nothingness and as God brought me back up in to the light, I began to feel some freedom for myself, the only thing I had ever truly wanted!

Today I live with my sponsor and a girl she sponsors. I am blessed to live with two women who are living this way of life. This is not the way my life was suppose to turn out. I was destined for a tragic end, so I thought, but have been given a new chance to live on this earth among all of God's kids. I sponsor a few women who make life quite interesting and beautiful. I always assumed living sober would be a bore, an impossible existence for a girl who knew only one thing: mental, physical, and spiritual manipulation through the use of foreign substances. My sponsor always told me, pumping me up, "we are saving lives here." What better gift to have than that! Through AA, we get life - and then we give it. *Raeanne F., Buffalo, N.Y.*

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Please Support Your Central Office by sending a representative from your group to the Intergroup monthly meetings. We meet the 2nd Monday of every month at St. Innocent Church at 5657 Lindley in Tarzana. Please Come! We would love to see you!

Newsletter Subscriptions: If you would like a copy of **Recovery Times** mailed to you, please provide this information along with a \$7.00 check (donation to cover cost & delivery) to: **SFV Central Office, 7417-E. Van Nuys Blvd., Van Nuys, CA 91405**

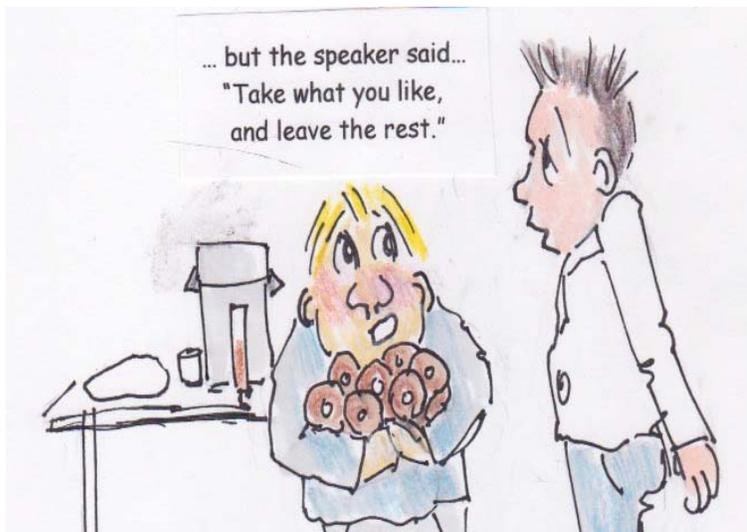
Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Zip: _____ (Please circle): **New Renewal** **Additional Contribution**

Moving? Please give us your former address: _____



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.

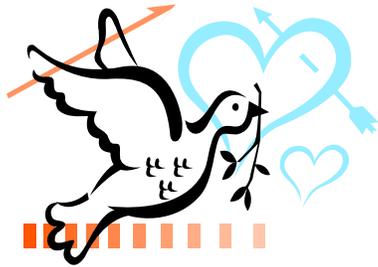
ILLUSTRATION BY LESLIE Z.

CELEBRATING AN A.A. ANNIVERSARY? 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. Please send your donation in during the month of your birthday so we can acknowledge you in the correct issue of Recovery Times. For March, we thank the following for their contributions:



Anonymous – 15 Years, Bonnie H. – 22 Years, Gus D. – 26 Years and Darwin B. – 40 Years 🎵🎵🎵 Happy birthday to you! 🎵🎵🎵 Happy birthday to you! 🎵🎵🎵, 🎵🎵🎵 Happy birthday, dear AAs. 🎵🎵🎵 Happy birthday to you! 🎵🎵🎵

DEATHS: THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE:



ALLEN A. – 23 YEARS & SUSAN T. – 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

The 12 Steps through Word Search. Each month, Recovery Times features the Tradition of the Month. In April we are featuring Tradition Four: **“Each group should be autonomous except in matters**

affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.” Can you find all the words? Look closely and read across as well as up and down.

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

That Morning Drink

He saw he was powerless and he took the Third Step

I walked out of jail and my very first thought was freedom! I paused for a moment and pondered. "Freedom from what? Freedom from myself!," I said. For I knew, after only a millisecond of self-analysis, I stood before all the world just as emotionally scarred, physically broken, and spiritually bankrupt as I was a mere eighteen hours prior.



Soon thereafter, a cloud of darkness fell upon my body and spirit the likes of which I have never known. I started walking north into the bitter cold. The relentlessly fierce and angry wind with its roar hit my face with what seemed to be a fitting punishment for someone who stole away something more precious to himself than life itself.

I continued on, all the while struggling to hold on to any shred of sanity I could muster. Thoughts just like fireworks were crashing about, exploding like bombs, some came and went very quickly while others would whistle and scream for what seemed like hours. Thoughts of the children, my wife, shelter, food, job, worry, regrets, memories, a cigarette, shattered relationships, life, death, self hatred, regrets, anger, a ruined life, or a new beginning, regrets, "I need a drink!" I thought.

I arrived at the gas station, purchased a water and a pack of cigarettes and proceeded to call my wife and secure a ride home. In a worried panic I wondered, "How can I face her, the kids?" What do I do? What do I say? Will she or I succumb to a nervous breakdown?" By far, the worst fear I felt was, "Will there be no reconciliation and are we to part ways after 10 years of marriage thus destroying the children's lives?" No one on earth could face this alone, I was sure.

I stood outside, smoking my first cigarette in what seemed like decades, a broken man, horrible husband, even worse—a failing father. Alas, off in the distance, I could see it: the sign. Ah, yes the sign from which I derived much pleasure on many occasions. I used to believe these signs were critical to me and my existence.

For it alone could not judge me. My spirit was drawn to it like a hurt child to the arms of an ever loving mother or the outstretched hand of a close friend pulling you up from an abyss from which there is no return. As I was drawn closer to this particular sign, step by step, my worries began to fade, my courage was building, and I was regaining confidence "Everything will work out it always does." I thought. Standing there before the sign it spoke to me in but one word. It said, "Open."

I approached the counter and proceeded to get my I.D. from my wallet in order to complete this transaction. That's when I remembered the man who saved my life. Officer Jackson, my arresting officer, had stashed it away in the sun visor of his cruiser thereby adding to his collection of what seemed to be in the dozens. I stood once again outside in the cold, I felt hopeless and therefore helpless. Before me there is a road, it is on this road I must travel or face a painful death. It was at that very moment, on Saturday February 11th at 9:30 in the morning, I took the first Three Steps. That was easy, now off to the hard stuff. There is but one choice. One cannot possibly embark on the journey without the surprisingly easy task of taking that First Step. Anonymous, Copyright c. 1944-2012. AA Grapevine, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Reprints by Permission Only.

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