

Recovery Times

A newsletter from Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office VOL 28, NO 8 August 2004

Better Than a Non-Loser

After I decided that I belonged in A.A., I was told to “stick with the winners.” I liked that thought; on the “outside,” those who were usually seen as winners wanted nothing to do with a person who lacked the ability to conform to generally accepted value systems.

I was seen as a stubborn, selfish and egotistical person, but I somehow felt shy and like a loner. Today, as I review and reflect on my past experiences, I can easily understand why I was seen as a nonconformist, a rebel who had a disturbing effect on others - in one word, a misfit.

However, I learned that winners in A.A. were prepared to take the time and go to the trouble to include me in their discussions and allow me to both ask questions and openly say how I felt, what I thought, and why I believed or disbelieved.

This was a new experience for me, and I liked the feeling of belonging that previously had been lacking in my life and way of living. The words “attraction rather than promotion” took on a new meaning for me. In time, I began to realize that these people were genuine in what they said about listening, changing, and believing.

They openly told of their past suffering. They explained how the principles of caring for others and sharing with others allowed them to repair the hurts that interfered with their capacity to think effectively. In that way, they could clear their minds of regrets, resentments, and guilt trips.

As I progressed in the program, I began to notice that some of the winners applied a tough approach (used a 2 x 4), while others were more gentle, simply offering information concerning what worked for them. I found myself gravitating more to the latter than to the former, though I could feel comfortable with both types of personality.

As I see it now, I needed to be both dominated and appreciated. I knew I was being accepted by them all despite my shortcomings and character defects. Each person saw me differently. Gradually, I began to feel grateful toward each and all of the members because they allowed me to be myself.

Continued on Page 5

Calendar Events

Upcoming Events

Maad Dog Daze

August 6-8, 2004

Doral Desert Princess Resort

Cathedral City, CA

Info: Chris M. (760) 200-1114

The Great Outdoor Beaver Meeting

September 2-5, 2004

Beaver, UT

Info: www.gscott3@socal.rr.com

26th Annual Ventura County AA Convention

September 10-12, 2004

Hyatt Westlake Plaza

Info: www.vcaac.org

53rd Southern California Convention

September 24 - 26, 2004

Town & Country Hotel, San Diego, CA

Info: www.aasocal.com

First Santa Clarita Valley A.A. Convention

October 22-24, 2004

College of the Canyons

Info: www.scvaaconvention.com

2005 International A.A. Convention

June 30 - July 4, 2005

Toronto, Ont

Registration forms available in August 2004

Info: www.alcoholics-anonymous.org

Registration forms for the events above are at the
Intergroup Meeting or at Central Office

SERVICE COMMITTEE SCHEDULE

August 16, 2004 **SFV H&I
THIRD MONDAY**
8pm Business Meeting
Get Acquainted Workshop, 7pm,
5657 Lindley Ave.

Sept. 6, 2004 **G.S. Districts #11, 16
FIRST MONDAY**
6pm, 11455 Chandler Blvd, N. Hollywood

Sept. 6, 2004 **G.S. Districts #17
FIRST MONDAY**
6pm, orientation, 6:30pm meeting
5000 Colfax (church), N. Hollywood

Sept. 7, 2004 **G.S. Districts #2
FIRST TUESDAY**
6:30pm, 4011 Dunsmore
La Crescenta

Sept. 8, 2004 **G.S. District #1
FIRST WEDNESDAY**
6:30pm, 7552 Remmet
Canoga Park

Sept. 8, 2004 **SFV Board of Directors**
6pm, Central Office

Sept. 11, 2004 **G.S. District #7
SECOND SATURDAY**
Agua Dulce Woman's Club
33201 Agua Dulce Cyn Rd
Sharon G. (661) 951-0372

Sept. 13, 2004 **SFV Intergroup
SECOND MONDAY**
6:30 pm Orientation
7pm Business Meeting
St. Innocents Church
5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana

Valley Events

As of publishing time -

Rafters Alcathon - Newhall
August 6-8, 2004

Pacoima Alcathon - Pacoima
August 13-15, 2004

no other valley events have been submitted

Special Events CENTRAL OFFICE

The price of the Big Book (hard cover and soft cover) is now \$1.00 higher since July 1, 2004. This is an increase by World Services.

The Book Store is closed the last Friday of each month; we are also closed Monday, Sept. 6 for Labor Day. The Book Store will be open Labor Day weekend, as we are all weekends, 9am to 5pm.

Service Opportunities & News

Service Opportunities in the San Fernando Valley

PUBLIC INFORMATION COMMITTEE -

Provides information to the general public about what A.A. does and does not do. Could always use volunteers, especially young people and Spanish speaking A.A.'s for health fairs and to speak at various schools and businesses. Contact Central Office (818) 988-3001.

HOSPITAL AND INSTITUTIONS COMMITTEE -

Carries the message of Alcoholics Anonymous into hospitals, prisons & treatment facilities to those who are unable to get out to meetings. Meets the 3rd Monday of the month 8:00 PM @ St. Innocent's Church, 5657 Lindley Ave, Tarzana, CA. Info: Sarah G. (818) 894-9921.

SAN FERNANDO VALLEY INTERGROUP -

Elected Intergroup representatives maintain and develop policies for Central Office, and inform other IG Reps about Alkathons & fund raisers, etc. Meets second Monday, monthly, St. Innocent's Church, 5657 Lindley Ave, Tarzana, CA. Orientation 6:30pm, Meeting at 7:30pm. Contact: Central Office at 988-3001.

SAN FERNANDO VALLEY CONVENTION -

Volunteers are welcome to participate in the planning of the 2005 Convention. The Committee meets the 3rd Tuesday of each month (except February and March); 7 PM at St. Innocent's Church, 5657 Lindley Ave, Tarzana, CA.

Central Office News

San Fernando Valley Central Office is On the Web

The SFV Central Office website is now available for Internet browsers. On the website, you can find a map to our office in Van Nuys, a listing of upcoming events in the Valley, service organization information and links to other cool A.A. websites. Our meeting schedule is also accessible on the website. Meetings are listed by day, Sunday through Saturday. Check it out: <http://www.sfvaa.org>

Do you have an article for the Recovery Times?

Email it to us at: sfvaanews@sbcglobal.net

San Fernando Valley Central Office Intergroup Representatives Meeting July 12, 2004

Sarah G. Chairperson – Meeting opened at 7:00 pm

Treasurer's Report; See Insert

Service Committee information - see page 2 and 3 of the Recovery Times for more information

Old Business: Office Remodel needs volunteers.

New Business: .None

Birthdays Steve -9yrs, Jimmy -21yrs, Derek -3yrs, Laurie -3yrs, George -4yrs.

Motion to adjourn 7:30 PM

The long form of the Intergroup Meeting Minutes for July is available at Central Office or at the Intergroup Meeting. These minutes are pending approval on August 9, 2004

Next Meeting - August 9, 2004

Prepared and submitted by: Jennifer J. Recording Secretary

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

July 2004

Roger P.	15 years
Chris T.	20 years
Lana T.	17 years
Susan S.	23 years

Your Birthday Gift to Central Office

Many A.A. members share their birthdays with those who need the same help and opportunity that A.A. gave to them.

By sending a donation to Central Office you share your birthday with Recovery Times readers. Send a dollar (\$1.00) a year - or \$1.00 for each year of your sobriety - or send as much as you wish to give to celebrate your birthday. The amount doesn't matter - it's the "counting" that counts.

May your special day be filled with joy from morning until night, and may the "24's" that lie ahead be especially glad and bright.

The Legacy of Recovery

Twelve Steps are a group of principles, spiritual in their nature, which, if practiced as a way of life, can expel the obsession to drink and enable the sufferer to become happily and usefully whole. Many of us, upon first seeing those words, asked ourselves the question "Can it be just that simple?" -and then heard a little voice inside us answer "Yes."

Bill's application of AA principles to ever-changing circumstances was another of his remarkable talents. Day in and day out, letters would arrive at his desk asking for his "last word" on a matter of AA policy. And, in answer after answer Bill would fall back upon the basic principles of AA's three Legacies, tempered by wisdom, humor, perspective, and regard for the feelings of others. One warm example occurred in 1968 when a well-meaning AA wrote to Bill, in deep concern, about an influx of youthful hippies or flower children to local AA groups, along with their distinctive manner of dress, sexual mores, and other unorthodox behavior, including the use of drugs. The writer feared that this particular invasion might be "a very real threat to our wonderful, God-given program." Bill's reply was typical of his use of AA principles to meet new challenges. -Anonymous

"Your letter about the hippie problem, so-called, was mighty interesting to me. I doubt that we need to be alarmed about this situation, because there have been precedents out of the past. All sorts of outfits have tried to move in on us, including communists and heroin addicts, prohibitionists and do-gooders of other persuasions.

"Nearly all of these people, who happened to have an individual problem with alcohol, not only failed to change AA, but, in the long run, AA changed them. I have a number of them among my closest friends today, and they are among the best AA's I know.

"You also have some people who are not alcoholics, but are addicts of other kinds. A great many AAs have taken pity on these people, and have actually tried to make them full-fledged AA's. Of course, their identification with alcoholics is no good at all, and the groups themselves easily stop this practice in the normal course of AA affairs.

"Thoughtful AAs, however, encourage these sponsors to bring addicts to open meetings, just as they would any other interested people. In the end, these addicts usually gravitate to other forms of therapy. They are not received on the platform in open meetings unless they have an alcohol problem, and closed meetings are, of course, denied them. We know that we cannot do everything for everybody with an addiction problem.

"There has also occurred lately a new development centering upon hippies who have LSD or marijuana troubles -not so much stronger stuff. Many of these kids appear to be alcoholics also, and they are flocking into AA, often with excellent results.

"Some weeks ago, there was a young people's convention of AAs. Shortly thereafter, four of these kids visited the office. I saw one young gal prancing down the hall, hair flying, in a mini-skirt, wearing love beads and the works. I thought, 'Holy smoke, what now!' She told me she was the oldest member of the young people's group in her area - age twenty-two! They had kids as young as sixteen. I was curious and took the whole party out to lunch.

"Well, they were absolutely wonderful. They talked (and acted) just about as good a kind of AA as I've seen anywhere. I think all of them said they had some kind of drug problem, but had kicked that, too. When they first came around, they had insisted on their own ideas of AA, but in the end they found AA plenty good enough as it was. Though they needed their own meetings, they found interest and inspiration in the meetings of much older folks as well.

"Perhaps, as younger people come into AA, we shall have to put up with some unconventional nonsense - with patience and good humor, let's hope. But it should be well worth the attempt. And also, if various hippie addicts want to form their own sort of fellowship along AA lines, by all means let us encourage them. We need deny them only the AA name, and assure them that the rest of our program is theirs for the taking and using - any part or all of it.

"For these reasons, I feel hopeful and not a bit scared by this trend. Of course, I'm no prophet. I may be mistaken, so please keep me posted. This is a highly interesting and perhaps significant development. I certainly do not think it ought to be fought. Instead, it ought to be encouraged in what we already know to be workable channels.

"In affection...Bill"

Better Than a Non-Loser (continued from page 1)

As time passed and as I learned to relate to each person, I began to see myself as a winner, too –not simply because I had learned the saying “one drink, one drunk” applied to me, but more because I was allowing others to be themselves and was feeling okay about it.

Today, I can say in all honesty that I have no resentments toward anyone. Also, I have no regrets for anything I’ve done in the past. As I see it, regrets are resentments turned inward, and I have learned from A.A. members that “one resentment leads to a flood of resentments,” none of which will benefit anyone, least of all myself.

After taking the first three Steps and starting on Step Four, I realized that uncomfortable feelings were internally induced, rather than externally produced by what others said and did. The important factor was my attitude toward what was happening, rather than the happening itself. A.A. hasn’t changed; it is my attitude toward the members and the Fellowship that has changed. My liking of others has progressed to love of others, and I no longer feel the need to change anyone other than my inner self.

It was after rereading my article “Who Are the Winners?” (Jan. 1982 Grapevine) that I realized I now see myself as a winner -not simply a non-loser, as I called myself then. I no longer feel uncomfortable when I confide that I feel good about myself, now that I’ve learned to accept my limitations and make the best of my potentials.

To me, the winners in A.A. are people who win out over the internally induced illness of alcoholism but realize that the disease is never cured, simply arrested.

By F.C., Burlington, Ont., Canada, From the “Pick Me Up, Jan. 2003, Wichita Central Office, Kansas



Co-founder Quotes

INTO ACTION

A.A. is more than a set of principles; it is a society of alcoholics in action. We must carry the message, else we ourselves can wither and those who haven’t been given the truth may die.

(“As Bill Sees It”, p. 13)

I desperately wanted to live, but if I was to succeed, I had to become active in our God-given program. I joined what became my home group,

where I opened the hall, made coffee, and cleaned up. I had been sober about 3 months when an old-timer told me I was doing twelfth-step work. What a satisfying realization that was! I felt I was really accomplishing something. God had given me a second chance, A.A. had shown me the way, and these gifts were not only free—they were also priceless!

Now the joy of seeing newcomers grow reminds me of where I have come from, where I am now, and the limitless possibilities that lie ahead. I need to attend meetings because they recharge my batteries so that I have light when it’s needed. I’m still a beginner in service work, but already I am receiving more than I’m giving. I can’t keep it unless I give it away. I am responsible when another reaches out for help. I want to be there - sober .

From AA “Daily Reflections”

My Name is Anna and I am an Alcoholic

For the past 2 years I have been working as a volunteer to develop and implement programs to help combat the spread of HIV/AIDS in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. It has been a fabulous 2 years in many ways. Even though there were no AA meetings in Addis Ababa that I could find, I was able to work my program by reading the Big Book and other AA-related materials, praying, journaling, and staying in touch with my home group in San Antonio through e-mail. I did hope to find another alcoholic or two while I was there and prayed that my Higher Power (HP) would put an alcoholic in my path. Well, after I had been there about a month I wrote the following e-mail to my home group.

Following is a copy of that e-mail:

“The most wonderful thing happened to me on my way home tonight. There are these little blue buses that are used for public transportation here. They are very cheap to ride which means mostly Ethiopians ride on them and not very many ferengies (foreigners). I use them occasionally when I am not in a hurry as they stop every minute or so trying to pick up new passengers. Well, I was leaving the hospital later than usual planning to take a taxi home. When I got outside it was a beautiful evening so I decided to walk for a while. After a bit a blue bus came along and I got on. The bus was really crowded so I squeezed in next to this guy. He spoke English so I asked him to tell the bus driver when we got to my stop. Turns out he was getting off there too. As we got off the bus we were talking and for some reason (my Higher Power) I invited him into the neighborhood café for a cup of coffee. We sat down and I asked him what he did during the days. He told me he had been spending a lot of time at church the past month because he had been drinking too much and was turning to God for help. I told him about A.A., and then we went to my house and I gave him my Big Book and 24 Hour book. He is going to read the book and call me in a day or two. We will meet and see what happens from there. He also told me that one of his mom’s friends has a bad drinking problem and that she may want to join us. So, in a sense I attended my first A.A. meeting in Addis tonight. Boy does God provide! I have been struggling with some character defects lately and asking God to show me His will and give me the power to carry it out. Even when I doubt God, He comes through for me. When I get out of the way, I do my best to turn things over to God, pray, journal, read, and attempt to maintain conscious contact. Life is good. I have noticed that I am the most miserable when I am exerting my will. So, there you have it. There are no coincidences right?”

I am grateful to be able to say that this alcoholic and I met for the whole time I was in Ethiopia. He celebrated 2 years of sobriety on June 23. Even though he does not have A.A. meetings to go to, he has turned his life over to the care of God as he understands God. He reads his A.A. literature and tries to take things one day at a time. I love how God brings us together to trudge the road of happy destiny?

Anna H., San Antonio, TX

Flight Pattern

Next fall, when you see geese heading south for the winter, flying along in a V formation, you might like to consider what science has discovered about why geese fly this way.

It has been learned that as each bird flaps its wings, it creates an uplift for the bird immediately following. By flying in a V formation, the whole flock adds at least 71% greater flying range than if each bird flew on its own.

People who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they are going quicker and easier because they are traveling on an uplift from one another.

When a goose falls out of formation, it immediately then feels the drag and resistance of trying to go it alone, and quickly gets back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird immediately in front.

If we have as much sense as a goose, we will stay in formation with those who are headed the same way we are going.

When the lead goose gets tired, it rotates back in the formation and another goose flies point. It pays to take turns doing hard jobs. Geese honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed. We, too, say something when we "honk from behind."

Finally, and I hope you get this, when a goose gets sick or is wounded by gunshots and falls out, two geese fallout of formation and follow it to help and protect it. They stay with the ailing goose until it is either able to fly or until it dies; then they launch out on their own or join another formation to catch up with the group.

If we have the simple sense of a goose, we will stand by each other like that.

By Anonymous, Surrey, BC, AA Groupvine, May 1993

Newletter Subscription: *If you wish to receive your copy of the Recovery Times at your home, please complete this form and return with a check (\$7 donation to cover delivery cost) to:*

*San Fernando Valley Central Office
7417-E Van Nuys Boulevard
Van Nuys, CA 91405*

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Moving ???: *We need your former address as well as your new address to correct our records. Fill out both forms and mail to the address above.*

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