

# **Recovery** *Times*

A newsletter from Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office

VOL 29, NO 1 Jan. 2005

## ***The First One That Led to The Last One***

Although attending my home group meeting is the peak of my week, my favorite meeting was my very first Alcoholics Anonymous meeting.

At my first meeting I fell in love with a room full of men and women. I got sober in Illinois and this meeting was in Wheaton. My first meeting was a small one held in a seemingly hidden room of a church basement. The format was unlike any meetings I have attended here in California. At this meeting, a speaker would talk on one of the first three steps. Afterwards, the group broke up into several sections to discuss those steps so everyone would have an opportunity to share.

It was here that I heard words that let me know I wasn't the only one who drank alone, who couldn't hold a job, who missed children's functions, who hated herself and who felt extreme remorse and humiliation.

Before attending my first meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous, I was scared and lonely. The day before, I had once again humiliated myself but I was also overwhelmed with the thought that I never wanted to drink again, yet a drink was what I wanted most.

Then for the first time, willingness to do something about my drinking overcame my desire to drink. I now believe that moment was when I began to accept the grace of God and begin my sober journey in Alcoholics Anonymous.

Today, as in the beginning of my sobriety many years ago, being part of a group makes me feel as though I belong and that was never the case before coming to AA. Isolation is as dangerous for me today as it was when I was drunk. By attending regular meetings my feelings of aloneness gradually lessen.

Upon reflection, I consider my biggest life-changing event to be the day I walked into my first meeting of AA.

Sharon B., Long Beach

# Calendar Events

## Upcoming Events

### **2005 River Roundup - Laughlin**

January 14 - 16, 2005  
Riverside Resort, Laughlin, NV  
(800) 864-1606  
<http://www.rcco-aa.org>

### **30th Annual San Fernando Valley Convention**

January 28 - 30, 2005  
Burbank Airport Hilton  
Burbank, CA  
<http://www.sfvaaconvention.org>

### **33<sup>rd</sup> Annual California Young Peoples Convention**

Residence Inn Oxnard  
Oxnard, California  
March 11, 12 & 13, 2005  
Info: Candy (805) 816-5628

### **40<sup>th</sup> Australian National Convention**

Perth, Western Australia  
March 24-28, 2005

### **20<sup>th</sup> Annual Ventura County Roundup**

Oxnard, California  
April 15, 16 & 17, 2005  
<http://www.vcroundup.com>

### **24<sup>th</sup> Annual Southern California Hospital and Institutional Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous**

April 29, April 30 & May 1, 2005  
DoubleTree Hotel, Orange, California  
More Info: Email: [rtaylor3@verizon.net](mailto:rtaylor3@verizon.net);  
Telephone: AA (714)979-8524 Al-Anon (714)545-7810

### **2005 International A.A. Convention**

June 30 - July 3, 2005  
Toronto, Ont  
Registration forms are now available  
<http://www.aa.org>

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

## SERVICE COMMITTEE SCHEDULE

- Jan. 17, 2005 **SFV H&I  
THIRD MONDAY**  
8pm Business Meeting  
Get Acquainted Workshop, 7pm,  
5657 Lindley Ave.  
\*\*\*\*\*
- Feb. 7, 2005 **G.S. Districts #11, 16  
FIRST MONDAY**  
6pm, 11455 Chandler Blvd, N. Hollywood  
\*\*\*\*\*
- Feb. 7, 2005 **G.S. Districts #17  
FIRST MONDAY**  
6pm, orientation, 6:30pm meeting  
5000 Colfax (church), N. Hollywood  
\*\*\*\*\*
- Feb. 1, 2005 **G.S. Districts #2  
FIRST TUESDAY**  
6:30pm, 4011 Dunsmore  
La Crescenta  
\*\*\*\*\*
- Feb. 2, 2005 **G.S. District #1  
FIRST WEDNESDAY**  
6:30pm, 7552 Remmet  
Canoga Park  
\*\*\*\*\*
- Feb. 2, 2005 **SFV Board of Directors**  
6pm, Central Office  
\*\*\*\*\*
- Feb. 12, 2005 **G.S. District #7  
SECOND SATURDAY**  
Agua Dulce Woman's Club  
33201 Agua Dulce Cyn Rd  
Sharon G. (661) 951-0372  
\*\*\*\*\*
- Jan. 10, 2005 **SFV Intergroup  
SECOND MONDAY**  
6:30 pm Orientation  
7pm Business Meeting  
St. Innocents Church  
5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana

## Valley Events

As of publishing time,

no valley events had been submitted.

**TO FIND OUT WHAT'S GOING ON  
YOU CAN:**

**COME TO CENTRAL OFFICE**

**CALL US AT 818-988-3001**

**VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT**

**<http://www.sfvaa.org>**

## Special Events

**CENTRAL OFFICE**

We at SFV Central Office  
wish for you and yours a  
Sober,  
Happy,  
Joyous and  
Free  
2005.

# 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](mailto:sfvaaews@sbcglobal.net)

### **San Fernando Valley Central Office Intergroup Representatives Meeting December 13, 2004**

Sarah G. Chairperson – Meeting opened at 7:00 pm  
Turned meeting over to New Chair - Richard W.

Treasurer's Report; See Insert

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

Old Business: None

New Business: None

*Birthdays: Eddie 1 year, Dennis 10 years and Diana 11 years*

*Motion to adjourn 7:30 PM*

*The long form of the Intergroup Meeting Minutes for June is  
available at Central Office or at the Intergroup Meeting. These  
minutes are pending approval on January 10, 2005.*

*Next Meeting - February 14, 2005*

*Prepared and submitted by: Dawn H.. Recording Secretary*

## **HAPPY BIRTHDAY!**

### **December 2004**

<b>Susan F. C.</b>	<b>15 years</b>
<b>Cheryl M. A.</b>	<b>22 years</b>
<b>Jim B.</b>	<b>14 years</b>
<b>Gloria P.</b>	<b>22 years</b>
<b>Terefe B.</b>	<b>16 years</b>
<b>Dennis B.</b>	<b>10 years</b>

### **Learning to Live Men's Stag Many 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.*

## ***Fragments of A.A. History***

### ***The A.A. Preamble***

The words contained in the A.A. Preamble are perhaps the most often repeated words throughout the A.A. Fellowship. Used to open many meetings around the world, the Preamble encapsulates the essence of A.A.'s traditions and gives us an overview of the practices and principles so vital to A.A. life.

Yet, where did these words come from? Who wrote them and why?

Following the first major surge of A.A. membership in the early 1940's, due in part to the Jack Alexander article in the Saturday Evening Post and subsequent media stories about A.A., there was an increasing and widespread interest in A.A., both among potential candidates for the Fellowship and among those non-alcoholic family members, friends, and professionals who dealt with alcoholics in their daily lives. With the hope of providing a concise definition of A.A. for such interested people, the June 1947 Grapevine carried the original version of what is known throughout the A.A. world as the Preamble. It was written by Tom Y., the Grapevine's first editor, who borrowed heavily for the phrasing from the first edition of Alcoholics Anonymous:

"We are not an organization in the conventional sense of the word. There are no dues or fees whatsoever. The only requirement for membership is an honest desire to stop drinking. We are not allied with any sect or denomination, nor do we oppose anyone. We simply wish to be helpful to those who are Afflicted."

The Preamble, initially referred to as "the A.A. Definition," took its place thereafter in each monthly issue of the Grapevine and soon began to appear in Conference-approved literature and many other A.A. publications.

The phraseology from the Big Book regarding "an honest desire to stop drinking" as "the only requirement for membership" was carried over into the original wording of the preamble. However, at the 1958 General Service Conference, a delegate asked about the words "honest desire to stop drinking," suggesting that since "honest" does not appear in the Third Tradition, it might be deleted from the preamble. In discussion, most conference members felt that as A.A. had matured, it had become almost impossible to determine what constitutes an honest desire to stop drinking, and that some who might be interested in the program might be confused by that phrase. Who was to determine what was an "honest desire" anyway? Thus, as part of the evolution of AA, the phrase was dropped from common usage. The mid-summer meeting of the A.A. General Service Board ratified the deletion and since then the Preamble has read simply "a desire to stop drinking."

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## ***Fragments of A.A. History (cont'd)***

At the same time the phrase “A.A. has no dues or fees” was clarified to read as it presently does: “There are no dues or fees for A.A. membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions”.

Over the years, as the Preamble caught on within the Fellowship and with nonalcoholic friends of A.A., it been translated into many other languages — Russian and Danish being the most recent. The Preamble has been used in television and radio public service announcements. It has been adapted (subject to conference approval) by many other 12 step fellowships as a concise definition of who and what they are. It has also been cited in many research papers, self-help books, masters theses and has appeared in the occasional doctoral dissertation

Such a brief history of the AA Preamble — this shining beacon which draws so many sick and suffering alcoholics into its light. And no matter where the Preamble may end up, it will always be best known as the beginning of yet another meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous.

### *The Preamble:*

*Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others recover from alcoholism. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for A.A. membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. A.A. is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.*

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### *Co-founder Quotes*

#### ***Faith without works is dead***

*And how appallingly true for the alcoholic! For if an alcoholic failed to perfect and enlarge his spiritual life through work and self-sacrifice for others, he could not survive the certain trials and low spots ahead. If he did not work, he would surely drink again, and if he drank, he would surely die. Then faith would be dead indeed.*

*AA Big Book, pg. 14-15*

#### ***The Story of the Camel***

*... Dr. Bob would explain prayer by telling how the camels in a caravan would kneel down in the evening, and the men would unload their burdens. In the morning, they would kneel down again, and the men would put the burdens back on. “It’s the same with prayer,” Dr. Bob said. “We get on our knees to unload at night. And in the morning when we get on our knees again, God gives us just the load we need to carry for that day.”*

*Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers, XVII, “As Dr. Bob said ...” page 229*

### **List to Live By**

The most destructive habit .....	Worry
The greatest joy .....	Giving
The greatest loss .....	Self-respect
The most satisfying work .....	Helping Others
The ugliest personality trait .....	Selfishness
The most endangered species .....	Dedicated Leaders
Our greatest natural resource .....	Our Youth and Elderly
The greatest "shot in the arm" .....	Encouragement
The greatest problem to overcome .....	Fear
The most effective sleeping pill .....	Peace of Mind
The most crippling failure disease .....	Excuses
The most powerful force in life .....	Love
The most dangerous outcast .....	A Gossip
The world's most incredible computer .....	The Brain
The worst thing to be without .....	Hope
The deadliest weapon .....	The Tongue
The two most power-filled works .....	"I can"
The greatest asset .....	Faith
The most worthless emotion .....	Self-pity
The most beautiful attire .....	A Smile
The most prized possession .....	Integrity
The most contagious spirit .....	Enthusiasm
Our greatest teacher .....	Experience

*... deep down in every man, woman and child is the fundamental idea of God. It may be obscured by calamity, by pomp, by worship of other things, but in some form or other it is there. For faith in a Power greater than ourselves, and miraculous demonstrations of that power in human lives, are facts as old as man himself.*

*Alcoholics Anonymous pg. 55*

## ***Editorial Policy of the Grapevine***

The AA Grapevine magazine, often called “our meeting in print,” publishes articles that reflect the full diversity of experience and opinion found within the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. No one viewpoint or philosophy dominates its pages, and in determining the editorial content, the editors rely on the principles of the Twelve Traditions.

The heart of the Grapevine is in the shared experience of individual AA members working the AA program and applying the spiritual principles of the Twelve Steps. Yet what works for one individual or AA group may not always work for another. For this reason, from month to month, articles may be published that appear to contradict one another. Seeking neither to gloss over difficult issues, nor to present such issues in a harmful or contentious manner, the Grapevine tries to embody the widest possible view of the AA Fellowship.

The Charter of the General Service Conference guarantees the Grapevine editor’s right to accept or reject material for publication. Articles are evaluated by AA staff members, and while some editing is done for purposes of clarity, styling, and length, the editors encourage all writers to express their own experience in their own unique way.

Articles are not intended to be statements of AA policy, nor does publication of any article constitute endorsement by either Alcoholics Anonymous or the AA Grapevine. Articles are invited, although no payment can be made nor can material be returned.

What the magazines do not publish: Neither magazine publishes poems, prayers, song lyrics, tributes to individuals, plays, previously published material, anything unrelated to AA or that violates the principles of AA.

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<b><i>Newletter Subscription:</i></b> <i>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:</i> <i>San Fernando Valley Central Office</i> <i>7417-E Van Nuys Boulevard</i> <i>Van Nuys, CA 91405</i>	<b><i>Current Information</i></b>	
	Name _____	
	Address _____	
	City _____ St _____ ZIP _____	
	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>New</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Renewal</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Additional Contribution</i> \$ _____	

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<b><i>Moving ???:</i></b> <i>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.</i>	<b><i>Former Address</i></b>	
	Name _____	
	Address _____	
	City _____ St _____ ZIP _____	