

RECOVERY TIMES

Vol. 34, No. 10, Oct 2010

The Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office Newsletter

Going To Any Lengths

Last night, 10 minutes before the coffee break, two men arrived at our meeting; one was a shaky, fear-filled bewildered new person; the other was a sober, non-alcoholic member of GA. Neither of them knew one another until the drunk (Donald), hysterically pleaded with the GA on the street, to 'help me.'

Isn't it amazing that on a particular Saturday night, a drunk asked a stranger for help in this city and the man to whom he pleaded is 14 years gambling-free and applying a 12-Step programme? To me, this was a good example of 'helping others' and gave me a tingle of joy.

Danny (GA) was an inspiration in etiquette, good manners and demeanor. He asked me if he could sit in our meeting. He thanked us for being so kind to him. The new man, Donald, managed to sit at peace for an hour.

After the meeting I drove them both to the south-side area where they live. They had [previously] walked seven miles to get to our meeting.

On the drive, we came upon a gang of some 15-20 or so delinquents with various weaponry in the throes of attacking four men at a bus stop some five meters from my car, on the sidewalk to our right. There were no police, no bystanders, and no traffic on the road - save my wee Daewoo car. In fact, [it was] a complete no-go part of the city for humans and police.

The traffic lights were at 'Stop' and Donald and Danny became animated and anxious as some of the gang members began to make their way toward us and seemed to be considering other targets.

Myself? I became more than willing to 'let God' change the traffic lights to 'Go' a.s.a.p.

To sum it up, my silent prayer was answered in perfection: God did for us what we could not do for ourselves at 10:15 last night. For me, it's straight from our textbook where it hints about being protected while on a 12 Step call. The passage referred to can be found on p.102 (penultimate paragraph), 4th edition of our basic textbook; the word in black ink, is "*unharm*ed."

This afternoon, I came upon a young lady outside of our local store poorly dressed; cold and shaking, polystyrene cup in hand containing a few coins. I asked her where she lived and her reply was, "Homeless." Asked if she had a problem with drugs she said "yes."



However when Susan (20 years sober), who was beside me, shared her story about alcohol, the young lady's eyes expressed she had latched onto something. "Yes, it's alcohol. I told a white lie in telling you it was drugs. It's so embarrassing to know that alcohol has brought me nothing but trouble. I am only 24 years of age, I look like 50 and my name is Amanda."

Driving Susan to her home, she said to me, "Alex, it's so exciting visiting you! Each time, we seem to bump into problem drinkers *before* they realize what the problem is."

That's what ah call 'sharing-my-day.'
Alex S., Glasgow, Scotland
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09/2010.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

7th Annual Santa Clarita Valley AA Convention

Oct. 15 – 17, 2010
Hyatt Valencia, Valencia, CA
www.scvaaconvention.org (661) 310-0384

23rd Annual Inland Empire Convention

Oct. 15 – 17, 2010
Hilton Hotel, San Bernardino, CA
www.ieaac.org

Movie Madness: “Bill’s Own Story”

Oct. 16, 2010, 4 p.m. – 9 p.m.
Prince of Peace Fellowship Hall
9440 Balboa Blvd, Northridge, CA

29th Annual H & I Birthday BBQ,

Oct. 21, 2010, 6:00 p.m.
St. Innocent Church
5657 Lindley Ave, Tarzana, CA
Tickets: \$10.00

26th Annual Santa Barbara Convention

Oct. 22 – 24, 2010
Santa Barbara, CA

Halloween Marathon Weekend

Oct. 29 – 31, 2010
Hole in the Sky
21044 Sherman Way, Canoga Park

Vegas AA Roundup

Nov. 25 – 28, 2010
Riviera Hotel & Casino
www.lasvegasroundup.org

Stateline Retreat 2010

Dec. 10 – 12, 2010
Primm Valley Resort & Casino
Primm, NV
www.statelineretreat.org

THE PASSING OF AAS -THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE:



Kris J: 8 Years
Eleanor Cadwallader: 46 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: Oct 18, 2010:

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

Gen Service, District 11: Nov. 1, 2010

6 p.m. New GSR orientation/ 6:30 p.m. Bus. Mtg
315 W. Vine Street, Glendale, CA

Gen Service, District 16: Nov. 1, 2010

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

Gen. Service, District 17: Nov. 1, 2010

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

Gen. Service, District 2: Nov. 2, 2010

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

Gen Service, District 1: Nov. 3, 2010

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

SFV Central Office Board Mtg: Nov. 3, 2010

6:30 p.m., Valley Central Office

Gen. Service District 7: Nov. 6, 2010

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

SFV Intergroup: Nov. 8, 2010

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

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



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 1st 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 2nd Monday of each month at St. Innocent Church, 5657 Lindley Ave. in Tarzana. New Intergroup reps should arrive for the 6:30 p.m. orientation, followed by the regular meeting at 7 p.m. **For more info: on serving as an Intergroup rep, call Central Office: 818 988-3001.**

San Fernando Valley Convention: Volunteers are welcome to participate in the planning of the 2011 Convention which will be held at the Warner Center Marriott, Jan. 28 – 30, 2011. The theme will be "Love & Tolerance." The Committee meets the 3rd Tuesday of each month (except Feb. & March) at 7 p.m. at St. Innocent Church, 5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana.-

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 to: **Central Office: 7417-E Van Nuys Blvd., Van Nuys, CA 91405.**

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).

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS:

Anonymous: 14 Years
Olivia C. 20 Years
Frank: 26 Years
Anonymous: 26 Years



Co-Founder Quotes:

Freedom From Self

"...the alcoholic is an extreme example of self-will run riot..."

Alcoholics Anonymous, pg. 62

"As active alcoholics, most of us are self-centered, and when we come to AA, our behavior can be still motivated by selfishness, self-seeking, self-pity, and self-centered fear. As we stay sober, however, we get released from "the bondage of self." As the Big Book puts it. We no longer have to be at the center of the universe. We learn a little humility. We give up the idea that the world must always respond promptly to our demands. We cease trying to run the show – ours and everybody else's. We stop playing God – and it turns out there is relief and freedom in that." *Emotional Sobriety, The Next Frontier* pg. 39



ACTION: Any Change To Improve Our Nature

PROGRAM: People Relying On God Relaying A Message

STEPS: Solutions To Every Problem Sober

SPONSOR: Sober Person Offering Newcomers Suggestions on Recovery

Central Office: IGR Meeting Notes of Sept. 13, 2010, 7:00 p.m.:

Chairman Hal S. opened the meeting with the Serenity Prayer. **Recording Secretary Dawn H.** accepted a motion to approve the minutes from August's Intergroup meeting. The minutes were approved as submitted.

Treasurer Brian H. gave the Treasurer's report: Group contributions are still down over this time last year; however personal donations are up significantly.

Executive Secretary Bob F. reported phone volunteers are needed for Central Office's phone banks (esp. 9 p.m. – midnight Saturdays and 12:00 a.m. - 9 a.m. Sundays). Volunteers are also needed to do 12 Step work and to help out of town AAs.

Internet, Michael F. reports Everything is running smoothly with the www.sfvaa.org website.

San Fernando Valley H & I Tom T. said H&I contributions for August were approximately \$700 below costs. The 29th Annual H&I Birthday BBQ will be Thursday, Oct. 21st at 6:00 p.m. at St. Innocent. Tickets are \$10.00.

Birthdays: IGRs celebrating birthdays in August were: Jasmine with 3 years and Judith with 28 years.



Do you have a story or news item to contribute? E-mail: sfvaanews@sbcglobal.net or by mail to the address below.

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** along with your **new address:**

Name: _____

Previous Address: _____

What a Sponsor Means to Me

In honor of the first Annual "Take Your Sponsor to Breakfast" Breakfast, held on October 9, 2010, we asked the ladies of the **Saturday Morning Burbank Women's meeting** on Scott Road what their definition of "sponsor" was. Here's what they had to say:

Diana W: Other Mom

Dawn H: Non Judgmental

Tracy: Support

Carol C: Teacher

Mary Jo: Connection

Sandy S. Guiding

Alina: Gracious

Cyndy S: Knowledge

Janine R: Wise

Pat K.: Loving

Jane J: Maternal

Kathy: Patient



Paula: Understanding

Scarlet: Guide

Tanya: There

We also asked AAs at **Dunsmore's Saturday Night Live meeting** for their definition:

Jeff: Sobriety

Randy: Influencer

Rodney: Solid

Bert: Supportive

Mike: Reliable

Laura: Sense of Humor

Woody: Gentleman

Elmer: Necessary

Susan: Unconditional Love

Tom: Advisor

Les: Guidance

Mark, Real John & Don C: all called their sponsor "Friend."

Rob: Instructor

Holly: Experienced

Dana: Listener

Jimmy: Wise

Thank you everyone for your input! Editor

Anonymity on the Internet

Breaking a Tradition can happen on social networking sites, but it's easily prevented

The Traditions are of the utmost importance for the survival of AA as a whole, but they were written in an era when methods of communication were fairly limited, consequently leaving some holes for the AAs of today to fill in. I remember when I first started thinking about anonymity, the Eleventh Tradition and the internet. Turning to the AA World Service pamphlet "Understanding Anonymity," I looked for answers. The pamphlet says that websites should be considered public media, and therefore we shouldn't use our full name or images on any public site. It goes on to say that "... the level of anonymity in emails, online meetings, and chat rooms would be a personal decision."

At first glance, this seems pretty clear: no full names or pictures on any publicly accessible website, but chat rooms, online meetings and emails are acceptable places to break our own anonymity, if we wish to. The pamphlet is trying to set up a distinction between "private" and "public" internet usage. Unfortunately, I believe it falls well short of comprehensively defining this distinction. One could easily say that breaking anonymity on a national news organization's

site is forbidden, but a break in an email to a friend is acceptable. A personal blog that is publicly searchable would also fall into the "public" category. But what about social networking sites? These widely used sites have their own security protocols, some of which are fully customizable by the individual users. They have their own levels of public and private, further complicating the issue. For instance, I can set my personal page to be viewed by my "friends" (people I've approved to view my page) only, preventing anyone else from seeing the information listed. Can I break my anonymity on this level, where only my friends can see? Wouldn't this be merely the virtual equivalent of gathering all of my friends in a room and telling them I am in AA?

One popular networking site has "groups" where likeminded people can sign up and post messages on discussion boards. Many of them are twelve-step-related. There are multiple unmoderated groups titled "Alcoholics Anonymous," one with over 9,000 members. Any member can access this group and its member list, most of whom use their full names (a requirement for one social networking site). One could argue that this is a public anonymity break because it falls under the banner of Alcoholics Anonymous. But what about the "Friends of Bill W." group that has over 12,000 members? It is public (to members of the site), but specifically states that it is not affiliated with any organization.

Dave's Suggestions

Dave S., the author of "Anonymity on the Internet," compiled some tips for anonymity-protected usage of social networking sites:

DON'T join any group with "Alcoholics Anonymous" in its name, even if there is a disclaimer.

DON'T disclose that you are an AA member if you choose to join a group for people in recovery. Talk in general terms about meetings, recovery and Steps.

DON'T post a message on someone's "wall" regarding meetings, sobriety or AA.

DON'T publish pictures from AA functions with your friends in them unless you have their permission. Make sure that these pictures are viewable by your friends only.

DO: If you choose to "out" yourself on your profile page, make sure the page is accessible only to your friends, not to the general public.

DO: When creating an AA-related "event" on the site, make sure that it is private so that invitees don't have their anonymity broken when they decide to attend. Make the guest list of an AA-related event hidden.

I think that the solution here has more to do with Tradition Six than with Tradition Eleven. Calling a group "Alcoholics Anonymous" implies affiliation, despite disclaimers. If all of these internet groups were titled something like "Friends of Bill W." or "Alcoholics in Recovery," then we would be solving two problems at once: ending affiliation with AA and allowing members to not worry about breaking their anonymity at a public level by merely joining the group. Each individual would be responsible for maintaining his or her own anonymity in these groups in discussions, but they would no longer have to worry about their anonymity being broken just by joining the group.

At the time the Traditions were published, this conversation about anonymity would have been inconceivable. As our world changes and evolves, AA, too, must change and evolve. AA members must meet new challenges head-on, inside and outside of AA.

Dave S., Cleveland, Ohio, Copyright © The AA Grapevine, Inc. (Oct. 2010).
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Rule #62: Past cartoons and submissions:



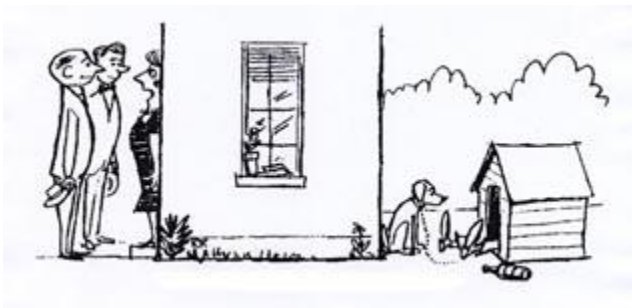
August 2010

Winner: "Last time the bartender asked him if he'd like a drink he said, "I better not. I have an important appointment next month."

—Barrett P, Philadelphia, PA

Winner: "Welcome to the half measures meeting of alcoholics anonymous... "

—Scott, Portland,



July 2010

Winner: "For Fido's sake please add a new chapter in your Big Book entitling it 'To the Family Dog '.'" —Larry M, Ft. Sherman Chapel Group

Winner: "Sorry, fellas; he's passed out in the backyard. I heard him muttering something about rebellion dogging his every step?" — Fred F., SadBadGlad Group, Albany, NY



June 2010

Winner: "12 steps, not 12 rounds " — Richard H.

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San Fernando Valley Central Office

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