

# Recovery

Times

VOL 27, NO 11 - November 2003

A newsletter from Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office

## HELPFUL HINTS FOR HOLIDAY PARTIES

First, if you think the party might bother you too much, don't go.

If you're not too sure of yourself, but would like to try it anyhow, go late and leave early. (Or go early and leave early.)

Just say, "I'll have a ginger ale, please."

It helps always to hold a half-full glass in your hand. Then you can say, "No thanks, I still have one."

Don't go into a lengthy discussion of why you're not drinking. A simple "I prefer ginger ale tonight" usually works.

While you're at the party, think of where you came from and how awful it would be to go back.

Don't fool yourself into thinking that maybe "just one" won't hurt. Remember all the stories you've heard about people who thought that way and where they ended up.

Have a good time. You'll be surprised at how easy it is and how much more fun it is to know what you're doing, instead of having to wait till the next day to hear the facts (probably unpleasant) from somebody else.

Take a look around the room once in a while and thank God you feel the way you do instead of the way some others do.

Think, too, of how hard it was to reach the point you've reached in AA and how much harder it will be to reach it again — if you can. Think of all the alcoholics who still suffer. Some probably don't even know what season it is.

Maybe you have been picked to help one of them find his (or her) life again.

*J.B., Rochester, N.Y.*

In This Issue...

\*Upcoming Events

\*Service Committee Schedule

\*Intergroup Minutes Synopsis

\*Happy Birthdays

NOTICE TO OUR READERS

In this month's issue of the Recovery Times, the Contributions Summary is provided as a page insert within the newsletter. The editors are revamping the newsletter layout. Look for more "new looks" in the upcoming months.

## Upcoming Events

Nov. 27-30                    37th Annual Las Vegas Roundup  
Las Vegas, NV  
Info: Call (702) 598-1888

\*\*\*\*\*

Feb. 6-8                      29th Annual SFV Convention  
Burbank, CA  
Info: (818) 734-0383  
www.sfvaaconvention.org

\*\*\*\*\*

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

## SERVICE COMMITTEE SCHEDULE

- Nov. 17, 2003 **SFVH&I**  
**THIRDMONDAY**  
8pm Business Meeting  
Get Acquainted Workshop, 7pm,  
5657 Lindley Ave.  
\*\*\*\*\*
- Dec. 1, 2003 **G.S. Districts #11, 16**  
**FIRSTMONDAY**  
6pm, 11455 Chandler Blvd, N. Hollywood  
\*\*\*\*\*
- Dec. 1, 2003 **G.S. Districts #17**  
**FIRSTMONDAY**  
6pm, orientation, 6:30pm meeting  
5000 Colfax (church), N. Hollywood  
\*\*\*\*\*
- Dec. 2, 2003 **G.S. Districts #2**  
**FIRSTTUESDAY**  
6:30pm, 4011 Dunsmore,  
La Crescenta  
\*\*\*\*\*
- Dec. 3, 2003 **G.S. District #1**  
**FIRSTWEDNESDAY**  
6:30pm, 7552 Remmet,  
Canoga Park  
\*\*\*\*\*
- Dec. 3, 2003 **SFV Board of Directors**  
6pm, Central Office  
\*\*\*\*\*
- Dec. 13, 2003 **G.S. District #7**  
**SECONDSATURDAY**  
Agua Dulce Woman's Club  
33201 Agua Dulce Cyn Rd  
Sharon G. (661) 951-0372  
\*\*\*\*\*
- Dec. 8, 2003 **SFV Intergroup**  
**SECONDMONDAY**  
6:30 pm Orientation  
7pm Business Meeting  
Knights of Columbus Hall  
14450 Valerio Street, Van Nuys

## Service Opportunities Alcoholics Anonymous 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, Knights of Columbus Hall, 14450 Valerio St., Van Nuys, CA. Contact: Central Office at 988-3001.

### SAN FERNANDO VALLEY CONVENTION -

Planning and executing all phases of our annual convention, at the Burbank Hilton, Feb, 2004. Committee meets every 3rd Tuesday of each month; 7 PM at St. Innocent's Church, 5657 Lindley Ave, Tarzana, CA.



# CENTRAL OFFICE

## GUIDELINES FOR PUBLICATION OF ARTICLES



**All** articles published in the Recovery Times will be reviewed by a committee of three (3) members. Articles must therefore be received by the 10th of the month for consideration of publication in the following month's issue. Guidelines for publication are as follows:

- 1) No use of profanity.
- 2) Primary content must pertain to alcoholism, the recovery from the disease of alcoholism, the 12 Steps or the 12 Traditions.
- 3) The committee reserves the right to edit all articles submitted.

As stated in each issue of the Recovery Times: "RECOVERY TIMES presents the experience and opinions of members of A.A. (and occasionally others) on the subjects bearing on the disease of alcoholism. Opinions expressed herein are not to be attributed to Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole, nor does publication of any article imply endorsement of its content by the San Fernando Valley Central Office or Alcoholics Anonymous. Articles from A.A. World Services, Inc. (AAWS, Inc.) and the A.A. Grapevine, Inc. (as well as other publications) appearing herein are reprinted with permission. The names ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS and BIG BOOK are registered trademarks of AAWS, Inc."

*Opposing views and rebuttals to articles published are also welcomed.*

**Submit correspondence to:**

**SFVCO Newsletter Committee  
7417 Van Nuys Blvd., Suite E  
Van Nuys, CA 91405**

### **Your Birthday Gift to Central Office**



**M**any 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.

## **HAPPY BIRTHDAY!**

October 2003

|                         |                 |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| <i>Debbie McG.</i>      | <i>19years</i>  |
| <i>Kay W.</i>           | <i>17years</i>  |
| <i>Maggie T.</i>        | <i>16years</i>  |
| <i>Spike W.</i>         | <i>16years</i>  |
| <i>Learning to Live</i> |                 |
| <i>Men's Stag</i>       | <i>115years</i> |



## *SEVEN FREEDOMS OF A NEW WAY OF LIFE*

The New Way of Life is a life of freedom. The alcoholic seldom realizes what a slave he is. Temporary confinement in jails, hospitals and rest homes are the least important of the curtailments of his freedom. He is a slave not only to drink but to his detective self as well. The New Way of Life gives back to the A.A. member his freedom, if he follows it faithfully. Having lost his freedom, he can now properly appreciate it. What freedom does he gain or regain?

**1. Freedom from hate.** The alcoholic usually becomes a bundle of resentments. Through the New Way of Life, he comes to understand that his fellow man is beset with difficulties too. He learns human sympathy and tolerance. He comes to realize that it is the lot of our common humanity to be weak, that his frailty calls for help, not hatred. He learns that it is more fun to create than to destroy. He learns that many of his resentments were inspired by the unworthy motive of debasing others to his own unenviable level.

**2. Freedom from guilt.** A guilty conscience goes hand in hand with drinking. A clear conscience may not cure alcoholism, but it helps. Our recovery can start only after we have made amends to those we have wronged, or proved our willingness to do so. We must be able to live with ourselves before we are good company to others. The A.A. program, literally followed, frees us from a sense of guilt.

**3. Freedom from want.** Most A.A. members find themselves more prosperous than they ever were when they were drinking. The typical alcoholic is a person with considerable talent and he can turn his aptitudes into good paychecks when he has been sober long enough to regain the confidence of his associates. When he “dries out,” however, it is necessary for his permanent recovery to begin paying back the sums he probably borrowed in his drinking days. It’s next to impossible to dodge creditors and whiskey at the same time. Therefore, for a time the new A.A. member may not enjoy his reacquired earning capacity fully. For a time he might have to economize to pay back old debts, but the results will be richly rewarding. By and large, however, the New Way of Life will provide a freedom from want never known before.

**4. Freedom from fear.** Most alcoholics suffer from one or more of a variety of anxieties. To escape from these fears has been an aim, consciously or unconsciously, of much drinking. Sometimes these have been compulsive fears. Sometimes they have been bafflement at the unknown. Sometimes they have been vague general fears of what the future has in store. Some times specific fears. The New Way of Life may not provide complete freedom from fear; it certainly will not do it all at once. But in placing our lives in the hands of God, as we understand Him, we find that our anxieties are reduced, that we have the necessary courage to cope with them. They become manageable. We come to see that the big thing of escaping certain insanity or death makes our fears seem small in comparison. New courage comes with the New Way of Life.

## *SEVEN FREEDOMS OF A NEW WAY OF LIFE (cont'd)*

**5. Freedom from self.** When sober, the alcoholic often displays many commendable traits of altruism. When drinking, his personality becomes entirely egocentric. He pushes aside and does not consider the well being of his family, the good will of his friends, or his own good name. Two things only matter to him, his ego and his alcohol. They, more and more, become one, so that in truly chronic alcoholism, the alcoholic feels that his drink is essential to the support of his ego, almost to life itself.

It is perhaps in the disciplining of the ego that the New Way of Life has scored its most spectacular success. By iterating and reiterating the idea of service to others, it draws the alcoholic's thoughts away from self. By providing him with a way to support his thoughts with action, it enables him to build up new behavior patterns of unselfishness. He learns what is at the center and core of nearly all religions; namely, that the human personality is inviolable, has dignity, is worthwhile and must be respected. In learning to respect others, he learns a genuine respect for himself. In serving others, he serves himself.

**6. Freedom from frustrations.** In this area, progress will be slowest and least encouraging. Nevertheless, I am convinced that if the A.A. program is to succeed over a considerable period of time, the alcoholic must learn to resolve his conflicts. We must frankly and fearlessly face the fact that we are neurotic, which is only another way of saying that in one way or another we are frustrated. Alcoholism is one of the ways of neurotic behavior, one of the outcroppings of frustration. Impatience is another, when carried to an extreme. A.A. provides two ready-made answers which are very helpful in combating frustrations. "Easy Does It" and "First Things First." Frustrations are stubborn things to fight. It is for this reason more than any other that the alcoholic is only reprieved, never pardoned. He must follow the New Way of Life and continue to follow it. The New Way of Life may not free the alcoholic of all his frustrations, but they will become manageable. From the source of all strength will come strength and wisdom adequate for his needs.

**7. Freedom from despair.** The New Way of Life offers hope. The alcoholic begins to be happy again and to enjoy life. These are indicative of hopefulness and are good. It is good, too, for the A.A. member to march forward again to new accomplishments through his regained self-confidence. The New Way of Life offers a spiritual freedom from despair which is greatest of all. One is freed from the death in life, which is living without purpose. He is freed from his faith in nothing. He is freed from the cynicism that nothing has meaning, and that death is a complete and final defeat. The New Way of Life confirms that life is worth the struggle. That happiness is worth the effort, and that God is good.

In our prayers we have often said, "Thank God I'm sober." Let us add, "Thank God I'm free!"

*AA Grapevine, Jan. 1948 (Reprint, Silver Dollar Paper, July 1991)*

## **Humor is good for the soul**

### **My Prayer**

*So far today, God, I've done all right.*

*I haven't had a drink, haven't gossiped, haven't lost my temper, haven't been greedy, grumpy, nasty or self-centered.*

*I'm really glad about that.*

*But in a few minutes, God, I'm going to get out of bed, and then I'm going to need a lot of help.*

*Thank you.*

*"I got big-hearted this morning and gave a bum five dollars."*

*"What did your husband say about that?"*

*"Thanks."*

*A sponsor is someone who sees through you and still sees through you.*

*Adam and Eve had an ideal marriage. He didn't have to hear about all the men she could have married, and she didn't have to hear about the way his mother cooked.*

*A drunk is in front of the judge. The judge says, "You've been brought here for drinking." The drunk says, "Okay, let's get started."*

*Never test the depth of the water with both feet.*

*Always remember - your unique. Just like everyone else.*

*The drunk riding the bus kept throwing little pieces of paper out the window. The lady beside him asked him why he was doing this. "It scares away the elephants," he answered. "But I don't see any elephants," the curious lady replied. Said the drunk, "Works good, doesn't it?"*

## **My Prayer**

*Many folks want to serve their Higher Power, but only as advisors.*

*It is easier to preach ten sermons than to live one.*

*Prayer: Don't give your Higher Power instructions - just report for duty!*



Rule #62: "Don't take yourself too damn seriously."

Help us! Think of a caption for the photo!

Give it a try - let your imagination fly.

Next month we will post some of the submissions so you can see what some of the other wonderfully wacky people are thinking.

**San Fernando Valley Central Office  
Intergroup Representatives Meeting – Sept.8, 2003**

Paul D Chairperson – Meeting opened at 7:00 pm

Treasurer's Report; See Insert

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

Old Business: None

New Business: First vote next month to move meeting location.

Birthdays Reza B 3yrs,Angela A. 4 yrs,Robin B. 3yrs,Lloyd W. 15yrs,Helaine L. 15yrs.

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.

Next Meeting - October 13, 2003

Prepared and submitted by: Marie B Recording Secretary

## NOVEMBER IS GRATITUDE MONTH

**What if AA had not been there for you when you reached out?**

**Are You Grateful the Hand of AA was there for you?**

**Support Your Central Office during Gratitude Month**

Secretaries, Please read the following to your group:

Remember reaching out for help?

AA was there. You were greeted by a caring fellowship, offered a safe place to be, and the only thing required of you was a desire to stop drinking. Your Central Office is the voice of AA for many who still suffer in our area. Now AA can use your help.

We ask that you show your gratitude to Alcoholics Anonymous today by making a contribution in the provided envelopes. Additional envelopes are available for individual contributions. Please include the name of your home group. Thank You!



**Newsletter 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

**Current Information**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ St \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

New                       Renewal  
 Additional Contribution \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**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.

**Former Address**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ St \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_