

# Anonymous Times

Published by North Orange County Central Office, 1111 E. Commonwealth, Suite D, Fullerton, CA 92831

Volume 14, Issue 2

March/April 2009

## Intergroup Reps. are Vital to NOCAA

*Much goes on behind the scenes to ensure we are not a glum lot*

Service centers usually have no authority on their own account; they derive it from the participating groups. Local group representatives reflect the groups' conscience in the service center operations.

*From A.A. Guidelines - Central or Intergroup Offices*

If your favorite meeting hasn't elected an Intergroup representative, there are many reasons why it should.

Intergroup representatives are an important part of the program of Alcoholics Anonymous. I would like to share with you a little bit about what goes on behind the scenes to prepare the packets that you share with your group. It starts with your Intergroup meeting. It is your Intergroup because Intergroup representatives are the ones that vote or make changes when needed. Your Central Office is governed by its Intergroup Body. And that is you.

Are you surprised yet at how important a position it is? Well consider what it would be like if there was no one bringing to your group the news about what is happening in your AA community and its Central Office. How would your group know that we are having a Christmas party for newcomers? Or how would you know that there is a wonderful convention taking place. Intergroup representatives carry the message to your meeting. And that is how we stay connected and learn about the fun things we do in A.A. There are also many people who spend hours preparing post cards.

Have you seen all those wonderful stickers that change to correspond with the seasons. Recently, the cards had hearts all over them.

*Continued on page 2*

## 24th Annual Orange County Convention -- Get Involved Register Early; Volunteer

If you haven't already done so, volunteer now for the 24th Annual Orange County Alcoholics Anonymous Convention, to be held April 10, 11 and 12 at the Hilton Hotel in Costa Mesa. Also, pre-register online at <http://www.oacaac.org>.

"A Day at a Time in 2009" is the theme of this year's event. If you can talk, stand, sit, or smile, your help is needed. Call Central Office at (714) 773-4357 for more information.

### NORTH ORANGE COUNTY CENTRAL OFFICE

1111 E. Commonwealth Ave., Suite D  
Fullerton, CA 92831

**OFFICE HOURS:** Daily 9am-9pm

**PHONE:** (714) 773-4357 (24 hrs)

**FAX:** (714) 773-0179

**WEBSITE:** [www.aanoc.com](http://www.aanoc.com)

**E-MAIL:** [OfficeManager@aanoc.com](mailto:OfficeManager@aanoc.com)



### Tradition Two Quote

*"For our group purpose, there is but one ultimate authority - a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience."*

*These practical folk then read Tradition Two, and learn that the sole authority in A.A. is a loving God as He may express Himself in the group conscience. They dubiously ask an experienced A.A. member if this really works. The member, sane to all appearances, immediately answers, "Yes! It definitely does." From 12 Steps and 12 Traditions page 132.*

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## NOCCO Revenue & Expense Report Year 2008 vs. 2007

Revenue	Dec-08	Dec-07
Sales - AA Books and Literature	\$40,866.99	\$39,622.34
Sales - Chips and Non-AA	\$32,054.93	\$29,853.21
Donations- Groups and Individuals	\$59,658.71	\$66,682.69
Fundraisers	\$4,519.22	\$4,500.00
Interest	\$1,270.98	\$1,399.54
Total Revenue	\$138,370.83	\$142,057.78
Cost of Goods	\$48,773.90	\$45,205.98
Gross Profit	\$89,596.93	\$96,851.80
Operating Expenses		
Salaries	\$39,735.00	\$40,580.00
Advertising	\$384.67	\$0.00
Bank Charges	\$87.00	\$168.00
Bad Checks	\$157.54	\$19.40
Computer Expenses	\$0.00	\$1,228.61
Depreciation	\$992.05	\$1,081.68
Insurance-General Liability	\$850.63	\$353.18
Insurance - Work Comp	\$717.50	\$596.28
Insurance - Medical	\$2,449.00	\$2,700.00
Legal & Accounting	\$1,980.00	\$1,850.00
Newsletter Cost	\$3,484.67	\$2,476.12
Office Supplies	\$4,873.93	\$3,617.06
Postage	\$276.90	\$55.26
Penalties on Tax Payments	\$34.42	\$0.00
Office Rent	\$19,100.00	\$17,061.73
Equipment Rental	\$1,599.73	\$1,843.94
Relocation Expense	\$0.00	\$770.00
Repairs & Maintenance	\$242.00	\$490.20
Seminars & Education	\$1,067.54	\$1,256.69
Taxes- Payroll	\$3,163.74	\$3,216.32
Taxes- Annual Filings	\$60.00	\$60.00
Telephone	\$4,318.12	\$3,849.97
Utilities	\$3,014.95	\$2,514.52
Total Operating Expense	\$88,589.39	\$85,788.96
Other Income and Expense	\$361.16	\$0.00
Net Income/(Loss)	\$1,368.70	\$11,062.84

## Intergroup ... From Page 1

Those hearts were put on with pure love to make you feel special, because that is what you are – special. And the lady who creates them is pretty special herself – Her name is Lizette. This program is a program of attraction, and it is hard not to feel happy when you get one of these cards in the mail with your name on it. How cool it is that this commitment starts out like that.

Now for a more serious note: consider what it would be like if there was no one to share all this information with you. Now aren't you happy there is? I'll bet you will be even happier to grab one of your friends in one of your favorite meetings and get them to share in the fun. Remember that we can't keep this wonderful gift of sobriety if we don't give it away. So don't be afraid to jump in and start giving it away.

*Roxy S., NOC Central Office Manager*



## Intergroup Elects 2009 Board

Election of this year's NOCCO Board of Directors was held at the January Intergroup meeting. Here is the list of the 2009 Board members and their positions.

Pete K.	Chairman	Term Exp. 2011
Dave O.	Vice-chair	Term Exp. 2010
D-D S.	Secretary	Term Exp. 2010
Ernie C.	Treasurer	Term Exp. 2010
Leesa H.	Newsletter Oversight	Term Exp. 2011
George C.	At-large	Term Exp. 2110
Tom T.	At-large	Term Exp. 2011
Paul H.	Editor, Anonymous Times	

## Flying high in sobriety

*Alcoholic trades in a rebel youth for pilot's wings in Alcoholics Anonymous*

**A**s I pass my 21st AA birthday, I find myself looking back at what it was like, what happened, and what it is like now. A miracle has happened in my life. When I was a child, I wanted to be a pilot. I made model airplanes, and hung them the ceiling on strings. I read and dreamed of flying.

As I grew up with no father and a drunken mother, I found the magic world of alcohol and drugs. It allowed me to go places and be things that I would not have normally been able to without that drunken fantasy world. But it was soon followed by a lot of trouble. I got suspended from school. I went to Juvenal hall. I found myself tied to a gurney in the E. R. getting my stomach pumped.

*He said, "listen very carefully, you can still fly. "If you go to bars, you will get drunk; if you go to meetings you will stay sober. If you go hang out at the airport, you will learn to fly."*

And then there was the stealing. I stole from everyone: family, friends, anyone. I broke into houses, stole cars, I went to jail. I had tried college, and got kicked out. Soon after I joined the Navy, I got kicked out. I went home to live with mommy, and I got kicked out. I had nothing left.

In January of 1988, God granted me the grace to have a moment of clarity to see my alcoholism for what it was, and I asked for help. I knew someone that was an example of recovery in my life, and she sent me to Alcoholics Anonymous.

In AA, I went to lots of meetings. I got a sponsor, and we worked the steps. I said the prayers even

though I didn't believe them, and I got commitments and went on panels when I did not want to. I found a God of my own understanding, and came to believe that no matter what happened, if we stayed sober, it was going to be okay.

The miracle of recovery happened in my life. I went back to school, got married, and was given a beautiful daughter.

In 2002, a man in the program named Mike sold my daughter and I an airplane ride in an old biplane. That day I remembered the dream of my youth, a dream I gave up years before, for the right to drink. Not long after that, I told a man in a meeting named Dexter about that flight and a dream I once had. Dexter, a pilot, told me something that night that was to change my life. He said, "listen very carefully, you can still fly." He went on to tell me, "If you go to bars, you will get drunk; if you go to meetings you will stay sober. If you go hang out at the airport, you will learn to fly." I went back to that man with the biplane and asked him to teach me to fly, and he did.

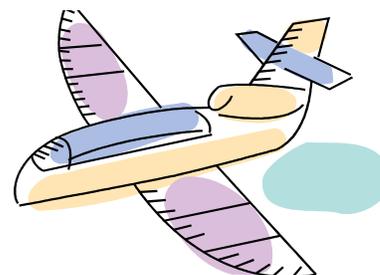
When I applied for a pilot's license, I had to fill out an application which asked about my substance abuse and criminal record. I answered honestly, and the application had to go to Oklahoma, the FAA headquarters. They asked me to send letters attesting to my abstinence, and I gave them lots of letters, because I had lots of friends. One letter was from the County Probation Department, and they reported that I had been doing panels at juvenile hall the last three years.

I did those panels for fun and for free, yet it was a big help to me getting my wings. I earned my private pilot's license, followed by an instrument rating. Now I am working on a commercial pilot's certificate, because that's the next step, one day at a time.

Over the years, I have been given so much by so many. Sober pilots have given me their time and support and they've shared the gift of flight with me. I have flown to conventions in Beaver, Utah and Laughlin, Nevada. I got engaged to my wife Mary in an airplane over Santa Monica.

Many of the men in my home group have been in the plane with me because I want to give to them what was so freely given to me. Sounds familiar, huh? It is difficult for me to be in an airplane, and not have an attitude of gratitude. I have been given the dream of my youth, and I almost missed it.

I've never had it so good.



**Danny B., Anaheim**

## UPCOMING EVENTS!

**WHAT: 24th Annual Orange County Alcoholics Anonymous Convention**

**WHEN: April 10, 11 and 12**

**WHERE: Hilton Hotel Costa Mesa**

Make plans now to be part of the fun. Call Central Office at (714) 773-4357 or go online to [www.oacaac.org](http://www.oacaac.org) for more information.

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### Anonymous Times Has New Email Address

The Anonymous Times has a new email address, to be used for submission of articles and letters.

That address is [aaletters@gmail.com](mailto:aaletters@gmail.com).

Use the address to send us your personal stories of recovery through the 12 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous and to ideas for ways to improve the newsletter.

### CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS!!!

During January and February Central Office took 1818 calls:

521 from men and  
437 from women.



Keep up the great work — YOU make a difference!

## Announcements and Activities

Here are some upcoming events and announcements of interest

### New Speaker Meeting

A new speaker meeting has been launched at the Fullerton Alano Center, 530 W. Commonwealth Ave., Saturday at 8 p.m.

Each week a sober member of Alcoholics Anonymous will tell his or her story, what it was like, what happened and what it is like now.

Tell your friends about the new meeting and come share in the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous.

### CENTRAL OFFICE NEEDS YOU!

Central Office needs volunteers. If you are reliable and looking for a short-term commitment, come see us! Volunteers are the lifeblood of the office and essential tools in maintaining the machinery of A.A. in North Orange County.

The work is also an essential part of your Twelfth Step—carrying the message of A.A. to other alcoholics. For more information, call Roxy at 714-773-4357. Six months sobriety is required.

Remember...to keep it you gotta give it away!

### Women's Banquet March 28

The 12th North Orange County Alcoholics Anonymous Women's Banquet will be held March 28, 2009 at the Fullerton Ebell Club, 313 Laguna Road in Fullerton.

All women in recovery are welcome to the event, which will feature dinner, speaker meeting and raffle. Tickets are \$30 and can be purchased by sending a check, made payable to NOCAA Women's Banquet, to P.O. Box 771; Fullerton, CA; 92836. Deadline for registration is March 18. For additional information, call Lisa S. at (714) 269-5098 or Tracy W. at (714) 334-5425.

## BIRTHDAY DONATIONS



Norma L., 36 years  
Tanny T. 25 years  
Alfred K., 25 years  
Lisette 11 years  
D-D S. 4yrs

### **PUBLISH YOUR BIRTHDAY or SOBRIETY STORY TODAY!**

To publish your birthday, send us your name, sobriety date and your contribution check (DO NOT SEND CASH) in the mail to: North Orange County Central Office, 1111 E. Commonwealth, Ste. D, Fullerton, CA 92831. Or email: [officemanager@aanoc.com](mailto:officemanager@aanoc.com).

Anonymous Times  
is now Online

The Anonymous Times is available online at <http://www.aanoc.com>, as well as at your favorite meeting.

Feel free to submit your personal stories about sobriety to us at [aaletters@gmail.com](mailto:aaletters@gmail.com).

Articles for the Anonymous Times can now be submitted on the NOCCO website: [www.aanoc.com](http://www.aanoc.com).

Also, we welcome your letters and suggestions in the mail: North Orange County Central Office 1111 Commonwealth, Suite D, Fullerton, CA 92831.

## CHECK IT OUT – DUDE! YOUNG PEOPLE'S AA MEETINGS!

### Sunday

Fullerton 6:00 pm 216 N. Malden (Alano Club)  
Orange 7:00 pm 261 N. Glassell@Chapman  
(The Ugly Mug)

### Monday

Irvine 7:30 pm Wild Bunch Men's Step Study  
5001 Newport Coast Dr. Mariners Church (Port Kid Zone room)

### Tuesday

Anaheim Hills 7:30 pm Step Study/Kaiser Lakeview-Bsmt.  
Dana Point 7:30 pm Campfire Beach Meeting  
(Winter) 34451 Ensenada Pl. @ D.P. Harbor Dr. - Boat House (Youth Center)  
(November thru March)

### Wednesday

Irvine 7:30 pm Wild Bunch Beginner Q&A  
18842 Teller Ave. @ Campus (New Song Church)  
Newport Beach 8:30 pm Topic Discussion, 414 E. 32nd St.  
Yorba Linda 8:00 pm Topic Discussion, 5320 Richfield Rd.  
Garden Grove 8:00 pm Young People's Meeting  
7212 Chapman Ave. @ Knott Ave. (Serenity Hall) 797-G4

### Thursday

Costa Mesa 8:00 pm Moorehead Podium Call-up  
2476 Newport Blvd. @ Fair (Oddfellows Hall)  
Laguna Beach 8:00 pm Romper Room Beginners  
20456 Laguna Canyon Rd.

### Friday

Anaheim Hills 8:00 pm Discussion-411 Lakeview Ave.  
@ 91 Fwy. (Medical Building, Basement, Rm # B-4)  
Huntington Beach 7:00 pm Seacliff, 225 7th St., Garage #1 @ Olive  
Irvine 7:30 pm Boys in Sobriety  
4400 Barranca & Culver

### Saturday

Rancho Santa Margarita 7:30 pm RSM 1 Hour Discussion  
30322 Via Con Dios (Church)

## Subscriptions/Gifts

Treat yourself or a friend to the A.T. for only \$6.00 a year! Send your name and address:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please send this along with \$\_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ subscriptions at \$6.00 per year to:

**ANONYMOUS TIMES:** 1111 COMMONWEALTH Ave. Ste. D, FULLERTON, CA 92831 Phone: 714-773-4357

# AA's 12 traditions give direction to groups

## Alcoholic learns importance of group conscience

All of A.A.'s traditions are geared towards the groups rather than the individual. I would like to qualify and then try not to talk about myself too much. I sobered up in one of the larger local groups. I did not agree with a lot of the goings on the last couple of years I was there so I left and basically started my own "small" group for lack of a better term. We are a loosely knit bunch but we have had to refer often to the traditions in our short time together.

*All the traditions are geared towards the groups rather than the individual.*

A couple of old-timers noticed a few of us running around together and observed that we were willing to make coffee, take out the trash, set up chairs etc. They asked if we would be willing to come over to their speaker meeting and participate. We gladly accepted. The meeting was having trouble making rent, and some members were contributing

up to \$20 a night to keep things afloat. Because the meeting was having difficulty making rent, my "small group" decided that we should acknowledge birthdays only at the end of the month. We did not bother with a group conscience because we comprised the majority. Very arrogant of us, I know now.

The people who were already there when we rolled in were rightfully very upset. The only thing we did right was to open the 12&12, read through the traditions and, as a group, decide we were wrong. We handed out chips the next week. Being sponsor to most

the men in our little "group," I made amends publicly to the meeting. (On a personal note, I feel I bounce back and forth between bleeding deacon and elder statesman.)

I have been blessed with the opportunity to sponsor a number of men, but I can be so anal about what they are doing or not doing that I can drive them out of my life.

Try controlling five or six alcoholics.

It's IMPOSSIBLE to do and stay sane. I have a wife and a daughter. When I can just be supportive of them, we are all much happier. Having been told that God speaks to us through people, I believe it.



With that earlier business about birthday chips, thank God somebody had the courage to get right in my face and tell me I was wrong. In my one-on-ones with God, I seemed completely justified. In hindsight, I was behaving just like the group of people I had just split off from. We are all equals, we all have a voice.

If you have an opinion, please speak up.

**Paul P. Fullerton**

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## Sign up now to be part of "Day at a Time in 2009" Annual Convention

*There's still time to volunteer*

If you can talk, stand, sit and smile, your help is needed for the 24th Annual Orange County Alcoholics Anonymous Convention, to be held April 10, 11 and 12 at the Hilton Hotel in Costa Mesa. A final walk-through at the hotel will be held March 18. The Hilton is located at 3050 Bristol St., Costa Mesa, CA 92626.

A full slate of activities has been scheduled, beginning with a golf tournament Friday April 10 at 8 a.m. That

will be followed by registration at 10 a.m., the first of a weekend of marathon meetings, movies, workshops and night owl speaker meetings. A dance will be held Friday night at 10 p.m.

Events Saturday begin with a four-mile walk/run marathon at Mile Square Park beginning at 7:30 a.m. That will be followed by a day of meetings, workshops, an old timers meeting at 2 p.m., a banquet, speaker meeting and dance in the evening.

Register online with a credit card at [www.oaac.org](http://www.oaac.org) and save a few bucks. While there, consider booking a room for the weekend. The convention must guarantee a certain number of bookings or the event will cost more.

Make plans now to be part of the annual convention.

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## SPEAKER MEETINGS: March/April 2009

Anonymous Times would like to publish your list of speakers for May/June 2009.

Contact Central Office or email to [aatimes@aanoc.com](mailto:aatimes@aanoc.com).

Deadline for publication is April 15, 2009.

### Friday

8 p.m.

March 6  
March 13  
March  
March  
April 3  
April 10  
April 17  
April 24

### St. Jude Speaker

St. Jude Hospital, Erickson Building  
101 E. Valencia Mesa, Fullerton, CA  
Peter S., Sherman Oaks  
Harold F., Hemet  
Gloria V., El Monte  
Casey C., Weschester L.A.  
Father Leo, Long Beach  
Sandy K., Anaheim Hills  
Mo P., Fullerton  
Roman C., San Dimas

### Friday

8:00 p.m.

March 6  
March 13  
March 20  
March 27

### Dreams Come True

109 E. Wilshire, Fullerton 92632  
Plumber Jim T. , 26 years sober  
Lizette with 11 years sober  
Duane I. with 16yrs sober  
(spiritual) John H. AA &  
Mary H. Al-Anon

### Friday Night No Puffers Speakers Meeting

8 p.m.

March 6  
March 13  
March 20  
March 27  
April 3  
April 10  
April 17  
April 24

395 S. Tustin Ave., Orange (Church)  
Fred L. , Brea  
Sharon B., Anaheim  
Marsha C., San Clemente  
George R., Anaheim  
Bob D., Tustin  
Surprise  
Mike C., Orange  
Shannon S., Garden Grove

### Sunday

### Fireside Speaker Meeting

3-01  
3-08  
3-15  
3-22  
3-29  
4-05  
4-12  
4-19  
4-26

8150 Knott Ave., Buena Park  
(Ehlers Community Center)  
Tim H, Long Beach  
Donna H., Orange County  
Clint H., Los Angeles  
Tom W., Laguna Niguel  
Ray M., Long Beach  
Frank J., Los Angles  
Joe C., San Diego  
Mark C., Santa Clarita  
Lisa S., Long Beach

### Saturday

8:00 p.m.

March 7  
March 14  
March 21  
March 28  
April 4  
April 11  
April 18  
April 25

### Oddfellows Speaker

109 E. Wilshire, Fullerton  
First Christian Church  
Richard W., Long Beach  
Christine M., Brentwood  
Tyler H., Buena Park  
Cindy F., Downey  
Joe C., San Diego  
Michael S., Long Beach  
Tony V., Los Angeles  
Lorrie S., Paramount

### Saturday

8 p.m.

March 7  
March 14  
March 21  
March 28

### Fullerton Alano Center

530 W. Commonwealth, Fullerton  
Jill, Fullerton  
TBA  
Teresa P., Fullerton  
TBA

### Sunday

10:30 a.m.

March 1  
March 8  
March 15  
March 22  
March 29  
April 5th  
April 12  
April 19  
April 26

### Fullerton Alano Center

530 W. Commonwealth, Fullerton  
Catie F., Fullerton  
Bubbles, Fullerton  
Glen (Big Foot), Tustin  
Joe B., Anaheim  
Birthday Sunday  
Lori B., Mission Viejo  
TBA  
Ernie C., Fullerton  
Birthday Sunday

### Sunday

10:30 a.m.

March 1  
March 8  
March 15  
March 22  
March 29  
April 5  
April 12  
April 19  
April 26

### Western Medical Center

1025 S Anaheim Blvd., Anaheim  
TBA  
Jeff R., Mission Viejo  
Jim N., Orange  
Myke C., Santa Ana  
Frances O., Dana Point  
Jeff L., Anaheim  
Sharon B., Anaheim  
Jim C., Orange  
Kingston, Orange



**Show up and hear the  
message of recovery**

## NOC Central Office BULLETIN BOARD

<b>H&amp;I</b> <b>2ND SUNDAY</b> <b>March 8 &amp; April 12</b>	<b>NOCPIC</b> <b>2ND WEDNESDAY</b> <b>March 11 &amp; April 8</b>	<b>INTERGROUP</b> <b>2ND WEDNESDAY</b> <b>March 11 &amp; April 8</b>	<b>VOLUNTEER MEETING</b> <b>SATURDAY April 11</b> <b>at 10 a..m.</b>
<p><b>Orange County Hospitals and Institutions Committee</b>            2nd Sunday of each mo.            Institutions Committee:            4-5 pm            (Orientation at 3:15 pm)</p> <p>Hospitals Committee:            6-7 pm            (Orientation at 3:15 pm)            Garden Grove Alano Club            9845 Belfast            Garden Grove            Call (949) 278-5173</p>	<p><b>North Orange County Public Information Committee</b></p> <p><i>Learn about sharing the message with Non-AA people like high school and college students.</i></p> <p>Meets at 6:30 p.m. on the 2nd Wednesday of every month at NOCCO            1111 E. Commonwealth, Ste. D, Fullerton</p> <p>If you have questions, call Brian K. at 714-658-4581</p>	<p><b>North Orange County Intergroup Association</b></p> <p><i>Be an intergroup representative for your meeting.</i></p> <p>Meeting at 7:30 p.m. on the 2nd Wednesday of every month at            109 E. Wilshire, Fullerton (First Christian Church)</p>	<p><b>CENTRAL OFFICE</b>            holds a quarterly volunteer meeting on the 2nd Sat. every three months.  <i>Coffee and donuts provided.</i></p> <p>Learn how to fill shifts at Central Office, be of service and meet fellow volunteers.</p> <p>Call 714-773-4357 for information</p> <p>MEETING 10 A.M.</p>

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL CENTRAL OFFICE 714-773-4357**

### Looking for a great way to be of service and participate in your own sobriety?

*Join us at the North Orange County Central Office*  
**VOLUNTEERS' MEETING**  
**Saturday, April 11 at 10 a.m.**

Learn How to answer phones and carry the message of A.A. to the North OC Fellowship.

Everybody is welcome - current AND future volunteers alike.  
 For more information, call Roxy at 714-773-4357.

### Send Us Your Story Online!

Articles for the  
**Anonymous Times**  
 can be submitted  
 online  
 by emailing  
**aaletters@gmail.com**

### Anonymous Times Needs You!

**Do you have a burning desire to share your story?**  
**Want to help somebody else stay sober?**

Tell us how you did it. Send us your articles. Please keep your stories to 700 words or less.

Subject matter of articles must be confined to alcoholism. Keep in mind that we are not able to print poetry or profanity. If you include material from another source such as the Grapevine or the Big Book, please specify

which page number and the source. Submit your article to Central Office or email to: [aaletters@gmail.com](mailto:aaletters@gmail.com).

Articles may be edited for space and clarity.

We look forward to hearing from you and sharing your story with the rest of the North Orange County AA community.



## Came to Believe - Step Two

### *Accepting a power greater than oneself helped return this alcoholic to sanity*

Step Two is an interesting and essential proposition, and it is at the core of recovery; without it, an alcoholic like me has no chance of recovery. Step Two, for me, is all about acceptance and humility. I have to accept that there is a power greater than me to whom I must turn if I want to regain some semblance of sanity.

It had become painfully obvious that my thoughts and actions, up to this step, were insane.

The first three steps of AA are all matters of making a decision, of examining one's innermost self and coming to certain painful truths. For me they are the basis of being humble in the purest sense; I must look outside for the answer to my dilemma. I have to put aside my pride, ego and self and take a long hard look at my thoughts and actions.

The second step is a twofold decision. First, I have to believe that there is a power greater than myself. Now wait a minute, a power greater than myself? What type of power? Where is it? Who is it? How and why is it? It doesn't matter. The only requirement is that I come to believe in a power greater than myself. It had become painfully obvious that of and by myself, I have very little power, if any at all.

Step One made that abundantly clear: I was powerless over alcohol and my life had become unmanageable. So much for any power I might have.

So I've admitted that I am powerless over alcohol and that my life has become unmanageable. I have now come to believe that there is a power greater than myself. Where do I find

that power? In a power greater than myself. What is this power? I choose to call it God.

Second, I have to believe that this power can restore me to sanity. Restore me to sanity? Whoa, hold on a second, I might have had a little drinking problem, but insanity? Well, let's look at the facts. Did I have any control over what was going to happen once I took that first drink? No. When I wasn't drinking, was I thinking of drinking? Yes. Would I stop drinking on my own if there was still alcohol available? No. Would I plan my next drink? Yes. Normal people don't do this.

Sane people do not obsess on their drinking. Sane people stop doing the things that make them sick or causes them harm. Sane people do not

*I have to accept that there is a power greater than me that I have to turn to if I want to regain some semblance*

actively strive to lose touch with reality. Okay, lots of people enjoy having a few drinks and the warm friendly feeling that it brings. Not me. Once the drinking starts, it's the Express Lane to oblivion. I said to myself many times that if I had stopped two drinks earlier, or drank something else, I wouldn't be hanging onto the carpet for dear life.

So I've admitted that I am powerless over alcohol and that my life has become unmanageable. I've come to believe that there is a power greater than myself, and that this power can restore me to sanity, for only a power greater than I can do this.

It was evident that once I admitted that I believed that there is a power greater than I, that it is possible to be sane, to be relieved of the obsession, of the delusion, of the pain of a self-centered existence. Did it happen in a great blinding flash of enlightenment? Thankfully, it did not. I don't know if I could have survived a massive epiphany, either mentally or physically.

The Second Step of the program of recovery of Alcoholics Anonymous is a cornerstone, the bedrock of my sobriety. I have come to believe that there is a power greater than myself, who I choose to call God, who has restored me to sanity.

Now that I have been restored to sanity, I can move forward and work the rest of the steps, gaining some serenity and peace of mind. And by practicing these principles in all of my affairs, I can keep a measure of that serenity and peace, and then go out and carry the message to an alcoholic who still suffers. This is the great promise of the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Stephan M. -- Cypress

# January 2009 Meeting Donations

## *Thanks for your continued support of NOC Central Office*

CITY	DAY & TIME	WHO	Jan-09
Anaheim	6:30pm Fri.	Gratitude is action	185.75
Anaheim Hills	Fri. Kaiser	Y.P. Discussion	60.00
Anaheim Hills	Thuir 7:00pm	Men's Stag, Kaiser	60.00
Anaheim Hills	Sa 6:00 PM	Winner's Circle	120.00
Brea	Tues 530pm	Mens Stag	70.00
Brea	Fr 5:30 PM	Happy Hour BB Study	35.00
Brea	Mo 5:30 PM	Happy Hour Step study	60.00
Brea	Mo 5:30 PM	Women's Happy Hour	57.00
Brea	We 5:30 PM	As Bill Sees It	60.00
Buena Park	Fr 8:00 PM	Friday Nite Discussion	20.00
Buena Park	Mo 7:30 PM	Just for Today	20.00
Corona Del Mar	Noonatics		180.00
Cypress	5-6pm	Sun. Happy Hour	60.00
Cypress	6pm	Spiritual Growth	168.00
Fullerton	Fr 11:30 AM	Podium Participation	20.00
Fullerton	Fri. 6pm	Singles 4 Sobriety	44.00
Fullerton	Sunday Speaker	Meeting Place	50.00
Fullerton	Official Inter-group Hispania	Spanish literature	404.00
La Habra	Sat 10:30 AM	Women's	71.13
La Habra	Tuesday 8pm	Discussion	25.00
Yorba Linda	Thurs.8pm	119601	105.00
Los Alamitos	ALL	Surrender is Freedom	129.00
Los Alamitos	Sunday	Big Book Study 6-730pm	30.00
NOCCO	Central Office	B-Day Norma Lodgson	
NOCCO	Central Office	Anonymous	72.00
NOCCO	Central Office	B-Day Alfred K.	
NOCCO	Central Office	Faithful Fivers Colleen B	25.00
NOCCO	Central Office	Anonymous	50.00
NOCCO	Central Office	Lisette L. Birthday	111.11
NOCCO	Central Office	Soda Coffee	18.00
NOCCO	Central Office	INTERGROUP	71.00
Orange	Fr 8:00 PM	No Puffer's Speaker	100.00
Orange	Joe and Charlie	Big Book Workshop	36.00
Orange	Mon. 530 pm	Rush Hour, Friendship Club	250.00
Orange	Fri. Nite Wand	couples Group	75.00
Orange	Mon.630am	Taking Care of Business	100.00
Orange	Thursday Noon	Freindship Club	70.00
Orange	Tu 7:00 PM	Walnut TustinCl.Disc.	100.00
Orange	Friday noon	Freindship Club	100.00
Orange	Tu. 6:30am	Doughnut Meeting	
Orange	We 6:30 AM	Friendship Club	223.00
Placentia	Tu 8:00 PM	Bradford Discussion	60.00

CITY	DAY & TIME	WHO	Jan-09
Villa Park	24hr.Group	Attitude Modification	252.96
Whittier	Mo 7:00 AM	Attitude Adjustment	5.00
Whittier	Mo 7:00 PM	Womens Calamity	50.00
Yorba Linda	ALL 6:00 AM	Attitude Modification	675.00
Yorba Linda	Mo 12:00 PM	Nooners	91.00
Yorba Linda	Th 7:30 PM	Serenity Seekers	100.00
Yorba Linda	We 12:00 PM	Noontimers	135.00

If your meeting is not listed here,  
PLEASE see your meeting secretary.



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# Fear of Failure

*A student carefully cleans his side of the street*

In a phone call on New Year's Day, a college professor told me she'd fail my final paper for her course. I could rewrite the paper, she said, correcting the shortcomings, possibly retaining my overall A for the course. Or I could let it go and accept the B average my failure to follow directions had earned.

Failure isn't a word that appears in AA literature that much. I haven't scanned the Big Book or "Twelve and Twelve" for it, or added up citations. But much of Bill's writing about the Steps and Traditions addresses personal and group mistakes and misconduct — failures of sorts — and how to manage them: humility, inventory, forgiveness, tolerance.

In reply to the professor, I swallowed my pride, thanked her for the chance to correct my mistakes, told her I'd get back to her about that, wished her a Happy New Year, hung up the phone — and then kicked over the chair I had been sitting in.

What I didn't do is rage at her or think even once about getting drunk. Considering the fact that, good news or bad, that's all I thought about for years, I had a lot to be grateful for. And seriously, what difference was a B or an A in some college course ever going to make to anyone?

I had more pressing and useful ways to spend my time than revisiting an academic exercise I'd already worked through. But something was eating me. I was getting As and Bs in all my courses, I'd worked hard on that paper, and I just don't do F-level work. I'm too obsessive.

My heart was racing, and my head was catching up with fantasies of getting the professor fired. However inconsequential the cause, I cannot afford to turn my back on resentment and self-pity. They tax my serenity, my patience, my concern for others, and they kept me drunk for years. So I had to do something.

One of the most difficult skills for me to learn and remember about living sober is listening, especially listening to criticism. My first instinct is to strike back. Fear and anger always hinder clarity. "Anger is the wind that blows out the lamp of reason," according to a local old-timer.

Hearing criticism that is to some extent justified, but out of proportion with my behavior, I vacillate between believing it entirely and rejecting it altogether as a personal attack. I can be sure one moment that I've been found out, and a phony like me deserves no less than failure and ridicule. And I can be equally certain the next moment that I'm a victim of someone else's envy and mendacity. I know this because I've spent years taking my inventory and sharing with other alcoholics.

With such a volatile and fragile mind, and registering that I'd failed a final paper that had cost me many hours' work, I needed to sit quietly, breathe, let what my professor said just be what it was, and unpack my AA tool kit.

"It's a spiritual axiom," I reminded myself, "that every time we are disturbed there is something wrong with us." Maybe I hadn't been treated fairly. Okay, but I was certain from past mistakes that it really wouldn't help to argue, defend, stonewall, deny, or attack. Balance, I reminded myself. I need balance, and I've never been able to find it on my own.

In my drinking days, when I didn't like what you thought of me, I would shoot back with rage or silent scorn. One negative comment could earn you a place on my list for the rest of your life. And every single night, I could drink myself into not car-

ing what you or anybody else thought about me. My view of others withered with my unwillingness to entertain the possibility I might be wrong, and my circle of friends got pretty small: down to me and my bottle in the end.

The point now isn't to get the greatest number of people to like me. It's to live at peace with myself, comfortable in my own skin, without blowing back and forth between self-loathing and blaming others. So I started in on my inventory.

Beginning with fear and pride, everything I wrote down was familiar territory, right down to the final admission of still being childish, grandiose, and over-sensitive — to a degree. With that out of the way, and having shared the situation with several sober alcoholics, and a couple of non-alcoholics too, I set to work weighing the professor's remarks and evaluations. And I felt grateful to have a faith that works, a step-by-step method to follow, and a simple vocabulary that got to the heart of the matter quickly.

The upshot is that I was able to review my failing paper with the professor, calmly admitting its shortcomings, but also — and most importantly for me — "take due note of things well done." She heard me out, again offered the chance to rewrite, but refused to change the grade.

I came away knowing that I had acted thoughtfully, standing up for my work without accusation, and without fear or anger in my voice. I didn't want to drink, didn't need to make amends, and didn't need to submit to someone else's low opinion of me, either. Today, I accept that people can disagree with me and still lead purposeful lives. So can I. And it was time to move on.

- Anonymous

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For more information