

Anonymous Times

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

Volume 15, Issue 6

November/December 2010

“If I can get through to just one other alcoholic ...”

Inmate finds sobriety serving life term, hopes his story will help others

My name is Richard, and I'm a recovering alcoholic, now in California State Prison, Solano. I abused alcohol for 28 years to displace feelings of frustration and anger. Then, on June 10, 1987, my whole life changed. While driving under the influence of alcohol, I caused the death of a perfectly innocent stranger. It was an act of unthinkable stupidity and selfishness. I was eventually sentenced to 15 years to life for second degree murder.

I wasn't born addicted to alcohol – none of us are. I accept full responsibility for all my circumstances. No one else is to blame for my addictions and selfish actions. I just made poor choices when I was very young. I preferred the dizzy, disoriented, dull feeling of being drunk to how I felt when I wasn't. To this day, I still find myself experiencing deep remorse and helplessness when I think of the enormity of suffering and pain that I am responsible for.

I am not any different than the next alcoholic. When it came to addiction-related problems that developed in my life, I would always play the blame game. Instead of seeking the source of my problems and a solution, I placed the responsibility elsewhere and continued to drink and get drunk.

Not in my wildest nightmares did I ever think I would end up killing anyone while under the influence, nor end up in prison for the

Continued on page 2

Annual Yuletide Dinner, Dance to be held Dec. 11

Santa Claus is again dusting off his red suit in preparation for his annual visit. In keeping with that, the 2010 North Orange County AA Holiday Dance will be held Saturday, Dec. 11, at the La Habra Community Center – Grand Ballroom, from 6 p.m. to midnight.

The annual event will feature dinner, a speaker meeting, a 50/50 raffle and a dance. Tickets bought before Thanksgiving are \$18.50. The price is \$20 if purchased afterward. Call Central Office at (714) 773-4357 or Michele M. at (714) 345-9895, Pete K. at (714) 306-4223 or Tom T. at (714) 224-8768 for tickets or more information.

North Orange County Central Office

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Happy Holidays!

The staff of the Anonymous Times would like to wish everyone a happy holiday season. The holidays can be an especially tough time for those in recovery, particularly newcomers. If you feel you are going to drink, call your sponsor or (714) 773-4357. The phone line is answered 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

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NOCCO Jan.-Sept. 2010 Revenue and Expenses

Revenue	Jan-Sep-10	Jan-Sep-09
Sales - AA Books and Literature	\$30,832.57	\$27,397.68
Sales - Chips and Non-AA	\$23,132.61	\$26,307.25
Donations- Groups and Individuals	\$42,927.11	\$33,346.87
Fundraisers	\$0.00	\$700.00
Interest	\$214.50	\$552.33
Total Revenue	\$97,106.79	\$88,304.13
Cost of Goods	\$38,983.55	\$36,625.88
Gross Profit	\$58,123.24	\$51,678.25
Operating Expenses		
Salaries	\$29,700.00	\$29,700.00
Advertising	\$0.00	\$401.83
Bank Charges	\$65.00	\$56.00
Bad Checks	\$201.60	\$49.04
Cash Short (Over)	(\$15.89)	(\$4.73)
Computer Expenses	\$0.00	\$134.81
Depreciation	\$322.29	\$463.95
Insurance-General Liability	\$2,163.51	\$1,445.15
Insurance - Work Comp	\$867.06	\$289.85
Insurance - Medical	\$3,143.75	\$2,394.00
Licenses	\$20.00	\$0.00
Interest Expense	\$9.86	\$0.00
Legal & Accounting	\$1,725.00	\$1,575.00
Newsletter Cost	\$1,822.27	\$1,847.62
Office Supplies	\$3,380.72	\$4,133.09
Postage	\$132.31	\$305.79
Penalties on Tax Payments	\$351.85	\$0.00
Office Rent	\$13,950.00	\$14,118.00
Equipment Rental	\$1,759.58	\$1,378.91
Repairs & Maintenance	\$0.00	\$50.00
Seminars & Education	\$1,455.11	\$527.78
Taxes- Payroll	\$2,397.89	\$2,383.96
Taxes- Annual Filings	\$60.00	\$50.00
Telephone	\$2,769.07	\$2,652.05
Utilities	\$1,873.31	\$1,996.04
Total Operating Expense	\$68,154.29	\$65,948.14
Other Income and Expense	\$0.00	\$0.00
Net Income/(Loss)	(\$10,031.05)	(\$14,269.89)

Prison ... From Page 1

rest of my life because of it. I have, however, spent the past two decades incarcerated, and made it my mission in life to turn myself around.

There is hope for us, but we have to care about ourselves and other human beings in order to change. My hope came on September 18, 1989 – my sobriety date. I like who I've become now. It's a feeling that won't wear off in 10 or 12 hours, leaving me nothing to show for my efforts but a hangover and trail of devastation in my wake.

Don't let your wake-up call be from some jail or prison cell, awakening only to find out you've killed someone the way I did! I've caused much pain and suffering for many people, needlessly. Even to this day, it's something that hangs over me. I will have to live with it for the rest of my life. It is something that will never go away.

Alcoholism is a cunning enemy. We must never become complacent, and think for one moment that we can ever have just one drink for any reason whatsoever. My hope is that if I can convince just one person to change his or her life before it's too late, at least that person can be relieved of his suffering.

I have great feelings of gratitude toward the many people in the fellowship of A.A. that have challenged and forced me to take an honest, hard look at my attitude and the motivations behind the absurdly insane and self-centered things I've done in the past.

Based on my experience, I have found that for me to sustain anything wholesome and beneficial in my life, my ongoing recovery from alcohol and drugs must continue to be my top priority. Without sobriety, I am thoughtless, reckless, and self-absorbed – even at the cost of the safety and well-being of others.

It's taken many years, but through A.A. I have found true peace and serenity, and for this I am truly grateful. In spite of my current situation and environment, I no longer feel imprisoned in my head. I will remain indebted to Alcoholics Anonymous for the rest of my sober life!

*Richard G.
California State Prison, Solano*

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Camaraderie, Sobriety Found in Home Groups

My name is Stephen M. My sobriety date is December 12, 1987, and I have a sponsor who is active in recovery and a home group, the Thursday Night Men's Stag at Mo's Fullerton Music, which is the best men's meeting in AA. The first three things I just listed are facts, the fourth, about my home group, is my opinion. But it is an important thing to have a home group, and if you do not consider your home group the best meeting in all of AA, I suggest you find the best meeting for you in AA and make it your home group.

Why? My home group consists of a core of approximately 40 men, who I know I can go to with anything, and I can seek advice, opinions or help, and any one of the men in this group will gladly help. They will also pull my covers when I start to get "good ideas" and start making plans, instead of allowing God to run the show. They know me, and I know them. We know each other's wives, girlfriends, children. We have shared experiences through the years that allow us to be friends, rather than just acquaintances.

Home groups help members through good times and bad. such groups are often vital to an alcoholic's sobriety.

I also know that each of these men have worked the twelve steps, and continue to apply the principles on a daily basis, to the best of their ability. How do I know this? In the meetings before the meeting, in the meeting, in the meeting after the meeting: the fences come down and we share honestly and openly from the heart about where we are and what is going on in our lives. We provide help where necessary and critique, sometimes harshly (as men do).

We engage in male bonding: we go camping twice a year, to a spiritual retreat once a year, and dinner every week before the meeting. Not everyone engages in all of the activities consistently, but they are available, and that is a big part of building the shared memories that create bonds of friendship.

Why is this important? There will come

a time in every recovering alcoholic's life when the urge to drink will become overpowering. Our ability to maintain sobriety will be based on our spiritual condition, which is a result of working the twelve steps, our ability to maintain strong bonds with other alcoholics, and to reach out and ask for help. A little cell phone can be quite heavy at times, but a call to a friend when you are in desperate straights can mean the difference between staying sober and getting drunk.

It is this alcoholics opinion that the program of AA, as outlined in the first 164 pages of the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, and the maintenance of a strong spiritual program, which includes a group of people with whom you are comfortable, gives me a chance to stay sober when confronted by that urge.

With some service work to get me out of my head for a little while, I may just become a bearable human being. Having a solid base of friends who mostly attend my home group (the best in the world!), I remain accountable for my thoughts, deeds and actions. If you do not have a great home group, I encourage you to find one and build that foundation.

Stephen M., Fullerton

Jail Prompts Woman to Focus on 12 Steps

One more jail stay may be it for alcoholic

Hi, my name is Sherry. I'm going to start this by saying I am scared and unsure what to write, but I do know God will guide me.

I have fought this disease for 37 years. I started when I was about 11 and have struggled ever since. I say this because it's on my mind and in my heart right now. When I was laying in my cell at age 15 or 16, kicking alcohol and heroin, a lady from Alcoholics Anonymous came to my cell and tried to talk to me. I told her to go away because, as far as I was concerned, she didn't know what I was going through. She showed me her arms. They had tracks all over them. Still, I pushed her away. As she left, she told me to remember her face and know that I was not alone.

Now more than 30 years later, I still see her face and hear her voice constantly. If you think H&I is a waste of your time, I'm telling you that it's not. God keeps her image in my mind, so when I felt like I couldn't do this last recovery, there was a ray of hope from her.

I was paroled and went to sober living. I like to think I really got into the program. Whether it was H&I or detoxes, I always tried to be helpful to prospective AA's. Yet something was missing. And I relapsed. This one just about killed me. I ended up in the hospital due to a bacterial infection. I was told I might die, so I withdrew and was mean to everyone.

Thank God for the program. No matter how mean I was, you people never left me alone. The day before I was to have surgery, I was so afraid, but had no idea how to tell anyone. So I just kept pushing everyone away until my 5-year-old daughter came into the room with a pink blanket and asked if I remembered when,

Continued on page 9

UPCOMING EVENTS!

Holiday Volunteers Needed at Central Office this Year

Temporary volunteers are needed at Central Office to answer phone calls and talk to people in need of help this holiday season.

The holidays can be especially troublesome for recovering alcoholics or those who haven't yet received the message of hope and fellowship the program offers.

Those with at least six months of sobriety are encouraged to contact Roxy at Central Office to help fill in for vacationing regulars. It's a great way to get out of your self and to be of service. A variety of shifts are available.

Contact Roxy at (714) 773-4357 for more information.

Annual Women's Conference Slated for Anchorage, AK

Make plans now to attend the 47th Annual International Women's Conference in Anchorage, AK February 10-13, 2011. The three-day event will be held at the Egan Center in the heart of downtown Anchorage.

The literature for the event states, "The conference is a bridge to a better understanding of the Alcoholics Anonymous philosophy and way of life because of our special needs in sobriety as women."

For more information, contact Chair, Allison K. at akgypsy@arctic.net; co-chair Angela C. at endlesslight@rocketmail.com; or treasurer Susan H. at susinak@hotmail.com.

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

Since the last issue,
Central Office took 904 calls:

478 from men and
426 from women.



Keep up the great work — YOU make a difference!

CHECK IT OUT – DUDE! YOUNG PEOPLE'S A.A. MEETINGS!

Sunday		
Fullerton	6 p.m.	530 W. Commonwealth Ave.
Orange	7 p.m.	261 N. Glassell@Chapman (The Ugly Mug)
Monday		
Irvine	7:30 p.m.	Wild Bunch Men's Step Study 5001 Newport Coast Dr. Mariners Church (Port Kid Zone room)
Tuesday		
Anaheim Hills	7:30 p.m.	Step Study/Kaiser Lakeview-Bsmt.
Dana Point	7:30 p.m.	Campfire Beach Meeting (Winter) 34451 Ensenada Pl. @ D.P. Harbor Dr. - Boat House (Youth Center) (November thru March)
Wednesday		
Irvine	7:30 p.m.	Wild Bunch Beginner Q&A 18842 Teller Ave. @ Campus (New Song Church)
Garden Grove	8 p.m.	Young People's Meeting 7212 Chapman Ave. @ Knott Ave. (Serenity Hall) 797-G4
Yorba Linda	8 p.m.	Topic Discussion 5320 Richfield Rd.
Newport Beach	8:30 p.m.	Topic Discussion, 414 E. 32nd St.
Thursday		
Costa Mesa	8 p.m.	Moorehead Podium Call-up 2476 Newport Blvd. @ Fair (Oddfellows Hall)
Laguna Beach	8 p.m.	Romper Room Beginners 20456 Laguna Canyon Rd.
Friday		
Anaheim Hills	8 p.m.	Discussion-411 Lakeview Ave. @ 91 Fwy. (Medical Building, Basement, Rm # B-4)
Huntington Beach	7 p.m.	Seacliff, 225 7th St., Garage #1 @ Olive
Irvine	7:30 p.m.	Boys in Sobriety 4400 Barranca & Culver

Central Office Support is Vital!

Central Office keeps the doors open during the day to help recovering and suffering AA members alike. We provide (at cost) the Big Book. We also provide the 12x12, assorted literature, chips, and newcomer packets. Your office manager organizes volunteers, makes bank deposits, keeps your accounting data accurate and safe guards your inventory. We make and distribute your meeting schedules and the Anonymous Times newsletter. Volunteers take calls from suffering alcoholics and organize 12 step calls 24 hours a day. The phone line and special call forwarding are paid for by your central office donations.

Please ask at your next business meeting if you are donating monthly to your Central Office. Being self-supporting means not only paying for rent and coffee, but also paying for the services you receive through Central Office.

If your group has stopped donating (or never started), please bring it up at your next business meeting and take a group conscience. The board has had a new influx of members, and oversight is strong. Traditions are always the first thought for any changes being considered.

We invite anyone to call, email, and/or attend the monthly Intergroup meeting, which is held at 7:30 p.m. the second Wednesday of every month at the First Christian Church, 109 E. Wilshire, Fullerton.

We value your input and want to make sure your opinion is heard.

Recycle Newcomer Chips!

You've heard about recycling aluminum cans and glass



bottles for pocket change. How about recycling your newcomer chips for a worthy cause?

If you have been sober awhile, no doubt you have several newcomer chips among your collection.

Why not put them to good use and donate them to NOC Central Office?

Contact Roxy at **(714) 773-4357** for more information. Or stop by Central Office, 111 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, CA 92831.

BIRTHDAY DONATIONS

Suzanne S. 11 years
Chuck J. 6 years



PUBLISH YOUR BIRTHDAY or SOBRIETY STORY TODAY!

Shall we put another candle on your birthday cake too?

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. Email: officemanager@aanoc.com.

Central Office News

Softbound literature on sale now

Central Office is continuing its sale on packets of soft-bound literature. For the time being, get \$35 worth of pamphlets and literature for \$10.

With titles such as "Understanding Anonymity," "the 12 Traditions Illustrated" and "The A.A. Group - Where it All Begins," it's enough literature to last the typical meeting six months or longer.

Visit NOC Central Office now at 111 E. Commonwealth Ave., Ste D., Fullerton, CA 92831.

Holiday 'Love Jar' Established

Central Office is sponsoring its annual "Love Jar," a campaign to raise money to send newcomers to the holiday dinner/dance in La Habra.

It's a great way to spread a little joy of the holiday season to a person who otherwise couldn't afford to attend the annual event. Contributions in any amount are being happily accepted.

Call Roxy at 714) 773-4357 or stop by Central Office, 1111 E. Commonwealth, Ste. D, Fullerton, CA 92831, for more information.

Projections and Expectations Never Work for Alcoholic

Projections and expectations have been a bit of a theme around my group of friends. To me, projecting has a negative tone. I never project a situation as turning out good. It is always bad. An example of this is when my daughter moved to Las Vegas (against my wishes) when she was 13. I "projected" her doing all kinds of things that never happened.

When it comes to expectations, I always envision a situation working out to my advantage, as when I do my job properly, I expect to get a raise. Sometimes it comes through, which is fine, and I don't give it a second thought. Often, it doesn't and I am let down.

I was going over someone's Eighth Step list with him the other night and he was concerned about making the amends to certain people and places. Fortunately, the Eighth Step is simply making a list and

becoming willing to make the amends. That eased his mind considerably.

With my years of sobriety, I am not immune to any of this. I worry about a job that is not going to pan out. I expect my wife and child to act a certain way. With experience comes an illusion of serenity. Sometimes. I don't always blow it, but sometimes I do.

Just today, my friends and I are involved with The Orange County Sober Poker Run. This was our second year. Last year, we had a certain amount of growing pains, as should be expected. With last year as a training period, we were going to really put on a show this year. We expected to double the amount of participants, raise a ton of money -- just really blow the roof off the place.

We had eight more participants than

last year. Personally, I was a little disappointed with that. My initial reaction was to be mad at the people who promised to show up and didn't. Who then would I take that anger out on -- the folks who did show up? That would not be a good idea. So I decided to adopt the "fake it til I make it" attitude. That meant putting on a smile, maintaining a pleasant attitude and thanking the volunteers for helping.

And wouldn't you know it, everything turned out GREAT! The band (The Anonymous) was fantastic. The raffle prizes were well received. People suggested we do this twice a year.

Everybody had a good time, not to mention we were able to raise three times as much money as we collected last year.

In the morning, I was done with this particular venture for 2010. Now it is evening, and I truly mean it when I say "see you next year!"

Paul P. Fullerton

AA History

Where Does AA stand on Non-Alcoholic Beer?

This isn't exactly a question of history, but I would appreciate an answer. My question is this: what is Alcoholics Anonymous stand on drinking non-alcoholic beer? I drink it every once in a while with no apparent deleterious effects. However, someone told me it does not jibe with Alcoholics Anonymous guides. Thank you for your answer.

First some borrowed comments: Alcoholism can be a slippery-enough slope. Why grease up your shoes?

I imagine that if a person whose drug of choice came in a needle were to shoot up a few syringes of water just for kicks, it could set off an avalanche of cravings. Would simulated sex be okay for a sex addict trying to recover?

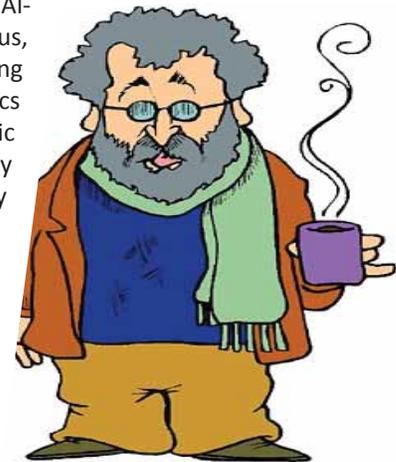
Non-alcoholic beer contains a certain amount of alcohol.

As to the view of Alcoholics Anonymous, page XXVIII speaking of chronic alcoholics (line 8): "These allergic types can never safely use alcohol in any form at all." Page XXX, line 30 states, "The only relief we have to suggest is entire abstinence."

And page 22, line 30, states, "We are equally positive that once he takes any alcohol whatever into his system, something happens, both in the bodily and mental sense, which makes it virtually impossible for him to stop. The experience of any alcoholic will abundantly confirm this."

So-called non-alcoholic beer is made for non-alcoholics.

Jerry L., Brea



SPEAKER MEETINGS: NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2010

Anonymous Times would like to publish your list of speakers for January/February 2011. Deadline for publication is December 15, 2010. Email: aaletters@gmail.com.

Friday 8 p.m. St. Jude Speaker
St. Jude Hospital, Erickson Building
101 E. Valencia Mesa, Fullerton, CA
Come hear a fabulous speaker in Alcoholics Anonymous share their experience, strength and hope every Friday night.

Friday 8:00 p.m. Downtown Fullerton Speakers
109 E. Wilshire, Fullerton 92832
Come hear a fabulous speaker in Alcoholics Anonymous share their experience, strength and hope every Friday night.

Friday 8 p.m. La Habra Speaker
631 North Euclid St., La Habra, CA 90631
Come hear a fabulous speaker in Alcoholics Anonymous share their experience, strength and hope every Friday night.

Friday 8:00 p.m. No Puffers Speaker
395 S. Tustin St., Orange
Nov. 5 Tessa B., Silverlake
Nov. 12 Grace A., Tustin
Nov. 19 Stephanie T., Newport Beach
Nov. 26 Jim T., Fullerton
Dec. 3 Casey D., Santa Ana
Dec. 10 Jaci W., Irvine
Dec. 17 Susan C., Laguna Hills
Dec. 24 Eric K., Laguna Hills
Dec. 31 James H. Orange

Saturday 8:00 p.m. Oddfellows Speaker
109 E. Wilshire, Fullerton 92632
(First Christian Church)
Nov. 6 Pearl N., Fountain Valley
Nov. 13 Revo M., Lakewood
Nov. 20 Josh S., Lawndale
Nov. 27 Charolett B., Cypress
Dec. 4 Shawn M., Miraloma
Dec. 11 Fred L., Brea
Dec. 18 Cheryl M., Long Beach
Dec. 25 TBA

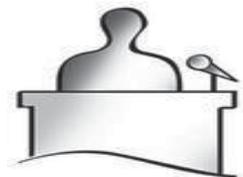
Saturday 8:00 p.m. Liverpool Speaker
4861 Liverpool @ Yorba Linda Blvd
(Messiah Lutheran Church)
Nov. 6 Richelle, O.C.
Nov. 13 Coleen A., La Habra
Nov. 20 Erin, O.C.
Nov. 27 Wendy P., Placentia
Dec. 4 Jim A., Discovery Bay, CA
Dec. 11 TBD
Dec. 18 Roxy S., Fullerton
Dec. 25 TBA

Sunday 10:30 a.m. Fullerton Alano Center
530 W. Commonwealth, Fullerton
Nov. 7 Lisa J., LA
Nov. 14 Quincy J., Encino
Nov. 21 Tom C., Marina Del Ray
Nov. 28. BIRTHDAY SUNDAY
Dec. 5 Tara F., Dana Point
Dec. 12 John B., Seal Beach
Dec. 19 Carla M., Tujunga
Dec. 26 BIRTHDAY SUNDAY

Sunday 10:30 a.m. Western Medical (24 Hr. Speaker)
1025 S. Anaheim Blvd., Anaheim
Nov. 7 Paul P., Fullerton
Nov. 14 Ernie C., Fullerton
Nov. 21 Doug L.
Nov. 28 Ken 2 1/2 cents
Dec. 5 Jim S.
Dec. 12 Holly S.
Dec. 19 Kevin C.
Dec. 26 Randy Kerr

Sunday 8:00 p.m. Fireside Speaker Meeting
8150 Knott Ave., Buena Park
(Ehlers Community Center)
Nov. 7 Tom B., Northridge
Nov. 14 Kevin B., Huntington Beach
Nov. 21 Barbara D., Studio City
Nov. 28 TBA
Dec. 5 John A., Laguna Woods
Dec. 12 Mike C., Corona
Dec. 19 Zack H., LA.
Dec. 26 TBA

Wednesday 8 p.m. Fullerton Alano Center
530 W. Commonwealth, Fullerton
Nov. 3 Mike B.
Nov 10 Gordon
Nov 17 Amy C.
Nov. 24 Roxy S.
Dec. 1 Lynne
Dec. 7 TBA
Dec. 14 TBA
Dec. 21 TBA
Dec 29 Julie



Show up and hear the
message of recovery

NOC Central Office BULLETIN BOARD

H&I 2ND SUNDAY Nov. 14 and Dec. 12	NOCPIC 2ND WEDNESDAY Nov. 10 and Dec. 8	INTERGROUP 2ND WEDNESDAY Nov. 10 and Dec. 8	VOLUNTEER MEETING Dec. 11 at 10 a.m.
<p>Orange County Hospitals and Institutions Committee</p> <p>2nd Sunday of each mo. Institutions Committee: 4-5 pm (Orientation at 3:15 pm)</p> <p>Hospitals Committee: 6-7 pm (Orientation at 5:15 pm) Garden Grove Alano Club 9845 Belfast Garden Grove Call (949) 278-5173</p>	<p>North Orange County Public Information Committee</p> <p><i>Learn about sharing the message with Non-A.A. 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 If you have questions, call Brian K. at 714-658-4581</p>	<p>North Orange County Intergroup Association</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>CENTRAL OFFICE 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 AT (714) 773-4357

26th Annual Orange County Convention April 22, 23 and 24, 2011

OPEN PLANNING MEETINGS at the Roque Center, 9842 13th St.,
Garden Grove, CA

7:30 p.m. Third Wednesday of each month: Nov. 17, Dec. 15, 2010;
January 19; Feb. 16 and March 23, 2011

YOUR HELP IS NEEDED! www.ocaa.org

Send Us Your Story Online!

Anonymous Times
articles can be submitted to
aaletters@gmail.com.

Faithful Fivers Get High Fives For Support!!!

What are Faithful Fivers?

Faithful Fivers are A.A. members who pledge at least \$5.00 each month toward the support of their local Central Office. This idea is catching on around the country. In the publication of the Tucson Area Intergroup, Just For Today, a story noted that "the plan is used in several other cities and came about when we remembered that many of us had spent more than \$5.00 every week on alcohol during our drinking days."

PAYMENT PLAN: I agree to pledge and here is my contribution of \$ _____ for _____ months.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

Make checks payable to North Orange County Central Office (NOCCO)
Mail checks to 1111 E. Commonwealth, Suite D., Fullerton, CA 92831



Two Wonderful Gifts of Sobriety

As sober anniversary nears, alcoholic reflects on the love and fellowship he found

Each year when my sober anniversary approaches I find myself reflecting on the unbelievable gifts of my sobriety. There are two, particularly, that for me stick out above all the others. The first one is the joy of living.

The Big Book says that "...we absolutely insist on enjoying life." And in the 12 and 12, the first sentence of the 12th chapter reads, "...the theme of AA's 12 Steps is the joy of living." And yet another paragraph in the literature describes us as being "...not a glum lot."

I certainly wasn't feeling much joy a few days before my first meeting. I was sitting on the floor of my studio apartment crying. At 40 years old I had lost everything – inheritance money, my job and

career, my family of four and my self-respect. Ten years before I had had a family, a corporate job, a beautiful home in the suburbs and two cars. But these had

The hell I had been living for so many years of drinking had beaten me down. I simply couldn't stand any more.

all vanished. Now a beat up Volkswagen beetle with 150,000 miles on it was my only possession.

But the worst thing I lost was myself. My soul had drowned in a sea of alcohol and my spirit was struggling with deep depression. As the tears streamed down my cheeks, I wondered just what I was going to do. Where was I going to go? The only thing I was sure of was that I

had had enough. The hell I had been living for so many years of drinking had beaten me down. I simply couldn't stand any more.

Through a series of God Shots, I found myself in a small town hospital the next day, being detoxed. The second day there, because word had spread around the small town's AA groups that there

was a "live one" in the hospital, I was visited by two of its members – the local attorney and the town taxi driver. They told me their stories and how their lives had improved in AA. And they left me a Big Book.

The third day I got permission to go to my first AA meeting, which was being held in the conference room on the first floor. Still in

Continued on page 11

Letter from Jail ... From Page 3

as a baby, she used to kick on me. She reminded me how I wrapped her in a pink blanket and gave her to God. She gave me the blanket so that I might wrap myself in it and be alright.

God reached me through my little girl that night. I prayed and my whole being changed. I made it through my surgery, came out and found it was a struggle just to do normal things like comb my hair. I had just had my fifth and sixth vertebrae removed. Anyway, the day I left the hospital, my mom was by my side. When I got to the car, my sister told me she would take me to get my prescriptions and wherever else I wanted to go after that.

No one wanted me back in their homes, so I called my sponsor – and thank God for the program. One more time, all of you nursed me back to life. Every time I picked up the phone and asked for help, someone showed up. And one more time, I was helping everyone else.

I did one more prison term for three violations. When I paroled in 2004, I really believe in the deepest part of my soul that I was alone. I worked at the Meeting Place and was out there helping everybody again.

I am in county jail again. My family, even my mom, is tired.

I never thought that day would arrive. On my third day here, I overdosed. I guess I flipped out, as people often do coming out of an overdose. I got here August 23 and woke up on the 28th in the medical ward with no memory of the past week. I never would have known I overdosed had another inmate not told me. As I lay in that cell in the medical unit, I broke down and cried for the first time in a long time. I've seen what happens to people when they die here – you get thrown on a gurney face down and handcuffed, and pushed outside. Another junkie gone. God, I pray this is my bottom.

If you have read my story and really paid attention, the one thing I never did honestly was WORK THE STEPS. I've been in custody now for 30 days. I'm trying to just stay out of the way and let God do his job. I don't know if it's going to be prison again. What I do know is that I'm going to stay out of the way and let someone else guide me. Things always go bad when Sherry tries to do it her own way.

I pray that my story touches someone in the way that lady touched me more than 30 years ago. Through the program, there is always hope.

*Sherry S.
Orange County Jail*

Meeting Donations Aug.-Sept. 2010

City	Day	Meeting	Aug-10	Sep-10
Anaheim	Friday 6:30 p.m.	Gratitude is action		144.00
Anaheim	Thursday 7:30 p.m.	Men's We Got a Coffee Pot Stag	35.00	35.00
Anaheim	Monday 5:30 p.m.	Primary Purpose		50.00
Anaheim	Saturday 7:30 a.m.	202 W Broadway club	413.93	
Anaheim Hills	Friday 8 p.m.	Couples Group	105.00	
Anaheim Hills	Monday 7 p.m.	Kaiser Women's Mtg.	183.47	
Anaheim Hills	Saturday 8:30 a.m.	It's In The Book	44.55	
Anaheim Hills	Thursday 7 p.m.	Men's Stag, Kaiser	100.00	
Anaheim Hills	Wednesday 7:30 p.m.	Big Book Study	100.80	
Brea	Mens Stag	Friday Night		50.00
Brea	Monday 10 a.m.	Women's Discussion	65.00	
Brea	Saturday 10:30 a.m.	Women's Step Study		100.00
Brea	Thursday 10:30 a.m.	Step Sisters		41.47
Brea	Tuesday 5:30 p.m.	Women's 10th Step	70.00	89.00
Brea	Wednesday 5:30 p.m.	As Bill Sees It	62.00	125.00
Los Angeles	Salvation Army	Closed program	123.92	
Cypress	6 p.m.	Spiritual Growth		60.00
Cypress	Monday 8 p.m.	Topic Discussion	75.00	
Fullerton	Monday night	Keep it Real	50.00	
Fullerton	Daily 6 a.m.	Att.Adjt.FAC		180.00
Fullerton	FAC Wednesday 2 p.m.	Women's Coffee Talk	30.00	
Fullerton	Friday 12 p.m.	12 & 12 Step Study	56.00	
Fullerton	24 hour womens group	Thursday. 6 p.m.		45.00
Fullerton	Monday 6 p.m.	Kats on the Roof	37.34	
Fullerton	Monday 6 p.m.	Mens Lemon at Wilshire	60.00	133.60
Fullerton	Anonymous		230.00	120.00
Fullerton	Sunday 2:30 p.m.	In The Now	60.00	
Fullerton	Thursday 8 p.m.	Men's Stag	77.00	140.00
Fullerton	Thursday 8 p.m.	We Got a Coffee Pot	35.00	
Fullerton	Thursday 6 p.m.	Womens FAC		72.30
Fullerton	Wednesday New-comers	6 p.m. Big Mikeys house	10.00	
Fullerton	Sunday Wilshire Group	Fullerton 8 p.m.		84.00
Garden Grove	Not taking a trip	Garden Grove	20.00	
La Habra	Sunday 7 p.m.	Sober Sunday	45.00	
La Habra	Thursday 8 p.m.	Participation	120.00	
La Habra	Wednesday 7:30 p.m.	Women's Participation	100.00	
La Mirada	Tuesday 8 p.m.	Winners Circle	50.00	
La Habra	Monday 7:30 p.m.	Fireside Greenwood M.		100.00
Los Alamitos	ALL	Surrender is Freedom	50.00	126.00
Los Alamitos	Sunday 6 p.m.	Big Book Study		60.00
Orange	Monday 5:30 p.m.	Rush Hour, Friendship Club		50.00

City	Day	Meeting	Aug-10	Sep-10
Orange	Saturday 7 p.m.	Not a Glum Lot		75.00
Orange	Friday 5:30 p.m.	Rush Hour, Friendship Club	100.00	
Placentia	Monday 8 p.m.	Unmanageables		60.00
Placentia	Sunday AM	Right Start	150.00	150.00
Whittier	Friday 7-8 p.m.	Big Book Study		50.00
Whittier	Saturday, 10:30 a.m.	Women's Acceptance		72.50
Yorba Linda	ALL 6 a.m.	Attitude Modification	775.50	814.80
Yorba Linda	Monday 7:30 p.m.	Book Study		70.00
Yorba Linda	Tuesday 10 a.m.	Women only discussion	70.00	
Yorba Linda	Thursday 8 p.m.	119601		35.00
Yorba Linda	Wednesday	Noontimers		173.36

Meeting Donations are Down!

If your meeting is not listed here, see your meeting secretary about making a donation to North Orange County Central Office

ATTENTION MEETING SECRETARIES

Suggested Donations are as follows:

- ✓ **70% N.O.C CENTRAL OFFICE:**
1111 Commonwealth, Suites C&D, Fullerton, CA 92831
- ✓ **20% GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE:**
Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163
- ✓ **10% MID-SO. CAL AREA #9:**
P.O. Box 51446, Irvine, CA 92619
- ✓ **OPTIONAL 5% Local District Office or Hospitals & Institutions**

See page 67 of the Orange County Meeting Directory for more information.

Please include the following important information when submitting your group donation: Full Meeting Name, Day, Time and City. Please include your name and return address so we can mail you a receipt.

Bringing the Message of Recovery to Veterans

Nucleus of new group is taking shape in Garden Grove; more support needed

On the 75th anniversary of AA's inception, I had to give up my favorite three hours of each week in favor of something even more enjoyable and valuable.

Volunteering at North Orange County Central Office every Thursday afternoon was something I looked forward to each week. But in May a counselor from the North Orange County Veterans Center came in asking if we had any kind of a "starter pack" for new AA meetings. While we got him our \$3 packet of start-up materials, he explained all the great services his center provides for vets (including chemical dependency counseling).

Having spent 6 weeks in the Camp Pendleton Hospital back in 1952, and winding up with a service connected disability, I have subsequently become very satisfied with the treatment we get at the VA Hospital in Long Beach. But

I was completely unaware of the various Veteran Centers throughout the country.

Two weeks went by and the counselor came back asking if we knew of any AA vets who might be willing to start an AA meeting at the Center. My partner, Jack, said he couldn't, so I said I would.

I never imagined that circumstance would dictate that the meeting would HAVE to be on Thursday afternoons. "Win a few, lose a few."

I asked four or five AA vets that I knew to attend our first meeting on June 10 and between the five or six of us, we had about 150 years of sobriety. Since then the nucleus of a great group has been formed and we want to build our attendance. So please....PASS THE WORD.

Our group is called "Returning Home" and meets at 2 p.m. on Thursdays at the Veterans Center in Garden Grove. 12453 Lewis St., Ste. 101 (at Lampson). Call 714-776-0161 for more information. We're listed in the new AA directory.

Ken R., Anaheim

Love and Fellowship .. from page 9

pajamas and slippers and accompanied by a nurse, I shuffled down the hall towards the conference room's open door where the meeting was being held. As I approached the room, I heard laughter wafting down the corridor. That laughter was my first contact with an AA meeting.

The second gift for me has been the love of one alcoholic for another. I have experienced it in the basement of churches, at meetings on beaches, in conference rooms in cities. I have seen it in coffee shops and conventions. It's everywhere. As a result of it, I have a stadium full of friends. One of those friends lives on Cape Cod, Massachusetts. His name is Jeff. For the first 22 years of my sobriety I lived there, too.

Every Thursday night Jeff and I went to the same meeting and sat next to each other. When it came time at the end for the Lord's Prayer, we stood up and held hands with the others. I don't remember

who started it, but we got into the habit of gently arm wrestling one another. After the "amen," we would look at each other and smile. This went on for years.

Then I left Cape Cod and settled in California. I had been away for eight years when I decided to visit Cape Cod again. And, of course, when Thursday came around, I went to the same meeting anticipating that I would see Jeff. And there he was, sitting in the same seat. Seeing me, he jumped up and we hugged. Then I sat next to him like old times and the meeting started. At the end we all stood up to say the Lord's Prayer. Somewhere in the middle, Jeff and I started our old habit tugging at each other's arm. After the "amen," I looked at him. There were tears rolling down his face. There was no need for words. We simply hugged each other.

This is the kind of love you see in and out of the halls. It's one of the greatest healing powers of the Program. And

the Program has freely given that gift to me.

With these two gifts, and so many others, AA has given me a new life, a life that started back in 1976 when I walked into that hospital conference room in my pajamas, heard the laughter and felt the love.

Win W.

Sobriety date: October 29, 1976

Don't drink this holiday season. Call North Orange County Central Office instead. Phone (714) 773-4357. Phone is answered 24 hours a day, seven days a week!

Gratitude Month Our Chance to Say 'Thank You!'

"The idea is in the air that A.A. might adopt Thanksgiving week as a time for meetings and meditation on the Traditions," A.A. co-founder Bill W. wrote in the November 1949 issue of the Grapevine (The Language of the Heart, p. 95) shortly after publication of the Twelve Traditions. In fact, the idea had already taken hold earlier in the decade when, each fall, the General Service Board hosted small Gratitude Dinners — precursors of the larger, more elaborate Gratitude Luncheons that would be held during the '60s as an initiative of the trustees' Public Information Committee.

The first official recognition of an A.A. Gratitude Week, specifically designed to coincide with Thanksgiving week in the U.S. (Canada celebrates in October), occurred in 1956, when the Sixth General Service Conference approved the motion, stipulating that "this action be noted in the annual pre-Thanksgiving appeals to the groups for funds to help support A.A.'s worldwide services." Three years later, Bill urged in a letter, "Gratitude should go forward, rather than backward... if you carry the message to still others, you will be making the best possible repayment for the help given to you." (As Bill Sees It, p. 29).

The motivation behind A.A.'s Gratitude Lunches was threefold: to express personal gratefulness for the gift of sobriety; to carry the message of A.A. to other alcoholics; and to express appreciation to our professional friends for their numerous articles, books and radio and TV interviews relating to A.A. in the year just past. It was hoped, in the words of a General Service Office memo circulated at the time, that the luncheons would "advance A.A.'s public relations by bringing editors, publishers, writers and broadcasters in personal contact with sources of reliable information on the movement."

Held without fail in November at New

York City's Roosevelt Hotel, the luncheons were always well-attended. A typical list of invitees to the 1965 luncheon included representatives of The New York Times, McCall's Magazine,

Besides observing Gratitude Month, many a member uses the A.A. Birthday Plan "to give back what's been given to me," as one wrote.

Medical World News and The Christian Science Monitor. Bill W. always addressed the gatherings, as did the late "Dr. Jack" Norris, then serving as A.A.'s Class A (nonalcoholic) trustee chairman. A discussion period followed the proceedings, an ample selection of A.A. literature was available for the taking, and in 1965 Bill sent an autographed copy of A.A. Comes of Age to every guest.

The luncheons were discontinued in 1968, but the concept of gratitude persisted and expanded in scope. For decades now, A.A.s in the U.S. have set aside all of November as Gratitude Month — marking the occasion with special contributions to G.S.O. In the spirit of the Seventh Tradition A.A. is self-supporting through its members' contributions, and frequently turns away money from well-meaning outside contributors. This means that the active input of every A.A. is vital to the life of the Fellowship.

Grateful for the sobriety they've been given and eager to pass it on, A.A.s are busier than ever in Twelfth Stepping and service. They are reaching out in greater numbers to Loners, people with special needs, members of minority groups and previously unreached alcoholics. It is clear from their sharing that an overwhelming number of A.A.s — along with many of our professional friends — find their own special ways to say thank you during Gratitude Month and, indeed, all year long. Writes one member: "Enclosed is a check for Gratitude Month, because I want A.A. to be there for all those who need it, just as I did." From

another: "The enclosed check is from my own pocket, to help groups in correctional facilities like mine. Some of us are struggling to turn our lives around. We begin the process in here ourselves, and by reaching out." And a nonalcoholic missionary wrote from India, "It is a matter of great encouragement and satisfaction that your A.A. has been a rich resource of guidance, help and light for

a number of organizations dealing with problems related to alcohol...."

Besides observing Gratitude Month, many a member uses the A.A. Birthday Plan "to give back what's been given to me," as one wrote. And from another grateful A.A.: "I want to say thanks today for my life and my family's — or all of us alcoholics in recovery," he wrote. "Enclosed is an anniversary check, because I want the hand of A.A. to be there for all who need it". Like him, many members celebrate their A.A. birthdays by sending in a gratitude gift to G.S.O. — usually a dollar or two for each year of sobriety.

Some groups follow this Birthday Plan by collecting contributions from members on a voluntary basis throughout the year, or until the number of dollars matches the member's total years of sobriety. On the group's anniversary, the money collected is sent to G.S.O. as a birthday contribution.

Gratitude. It's a weighty, high-dignity word, but in truth its close companions are humor and joy. As Bill W. observed early on in the Big Book (p. 132), "Outsiders are sometimes shocked when we burst into merriment over a seemingly tragic experience out of the past. But why shouldn't we laugh? We have recovered, and have been given the power to help others." What greater cause can there be for rejoicing than this?

Box 459© Vol. 46 No.5/ October — November 2000