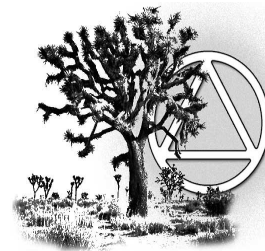


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## I Am Responsible

When anyone, anywhere, Reaches out for help,  
I want the hand of A.A. to always be there. And for that: I am responsible.

## Some Important News

When making checks out to Central Office, please be sure to make them out to:

**Victor Valley Intergroup**

The bank will no longer accept “VVIG,” “Central Office,” or, really, anything but Victor Valley Intergroup. Thank you for your understanding.

**ALSO:**

The Founders’ Day Picnic scheduled to take place during the Convention June 12—14, 2015 has been cancelled. The Ways and Means Committee is working very hard to reschedule the event at a later date in June. They extended their apologies for any inconvenience this may cause.

In sobriety,

Craig B., Office Manager

## Fun (and Misery) in the Sun

For the past twenty years, fifteen years drunk and five years sober, my workplace has been the Mojave Desert. Unbelievably, I would walk all day in 115 degrees under the blazing sun, enduring killer hangovers, spending nights in bars, motels, and campsites working on tomorrow’s new hangovers. While on the road, I frequented bars in every town from Lancaster to Landers, from Barstow to Banning, from Palmdale to Palm Springs, and from Needles to Neenach. I usually didn’t drink in the morning or during the day, but “O-beer-thirty” happened every afternoon and I typically didn’t taper off until the wee-wee-hours of the morning. While camping, I drank liquor all afternoon, took sink baths in rest stops, and dismissed anxious looks from suspicious rest stop patrons. Dinner often included a six-pack (or two), a bag of corn chips, and a candy bar (or two) for dessert. I stayed in roach motels, rubbing elbows with the scum of the earth, hookers and drug dealers knocking on my door at two o’clock in the morning.

(Continued on page 2)

## Deep Down Inside

When we talk about “*a power greater than ourselves*,” we all have a different way of expressing the way we, as individuals, try to describe our understanding of it. We hear a person say, “*Deep down in my heart, I knew better*,” and if we take the sentence literally we could ask, “*How can an organ that pumps blood to everything in our body know better?*” It is obviously a **figure of speech** meaning something else. Or, “What is a soul?” “What shape does a soul take?” That’s another thing a person could have a problem defining. Then there’s “What is a conscience?” It seems to be something inside of us that governs our behavior to some degree or another, and it causes us to feel guilty if our conscience is not clear. [But] these things that I’m describing here are not like organs that can be surgically removed or replaced. These things seem to me to fall into the **spiritual realm**; things that we can’t see or describe but know that they have a profound effect on our day to day living.

(Continued on page 3)

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The brain cells I didn't bake in the sun by day, I pickled with alcohol by night. In the Mojave, when the air temperatures are 100° F, ground temperatures are 150° F. If you're not wearing sunglasses, the sun bouncing up from the reflective white sands will sunburn your corneas. My sandpapered eyelids would scratch down over bloodshot eyeballs, suffering from last night's alcohol abuse. On a typical August day in the Coachella Valley, you can drink two gallons of water and (maybe) urinate once, losing most of your water through evaporation. Already dehydrated from late-night over-indulging, I often could not drink enough water the next day to either evaporate or eliminate. I'd need to stop a dozen times, huffing and puffing my way up the steep, boulder-strewn mountainsides of southern California deserts, hangovers getting heavier with each step.

During the day in the office, I harassed employees for failing to achieve my overachieving work (so-called) ethics. I surreptitiously criticized them to fellow employees for failing to meet unrealistic standards, which fluctuated from high to low because of my cyclic superiority and inferiority complexes. In the field, I surrounded myself with drinking buddies who walked with me all day and drank with me all night. In the evening, I shared misery with old drunks getting older by the drink, who like sober oldtimers, habitually occupied the dame designated barstools. I had a home-bar-away-from-home in every town, drinking with strangers whom I confused for friends. They'd wave me over to my favorite stool where we'd sing along to country music lyrics, celebrating adultery on a barstool.

I was short-tempered and directed temper tantrums at employees. Both my physical well being and relationships were strained and stressed by alcohol abuse. My outdoor workplaces typically required that I drive 100 miles east to Joshua Tree or 100 miles north to Ridgecrest, walk all day, and return home that night. My favorite destination was east to Twentynine Palms. After a day of walking in the desert, I'd get a fat blue quart of beer in Twentynine Palms, another in Yucca Valley 30 miles west, stop at the Mule Lip Saloon in Lucerne Valley 30 miles further west for several icy cold schooner of beer, and finish with a cold fatty for the final 30-mile drive to my mountain home. Drinking and driving never occurred to me, except when I saw police cars. I spent half my time in my rearview mirror! There's a certain cabin several blocks below ours where I'd throw out the empties so my wife wouldn't suspect my drinking, using toothpaste, deodorant, and eye drops to complete the masquerade.

Though I never had this particular problem, in the kinds of dives and saloons I frequented they frowned on you sitting there at the bar not drinking, so my favorite form of consumption was the "beer-and-a-bump" method. Shooting bumps (shots of liquor) got me where I wanted to be while sipping beer allowed me to hang out all night. Whether I went to the bar at three o'clock in the afternoon or ten o'clock at night, I closed the bar at two o'clock in the morning. I'd typically wake up

several hours later, still drunk, hurting, and unable to fall back to sleep until about sunrise. If I made the business meeting the next morning, I guzzled coffee and kept quiet, hoping no one would notice how sick I was.

That was then, this is now. I still walk 15 miles-a-day in oppressive heat, although I appreciate the cooler months more and more as I get older. At 52 years of age, I still keep up with one 22-year old employee (a sponsee), even in August. I've come to realize in the persisting absence of pain these last five years sober that most of the suffering I endured those fifteen years drunk in the sun was self-induced. I've learned that there is no virtue, whatsoever, in enduring self-inflicted pain that is completely avoided by not drinking. I haven't taken a sink-bath in years, nor have any hookers or drug dealers recently knocked on the doors of motels I frequent these days. I've exchanged a thousand barroom happy hours for thousands of truly happy hours!

In working several Fourth Steps with two different sponsors, I've come to believe that, then and now, I tend to surround myself with people who provide me with what I need. That used to be drinking buddies, who provided familiar company and substances on which I once relied. Now, it's you guys in meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous, who provide solutions to problems and demonstrate how to live life on life's terms. Funny thing is, most of the reasons I drank disappeared when I stopped drinking!

In working my Ninth Step, I apologized to several former employees and have made living amends to three of them by continuing to employ them under different, much improved conditions. I (mostly) keep my temper to myself and (mostly) allow them to work out their issues among themselves rather than butting in and interceding. Where I used to take advantage of my friends, I now try to engender an advantageous workplace that is beneficial to us all.

Today I have a "home-away-from-home-group" in Ridgecrest and a "mobile home group" at the 6:30 p.m. men's stag, "It's a Better Deal," in Yucca Valley. Twentynine Palms is still a favorite eastern destination. In fact, day-before-yesterday, I had a business meeting there at 10:00 a.m. I left at 4:45 a.m. and fellowshipped with alcoholics at the Joshua Tree Fellowship Hall at their daily 7:00 a.m. meeting. On my way home at 5:30 p.m., I made "Happy Hour" at the HUG (Hesperia Umbrella Group). On any given day, there are half-dozen halls and dozens of meetings in the 30 miles between Lucerne Valley and Wrightwood, including Apple Valley, Hesperia, and Victorville where I've spent some of my happiest hours of my life.

An antiquated, traditional spiritual song says, "I'm using my Bible for a road map. The ten commandments tell me what to do." In truth, these days, "I'm using my meeting schedule for a road map! The Big Book tells me what to do!"

Submitted by,  
Ed L., Wrightwood, CA

(Continued from page 1)

On page 55 in the Big Book it says, "... deep down in every man, woman, and child, is the fundamental idea of God." This statement does not exclude anyone, and I believe that we all can access that fundamental idea and call it anything we want to. Even the militant atheist has a conscience and has that fundamental idea inside himself as well. [And] when it comes to alcoholism, he often bridges the gap when he comes to an understanding of this and is satisfied with a more generic description such as "a power greater than myself." It's just that simple. The main thing is to come to recognize and to separate the literal ideas from the figurative ideas and drop the prejudgment of what other people use to find their path to enlightenment.

WE all see to come into A.A. on the defensive. Life hasn't been good to us, up to that point, and we have been conditioned to defend ourselves. [After all, we are used to getting the short end of the stick. [We] cross that line in our lives when we realize that we are not immortal, and if we don't do something about it soon, we may cause irreparable damage to ourselves, our families, or others. [We show up at A.A. and begin the slow process of excepting outside input. Most of us resist this and only give it up a little at a time. On page 27 in the 12 X 12 it says, "... to acquire it (higher power), I had only to stop fighting and practice the rest of A.A.'s program as enthusiastically as I could." It worked for me.

In Tradition Two in the 12 X 12, it speaks of "a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience." Throughout all my years in the program, the answers to most of my problems came from the collective input of others that came before me in the program. Much of my intuition didn't come from a comment or a word but came in fragments of many different comments and words which my inner self collected without my knowing the answers were there when I needed them. My part in it was to find the strength to surrender to something other than my own failed thinking. Strength to surrender sounds like an oxymoron, but I find it to be essential to crossing over into a way of thinking that has worked on alcoholics in the millions. All I had to do was to let go of my ego-centric thinking, start listening to others, and let the healing begin. My Higher Power did the rest.

Submitted by,

Rick R., Poway, CA

I don't have time to worry  
about who doesn't like me.  
I'm too busy loving the people  
who love me.

# Intergroup Minutes January 17, 2015

The meeting was called to order at 9:38 a.m. by Helen M. who led us in the Serenity Prayer. In attendance were Ted B., Joey R., Becky B., Carl O., Helen M., Doug H., Chad F., and Craig B.

Carl O. read the [minutes of the previous meeting. The minutes were accepted].

The Twelve Traditions were read by Ted B.

**Treasurer's Report:** Chad F. read the Treasurer's Report.

As of February 28, 2015 there was a balance of \$15,537.26 in savings, \$7,121.93 in the C.D., and \$6,552.81 in the checking account. The income for the month was \$2,910.65, with total expenses of \$3,297.71. February's expenses before literature were -\$387.06. Literature sales were \$1,808.70. The net income was \$140.70. The Treasurer's Report was accepted.

**Office Manager's Report:** Craig B. reports we may need volunteers for Tuesday a.m. and p.m. shifts at the Central Office.

**Ways and Means:** [Joey R. reminded us about the Convention and the Ride for Recovery] coming up. There are registration forms for the event coming on April 1<sup>st</sup>. [THE FOUNDERS' DAY PICNIC HAS BEEN CANCELLED FOR THAT WEEKEND].

**Web Master's Report:** The report was given by Craig B. in which he states Jim has a new webpage with complete control. We also will be opening and it will be cheaper. There is also a link to the Conventions and registration forms can be downloaded there around April 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Old Business:** Bob R. will donate a laptop to Central Office for sales of literature and other items. A printer will also be purchased for receipts, etc. The type of printer to be purchased is under discussion.

**New Business:** Joey R. asked if we are going to have the Founders' Day Picnic after the Convention. That is still undecided and being worked out – on or around June 27<sup>th</sup>? Helen and Doug are not going to make the next Intergroup Meeting due to them going on the Ride to Recovery trip. Central Office's phones need maintenance and are in the process of being repaired. The office also needs someone for [both office shifts] on Tuesday. Carl O. announced that the 12 Step Workshop, which is on Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m., was shut down due to a HUG bylaw violation. (Joe and Charlie tapes [were] being used.)

**Announcements:** Carl O. celebrated his 2<sup>nd</sup> A.A. Birthday on March 19<sup>th</sup>.

**The next Intergroup Meeting will be April 18, 2015 at Central Office at 9:30 a.m.**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:17 and closed with the Serenity Prayer.

Respectfully submitted by,

Carl O., Assoc. Member, Acting Secretary

## Upcoming Events

**Intergroup meets the third Saturday of each month at Central Office at 9:30 a.m. Please have your Intergroup Reps. plan on attending.**

**June 12—14, 2015**

**The High Desert Sunshine of the Spirit Convention will be held at the Ambassador Hotel in Victorville, CA (Soon to be Holiday Inn [again!]). This is a new date for the convention so plan on attending and supporting it. Flyers are available at Central Office, or you can download them at the website, [www.highdesertconvention.com](http://www.highdesertconvention.com) or [www.victorvalleyaa.org](http://www.victorvalleyaa.org).**

**September 19, 2015**

**H & I Roundup at Horsemen's Center in Apple Valley, CA. More information will be forthcoming.**

Thought I'd share with you all an email thought from Marion titled "The Spiritual Life is not a Theory."

"Prayer is not a "spare wheel" that you put on when in trouble, but it is a "steering wheel" that directs the right path throughout life."

And here's another from Maureen from her "Pearls of Wisdom" cache: "If you cannot find happiness along the road, you will not find it at the end of the road."

Yep—a pearl of wisdom!

Submitted by,

Kathy F., Hesperia, CA

## For Today

For Today

The price we paid for using alcohol . . . was our freedom. We finally realized that it costs too much to feel oblivious. The price became so high that we could no longer barter with mood-altering [alcohol] for our time and freedom. The [alcohol] had absolute control

Unless we wake up and pay the price for freedom—which is spiritual growth—we will be a slave to [alcohol] until death. But if we turn our lives over to God, all the liberty we need is made available to us.

Via, *Day by Day*

Submitted by,

Bill P., Victorville, CA

## And Finally . . .

This is maybe something we should *all* work on not only in our everyday lives, but in meetings, also!

