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## The Loss of a "Friend"

**G**OD put George Edward Friend in my life years ago at the Hesperia Umbrella Group (HUG) back when it was on Tamarisk and soon there after we talked of the need for a Friday book study. And so it began.

He made the Friday book study one of his regular meetings and was always there, being punctual while making a phone call if he couldn't make it. The back room book study was small, medium and large at times. In fact many times it was just the three of us; me, George and God, reading to each other and sharing what it meant to us. We studied many different A.A. approved books while learning together.

The last few years I was able to spend most Fridays with him. Before and after the meeting we would drive along Main Street in Hesperia, California. He listened to the exact nature of my wrongs and always said that God forgives me and loves me and so did he at that moment, exactly as I am. We talked of life, death, fear, joy, sorrow, and lust but the conversation always turned back to a loving God. He made it clear that there are many spiritual avenues one can take but to find and keep a loving higher power in A.A. is what works for people like us. This past year he had trouble meditating due to health issues so I asked if I could meditate for him; he agreed and seemed relieved, but I know I was not the only one doing so.

They say he was a giant in A.A., a spiritual guru down the hill at the sobriety capital of the world. I will always remember my friend (all I ever wanted was a friend). George Friend was an honest humble man who was a good example of an A.A. life, whose Higher Power truly blessed.

I am fortunate and grateful for the loving God I have found in A.A. for putting George Edward Friend, Jr. in my life and to share my Fridays with. I wish there were more Fridays in weeks past.

Thank God for A.A.! I could have missed all this!

JOE C., Hesperia Umbrella Group

## To: Jack Alexander

*Fr: Sara Lee Leach*

*Dt: July 29, 2009*

*My dearest Jack:*

*This is a love letter, as you may have guessed from the salutation. You don't know me, and yet you do. I am a sober member of Alcoholics Anonymous. It is in that capacity that I write to you today.*

*You, Jack, have a gift, and your gift saved my life in 1974. Your article, "Alcoholics Anonymous," first published in the Saturday Evening Post in 1941, was the deal-breaker that kept me in AA. I had a personal connection with you because my late father was a journalist and newspaperman. Like you, he could put a hook in my heart with the written word. But this letter is not about my personal good fortune to have found my sobriety in your words. This is a thank-you letter for being a cornerstone in the building of AA as a stable fellowship that has endured the test of time. That's really big, Jack—bigger than you or me. AA might not have made it into our lives decades later if you had not put the spotlight on our fledgling band of survivors and their simple, effective way of staying sober a day at a time.*

*Back to my love letter. As you gave to me, may you receive all of the love I know, and all of the love that there is. May it be yours forevermore.*

*Your special devotee,*

*Sara Lee Leach*

*Apple Valley, California*



# Become a "Faithful Fiver"

## What are Faithful Fivers?

They are A.A. members who pledge at least \$5.00 each month toward the support of their Central Office to "carry the message." Many of us have spent more than \$5.00 daily/hourly on alcohol during our drinking days!

I agree to pledge \$\_\_\_\_\_ and enclosed is my contribution.  
 Name\*: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_  
 State/ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

*\*You may remain anonymous if you wish.*

## FAITHFUL FIVERS for JULY 2009

|            |       |          |      |
|------------|-------|----------|------|
| Pete P.    | 25.00 | Donna H. | 5.00 |
| Wayne S.   | 20.00 | Jim F.   | 5.00 |
| Linda C.   | 12.80 | John B.  | 5.00 |
| Bob O.     | 10.00 | Craig B. | 5.00 |
| Sheldon S. | 5.00  | Kara O.  | 5.00 |

## CENTRAL OFFICE ACTIVITIES for JUNE 2009

|                        | <u>JULY</u> | <u>Y.T.D.</u> |
|------------------------|-------------|---------------|
| <u>CENTRAL OFFICE</u>  |             |               |
| Visitors               | 93          | 740           |
| Information Calls      | 243         | 1,503         |
| 12 Step Calls          | 3           | 14            |
| <u>CALL FORWARDING</u> |             |               |
| Information Calls      | 182         | 1,310         |
| 12 Step Calls          | 1           | 16            |
| <u>TOTALS</u>          |             |               |
| Information Calls      | 425         | 2,813         |
| 12 Step Calls          | 4           | 30            |

With 76 days sober, David D. of Apple Valley had this to say at a meeting:  
 "Going to meetings is like eating watermelons. You chew the meat and spit out the seeds!"



## Things We Cannot Change

George Friend of Hesperia,  
 passed away  
 July 14, 2009, with over 43  
 years of sobriety.

~~~~~  
 Tina M. of Apple Valley, passed  
 away July 2009.

They will be missed!



## Listening Deeply

*How persistently we claim the right to decide all by ourselves just what we shall think and just how we shall act.*

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, p.37

If I accept and act upon the advice of those who have made the program work for themselves, I have a chance to outgrow the limits of the past. Some problems will shrink to nothingness, while others may require patient, well-thought-out action. Listening deeply when others share can develop intuition in handling problems which arise unexpectedly. It is usually best for me to avoid impetuous action. Attending a meeting or calling a fellow A.A. member will usually reduce tension enough to bring relief to a desperate sufferer like me. Sharing problems at meetings with other alcoholics to whom I relate, or privately with my sponsor, can change aspects of the positions in which I find myself. Character defects are identified and I begin to see how they work against me. When I put my faith in the spiritual power of the program, when I trust others to teach me what I need to do to have a better life, I find that I can trust myself to do what is necessary.

*via, Daily Reflections, p. 226*

# A.A. BINGO!

Do you keep falling asleep in meetings? What about those long and boring drunkalogs? Here is a way to change all that!

1. Before (or during) your next meeting, prepare yourself by drawing a square. I find that a 5" x5" sheet of paper is a good size. Divide the card into columns and rows, five across and five down. That will give you 25 one-inch blocks.

2. Write one of the following word/phrases in each block such as:

- a. Issues
- b. Inner-child
- c. Living Amends
- d. Meaningful Relationship
- e. Slip
- f. I'm stuck on Step \_\_\_\_.
- g. GOD Stuff (in any form)
- h. I couldn't find a meeting.
- i. My sponsor has been out of town.
- j. Can't
- k. Won't
- l. Yeah, but . . .
- m. But don't you think . . .
- n. Misunderstood
- o. Never
- p. Rational Recovery
- q. Recovering Person
- r. Searching (as in for answers)
- s. Waiting for God to answer
- t. Huh?
- u. Gonna (sometimes prefaced with: "I'm")
- v. Been thinking (sometimes prefaced with: "I've")
- w. She/He said . . .
- x. Dysfunctional
- y. I heard
- z. Rage
- aa. I don't know much about this, but . . .
- bb. You know, . . .
- cc. Overall scheme of things

3. Check off the appropriate block when you hear one of those words or phrases.

4. When you get five blocks horizontally, vertically, or diagonally, stand up and shout "BULL#@\*%!"

TESTIMONIALS FROM SATISFIED "A.A. BULL#@\*% BINGO" PLAYERS:

"I had been in the meeting for only five minutes when I won." Adam W., Atlanta

"My attention span at meetings has improved dramatically." David T., Tampa

"What a gas! Meetings will never be the same for me after my first win." Dan J., NY City

"The atmosphere was tense in the last "Honesty" meeting as 14 of us waited for the fifth box." Ben G., Denver

"The speaker was stunned as eight of us screamed 'BULL#@\*%' for the third time in 20 minutes." Sambo, Apple Valley

**The Bull#@\*% Bingo Championship will be played at the next meeting!**

Christopher B., Middletown, RI

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## HELP WANTED!

YOUR CENTRAL OFFICE HAS THE FOLLOWING DAY OPEN SO ***YOU*** CAN HAVE THE PRIVILEGE OF BEING OF SERVICE AT CENTRAL OFFICE. AS OF AUGUST 2009:

### OFFICE SHIFTS

THURSDAY 10:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.

THURSDAY 1:00 A.M. – 4:00 P.M.

***ALTERNATES ARE ALSO NEEDED TO FILL IN. PLEASE PASS THE WORD!***

ALSO, WE NEED A.A. MEMBERS TO SIGN UP FOR OUR SPEAKER'S LIST. PLEASE GIVE US A CALL AND ADD YOUR NAME TO THE LIST.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL CRAIG B. AT CENTRAL OFFICE AT 760-242-9292 OR 760 240-1201.

## Upcoming Events

**August 15, 2009**

**Victor Valley Intergroup Meeting at Central Office at 9:30 a.m.**

**August 22, 2009**

**District 19 6th Bi-Annual Event at the Hesperia Umbrella Group (H.U.G.), 9989 E Ave., Hesperia, CA, from 12:30 p.m. — 3:30 p.m. There will be an Archives Presentation as well as “How to Do a Group Inventory.” A free lunch will be served.**

September 3 — 6, 2009

“The Great Outdoor Beaver Meeting,” Beaver, Utah. Visit

[www.greatoutdoorbeavermeeting.com](http://www.greatoutdoorbeavermeeting.com) for more information or e-mail Joe Cane at [jo-jopelli@gmail.com](mailto:jo-jopelli@gmail.com).

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## MEETING DIRECTORY CHANGES

### NEW MEETINGS

#### APPLE VALLEY

The Victor Valley Alano Club, 11085 Central Rd., is now open for meetings after the fire of a few months ago. We will pass along the new telephone number and any new meetings as they become available.

### DELETE

#### BARSTOW

Sunday, 5:00 p.m., Women’s Meeting (B2)

#### WRIGHTWOOD

Wednesday, 7:00 p.m. Open Participation Meeting

### CORRECTIONS/CHANGES

#### APPLE VALLEY

Monday Big Book Study is now at **7:30 p.m.**, not 7:45 p.m. (AV1)

## WARNING TO:

All A.A. members, Office Volunteers and those who answer the telephones after hours

The following scam has been going on for some time now. Recently it happened in Colorado and here’s how:

A scammer (usually a man) will call a local Intergroup or Central Office, claiming to be a member of Alcoholics Anonymous. He will tell the person who answers the phone that his wife and son have been in an accident and have been killed. He must get a ride to an airport to catch a flight. And it won’t be the closest airport either. In our case here in the High Desert, he would want a ride to LAX instead of Ontario, or something similar. And of course they will have no means to buy their ticket. So, the person giving them the ride becomes the proverbial good Samaritan and buys the ticket. Needless to say, one person has gotten a free airplane ride to the destination of their choice while the other has lost their hard-earned money.

So while we do not want to discourage folks from having the proper attitude about helping other drunks – especially those up against a drink – we do caution you to use proper judgment. And at the same time, do a quick inventory to check if your motives are in the right place, and ask yourself this question: Am I doing this to be of service, or am I doing this to be a big shot?

Craig B., Office Manager

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## And Finally . . .

Mick was in the pub yesterday when he suddenly realized he desperately needed to pass gas. The music was really, really loud, so he timed his reliefs with the beat. After a couple of songs, he started to feel better. He finished his pint and noticed that everybody was staring at him.

Then he suddenly remembered that he was listening to his iPod.

*via, the Internet*