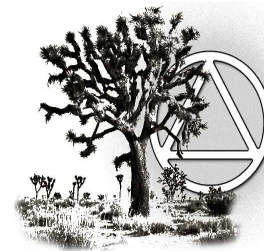


Victor Valley Intergroup, Central Office, Inc.
18888 Highway 18, Suite 107
Apple Valley, CA 92307
Telephone: 760-242-9292; Email: vvigco_aa@yahoo.com;
Web site: www.victorvalleyaa.org



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.

No Matter What

Don't drink no matter what. We often exhort each other and, especially, newcomers. But it's hard enough for an alcoholic to stay sober under everyday circumstances. The question is how do we stay sober through adversity—through sickness, financial disaster and poverty, unemployment, conflicts with other A.A. members, death of loved ones, or even our own impending deaths? How do other A.A. members not drink, "No Matter What?" That is the title of a new book from the Grapevine Press and available at the Victor Valley A.A. Central Office.

The book is a compilation of stories from the *Grapevine* over the last decade or so. They describe how A.A. members have dealt with difficult situations during their continued recovery. The book is divided into four parts: Physical Adversity, Emotional Adversity, Financial Adversity, and Spiritual Adversity. And each part is divided into several sections with titles, such as My Greatest Test So Far, When Love and Tolerance Fail Us, Sober Grateful Broke, and The End of the Journey. The stories tell the ways A.A.s have dealt with the problem without drinking.

"Fertilizer happens" is a popular phrase that people use. Well, you know what I mean by "fertilizer." But I prefer to say, "Life happens." In their stories, these A.A.s use three basic methods to stay sober while handling life. In many of the stories, a member is helped by talking to fellow sober alcoholics. Our program is based on "one drunk talking to another," and whatever you might have to go through, someone has already been through it. The fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous is how we help each other through problems and stay sober ourselves. The second way is by applying the 12 Steps. There are Steps to deal with fears – 2, 3, and 11; Steps to deal with resentments – 6, 7, and 10; and Steps to deal with guilt and shame – 8, 9, and 12. By applying these Steps, often with the help of a sponsor, we strengthen our sobriety while using the A.A. framework for living sober. And thirdly, of course, we call on our Higher Power for help. Our Big Book tells us that

(Continued on page 2)

Beyond My Reach

I love working with young people, even though I didn't get sober until I was in my 40s. I deal with my regret over being drunk for so many years by helping others get—and stay—sober before they drink away a large chunk of their lives. It makes sense to me. God keeps putting young people in my path; they keep asking me to sponsor them. And I keep saying yes. It seems to work most of the time. However, I cannot help but wonder about many whom I have not heard from again—yet.

One man had asked me to be his sponsor when he was 19. He showed great promise and was progressing well—things looked very bright indeed—until the day he told me he had decided he didn't have a drinking problem and he was leaving the program. My heart sank, for I had heard his story. He might not have known, but I did. The Big Book says, "We do not like to pronounce any individual as alcoholic." It doesn't say I can't, or don't know how. And in his case, I didn't.

I didn't tell him that he was an alcoholic. I did the only thing I could think to do. I told him to call me—drunk or sober—to keep me posted on how he was doing, that I would always care about him and be there for him when he wanted to get back off the elevator to hell. I told him to remember I wanted to help if he wanted help.

Six months later, I went to his funeral. He was killed in a drunk-driving accident. His family was devastated. I was crushed. The questions spun in my head like a tornado: Had I done all I could do? Should I have called him instead of waiting for him to call me? Should I have contacted his family? Why would God take a 20-year-old when he let me drink for 25 years? Then I remembered something my first sponsor told me.

"You don't get them sober," he said, "God does that. It is only your job to be ready for God to use you as an extension." That helped, but it wasn't enough. This one had hit too close to home.

I took his obituary and had it laminated. I keep it in a prominent place so that I don't forget how easy it is to get

(Continued on page 2)

Minutes of the Intergroup Meeting 18 January 14

The meeting was opened at 9:32 a.m. by Doug H., who led us in the Serenity Prayer. Jim F. read the Twelve Traditions. In attendance were Doug H., Joey R., Jim F., Craig B., Helen M., Ted B., Dory E., and Sam B. Ted B. read the minutes of the previous meeting. The minutes were approved.

Treasurer's Report: Helen M. gave the report in Chad F.'s absence. As of December 31, 2013, there was a balance of \$8,399.61 in savings, \$7,106.98 in the C.D., and \$6,323.76 in checking. Income for the month of Dec. was \$2,147.65, with total expenses being \$2,593.19. This came to a negative balance of \$445.54 before literature. December literature sales were \$824.54 with purchases being \$0.00. The net Dec. income was \$379.00. In Dec., 17 people contributed \$740.00 to P.Y.M.W.Y.M.I. The Treasurer's report was unanimously accepted.

Webmaster's Report: Jim F. gave the report. There have been 558 hits from Jan. 1 to Jan. 18, 2014. Since March, 2011, there have been 63,000 hits accessing the meeting directory. Jim is working on to better interface the Web site with Internet Explorer and mobile devices. There are cheaper programs Jim can use that will give him more control of the web site. He will keep in touch with Craig B. on these programs.

Office Manager's Report: Craig B. reported that there were 68 visitors to Central Office in December. There were 145 information calls and zero (0) 12 Step calls. There were 136 call forwarding calls and three 12 Step calls. The totals were 281 information calls and three 12 Step calls. Y.T.D. information calls were 1,930. Craig believes the decline in information calls is a good indication that the people are accessing the web site. There is a need for call forwarding volunteers for both Mondays (2 people – one for each Monday) and still a need for a call forwarding person for every other Friday. Please announce at meetings and if people are interested, have them call Craig B. at Central Office. All office shifts are filled. [The] office has a full stock of Grapevine books. There will be "huge" expenses in January, especially literature. Central Office has to pay "up front" the preorders for the 75th Anniversary Edition of the Big Book. Twenty-eight people have already preordered and most have paid. Central Office is focusing on 2014 pledges, especially P.Y.M.W.Y.M.I. However, Faithful Fivers and other pledges will not be neglected. There has been some response to the need for people being on the 12 Step list; 5–6 women and a couple of men have responded. Keep getting the message out to get on the list. New meeting directories will be coming out. If there are additions or changes, please notify Central Office by Wednesday, Jan. 22.

Ways and Means Report: Joey R. gave the report. With regards to the Horseshoe Tournament fundraiser, Joey will

(Continued on page 3)

No Matter What

(Continued from page 1)

the "main object [of the book] is to enable you to find a Power greater than yourself who will solve your problem," (page 45). The description in the Big Book of the stories after page 164 does not say that they are stories about how people got sober or even how they stay sober. Instead, it says that they are stories about how people "established a relationship with God," (page 29).

It is not a coincidence that those same three methods are how I manage to stay sober. I need all three: the fellowship, the program, and my Higher Power. The book is confirmation that these methods work. What do we tell each other at the end of each meeting? "Keep coming back, it works!" So far, I have been able to stay sober through some difficult times. As I write this, I am thinking of my mother, who passed away this morning. Will I drink over this? I doubt it. I have talked to other A.A.s who have lost loved ones. And I have used Step 11, thanking my God for a mother who loved me unconditionally all my life, with all my failings . . . much like my concept of my Higher Power. And, of course, my drinking would not bring her back, nor would it have healed her in her final illness. Drinking would not get me a job, pay my bills, heal my illnesses, or save my life. Quite the opposite, actually. Drinking is never a solution to my problems. But Alcoholics Anonymous, its fellowship, program, and my Higher Power are. With their help I won't drink – no matter what.

Submitted by,
Doug H., Hesperia, CA

Beyond My Reach

(Continued from page 1)

back on the elevator—how easy it can be to believe I will be able to ride it down just a few more floors. I want to remember that some elevators are faulty. Their cables can snap and the brakes can fail. They might not provide me with a way to get back off. I may just end up speeding to my death without a single Step in sight.

I want to remember this for me, especially when someone I know decides to go back out. I want him to know I will be there, but he might not get the chance to make another comeback; the first drink might just be his last. I want to love him enough to chew his ear enough to—hopefully—put something in there that might help him change his mind. I want to show him the love I have been shown, because it is through the love that we begin to heal.

When it seems like love just isn't enough, I remind myself that it is all I have to give beyond my experience, strength and hope. For some people, love may not be enough. I hope the story about Jimmy might be. I hope my sponsee didn't die in vain.

Mark E., Lansing, Michigan

One on One, A.A. Sponsorship in Action, pgs. 58—59

(Continued from page 2)

have to talk to the Alano Club about adding more horse-shoe pits. Also, because people are presently involved with [the Convention March 7—9) and the Ride for Recovery Poker Run (April 4—5), setting the date for the Horseshoe Tournament has become a problem. Joey, at this time, is looking at the last Sunday of March, April, and May. She will have more definitive information at the next Intergroup Meeting. Dances and Golf Tournaments are not likely candidates for fundraisers due to a lack of interest by A.A. members in the past year. Joey is looking to bring together a “quick” fundraiser in the near future if she can find a venue that will keep costs down relative to donations.

Old Business: The A.A. newsletter will start to be e-mailed in April. Announce at meetings that those who wish to have the newsletter e-mailed to them contact Central Office via e-mail. Those who wish to have a hard copy, have them call Central Office.

New Business: None

The next Intergroup Meeting will be February 15, 2014 at 9:30 a.m. at Central Office.

Helen M. motioned to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 10:18 a.m.

Respectively submitted,
Ted B., Secretary

A.A.isms from 2013

(Editor’s note: The following has been submitted by one of our local, published A.A. members, Ed L. from Wrightwood. There were too many to use in one edition, so I will be using them throughout the coming months. Enjoy!)

The following A.A.isms were recorded during some 350 meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous in 2013, from Virginia to California. I know of no other place where so many witticisms and words of sober wisdom have been uttered. Most of them were passed on from sober drunks to other sober drunks for the benefit of keeping drunks sober. If laughter is the best medicine, I intend to practice medicine without a license. Where possible I have acknowledged the anonymous drunk who first spoke the words and given the hallowed halls (rooms) in which the statement was heard. Since we’re all a bunch of plagiarists, I can’t credit anything said to the actual author but only to the person I first heard say it. I’ve usually transcribed these expressions some time after hearing them, so all are prone to losing something in the translation.

Submitted by,
Ed L., Wrightwood, CA

“I have worked the Steps. Now, I’m letting the Steps work me.”
—Jack (from Joshua Tree) to the Sunshine of the Spirit Conven-

tion in Victorville, CA on 9 March 2013

“Step Three opens just a little crack that allows the Sunlight of the Spirit to shine through.” – Jack (from Joshua Tree) to the Sunshine of the Spirit Convention in Victorville, CA on 9 March 2013

“I was so high I could hear a rabbit fart at fifty yards.” – Dave C. to the Sunshine of the Spirit Convention in Victorville, CA on 9 March 2013

“Drugs are what got me here; alcohol is what keeps me here.” – Ed. L. to the Sunshine of the Spirit Convention in Victorville, CA on 9 March 2013

“Remember, God made the assholes, too!” – Alfred to the Sunshine of the Spirit Convention in Victorville, CA on 9 March 2013

“We don’t have it all together. But, together, we have it all.” – Don (old guy from Palm Springs who attended meeting with Bill W. in San Francisco) to the Sunshine of the Spirit Convention in Victorville, CA on 9 March 2013

“I have a knack for saying the wrong thing at the right time.” – Dave W. to Phelan Good Morning Group in Phelan, CA on 20 March 2013

“Those folks who think they know everything piss off those of us who really do.” – Painter Ron to Phelan Good Morning Group in Phelan, CA on 22 March 2013

“Son, you look around the rooms and you’ll find that people are either hateful or grateful. It’s up to you to decide which one you’ll be.” – Walt to Wednesday Night Men’s Stag in Wrightwood, CA on 27 March 2013

“I’ve always been a believer in God, but I didn’t become a follower until I came to A.A.” – Mike S. to the Sunset Group in Joshua Tree, CA on 2 April 2013

“Church gave me amnesty. Psychiatry gave me an excuse. Only A.A. give me freedom.” – Ed L. to the Sunset Group in Joshua Tree, CA on 2 April 2013

“I may be a grain of sand on the beach, but I’m a *fabulous* grain of sand.” – Wendy to the Sunset Group in Joshua Tree, CA on 14 April 2013

“When I hear you say, ‘dubious luxury,’ I hear ‘luxurious doobie.’” – Ed L. to the Phelan Good Morning Group in Phelan, CA on 16 April 2013

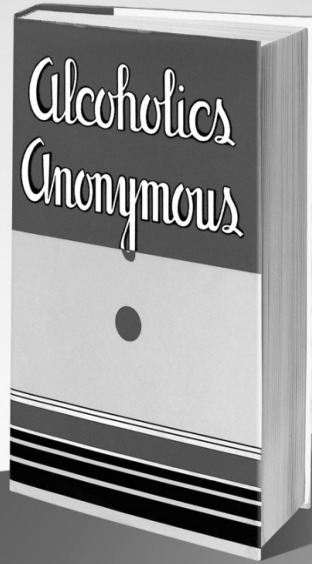
“*Convictions* are the easier, softer way of justifying *prejudices*.” – Jay to the Yucca Valley Alano Club in Yucca Valley, CA on 29 April 2013

“A good way for me to understand the attitude of *willingness* is to reflect on the attitude of *unwillingness*.” – Ed L. to the Joshua Tree Fellowship Hall in Joshua Tree, CA on 29 April 2013

“Don’t be a noun, be a verb.” – Brent to the Joshua Tree Fellowship Hall in Joshua Tree, CA on 29 April 2013

Central Office News

Announcing the 75th Anniversary edition of the Big Book



A.A. World Services, Inc. is pleased to announce the publication of the only authorized reproduction of the first edition of *Alcoholics Anonymous*. This new edition will be a faithful replica of the original, with the famous “circus cover” dust jacket and bulky paper (which is why it was initially called the Big Book).

To commemorate the 75th anniversary of the historic publication of *Alcoholics Anonymous* in April 1939, the 2013 General Service Conference approved the creation of this facsimile edition of the first printing of the first edition.

Preorders: Starting **right now**, you can pre-order your copy at Central Office. They will be ready for pick-up in **April 2014**.

<<<< >>>>

Stop by and browse our HUGE selection of Grapevine books including:

No Matter What

One on One, A.A. Sponsorship

Young and Sober

Beginners

Language of the Heart (soft cover)

The Best of Bill (soft cover)

Upcoming Events

Third Saturday of the Month

Intergroup Meeting at 9:30 a.m. at Central Office.
Call 760-242-9292 for more information.

March 7—9, 2014

The 30th Annual Sunshine of the Spirit Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous will take place at the Ambassador Hotel in Victorville, CA. Flyers are available at Central Office.

April 4—5, 2014

The Death Valley Ride for Recovery and Poker Run. There will be more information coming in the future.

April 18—20, 2014

11th Annual Spanish Congress in Barstow, CA at the Cora Harper Fitness Center. There will be English participation. Rooms are available at the Ramada Inn, Barstow with special rates. For more information contact Martha or Mary G. at 760-985-7815.

And Finally . . .

