

NEWSLETTER for the Fellowship

JAN. 2018

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The Set Aside Prayer:

*Dear God, please set aside everything I think I know about myself, this book, my disease, these steps, and especially about you dear God, so that I might have an open mind, and a new experience with all these things.
Please help me to see the truth. AMEN.*

Taken from: <http://www.theprimarypurposegroup.com/setasideprayer.htm>

Step One — “We admitted we were powerless over alcohol — that our lives had become unmanageable.”

A Powerful Assignment

My tail was wagging away, just like a very happy puppy who has brought the stick back to its master and now awaits a pat on the head. I'd just completed my first AA homework assignment. Vince, my sponsor, had put me on the First Step and I set about doing the best delineation of that Step anyone had ever done. As I went to First Step meetings, my thesis grew and grew. Besides going to meetings, I read and reread the "Twelve and Twelve" and the Big Book. Finally I was ready to impart to Vince all the wisdom and understanding I'd amassed.

Nervous? Yes, I was. As the phone was ringing, I rehearsed what I was going to say. But I was already quite proud of what I knew that I knew about the First Step. Then Vince answered. Everything got jumbled up but he put me at ease and I began to explain the First Step to him. I told him about the unmanageability--that my life had become very small; everything reduced to shoebox size. There wasn't very much in my life and no room for people. Then I launched into a dissertation on powerlessness. I really couldn't wait to get to this. I mentioned how we were powerless over people, places, and things. On and on I went, giving various examples--this was a full-blown, definitely AA-grounded, exposition. I waited for Vince to tell me how wonderfully I'd mastered the Step. I was ready to swell with pride. Then, in a soft voice he said: "It says 'powerless over alcohol.'"

I was devastated. It was as if Vince had stuck a sharp pin in me and I'd suddenly deflated. I tried to counter what he'd said. "But what about this, that, or the other thing?" I was back to that old feeling: "But you don't understand." But he had understood. And it took me a few years to understand fully that the First Step only has to do with being "powerless over alcohol." Many times I've come from a First Step meeting where people talked about being powerless over all kinds of things besides alcohol. And I've gone home and again read the discussion of the First Step in the "Twelve and Twelve" and again seen that the only focus is alcohol. Nothing else.

—Ben N., White Plains, New York Copyright © AA Grapevine, Inc. .

Tradition One - “Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.”

A Perfectly Practical Program I arrived at AA in a shattered condition. I'd lost everything I'd been taught was worth living for: wife, children, career. I already had no friends because of my incessant drive to shrink my world by sitting in a chair in my living room and drinking alone, night after lonely night. Finding that there was nowhere left to hide after a blackout (which resulted in a fire in that chair), I was accompanied to my first meeting by Ray. Ray was then seventeen years sober and from the look of him certainly needed AA. After he'd spent several weeks shepherding me to meetings, I managed to drive him away with my less than friendly temperament and proceeded to do it my way--alone.

Continued on page 2

I trudged desperately from one meeting to another, knowing I couldn't drink. In between I retreated to that fire-scarred chair and sat, alone, alone, alone until it was time for the next meeting. I kept going to AA because there was no place else, but I kept myself isolated from the people in AA. At every meeting I attended I sat by myself, away from the group, uninvolved, like a frightened animal. I felt superior to all those drunks.

Six months into this I was at another bottom. My life was a mess practically and emotionally, and though I'd not yet picked up a drink, I was still alone and desperate. I couldn't take it anymore.

That's when I found the courage to ask Al for help. He was sober ten years, active in AA, and had a positive attitude. Al brought me to different meetings, away from the clubhouse group where I'd hidden myself. He introduced me to a lot of people, which I wasn't thrilled about, but it was good for me. With his prodding and example, I joined a group and began attending business meetings and taking speaking commitments. Al shared with me his story, past and present. I learned how he became sober and how he stayed sober. Al was a devout Catholic and a great believer in the power of prayer, and he often shared with me the value he found in prayer and his belief in God. But whenever I was in a bind, he didn't just say, "Pray. Ask for God's help." He made other, very practical suggestions that came from his experience.

Once, when I expressed confusion about the meaning of spirituality and all this "God business," especially since I had no belief that God could help, Al said, "Look Eddie, there's a place in AA for everyone. AA is a very practical program. We come in here after a lifetime of learning bad habits--number one being drinking. We stay sober and go to meetings and try to listen and we begin to understand what those bad habits are. With the help of the program and the people, we get the strength to get rid of some of those bad habits. Then in time we begin to replace them with good habits. Our life gets better and we pass on what we've learned to someone else." I can't express how much that meant to me. It gave me a faith that there was a solution; that things could get better if I kept coming.

I learned to share my feelings with Al, I was always depressed, angry, sad, lonely, you name it. One day when I was down in the mouth again and thinking that this AA meeting stuff was going nowhere, I told Al how helpless I felt. He said, "Eddie, nobody ever died from a feeling. People die from what they do, not from what they feel. You're doing the right things. You're going to meetings, you're sharing with other people, you're helping them and yourself. You'll feel a lot of things as you get sober, but if you keep doing what you're doing you'll be okay."

As time passed I was going to a lot of meetings, but the thought began to creep into my head that maybe I wasn't really an alcoholic. Maybe I needed to go out and get some more drinking in. I even began to think that people were talking about me and saying things like, "Eddie has a lot of problems, but he's not an alcoholic." My story, I thought, wasn't as grand and dramatic as those of the people I'd heard at open meetings. I was afraid to share this with Al, but finally after many weeks when I was nearly convinced that I didn't belong in AA, I told Al what I was thinking. He didn't say, "Pray for acceptance" or "Shut up and sit down, you're an alcoholic." "Eddie," he said, "the only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking." I'd forgotten that and I thought to myself, "So what if they think I'm not an alcoholic? I have that desire. I don't want to drink. I have a right to be here."

that happened?"

I thought about the blackouts, the accidents, the terror, the shakes, the self-loathing, the nausea, the depletion of energy, the crushing isolation, the unending fear. "Yes," I said.

"Do you want to go back to that?" Al asked.

"No," I responded like a little boy being threatened with banishment to a chair in the corner.

Al said, "Well, you don't have to. You don't ever have to drink again if you don't want to."

I felt liberated after hearing those words. Many people had said to me, "You have to stop drinking." No one had ever said, "You don't have to drink."

Al made AA accessible to a person as sick as I was by showing me how practical it is. I needed to see how it could work for me. He harped on the simplicity of AA, on the wisdom contained in applying ideas like HALT to our lives: try not to get too hungry, angry, lonely, or tired. I abused myself in all of those areas, and still can if I don't stay conscious of that slogan.

First things first. Think. Easy does it. He wove all these phrases into his speech and explained how he applied them in his life and showed me how I could too. Al made me believe that AA is a very practical program and holds the solution to my problem. I'm no longer a doubting Thomas. I've seen AA work in my life. —Eddie M., Brooklyn, NY

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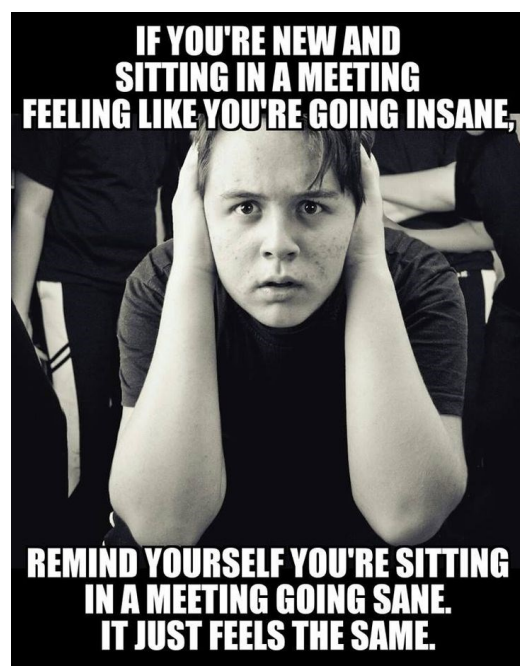


Image taken from: <https://www.pinterest.com/explore/recovery-humor/>

FINANCIAL SUMMARY AS OF DE-		
	BALANCE	
Savings	\$ 19,027.22	
CD	\$ 10,038.88	
Cash in Union Checking	\$ 6,442.52	
INCOME	DECEMBER	Y.T.D.
Group Donations	\$ 1,103.75	\$ 19,238.66
Birthdays	\$ -	\$ 353.00
Memorials	\$ 100.00	\$ 124.00
P.Y.M.W.Y.M.I. (12 members)	\$ 258.00	\$ 3,418.00
Newsletter	\$ -	\$ 30.00
Chips and Medallions	\$ 441.55	\$ 8,803.36
Literature	\$ 373.33	\$ 16,094.23
Credit Card Fee	\$ 9.00	\$ 175.00
Coffee Kitty	\$ 10.02	\$ 212.55
Faithful Fivers		\$ 85.31
Womens Banquet	\$ -	\$ 250.00
Buck of the Month	\$ -	\$ 59.56
2017 High Desert Convention	\$ -	\$ 1,000.00
Reimbursement/ Refund	\$ -	\$ 43.00
Ride for Recovery	\$ -	\$ 3,484.00
Mountain AA Conference	\$ -	\$ 300.00
H & I Dance	\$ 25.00	\$ 25.00
Intergroup 7th Tradition	\$ 26.00	\$ 166.00
INCOME FOR THE MONTH	\$ 2,346.65	\$ 53,861.67
EXPENSES		
Rent	\$ 360.00	\$ 4,320.00
C.A.M. Charges	\$ 117.40	\$ 1,514.78
Utilities	\$ 43.15	\$ 905.01
Manager Salary	\$ 1,190.08	\$ 13,718.71
Charter	\$ 102.25	\$ 1,222.30
Printing	\$ 55.56	\$ 927.29
Security/Maintenance/Office	\$ 98.00	\$ 2,589.70
Chips and Medallions	\$ 89.68	\$ 4,649.41
Literature	\$ -	\$ 13,453.20
Payroll Tax State (EDD)	\$ -	\$ 483.16
Board of Equalization (sales tax)	\$ -	\$ 1,748.00
Federal Payroll Tax	\$ -	\$ 4,585.45
Freedom Financial (tax prep)	\$ -	\$ 180.00
Credit Card Fee	\$ 30.05	\$ 275.67
Professional Services	\$ -	\$ 260.00
Liability Insurance (Hub Int.)	\$ -	\$ 575.00
Alarm	\$ 96.00	\$ 480.00
Ride For Recovery	\$ -	\$ 360.95
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 2,182.17	\$ 52,248.63
NET INCOME	\$ 164.48	\$ 1,613.04
APPLE VALLEY		
Keep it Simple		\$ 160.83
How It Works	\$ 46.00	\$ 691.19
Simple Changes		\$ 275.00
Children of Chaos	\$ 17.00	\$ 779.56

Front & Center	\$ 179.11	\$ 1,665.34
Saturday Speaker Meeting		\$ 624.79
Nuts and Fruits		\$ 78.00
Womens 12 X 12/ Big Bk.		\$ 153.00
Sun. Just for Today	\$ 15.00	\$ 65.00
Thursday Mens Stag		\$ 150.00
Primary Purpose		\$ 180.00
Anonymous Group	\$ 110.00	\$ 1,095.00
Wed. Womens Participation		\$ 116.60
Questions and Answers		\$ 30.00
Coffee Talk	\$ 12.00	\$ 180.00
Campfire Group		\$ 160.28
7 pm Monday Big Book		\$ 27.00
There is a solution		\$ 80.00
Original Big Book		\$ 320.00
Cedar Street Big Book		\$ 54.00
Barstow		
Los Coyotes Mens Group		\$ 720.00
Mon. Mens Meeting- Vets Home		\$ 10.00
Friday Nite Live		\$ 1,200.00
Our Primary Purpose		\$ 200.00
Wed. Meeting-Vets Home		\$ 130.00
Womens Rule 62- Vets Home	\$ 25.00	\$ 50.00
Barstow Desert Group		\$ 7.00
Into Action	\$ 589.00	\$ 589.00
Ft. Irwin		
New Horizons II		\$ 20.00
Helendale		
4th Dimension Big Book		\$ 100.00
HESPERIA		
Back to Basics	\$ 70.00	\$ 1,860.00
Hesperia Umbrella Group		\$ 4,480.00
Wed. Mens Stag		\$ 60.00
LUCERNE VALLEY		
Newberry Springs		
Mon. 12 x 12		\$ 60.00
Sat. Breakfast Club		\$ 200.00
Phelan		
Tues. Phelan Sober		\$ 145.00
Big Book Study		\$ 120.00
Silver Lakes		
No Valid Complaints		\$ 285.00
Thursday Big Book		\$ 80.00
Sat. Nite Serenity Group		\$ 262.00
VICTORVILLE		
Tumbleweed Group		\$ 191.80
4PM Big Book Study		\$ 15.00
Friday Night Speaker Meeting	\$ 10.00	\$ 50.69

Mixed Bag Group		\$ 100.00
Little House Group	\$ 30.64	\$ 67.28
Wrightwood		
Wed. Mens Stag		\$ 720.00
Mon. Womens		\$ 135.50
12 X 12 HWY. 2 RGP		\$ 36.00
9 a.m. Sun. Open Participation		\$ 478.80
In Memory of:		
Bill F	\$ 100.00	

Intergroup Meeting Notes December 16th, 2017

Called to order at 9:35 by Chairman Ted B and traditions read by Bill P

Present were Ted B, Bill P, Craig B. Chad B, Doug H, and Brian J.

Previous minutes read by Doug H and accepted

Treasurer's Report by Chad B

Bill \$18,526.76 Savings \$10,537.62 Checking 6942.47
Income \$4402.22 Expenses \$4230.92 Net increase
\$171.30

Newsletter report: Continues to run smoothly. Julia works hard to put it out on time

H&I Report: Both Juvenile Halls are covered. Federal Correction not covered at this time. All other facilities covered. A dance to benefit H&I will be held Dec 31 at the Alano Club

Office Manager's Report

November visitors 72 Information calls 113 12 step calls 2
Call forwarding Information calls 76 12 step calls 2
Total Information calls 189 12 step calls 4

Office has two shifts to cover. Call Craig for information

Old Business: Computer search on hold

New Business: The Intergroup is currently short a board member. Associate member: Brian J was nominated, seconded, and approved by acclamation.

The ride for recovery committee is up and running. More details to follow

Seventh Tradition passed. Meeting adjourned at 10AM with the serenity prayer.

Respectfully Submitted
Doug H., Secretary

		Final Year- End Totals for 2017	Final Year-End Totals for 2016 (To Compare)
CENTRAL OFFICE STATISTICS	DEC.		
Visitors	63	914	1100
Information Calls	92	1425	1814
12-Step Calls	1	13	12
CALL FORWARDNG			
Information Calls	86	1246	1335
12 Step Calls	0	17	23
TOTALS			
Information Calls	178	2671	3149
12 Step Calls	1	30	35

Looking for a Commitment?

**Needed: New Newsletter Editor for the Victor Valley Inter
Office**

Description of Responsibilities:

- Acquire, organize and/or write content for monthly newsletters
- Prepare Newsletters in Microsoft Publisher
- Send monthly Newsletter to be printed and prepare mailings
- Send monthly Newsletter to email distribution list

Minimum Requirements:

- 14 months sobriety
- Availability to work on a computer a couple hours a week
- Some knowledge of printing / publishing

If Interested, contact the Central Office, 760-242-9292

REMINDERS FROM CENTRAL OFFICE

When Making Contributions to Central Office:

Make checks payable to Victor Valley Intergroup, not AA or just Central Office, and enclose group or Meeting's Name.

Ex. How it Works—Apple Valley, Not Group Numbers.

Thank you.

If you would like to receive or send news to the
newsletter, please contact us here:
newsletterforthefellowship@yahoo.com