

NEWSLETTER for the Fellowship

NOVEMBER 2009

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November is Gratitude Month From Box 459

GratITUDE is always in order, but many groups have designated November as a particular time to give thanks to the A.A. program. It has been that way since the 1940s, when the General Service Board held small "gratitude dinners," which were replaced in the 1960s by bigger and more elaborate "gratitude luncheons." These get-togethers, which Bill W. would address, were occasions for A.A. members to express their appreciation for the program. More important, it was A.A.'s opportunity to meet with members of the media to thank them for their sympathetic coverage. According to a G.S.O. memo at the time, the aim of the functions was, "to advance A.A.'s public relations by bringing editors, publishers, writers and broadcasters in personal contact with sources of reliable information on the movement." The luncheons, which later were deemed too expensive, ended in 1968. Why November became Gratitude Month in the U.S. (in Canada, it is in October) is uncertain. It may have something to do with Bill W.'s mistaken notion for a time that his sobriety began in November, instead of its actual start date of Dec. 11. There are clear connections to Thanksgiving, though. In 1956 and 1957, there were floor actions at the annual General Service Conferences recommending that Thanksgiving week in those years be designated "A.A. Gratitude Week." The floor action suggested that this be noted in the annual pre-Thanksgiving appeals to the groups for funds to help Worldwide Services." However it was that November became Gratitude Month, A.A.s early on saw that staying grateful was important in staying sober. Acceptance may be the answer to all our problems, but gratitude has to be a close second. As many in A.A. have discovered, gratitude is a sure cure for self-pity. And can you be resentful at the same that you're being grateful? Some in recovery will coax their thinking onto spiritual lines with gratitude lists. If not force to look – in black

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Twelve Tips on Keeping Your Holiday Season Sober and Joyous

1. Line up extra A.A. activities for the holiday season. Arrange to take newcomers to meetings, answer the phones at Central Office, speak, help with dishes, or visit the alcoholic ward at a hospital.
2. Be host to A.A. friends, especially newcomers. If you don't have a place where you can throw a formal party, take one person to a diner and spring for the coffee.
3. Keep your A.A. telephone list with you all the time. If a drinking urge or panic comes – postpone everything else until you've called an A.A.
4. Find out about the special holiday parties, meetings, or other celebrations given by groups in your area, and go. If you're timid, take someone new than you are.
5. Skip any drinking occasion you are nervous about. Remember how clever you were at excuses when drinking? Now put the talent to good use. No office party is as important as saving your life.
6. If you have to go to a drinking party and can't take an A.A. with you, keep some candy handy.
7. Don't think you have to stay late. Plan in advance an "important date" you have to keep.
8. Worship in your own way.
9. Don't sit around brooding. Catch up on those books, museums, walks, and letters.
10. Don't start now getting worked up about all those holiday temptations. Remember – "one day at a time."
11. Enjoy the true beauty of holiday love and joy. Maybe you cannot give material gifts – but this year, you can give love.
12. "Having had a . . ." No need to spell out the Twelfth Step here, since you already know it.

Groups and Meetings.

Please see page 3 for a request from the Fellowship

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 SEPTEMBER 2009

Joanna W.	20.00	Sheldon S.	5.00
Wayne S.	20.00	Mike E.	5.00
Bob O.	15.00	Craig B.	5.00
Bill P.	10.00	Betty B.	5.00
Bill P.	5.00	Kara O.	5.00

BIRTHDAYS

Mike E. 10.00

P.Y.M.W.Y.M.I.

Anonymous 28.00

CENTRAL OFFICE ACTIVITIES for SEPTEMBER 2009

	<u>OCT.</u>	<u>Y.T.D.</u>
<u>CENTRAL OFFICE</u>		
Visitors	109	1,028
Information Calls	237	2,180
12 Step Calls	2	18
<u>CALL FORWARDING</u>		
Information Calls	182	1,984
12 Step Calls	3	26
<u>TOTALS</u>		
Information Calls	419	4,164
12 Step Calls	5	44

Things We Cannot Change

Doug Gibson of the Original Big Book Meeting in Apple Valley, CA with 26 years of sobriety.

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Barry Calvin of Apple Valley, CA passed away sober on October 10, 2009.

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B.J. Leeper of Victorville, CA, passed away October 30, 2009 with 15 years of sobriety.

They will be missed!

In Memory of ...

John Gallo 70.00 Gaylen O. 10.00

ATTENTION MEETING PLACES

A request has come in to Central Office from one of our disabled members. They asked if we could list in our meeting directory whether or not the meeting places are Handicapped Accessible. PLEASE contact the office as soon as possible to let us know if:

- There are any steps that would prevent wheelchair access
- If the restrooms (men's and women's) are wheelchair accessible

We will put a note next to each meeting site to be of better service to all who are reaching out for help.

Thank you in advance.

Time To Take a Group Inventory

Many groups periodically hold a "group inventory meeting" to evaluate how well they are fulfilling their primary purpose: to help alcoholics recover through A.A.'s suggested Twelve Steps of recovery. Some groups take inventory by examining our Twelve Traditions, one at a time, to determine how well they are living up to these principles.

Groups interested in taking regular inventory will find a review of the Tenth Step helpful. The following questions, compiled from A.A. shared experience, may be useful in arriving at an informed group conscience. Groups will probably wish to add questions of their own:

1. What is the basic purpose of the group?
 2. What more can the group do to carry the message?
 3. Is the group attracting alcoholics from different backgrounds? Are we seeing a good cross-section of our community?
 4. Do new members stick with us, or does turnover seem excessive? If so, why? What can we, as a group, do?
 5. Do we emphasize the importance of sponsorship? How effectively? How can we do better?
 6. Are we careful to preserve the anonymity of our group members and other A.A.'s outside the meeting rooms? Do we also leave the confidences they share at meetings behind?
 7. Do we take the time to explain to all members the value to the group of keeping up with the kitchen/housekeeping chores and other essential services that are part-and-parcel of our Twelfth-Step efforts?
 8. Are all members given the opportunity to speak at meetings and to participate in other group activities?
 9. Mindful that holding office is a great responsibility not to be viewed as the outcome of a popularity contest, are we choosing our officers with care?
 10. Are we doing all we can to provide an attractive meeting place?
 11. Does the group do its fair share toward participating in the purpose of A.A. – as it relates to our Three Legacies of Recovery, Unity, and Service?
 12. What has the group done lately to bring the A.A. message to the attention of professional in the community – the physicians, clergy, court officials, educators and others who are often the first to see alcoholics in need of help?
- How is the group fulfilling its responsibility to the Seventh Tradition?

Via General Service Office

YOU THINK *YOU* HAVE MONEY PROBLEMS?

Due to the downturn in the economy, Alcoholics Anonymous will NO LONGER be dues and membership "free" as has been the case for almost 75 years. Like many businesses, AA will now be charging for some things that used to be free, such as:

1. Being Rocketed into the 4th Dimension – \$49.99 per trip, fuel surcharge applies, extra baggage NOT included. 5th dimension trips optional. See your sponsor for details.
2. Sponsorship – was free, **NOW** \$9.99 per month, with 4 visits/15 phone calls per month free, after that, \$2.00 each.
3. Membership Dues now \$29.99/month, 10% discount for a 1-year plan.
4. Seating charges – Each seat now \$1.00 per meeting, with a 20% discount for the 90-in-90 plan.
5. The "Pink Cloud" was free, **NOW** \$14.99 per cloud, with a \$5.00 per event environmental cleanup fee. These are the **NEW** ozone-free Pink Clouds that DO NOT add to global warming.
6. Coffee to be \$1.50 per cup, with a 10% discount for 5 or more cups.
7. Hugs now will be \$2.50 each.
8. Conscious contact with GOD now \$9.99/month, with the first 450 minutes free, then 0.10 cents/minute fee over. New "double your minutes for life" plan is a low \$49.99 one time charge – holidays and weekends extra. See the current rate schedule, as GOD is VERY busy.
9. Accidental "cell phone going off during meeting charge" now set at \$25.00 per ring (NOT PER CALL).
10. "I've Been Thinking" fees to now be \$3.00 each, with a relapse re-entry fee of only \$99.99 each, if you're lucky enough to make it back into the rooms.
11. Publication of A.A. Birthdays in "Newsletter for the Membership" fees will be \$5.00 per 5 years of sobriety (\$5.00 for 1 - 5 years, \$10 for 5 -10 years, etc.).

Please, void where prohibited by law. A.A. reserves the right to change none, all or some of these rates at anytime, with no notice to you. If you need a notice of change of rates, a written request may be sent to A.A. World Service headquarters in New York. Of course, a \$10.00 fee applies.

NOTE: The editor does not accept responsibility for your reaction to this article.

Submitted by, Spence O., Apple Valley, CA

Upcoming Events

November 21, 2009

1st Annual Fall Dance of the High Desert Alano Club, Church of Religious Science, 18575 Corwin Rd., Apple Valley, CA. Dinner will be \$5.90 and includes dessert and beverage. For ticket prices and information call Russ at 760-780-8305 or Kathy at 760-948-8945.

December 19, 2009

Intergroup Meeting at Central Office, 18888 Hwy. 18, Suite 107. For information call 760-242-9292.

December 31, 2009

New Year's Dance at the Victor Valley Alano Club, 11085 Central Rd, Apple Valley from 9:00 p.m. — 1:00 a.m. Call Richard B. at 760-964-7240 for more information. MUST BE OVER 18 TO ATTEND.

March 19 — 20, 2010

4th Annual Ride for Recovery. Starts Friday with a Speaker Meeting at the Barstow Alano Club with the ride to Beaty, NV on Saturday. For more information call Abel at 760-559-1880, Rob H. at 818-929-4119, or Central Office at 760-242-9292.

July 1 — 4, 2010

International Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous, San Antonio, TX. Convention and housing registration is now open and all necessary information is available at Central Office. For more information visit www.aa.org. There will also be information at Central Office.

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and white – at what they have been given, too many A.A.s find they can drift off into a reverie about what they imagine they've been denied. Being quick to take credit for what has been a gift also takes its toll. Bill W. once detected in himself a stain of self-congratulations for his contributions to A.A. Seeing that this attitude was cutting him off from his fellow A.A.s, he reflected, "How much better it would have been had I felt gratitude rather than self-satisfaction – gratitude that I had once suffered that pains of alcoholism, gratitude that a miracle of recovery had been worked upon me from above . . ." (Grapevine 1946). Some groups will hold Traditions meetings in November to remind themselves of the rich heritage of A.A. Others do topic meetings on the various aspects of gratitude, such as "gratitude is not passive" or "giving it away." During the course of the year, many members of the Fellowship send a gratitude gift of one or two dollars for each year of sobriety on their anniversaries to their local Intergroup or to the General Service Office. As Bill W. wrote in a letter in 1959, "If you carry the message to others, you will be making the best possible repayment for the help given you."

*Reprinted from Box 459, No. 5,
October-November 2009*

Minutes from the 10/17/09 Intergroup Meeting

Kara O. called meeting to order at 9:30am.

Betty gave treasurers report as Sheldon went hunting for 1st day of Pheasant hunting. See report in newsletter.

Office Managers report: Craig B. said in September we had 87 visitors to Central office. Received 223 info calls with 1 12 step call. Call forwarding had 208 calls with 3 12 step calls. All office shifts have been filled. Thanks for your support. Do need call forwarding for every Wednesday & Thursday evenings. To offer your time, call Central office.

Old business: Betty wants to thank Doug for steps in the newsletter. Anybody wishing to write an article for the newsletter, you may do so by submitting your article to Central office or Email it to vvigco_aa@yahoo.com.

New Business: Nominations for position on the Intergroup Committee as follows: Wayne nominated for Secretary by Kara and elected. Sheldon nominated for Treasurer for life, tabled. All other positions were tabled as well. We also need a Public Info person. Thanks to Shane for conducting a picnic & speaker meeting at Virginia Park in Apple Valley on October 10th. \$61.75 was donated to Central Office. Again, THANKS!

Birthdays: Sam D. 12 years, Tom S. 5 years Betty motioned to go home at 10:05am, Becky seconded.

Respectfully submitted by: WAYNE U.

MEETING DIRECTORY CHANGES

New Meeting

APPLE VALLEY

Friday, 6:00 p.m.

Open Participation, in the back room (AV1)

And Finally . . .

The young man was sharing at an A.A. meeting. "This hasn't been a good day for me. I wasn't centered, I wasn't in touch with my feelings, and my inner child felt deprived. I just wasn't comfortable in my own skin."

An old-timer leaned over and whispered to the woman next to him, "I'm hard of hearing. What did he say?"

The woman replied, "He says he's hungry, angry, lonely, and tired."

Anonymous