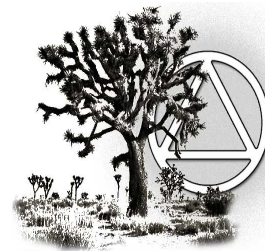


NEWSLETTER for the Fellowship

MARCH 2014

Victor Valley Intergroup, Central Office, Inc.
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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.

One Month to Go

Well, folks, the time is just about here. I cannot believe it is March already with April just around the corner. That means it's time to get ready for the *Newsletter for the Fellowship* to be emailed to your personal email accounts. Or, if you prefer, it's time to get your subscription in to Central Office.

As you may recall, the Board of Directors and Intergroup have decided not to renew our mailing permit. In this day and age several offices have stopped mailing out their newsletters, and we have decided to step into the 21st century. What a scary thought!

So, how is this going to work? I have set up an email account through Yahoo.com for the sole purpose of sending the newsletter out and receiving any newsletter related items. This can include general questions, articles for submission to the newsletter, and a means to send your email addresses to be put on the "mailing" list. **Your email and any personal information will be kept in strictest confidence, and I will never use it for anything other than communicating on the above mentioned things.** I am sure we may get the occasional letter requesting 12 Step work and meeting information. If that occurs I will forward them to the Office's email account.

Here is all that needs to be done: If you want to receive the *Newsletter for the Fellowship* on-line, send your name and email address to:

newsletterforthefellowship@yahoo.com

and I will add you to our list. If you would rather subscribe and receive the hard copy, mail your \$10.00 subscription fee to:

Victor Valley Intergroup
18888 Hwy 18
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Starfish

Tonight as we shared about being of service, I was reminded of a story I heard several years ago. On the morning after a severe thunder storm, thousands of starfish had been stranded on a narrow beach by a twenty-foot tall waves and high tides. There among them, a five-year-old boy ran frantically back-and-forth along the beach picking up starfish and returning them to the ocean. When an adult bystander criticized the boy for his futile attempts, asking what difference it would make to the millions of starfish he couldn't possibly help, the boy responded, "It makes a difference to the ones I *do* help."

Let's celebrate that you and I are the ones who have been helped! We are the few souls who have been touched by grace and reunited with sanity through the compassionate guidance of sponsors who cared enough to individually pick us up and introduce us to the road of happy destiny. Indeed, we have been touched by God through the helping hands of other alcoholics! I often share that not even my wife, who has loved and tolerated me for twenty-seven years, which is half our lives together, would be willing to sit down and listen to seven hours of the wreckage of my past, like my first sponsor did when we went through my Fifth Step. Besides, she had a front row seat!

Today, I am able to practice compassion because I have seen it' two men, whom I call "sponsor," have clearly shown me what it looks like to care for the newcomer – me – whose life had been compromised by alcohol and poor choices that resulted. Because of these two men, today I can transmit something I have got, and I'm pleased to say that I caught it from them. Through demonstration, they've transmitted compassion, empathy, tolerance, patience, and many of the other characteristics associated with restoration to sanity.

If I may shift gears to another analogy, when I stop playing Dorothy long enough to be of service to another suffering alcoholic, I am able to see that I am the one who is often

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thoughtless, needs courage, and lacks compassion. When we first come to A.A. to trudge the yellow brick road of happy destiny, we are so enamored with and alternatively disdainful of ourselves, we all think we're Dorothy. Everybody can't be Dorothy; some of us have to be scarecrows, tin men, and cowardly lions. By being of service and getting out of ourselves for a while, we begin to see that we are both Dorothy and everyman or everywoman, alternating between and lacking thoughtfulness, compassion, and courage. Although we still suffer from the Dorothy complex of me, me, me, we can now relate to the moron, the egomaniac, and the faint-hearted because, on a daily basis, we are a reflection of all the other bozos on the bus.

Thanks for letting me be of service,
Ed L., Wrightwood, CA

Minutes of the Intergroup Meeting 15 February 14

The meeting was open at 9:30 a.m. by Helen M., [Co-chairman, in Doug H.'s absence], who led us in the Serenity Prayer. Doris G. read the Twelve Traditions. In attendance were Helen M., Chad F., Ted B., Betty B., Craig B., Joey R., Vanessa C., Doris G., and Sam D. Ted B. read the minutes of the previous meeting. The minutes were approved.

Treasurer's Report: Chad F. gave the report. As of Jan. 31, 2014, there was a balance of \$8,399.61 in savings, \$7,108.49 in the C.D., and \$4,810.87 in checking. Income for the month of Jan. was \$3,675.90, with total expenses being \$4,579.25. This came to a negative balance of \$903.35 before literature. January literature sales were \$1,561.06 with purchases being \$2,215.40; total literature sales were negative \$654.34. The net Jan. income was negative \$1,557.69. In Jan., 15 people contributed \$505.00 to P.Y.M.W.Y.M.I. The negative Jan. income was due, in part, to Federal Payroll taxes and literature purchases. The Treasurer's Report was unanimously accepted.

Webmaster's Report: Jim F. gave the report. Between Jan. 1—Jan. 15, there have been 431 hits. Since Jim has taken over the webpage, there have been 10,049 hits. Jim is still working on getting a better interface for the web site on mobile devices. Craig will write a letter to the person in charge of the web server to release control to Central Office so that Jim can "update" the web site. The Webmaster's Report was accepted.

Ways and Means Report: Joey R. gave the report. "People who matter" are, at this time, involved with the Convention (March 7—9) and the Ride for Recovery (April 4—5). Joey, therefore, is putting off any other fundraiser until people are free to work on them. She is putting together a committee to start working on the Founder's Day Picnic in June. Betty B. asked about additional horseshoe pits at the Alano Club. Joey said that it should not be a problem. Les, of the Alano Club, is OK with it, and the people who would be involved have the equipment necessary to build the additional pits. The Ways and Means Report was accepted.

Office Manager's Report: Craig B. reported that there were 125 visitors to Central Office in January. There were 137 information calls and two 12-Step calls. There were 124 call forwarding calls and three 12-Step calls. The totals were 261 information calls and five 12-Step calls. The every-other-Monday and Friday call forwarding shifts have been filled. There is a need for Intergroup Reps. and for a Public Information Chairman. Please announce at your meetings. If someone is interested have them call Craig at Central Office. The Office Manager's Report was accepted.

Newsletter Report: Betty B. gave the report. The February newsletter has been sent to the printer. Some subscriptions have been paid and there have been several requests for the newsletter to be delivered by email starting in April. Please announce in meetings that if someone wants a subscription [for] a "hard copy" of the newsletter to be mailed to them to contact Central Office and send a check for the subscription. Also, announce that those who want the newsletter to be emailed to them that they should email [address] to Central Office [vvigco_aa@yahoo.com]. Please, Do Not Call. Jim F. will put this request concerning the emailed newsletter on the web page. There is also a need for local stories with regards to people's Experience, Strength, and Hope. Anyone can submit an article. There is not a "Length of Time" requirement for those who wish to submit an article. Please announce this at your meetings. The Newsletter Report was accepted.

Old Business: There was no old business. Joey R, however, raised a question concerning P.Y.M.W.Y.M.I. Although Intergroup pushed this concept in 2013, we should continue to do so in 2014. Please keep announcing this pledge at your home groups.

New Business: There was no new business.

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

Betty B. motioned to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 10:09 a.m.

Respectively submitted,

Ted B., Secretary

Newsletter

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With that all being said, I believe I/we are ready to embark on this new adventure. It is my hope that the transition will be painless. If not, I am sure you will all let me know.

I truly appreciate you all allowing me to be of service.
In sobriety,

Betty B., Newsletter Editor

Welcome

It was at Bill W.'s kitchen table that he and Ebby T. formed the first sponsee/sponsor relationship. "He had come to pass his experience along to me – if I cared to have it," Bill wrote in his story, the first chapter in the Big Book. "Certainly I was interested. I had to be, for I was hopeless."

Ebby T., a former schoolmate and occasional drinking buddy, had gotten sober through the Oxford Group and had been told to carry the message of hope to others. But Ebby's message to Bill wasn't just sympathy for a suffering man. He told Bill that if he wanted to get better, he had to change, Ebby started working with him on making amends and getting rid of character defects. "I fully acquainted him with my problems and deficiencies," Bill continues, describing in the Big Book the early work he did with Ebby: "We made a list of people I had hurt or toward whom I felt resentment. I expressed my entire willingness to approach these individuals, admitting my wrong. ... My friend had emphasized the absolute necessity of demonstrating these principles in all my affairs. Particularly was it imperative to work with others as he had worked with me." That message led to Bill finding Dr. Bob, and they became sponsor/sponsee. As the A.A. program grew and its founders began to work with others, the flame of sponsorship was passed along – and it continues to burn today.

"In A.A., sponsor and sponsored meet as equals, just as Bill and Dr. Bob did," says the A.A. pamphlet, *Questions & Answers on Sponsorship*. "Essentially, the process of sponsorship is this: An alcoholic who has made some progress in the recovery program shares that experience on a continuous, individual basis with another alcoholic who is attempting to attain or maintain sobriety through A.A."

In this book, members write about the joys and challenges of sponsorship, the many ways we do it, and how we consider it a vital key to staying sober as well as living a happy life. "Alcoholics recovered on A.A. want to share what they have learned with other alcoholics," *Questions & Answers on Sponsorship* says. "We know from experience that our won sobriety is greatly strengthened when we give it away!" There is no right or wrong way to sponsor, only suggestions—each sponsor and sponsee finds his or her own path.

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The above article is taken from the new Grapevine book, *One on One, AA Sponsorship in Action*. This book, along with *No Matter What*, are available at Central Office. Stop by and browse the many items – some old, some new – we have to offer the Fellowship. You'll be glad you did!

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!)

"When you ask me *how* I'm doing, I invariably sidestep the question by telling you *what* I'm doing." – Ed L. in notebook at Sunday morning group in Wrightwood, CA on 12 May 2013

"Why (Y) is a crooked letter, the answer to which is best revealed by walking the pathway of spirituality." – Anna May to Sunday morning group in Wrightwood, CA on 12 May 2013 (Mother's Day)

"The most meaningful changes happen gradually in the quiet absence of any audience." – Ed L. to the Joshua Tree Fellowship Hall in Joshua Tree, CA on 13 May 2013

"We have no control over the thoughts that enter our minds, but we can choose those thoughts on which we dwell." – Todd N. to Phelan Good Morning Group in Phelan, CA on 13 May 2013

"When I got busy, I got better." – Jack to the Joshua Tree Fellowship Hall in Joshua Tree, CA on 13 May 2013

"That town (referring to Lucerne Valley) ain't got nothing but nothing." – Larry to the Joshua Tree Fellowship Hall in Joshua Tree, CA on 13 May 2013

"For me, it's never been drugs *or* alcohol; it's always been drugs *and* alcohol." – Ed L. to the Joshua Tree Fellowship Hall in Joshua Tree, CA on 16 May 2013

"So far, this year's been about wanting things I didn't get and getting things I didn't want." – Ed L. to the TGIF in Apple Valley, CA on 17 May 2013

"I'm so new that my A.A. program still has that new-car smell." – Dave to 8:00 a.m. meeting at Strawberry Music Festival, Camp Mather, Yosemite, CA on 24 May 2013

"So, life has a hill. Get over it." – Observed on a T-shirt at the Strawberry Music Festival, Camp Mather, Yosemite, CA on 28 May 2013

"Why worry about it when you can write about it?" – Anna May to Sunday morning group in Wrightwood, CA on 9 June 2013

"What is real and what is imagined may both be legitimate, but imagining reality is best left to artists and fiction writers." – Ed L. in notebook following the Sunday morning group in Wrightwood, CA on 9 June 2013

"When you get on my nerves in an A.A. meeting, I ask myself: What's more important: My nerves or your sobriety?" – Ed L., to Joshua Tree Fellowship Hall in Joshua Tree, CA on 10 June 2013

"You can always tell an alcoholic; you just can't tell them much." – Richard O. to Yucca Valley Alano Club in Yucca Valley, CA on 17 June 2013

Upcoming Events

**Third Saturday of the Month
Intergroup Meeting at 9:30 a.m. at Central Office.
Call 760-242-9292 for more information.**

**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 Eng-
lish participation. Rooms are available at the Ra-
mada Inn, Barstow with special rates. For more in-
formation contact Martha or Mary G. at
760-985-7815.**

**May 15—18, 20014
Tri-State Roundup, Riverside Resort Hotel and Casino,
Laughlin, NV. For information email tristate-
roundup@hotmail.com or visit www.tristate-
roundup.com**

**Monthly through September
Movie Night at the Archives! 711 Arlington
Ave., Suite B, Riverside, CA. Doors open at
7:00 p.m., and the movies start at 7:30 p.m.
The schedule is:
Apr. 19 – One Too Many (1950)
May 17 – Life of the Party (1982)
June 21 – 28 Days (2000)
July 19 – Days of Wine and Roses (1962)
Aug. 16 – Flight (2012)
Sept. 20 – The Lost Weekend (1945)
Stay after and tour the archives.**

**Coming this June will be our 19th Annual
Founder’s Day Picnic and Speaker Meeting.
There will be more information in the com-
ing months. Also, the Ways and Means
Committee, chaired by Joey R., is brain
storming for upcoming events. If you have
any suggestions or would like to help out the
committee, call the office at 760-242-9292.
any and all help will be appreciated.**

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**.

And Finally . . .

Some ale was spilled on the barroom floor
When the pub was shut for the night,
When out of his hole crept a wee brown mouse
Who stood in the pale moonlight.

He lapped up the frothy brew from the floor,
And back on his haunches he sat.
And all night long you could hear him roar,
“Bring on the goddamned cat!”

Anonymous

Submitted by,
Helen M., Hesperia, CA