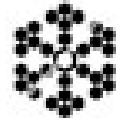


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Volume 35 — Issue **DECEMBER 2015**

THE TRADITION

Monthly Newsletter of the Ventura County Central Service Office Inc.

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Plus
Flyers Inside

My Most Joyful Christmas

Reprinted from the Grapevine

Last Christmas was my fifth – and most joyful – sober holiday. Indeed, I have frequently thought in the months since then: How wonderfully creative God is! For I know that my life today is finer in every detail than anything I could ever have constructed, had I been afforded the opportunity.

On Christmas morning, as I rode with the special lady in my life to a meeting, the traffic lights a half-acknowledged blur on the fringe of my consciousness (she was driving), my mind for some reason turned to those early, agonizing weeks when I sat at the tables of AA in anger, fear, and arrogance. During those first weeks a singular phrase echoed again and again, sometimes audibly through tears of self-pity, sometimes silently in stoic regret. “Why me?” cried the repeated chant. “Why me? Why me? Why me?”

Of course, there was no answer then. And, I thought with a smile, there was no need for an answer today.

We stopped at a light. On the cold morning sidewalk nearby, a sad man stumbled across the curb to seek the safety of an abandoned building. He was almost too weak to lift his paper bag to his blistered lips for another sip from the bottle it contained.

As I watched, my mind enumerated the fringe benefits I know today, in addition to the primary reward, sobriety.

The gift of awareness. Of comfort. Of an end to fear and insecurity. Of the “new freedom” and “new happiness” promised in the Big Book. Even the gift of love.

And as the total grew in my grateful heart, there came again into my mind – the phrase that had echoed so endlessly before: “Why me? Why me? Why me?”

Christmas Without Santa

Reprinted from the Grapevine

After my mother had gone, my father continued her practice of making Christmas a joyous time for us, so our home sparkled with lights and holly and happy music. When my children came, I tried to recreate this for them. I must have succeeded somewhat, as their memories of past Christmases are joyful.

One Christmas looms before me. It's the Christmas Santa missed. He, too, was powerless over alcohol.

For years, I fought the great fight against the disease – not knowing what I was fighting against or even that I was fighting. The dams broke, as they always do, and the torrent of progression swept everything in its path. Down those swirling, insane falls raced everything I held dear – courage, honor, love, self-respect, faith – all dashed on the rocks of alcohol.

All I had left were fear, distrust, resentment, and self-loathing.

Finally, and worst of all, came not caring. I could not care, though I tried. I knew I was doomed to live out my life as a falling-down, fearful drunk, and I could not care.

Then, as that Christmas drew near, I heard the children's glad whispering of things to come, and I felt a stab of pain. I knew their Santa would not come here that year. I could not think of Christmas. I asked my kind sister to take them. She did. They went. They had a lovely time. They never knew.

Christmas Day came to my lonely house. It was grave-silent and dark. The awesome fears were maddening. I knew despair.

AA plucked me from that insane place. It dried me out and told me I need never be afraid again – never be lonely again – never loathe myself again. They even told me that Santa Claus would come again.

Continued on page 2

NOTE: Members in service positions qualify for a FREE Newsletter*

Mail Subscription Order Form *The TRADITION*

☐ Yes! Enclosed is my \$5.00 check for 12 Monthly Mailed Issues

☐ RENEWAL ☐ NEW FREE SUBSCRIPTION Date _____

Name _____

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City _____ State _____ ZIP _____



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321 No. Aviator St. Suite 115, Camarillo, CA 93010



***NOTE—FREE SUBSCRIPTION: TO ALL MEMBERS IN SERVICE POSITIONS:** Meeting Secretaries, Intergroup Representatives and GSR's who register with Central Office, will automatically receive *The Tradition* each month at no charge. If you'd like to receive a free copy in the mail, please submit this subscription form and note the service position you are now filling. *Stay informed, order now!*

LATEST NEWS
+ Events
+ Meetings
+ Recovery
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Info Lines ..

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Check out the expanded Ventura County website.
www.aaventuracounty.org

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24 Hour Telephones
(805) 389-1444
(800) 990-7550
Fax (805) 389-2912
E-Mail
vcaaco@verizon.net

Christmas Without Santa

Continued from Page 1

All I had to do was keep away from one drink one day at a time, with the help of a Higher Power whom I was to ask and thank for help.

Impossible, I thought. Humpty Dumpty could not be put together again – or, surely, not so simply. Unbelieving, I tried, and unbelievably, it worked. It worked!

The fear has gone. The loneliness has gone. And the miracle is that I like myself, but most of all, that I care. I care!

It has been twenty-odd lovely years since that black Christmas. Again, I am in the midst of happy whisperings (from other small ones) and am secretly preparing great day.

How can I thank AA, not only for my life, my beautiful life, but for giving me back my lovely Christmases, complete with Santa in full regalia coming to call?

May the Higher Power by and for whom all this joy is felt bring Santa to your houses this Christmas, my AA family, to whom I owe so much.



The Humor Column "We're Not a Glum Lot"

Alcoholic Prayer

Lord, In the past several hours I have not hurt any one. I have not drank. I have peacefully coexisted with life. For that I am grateful. But I'm about to get out of bed now and I'm really going to need your help.



The codependent

Three people, one of whom was a codependent, were in line to be executed at the guillotine. The first person stuck his head in the hole, the rope was cut, and the blade fell, only to stop an inch above the person's neck. The executioners saw it as a sign from God and so decided to let the person go.



The next person put his head in the hole, the rope was cut, and again, the blade stopped an inch above the person's neck. That person, too was released.



As the codependent walked up for his turn at the guillotine, he turned to the executioner and said: "You know, I think I know how to fix that."



12 Steps of a Relapse



1. I decided I could handle any emotional problems if other people would just quit trying to run my life.

2. I firmly believe that there is no greater power than myself and anyone who says differently is insane.

3. I made a decision to remove my will and my life from God, who didn't understand me anyway.

4. I made a searching and thorough moral inventory of everyone I know, so they couldn't fool me and take advantage of my good nature.

5. I sought these people out and tried to get them to admit to me, by God, the exact nature of their wrongs.

6. I became willing to help these people get rid of their defects of character.



7. I was humble enough to ask these people to remove their shortcomings.

8. I kept a list of all the people who had harmed me, and waited patiently for a chance to get even.

9. I got even with these people whenever possible except when to do so would get me into trouble.

10. I continue to take everyone's inventory and when they are wrong, which is most of the time, I promptly make them admit it.

11. Sought through the concentration of my will-power to get God, who didn't understand me anyhow, to see that my desires were best, and He ought to give me the power to carry them out.

12. Having maintained my emotional problems with these steps, I can thoroughly recommend them to others who don't want to lose their hard-earned status, but wish to be left alone to practice neurosis in everything they do for the rest of their days.

If drinking is interfering with your work, you're probably a heavy drinker. If work is interfering with your drinking, you're probably an alcoholic.



From Central Office



As I have now been in my position for 2 years, I would once again like to say what an incredible honor and pleasure it is to be of service in this capacity. There has not been a single day that I have not thanked my Higher Power for this incredible opportunity (well maybe not every day ☺).

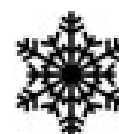
I would never have imagined, as I laid in a hospital bed or the bathroom floor, that my life would have taken such a miraculous turn. It was Christmas Eve 2006, after just being out of rehab, that I found my way to a midnight marathon meeting at Visions. I met a man who helped me find my God, who showed me the way and held my hand through the steps - I am forever indebted to that man. That midnight meeting is where you have found me every year since, looking out for me walking through the door.

On behalf of Central Office and the Intergroup Board of Directors, I would like to wish everyone a safe, sober and happy holiday season.

I would also like to extend my thanks and best wishes to all of our incredible office and phone volunteers, as well as my wonderful assistant. It is through your hard work and dedication that we are able to serve and be a resource for our community. You are Central Office!

With incredible gratitude,

Matthew



Happy
Holidays!



Districts, Area & AAWS CONTACTS

District 13

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 166
Ventura, CA 93002

Gold Coast Districts (9 & 12)

PLEASE NOTE NEW ADDRESS

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 132
Camarillo, Ca. 93011

District 24

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 843
Simi Valley, CA 93065

District 28

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 3432
Thousand Oaks, CA 91359

Area 93

Mailing Address:
PMB #140
606 Alamo Pintado #3
Solvang, CA 93463

AAWS

P.O. Box 459
Grand Central Station
New York, NY 10163
(212)870-3400



MAJOR AA EVENTS Around America

Christmas and New Year's Marathon Meetings

MARATHON MEETINGS RUN CONTINUOUSLY

Visions Meeting Hall

2667 N. Moorpark Rd #105
Thousand Oaks

Christmas

6:00 PM Thursday December 24th -
10:30 PM Friday December 25th
Potluck Dinner Christmas Day 4:00-5:00 PM

New Years

6:00 PM Thursday December 31st -
10:30 PM Friday January 1st

Meetings run 1 hour in length with 1/2 hour break between meetings

The Buck

321 N. Aviator St. Suite #111
Camarillo

Christmas

1:00 PM Thursday December 24th -
Midnight December 25th
Potluck Dinner Christmas Day 2:00 PM

New Years

1:00 PM Thursday December 31st -
Midnight January 1st

Unity Hall

2355 Tapo Street #5
Simi Valley

Christmas

8:00 PM Thursday December 24th -
Midnight December 25th
Potluck Christmas Day 11:00 AM

New Years

8:00 PM Thursday December 31st -
Midnight January 1st
Potluck New Year's Day Noon

NEW YEAR'S EVE DANCES

Serenity By The Sea's

New Year's Eve Speaker Meeting and Dance

Ventura County Fair Grounds

McBride Hall

Speaker Meeting 8:00 PM

Dance 10:00 PM

Tickets \$10

Oxnard Alano Club

620 South D Street

Speaker Meeting 7:30-8:30

Dance 9:00 – Midnight

Free



December 2015 Calendar

Wed 2h 6:00 pm District 13 GSR Meeting @ Ventura Center
for Spiritual Living @ 101 S. Laurel, Ventura

Thu 3th 7:00 pm Inter-group Board Meeting @ Central Office

Mon 7th 6:00 pm H & I Board Mtg @ Central Office

Wed 9th 7:00 pm Inter-group Meeting @ The Buck
321 N Aviator Suite 111, Camarillo

Sat 12th 10:00 am Newsletter Stuff and Fold @ Central Office

Sun 13h 12:00 pm VCYPAA Committee Mtg @ Central Office
5.30 pm H & I Committee Mtg @ Central Office

GSR District 28 DOES NOT MEET IN DECEMBER

Gold Coast Districts Gen DOES NOT MEET IN DECEMBER

Thu 17th 7:00 pm District 24 General Service Meeting
United Methodist Church 2394 Erringer Rd
Rm # 10, Simi Valley

Sun 22  10 pm VCYPAA Committee Mtg @ Central Office

Dec 28th Last day to submit items to the January Newsletter



January 2016 Calendar

Wed 6th 6:00 pm District 13 GSR Meeting @ Ventura Center
for Spiritual Living @ 101 S. Laurel, Ventura

Thu 7th 7:00 pm Inter-group Board Meeting @ Central Office

Fri 8th 6:00 pm H & I Board Mtg @ Central Office

Wed 13th 7:00 pm Inter-group Meeting @ The Buck
321 N Aviator Suite 111, Camarillo

Sat 16th 10:00 am Newsletter Stuff and Fold @ Central Office

Sun 17th 12:00 pm VCYPAA Committee Mtg Central Office
5.30 pm H & I Committee Mtg @ Central Office

Tue 19th 7:00 pm GSR District 28 Meeting @
King of Glory Lutheran Church
2500 Borchard Road, Newbury Park

Wed 20th 7:00 pm Gold Coast Districts General Service Mtg
The Buck 321 N Aviator Ste 111 Camarillo

Thu 21st 7:00 pm District 24 General Service Meeting
United Methodist Church 2394 Erringer Rd
Rm # 10, Simi Valley

Sun 23rd 12:00 pm VCYPAA Committee Mtg @ Central Office

Jan 25th Last day to submit items to the February Newsletter

A Review of Tradition #12

*"Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all
our traditions, ever reminding us to place
principles before personalities."*

- Why is it good for me to place the common welfare of all A.A. members before individual welfare?
- Have I a personal responsibility in helping an A.A. group fulfill its primary purpose?
- Do I do all I can to support A.A. financially? When is the last time I gave away a Grapevine subscription?
- Should I keep my A.A. membership a secret, or reveal it in private conversation when that may help another alcoholic (and therefore me)? Is my brand of A.A. so attractive that other drunks want it?
- What is the real importance of me among more than a million A.A.'s?

Living Step # 12

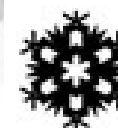
"Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs."

The joy of living is the theme of A.A.'s Twelfth Step, and action is the key word. Here we turn outward toward our fellow alcoholics who are still in distress. Here we experience the kind of giving that asks no rewards. Here we begin to practice all Twelve Steps of the program in our daily lives so that we and those about us may find emotional sobriety. When the Twelfth Step is seen in its full implication, it is really talking about the kind of love that has no price tag on it.

Our Twelfth Step also says that as a result of practicing all the Steps, we have each found something called a spiritual awakening.



M. Nadler



GRAPEVINE CORNER The Meeting In Print

By Michele B. of Newbury Park

Twelve ways to use the AA Grapevine to strengthen and insure your sobriety

12. As a source of regional and worldwide A.A. history.

The new "What We Were Like" section of archival material presents fragments of local, regional, and general A.A. history, and offers an exciting anecdotal glimpse into our Fellowship's rich heritage of experience.

At Wit's End

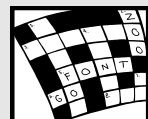
Family holiday

The entire family gathered for the big holiday dinner, including the drunken uncle who put in his usual annual appearance. During dinner, his 4-year old niece kept staring at him. He checked his tie, felt his face for food and patted his hair in place, but nothing stopped her from staring at him. The uncle tried his best to just ignore her, but finally it was too much for him. "Why are you staring at me?" he asked her. Everyone at the table had noticed this and all conversation stopped to wait her response. The little girl said, "They all say you drink like a fish, I just wanted to see how you did that."

Heard at a meeting

"I practice my opinion in all my affairs."

THE GRAPEVINE WISHES YOU ALL
A HAPPY SOBER HOLIDAY SEASON



Recovery Word Search Puzzle

W	D	A	T	Y	U	J	C	M	U	I	O	P	E	A	Q
D	F	A	Y	L	E	N	O	L	T	E	W	D	N	A	P
X	S	R	T	R	U	K	N	Q	A	A	I	W	D	O	L
D	R	S	G	E	T	A	S	B	H	R	O	U	U	M	K
E	A	E	A	T	A	F	E	A	G	D	H	J	R	A	Y
A	X	L	S	T	R	T	Q	U	K	I	O	F	E	J	N
W	D	B	G	U	J	Q	U	A	L	I	T	I	E	S	A
B	F	M	D	E	A	A	E	S	F	H	K	A	G	H	T
T	C	A	P	M	I	R	N	J	K	U	A	E	D	G	P
R	S	H	E	W	B	U	C	U	E	D	C	V	H	D	M
U	A	S	U	O	V	R	E	N	J	K	D	T	A	R	E
D	A	O	S	F	G	A	S	L	T	E	W	E	A	I	K
G	L	U	M	K	J	A	D	O	S	E	L	R	Y	I	N
E	L	A	D	I	S	T	M	V	X	P	S	G	U	L	U
A	W	I	A	F	T	E	R	E	C	K	L	E	S	S	L
D	S	C	B	T	E	A	A	D	H	I	Y	R	M	D	F

Find the following words in the puzzle below and win a few minutes of free sobriety: There are also 12 'AA's. Can you find them all?

CONSEQUENCES
BREAKDOWN
ENDURE
NERVOUS
LONELY
UNLOVED

UTTERLY
SHAMBLES
IMPACT
RECKLESS
TRUDGE
REGRET

GLUM
OMIT
PLEAD
QUALITIES
VAIN
UNKEMPT

SPECIAL HOLIDAY GAME

All of the snowflakes throughout this newsletter are unique except for one pair
CAN YOU FIND THE PAIR?

If drinking is interfering with your work, you're probably a heavy drinker.
If work is interfering with your drinking, you're probably an alcoholic



AA BIRTHDAY CLUB Celebrate Sobriety

CELEBRATE YOUR AA BIRTHDAY HERE!

Celebrate your annual sobriety anniversary with us. To participate in this tradition, just send in the form provided in this column or submit it to vcaaco@verizon.net with your Birthday information. Member's birthdays submitted will be published in this section the following month. Join the winners and celebrate your recovery.

November & Previous AA Birthdays

HAPPY SOBRIETY BIRTHDAY



Matthew C. 9
Thousand Oaks

Rob S. - 9
Oxnard

Azuza S - 10
Oxnard



CONGRATULATIONS!

Birthday Club Listing For:


Name _____

City _____

Sobriety Date _____ Years _____

Voluntary Donation Amount \$ _____

Please mail to:

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Camarillo, CA 93010



CENTRAL OFFICE Phone Call Activity

Meeting Info	511
Twelve Step Calls	61
Other Twelve Steps Programs	29
Activities	84
Directions to Office	15
Other Type Calls	419
TOTAL	1119



AA TRIVIA QUESTION Of The Month

Q

DECEMBER QUESTION:

Who was Sue Smith's (Dr. Bob's daughter) first husband and what was memorable about the wedding?

A

NOVEMBER ANSWER:

On what date was the ribbon cutting for the GSO archives?

November 10, 1975

Answers will be published the following month. Mail your answer to:
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321 N. Aviator Street, Suite 115, Camarillo, Ca. 93010.
The correct answer will win a free one-year subscription to this publication. If the winner already has a subscription, a gift subscription will be awarded to another member — winner's choice.

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Vice Chairperson	Wayne W. Ventura
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Treasurer	Lynn S. Simi Valley
Member at large # 1	Jan K, Ventura
Member at large # 2	Vickie L. Camarillo
Member at large # 3	Scott W. Simi Valley

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Don B., Skip, Rebecca, Peter M., Mike A., Mary H., Dora E., Azusa S., Dale S., Malia S., Robin S. Latoya

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24 Hour Telephones
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