

THE TRADITION

Monthly Newsletter of the Ventura County Central Service Office Inc.



Serving: Agoura Hills, Thousand Oaks, Newbury Park, Simi Valley, Moorpark, Camarillo, El Rio, Oxnard, Port Hueneme, Ventura, Ojai, Santa Paula, Fillmore

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<https://aaventuracounty.org>

What's a Group Inventory?!

Over this last month I had the opportunity to sit down with Chris B of Ventura and hear his experience leading his home group in taking a group inventory.

What is a group inventory?

A group inventory assesses where a meeting is at and what its goals are. What its sole purpose is and how it's doing. It identifies things the group can work on and if there are concerns about the meeting.

How did your group decide to take a group inventory? What prompted that?

I suggested doing a group inventory. I was concerned about how our meeting attendance had gone down. I know all meeting attendance went down during Covid, and it took a while to get it to come back, but I saw it going down even prior to Covid. We had been a large group attendance wise, sixty to seventy guys. Then I saw it go down to about twenty.

Call for Contributions!

The Tradition would love your AA related:

- Stories, Writings
- Poems, Artwork
- Jokes, AA Quips
- History, Trivia
- News, Events

Steps, Traditions & Concepts

Step 8

Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

Tradition 8 (short form)

Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

Concept 8 (short form)

The trustees are the principal planners and administrators of over-all policy and finance. They have custodial oversight of the separately incorporated and constantly active services, exercising this through their ability to elect all the directors of these entities.

What did you start to think when you observed the meeting attendance drop?

I started to wonder, and this is from feedback from some of the guys that I talked to after they'd left the meeting and I'd see them at other meetings and I'd say, "Hey, why don't I see you Thursday nights anymore?" Some of them had resentments towards some of the people there, which is like any meeting, others said, "well I didn't feel too welcomed there. I felt like it was a little cliquey." That was one of my concerns.

Also, I saw firsthand a guy share at the meeting and the leader kind of jumped on him because he didn't like what he was sharing, and he was sharing for too long. The guy stayed for the entire meeting, but he got up and left right away after. Two of us went after him and talked to him. So, I was concerned about that, you know, how we're treating newer guys and I thought we could have been more welcoming.

So, you saw ways your group might be able to improve.

Right. I love that meeting, but why not see what we could do better.

Had the group ever done an inventory before?

I came to that meeting in 2018 when I had a few months sober. I kind of remember a group of questions being handed to me one time, but I don't remember going over them. I don't remember a follow up about it. Then another time I remember an email was sent out with those questions, but I think it just got overlooked because people didn't really respond to the email. I don't remember an intensive one where we answered the questions as a group and went over them.

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Districts, Area & AAWS Contacts

Ventura County Central Office serves the following Districts within Area 93

District (9 & 12) Gold Coast

P.O. Box 132
Camarillo, CA 93011

Area 93

PMB #140
606 Alamo Pintado #3, Solvang, CA 93463
<https://area93.org>

*Sign up for the Area 93 newsletter

District 13

P.O. Box 166
Ventura, CA 93002
<https://www.aad13.org>

District 24

P.O. Box 843
Simi Valley, CA 93065

District 28

P.O. Box 3432
Thousand Oaks, CA 91359

Alcoholics Anonymous World Services(AAWS)

Member Services Line (212) 870-3023
General Service Office (GSO) Address:
P.O. Box 459, Grand Central Station
New York, NY 10163

Mail Donations to:

P. O. Box 2407
James A Farley Station
New York, NY 10116
<https://www.aa.org>

*sign up for the G.S.O newsletter

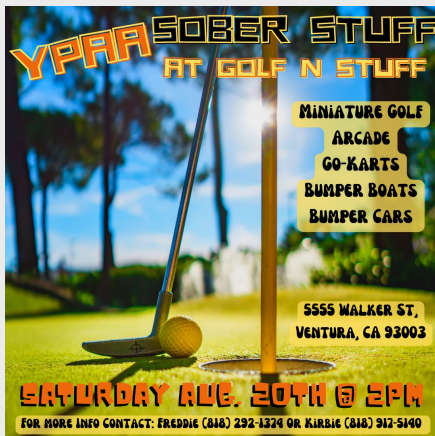


**Let's stay
connected**

If you have any A.A. related news, events or meeting updates that you would like to be included in *The Tradition*, please contact us at Central Office: 805-389-1444, vcaaco@verizon.net

News, Events & Service Opportunities

YPAA EVENT AUGUST 20TH



LABOR DAY CAMPOUT & RETREAT SEPT. 1ST - 5TH



Hosted by the Sunrise-Sunset Group
@ Malibu Creek State State Park

[Visit the Event Webpage](#)

GOLF FUN-DRAISER SEPT. 9TH

[Register Online](#)

VC AA CONVENTION SEPT 9-11TH

[Register Online](#)



NEW PODCAST - A.A. Grapevine Half-Hour Variety Hour

Tune in to hear funny, poignant, and always inspiring “**meeting after the meeting**” conversation about getting sober and staying sober in Alcoholics Anonymous.

Free wherever you listen to podcast or at www.aagrapevine.org/podcast

VC Central Office - Office Volunteer Shifts

Prerequisite - One year of sobriety. Duties include, but not limited to: answering phone, literature sales, organizing, stocking shelves.

Open Office Shifts

Wednesdays 2pm - 6pm

Thursdays 10am - 2pm

VC Central Office - Phone Coordinator Volunteer

Central office is looking for a volunteer phone coordinator.
Contact Matthew at Central Office for more information.



It's for you!



Open Phone Shifts

Mondays 9pm-9am 4th and 5th weeks

Wednesdays 9pm-9am 5th weeks

Thursdays 9pm-9am 1st week

Fridays 9pm-9am 3rd and 5th weeks

Mon & Weds 6pm-9pm 5th week

Prerequisite - One year of sobriety and completion of the steps.

*exceptions made on a case-by-case basis

What's a Group Inventory?! CONTINUED

Where did you get the questions for the inventory from?

I got the questions from approved A.A. literature from the pamphlet rack, titled, "The A.A. Group...where it all begins." *You can view that pamphlet here [HERE](#)

What kinds of questions did the inventory ask?

There are thirteen questions. The first one is, what is the basic purpose of the group? What we did for our inventory was look at all thirteen questions and ranked them in order of what we thought was most important to least important to discuss. As a group we went over the top five. It took us four business meetings.

What question ranked number one?

What is the basic purpose of this group?

What was the general answer/consensus?

To carry the message to the newcomer.

The second ranked one was, do new members stick with us or is the turnover excessive? That was the one that was my concern.

What came about through taking an inventory?

Through our discussions we came up with some ideas on how we could improve the meeting.

What ideas did your group come up with and implement?

To have a greeter at each door. There was talk about adding a newcomer liaison. That was ultimately added to the literature commitment. So, for anyone brand new to that meeting or A.A. there's a person who can make sure they know about how to go about getting a sponsor, finding other meetings, those kinds of things. We also added to our phone list who is willing and available to sponsor. We discussed having the leader of each meeting provide more direction, in other words, take charge of the meeting more, so there's a clear, concise person. We also added a timer. That was a new commitment that was never there before. Some people didn't like that idea, but I think since we started doing that it's improved the meeting. It gives time for more people to share.

Overall, what was it like being a part of this process with your group?

It went better than I had expected. I think it was a positive experience overall. I think we added some things that we needed to and because of that attendance has gone up. There are more newcomers and they seem to be coming back every week, which is good. Overall, people said it was a positive thing. Also, doing an inventory isn't just a negative process. You take positive inventories too.

What did the group find that it was doing well?

The shares there are concise and very recovery oriented. We don't really get off on tangents. In the format it states at the beginning of the meeting that there's only three topics to choose from every week – how to get sober, how to stay sober and how to live sober. We do that well. There's good long-term sobriety at that meeting.

How was it chairing the process of taking a group inventory?

It was a learning experience for me. I'm not versed on a lot of the behind-the-scenes things in A.A. It was good for me to go through that. To learn about group majority, minority opinion, all that kind of stuff.

There are a lot of strong personalities in that meeting. It was a challenge to just be the vessel for that and not necessarily express my opinions. I'm kind of a high-strung guy so it was a good experience for me to kind of mellow out and just listen to other people and what they have to say, listening instead of speaking.

What kind of bothered me at first, when we had the business meetings, some people were kind of saying, "Well nothing's broken. We don't need to fix anything here." We're taught in A.A. to do an inventory on ourselves individually all the time. I think it's healthy to do a meeting inventory every so often. Why not? It can't hurt. I would recommend to every meeting that every two to three years do an inventory and see where you're at. It's a positive thing.

What do you think of the old school versus new school A.A.?

This surprised me - I'm more of an old school A.A. I like structure. I don't like babying people either. There was a grey area in our group inventory process, like, we're too hard on newcomers at the meeting or something. That's not what I was saying. I think we could be more welcoming to them, but we still tell them what's up. We're straight forward at that meeting. We're not going to pat them on the back and tell them everything is going to be ok, but we do want to walk up and shake their hand, learn

their name. I didn't want to change the vibe of the meeting because I like the vibe of that meeting. It's kind of intense. It's kind of like in your face sobriety. I like that part, but what I thought we could improve on was bringing new guys into that.

I've gotten feedback from people that we're really welcoming now. It feels good.

It sounds like you take a lot of pride in your group.

I do. I love that meeting. I think, like we were talking about with the strong personalities, sometimes we clash and have different opinions, but every one of those personalities care about that meeting and they're coming from a good place.

Thanks for sitting down for an interview, Chris!

A.A. Quip of the Month

G.O.D.
Group. Of. Drunks.
Good. Orderly. Direction.

A.A. Quote of the Month



“A business which takes no regular
inventory usually goes broke.”
(A.A., p. 64)

Good Joke of the Month

A sandwich walks into a bar.
The bartender says, “Sorry we don’t serve food here.”

BAD JOKE OF THE MONTH

A scientist interrupts an AA meeting, “I’ve just invented a cure for alcoholism.
Take one of these pills and you’ll be able to control your drinking!”

An AA member jumps up, “I’ll take two!!”



Meetings, Meetings, Meetings!

Check for weekly updates on local meetings
<https://aaventuracounty.org/meetings>

The Responsibility Statement

I am responsible. When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help,
I want the hand of Alcoholics Anonymous always to be there.
And for that; *I am Responsible.*

Oh Yes! IT'S
FREE

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vcaaco@verizon.net to subscribe.