

NAPA VALLEY

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

A Quarterly View into what is going on in Napa Valley AA

food for thought...



Chairperson's Corner >>>

Honored To Serve

Fellow AA's, I am honored to serve a two-year term as the Chair of our Intergroup organization. I say 'our' because it is only through your active participation that we can reach out and help those who want to become sober, as well as support those working on being sober every day. As I travel around the valley visiting meetings, H & I, Bridging the Gap, and our colleagues in the district General Service, I am struck by the depth and breadth of your understanding of service and fellowship. You inspire me.

Sometimes I lose sight of the purpose of my recovery. Thankfully, each of you reminds me just when I need it most – every single day!

I look forward to our being of service together over the next two years.

- Bill C



Can an Atheist Find a Place in AA?

Here's a report from one who did

As I read the Grapevine every month, one thought always stands out in my mind. Many stories are about particular alcoholics who have found their niches in life and more important, in AA. In each case, there is a fight, a surrender and an acceptance. This seems to be topped off by an air of enthusiasm about the fellowship, and a tranquility about these individuals which is almost an entity unto itself.

Here is a new approach to AA, or here is how some of the other half lives, the half made up of scared-to-death newcomers, "doubting Thomases" and me, the outright non-believer, who finds that certain words in the English language still

have their mysterious power over the chemical forces in the body. The mere mention of them makes me want to be physically ill. Some of these dandies are: acceptance, society, conformity, God, religion and at times, even the word alcoholic.

Joshua Loth Liebman once said that "Agnostics are like the damned spirits of Dante's inferno, condemned to be

whirled forever on the shifting winds of opinions and emotions, and that atheism at bottom means the inability of a man to utter an all embracing 'Yea' to existence. It is the denial of meaning in life, it is the distrust of the universe."

"Agnostics are like the damned spirits of Dante's inferno"

I am an alcoholic, and I am also an atheist, and it is to my own kind that I am writing. The atheist, the agnostic, the people who are still searching. A terrible restlessness pounds at our hearts and our consciences

as we continue the ever-loving search for what's beyond the next green hill, with the terrible realization that, above all, the first drink is out.

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For as shocking as this may seem to some people, I am one of those individuals who do not enjoy being an alcoholic, and I know that there are many more like me. I also know that this is contrary to all the basic laws of staying sober, which brings the number-one point in question to the test.

Can such a person find his place in AA? And if he can, how does he manage to stay sober? I tried AA in 1960 and after one meeting and one particular slogan that kept glaring at me to the bitter end, But for the Grace of God, I went out and got drunk, and stayed drunk for another year—a year filled with horror and degradation that in comparison made my other nine years of drinking seem like kid's play.

Having had my fill of people and life, and people and life having had their fill of me, I again turned to the last door that was open to me: AA, and to that slogan that I dreaded so much the year before.

The first night back, I don't think I would have cared if God Himself had been the chairman, I was staying, and I have stayed, and if the prisoners don't get too restless up stairs in my overactive mind, which I think of as Cell

Block 9, I will be staying every day, each and every twenty-four hours of them one at a time.

I believe that there is a place in the world and in AA for people who do not have the capacity to believe, and that we are no more or no greater odd-balls, than those people who do believe. After all, Faith is not something that you can buy packaged and ready for sale in a grocery store. You either believe or you don't believe, and if you don't, stop worrying about it. You can still stay sober.

I have been around AA a few twenty-four hours, and when I received my two-year medallion, I was convinced that there is a place in AA for you and me.

They say, "Don't fight it." I try not to, but there are many times when I still do. I can see that beautiful pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, but so often I have stumbled and fallen, and mentally slipped back. It is foolish to run; I can barely walk.

There is an old proverb that says "A journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step." Today, Step One is behind me on my road to glory and continued sobriety.

if in my travels and search for truth, on this twisted, hazardous road of life, I chance to meet the one they call God, my secret wish is that we will recognize each other and that pride will not keep me from accepting and admitting the painful truth, when and if I do find it. On the other hand, should I not meet any strangers on my journey, I will be contented and happy in my realization that AA as my higher power is walking close behind as I continue one step at a time toward that pot of gold at the end of my rainbow, which is filled with every one of my diamond-studded twenty-four hours of sobriety.

Is there a God or isn't there? I say it doesn't matter. Keep an open mind and don't give up the fight because of a slogan or someone's personal credo. The highway is wide enough for all of us, and the rules for pedestrians are: KEEP AN OPEN MIND; KEEP COMING BACK.



(Reprinted with permission, AA Grapevine Digital Archives, June 1964, Vol. 21, No. 1)

**This is Tear-Able!
The Alano Center
Is Moving!**

A new location has not been confirmed when we went to press so be sure to visit the aanapa.org web site periodically. We'll post the news there as soon as we get it!

Special Meetings

Napa Valley Intergroup Meeting
Second Saturday of Every Month - 10:00 AM
Alano Center Napa Valley
2485 Stockton St., Napa

H & I Business Meeting
First Friday of Every Month - 6:45 PM
Sea Scout Building
402 Riverside Dr. Napa

General Service District 11
10:00 District Business Mtg.
9:15 AM Concepts Study
First Saturday of Every Month - 'til Noon
Veterans Home
220 Presidents Circle, Section A, Yountville

Grapevine Turns 70 in 2014

Special events are planned all year long. Beginnings now, check www.AAGrapevine.org/GV70 to learn about ways to get involved.

On the website, you will find an events calendar, a photo gallery, and much more. Available for download is the Grapevine Anniversary Kit, which includes a wealth of information for you to create your own events.



AA events >>>

<p>AGENDA TOPICS WORKSHOP GSRs, all interested AA's Agenda Topic Summaries and Planning Group Sharing Sessions 1300 St. Francis Road, Santa Rosa Saturday, February 15th 8:30 AM ~ 3:30 PM</p>	<p>Northern California Council of Alcoholics Anonymous NCCAA Spring Conference San Ramon Marriott Hotel 2600 Bishop Drive San Ramon, CA March 21-23</p>
<p>TRIBAL MEETING Bridging the Gap - H&I Public Information/CPC 2 Videos - Pizza Alano Center Sunday February 23rd Noon ~ 3:00 PM All AAs are invited!</p>	<p>Pre-Conference Assembly GSRs & All interested AAs Group Conscience to Delegate 2004 Fairground Road Monterey, CA April 5-6</p>
<p>PRAASA Pacific Regional Service Assembly http://2014.praasa.org March 7-9, 2014; San Diego</p>	<p>Hospital and Institution Conference Masonic Family Center 1110 W. East Ave. Chico, CA May 2-4</p>



The Pacific Region Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly is an annual assembly hosted by one of the 15 areas in the Pacific Region of Alcoholics Anonymous each year and it therefore moves around the region. This year the San Diego - Imperial Area Assembly is excited to host PRAASA.

The purpose of PRAASA is to:

- Develop greater unity among the members, groups, and areas of the Pacific Region;
- Encourage the exchange of ideas and experiences;
- Provide an opportunity for members to discuss pertinent aspects of Alcoholics Anonymous.

The Assembly and the PRAASA Committee should always foster the Recovery, Unity and Service legacies of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Here's what **Thom H.**, our **District Committee Member Chair (DCMC)** had to say about his past experiences at PRAASA:

"The host Area was impeccable, always available to answer questions and to be of service. The format was a speaker panel covering over 26 topics addressing the agenda items. Each session was followed by an open mike session where people from the floor could make statements, ask questions or just say what was on their mind. From these panel sessions I noticed a common theme: be all inclusive, make sure the minority opinion is heard, work with other service entities, i.e. Intergroup, and wait. There is no need to rush to obtain the answer, take time to hear everyone's opinion and wait some more. It is better to be on the side of time than rush into a quick fix only to find it needs to be done over again and amends might have to be made.

As a leader I was reminded I am your servant. I am available for the alcoholic who needs help, not the one who tells her or him how to live. I discovered I am blessed to have a host of friends here in Napa who love and support me and who want to help others with their recovery."

ask the experts >>>

Q: *How Can I Get Into Service?*

A: *Many Meetings In Napa Valley Do Not Have Intergroup Reps.*



Looking for a service position? Come see what all the fuss is about. Come be the eyes, ears and voice of your meeting. An **Intergroup Rep's** responsibility is to attend the monthly meeting and take the information gathered there back to your home group. You can do this! (1 year sobriety requirement)



Beginner's Meeting

EVERY MONDAY – 7:30 PM
First United Methodist Church
Randolph St., Napa, CA

"It's a fun meeting where questions can be asked and crosstalk is allowed."

Contact: Elisabeth 707-738-0606

Birthday Meeting

You worked for it! You deserve it...

Pick up your chip at the Birthday Meeting the last Friday of every month, at 7pm, in the gymnasium at the **Crosswalk Church:**

2590 First Street, Napa

Great Speakers!
AA literature always available
Come and eat cake!

Need Help?

Napa Valley
AA Hotline

707-500-7001

Intergroup Meets 2nd Saturday of Each Month – 10am at the Alano Center

final thoughts...

This section will be used in future issues as a venue for important communications from our Intergroup Officers. Our first victim is a note from yours truly (editor).

I am excited to join the Napa Valley Intergroup and serve as Newsletter Editor. I am especially grateful for the excellent guidance I received from my predecessor (Jeanie, you ROCK!)

In this issue we have attempted to bring a 'hint of the web' to our format. One of the goals discussed among the (newly formed) Communications Committee members was to look at our messaging across all channels (web, newsletter, etc.) and to bring them into alignment.

Contact us at Newsletter@aanapa.org

We've come up with a few sections in the newsletter that we'd like to see recur with each issue. The **Chairperson's Corner** will give an on-going voice to our fearless leader. I also love the idea of the **Ask the Experts** section. Oh, before I forget, we need experts to volunteer to contribute to that! Of course, we will continue to advertise our **Special Meetings** also.

I hope you enjoy this Winter Issue and look forward to hearing from you with your constructive feedback & suggestions.
-Bob S

Intergroup Officers >>>

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