

Lighting

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THIS IS A CHRISTMAS STORY

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My name is John, I am an Alcoholic. My wife, Karin, and I have four children.

We alcoholics seem to have particular problems with holidays, especially Christmas. We remember how we disappointed our families and ourselves. I'd like to share with you my last drunken Christmas. That was in 1961.

We celebrate on Christmas Eve in our home. By 7:30 that evening I was passed out under the Christmas tree. My wife spoke. "The only thing he lacks is a red apple in his mouth." Things were not good at our house.

The following nine months I couldn't get drunk and I couldn't get sober. Nothing worked anymore. The guilt was on all the time, there was no relief. I thought I was going crazy and I probably was. I had tried various things to get off but I always went back to drinking. The last week in September my wife told me, "Either you try that thing called Alcoholics Anonymous or you'll have to leave," (I had been kicked out once before.) And that is how I came in to AA—just to get out of the heat. I didn't know that it was going to be a solution in my life.

Josephine, the woman behind the coffee-bar in the Alano Club in Anaheim,

asked me if I had a problem with alcohol. "No," I said, "I get along just fine with it, but can you do something for my wife, she is crazy."

The next day it all happened to me. I was back in the Alano Club again standing there arguing why I couldn't be an alcoholic. There was a man watching me and after awhile he said. "Why don't you come home with me and let us talk." "OK," I said. It was the most pathetic surrender you ever saw. I had always tried the best I could in all areas of my life but I was beat down to nothing.

We sat on his patio and he told me his story. When he finished, I realized, that he was worse than I was, and he depended on it more than I did, but he was sober in spite of it. I asked him, "You were like that and you don't have to drink anymore?" "Yes," he said. "I've been sober a year and nine months now." "Show me how," I said. "Tell me what to do." His name was Charlie Vick and he became my sponsor.

That night I was in a meeting and when they read a portion of Chapter Five, I asked God to help me to stay sober. I haven't had a drink since that day. The

continued on page 2

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS CENTRAL OFFICE

HOURS

Weekdays 8:00 A.M. to 9:00 P.M.
Saturdays 9:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.
Sundays & Holiday 10:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.

2712 S. Grand Avenue
Santa Ana, CA 92705
Phone (714) 556-4555

From San Clemente, Dana Point, Laguna
Beach & Capistrano Valley Areas -
Phone (714) 581-2694
TDD 556-4559

Christmas Story *(from page 1)*

1st of October this year it will be 33 years ago.

I went to a meeting every day that first year and have gone to several meetings a week ever since. I still work, I have a busy life, but there is always time for a meeting.

I have been a husband to my wife and a father to my children They were 13, 10, 8, and 6 years old when I got sober. I relived my youth with them and am so grateful. I experienced everything with them that I wish my father could have experienced with me. He died from this disease when I was eight. Because of this program and my belief in a higher power I feel that my father has been a part of this journey in Alcoholics Anonymous. There are no more empty spaces inside me.

I met Karin in Stockholm when she was seventeen years old. She was absolutely enchanting and had a freedom within her that knew no bounds and such an appetite for life. Needless to say those qualities were destroyed during the last years of my drinking. Thanks to Al-Anon, and let's face it, the sobriety in our house, she has been given the same spirit and gratitude that's been given to me.

One time, many years ago, we took a new man to a meeting. We took him and his wife to the Southern California AA Convention in Anaheim He didn't want to be there at all, but he had consented to go to one meeting just to get his wife to stop going to Al-Anon. Chuck C. was speaking that Sunday morning and ten minutes into his talk we saw it happen to this guy. It was as if something left him, all the hostility, venom, and fear fell off him, and he reached over and took his wife's hand. He was sober eighteen years before he died of a heart attack, and he and his wife helped many people in AA and Al-Anon.

Our lives have meaning and purpose thanks to the program. I have been asked to do a lot in AA, and I have served my terms. The only thing I have done on my own is that I have listed my name with Central Office for 12 step calls. That's yours and mine business, "to help

others," to give away what we have got. I have gone to lots of meetings over the years and I always love to hear of "when it happens".

I love Chuck C's story of his first meeting. He thought he had come on the wrong night because the people looked so nice. Turning away to leave he heard a voice ask, "Mister, were you looking for something?" Chuck said, "If it interests you, Sir, I was looking for sobriety." The man answered, "You're in the right place. Take off your hat and coat and have a cup of coffee." Chuck said, "I sat down and those fellows rocked me to sleep and I have been here ever since." That happened to him in 1946.

A young woman was speaking at a convention. She told how she came from a good home but the time she was speaking of she was lying in a hospital. She had been there before; this was the fourteenth time, at 22 years of age, and she had hepatitis. Four doctors discussed her case at the foot of her bed. They had done everything they knew to do for her (and they had) but they didn't think she would live through the night. The speaker continued. "A young night nurse, was standing beside the bed. When the doctors left, she took off her shoes and climbed into bed with me and held me in her arms and said. 'You know, I was in the same spot you're in two years ago and if you hold on to me and talk to God, I know that you are going to be all right.' And that was eleven years ago."

My moment of clarity was not so profound, but maybe in itself it was. "Perhaps after all this there is a way for me too." Sometimes we wonder, Do I really have God in my life. How do I know? But you know, it's not natural for an alcoholic not to drink, but as long as you and I do not take the first drink, we have a chance. Abstinence is a Spiritual Environment. We cannot drink or use. That's our deal. Again, Abstinence is a Spiritual Environment. As long as we have that in our living, we have God in our lives.

This will be my thirty-fourth sober Christmas. Merry Christmas to you and I thank you for my life, because it is God

through you that has given me this gift of sobriety.

There is no intellectual solution to an Obsession.

Remember that:

- a) That we were alcoholic and could not manage our own lives.
- b) That probably no human power could have relieved our alcoholism.
- c) That God could and would if He were sought.

John A., Laguna Beach, CA



Looking For a FUN Commitment?

Okay, so you've done your stint as secretary, treasurer, coffee-maker, GSO or Intergroup rep... what's left? Here's a chance to be of service and have a blast at the same time!

Take a look at this issue; except for one Grapevine reprint, it is entirely made up of articles written by Orange County A.A.'s. Our goal is to have your Intergroup publication consist 100% of material written or contributed by *you*, our local fellowship.

The Lifeline is looking for committee members to serve for a one-meeting-per-month commitment, with some recruiting activity in-between. Are you an aspiring writer? Reporter? Cartoonist? Avid reader of A.A. publications? Volunteers do not need to be computer-literate, but experience in PageMaker, Lotus 1-2-3 or any database program would also be helpful.

The old days of "mailing parties" are long gone, so a Lifeline commitment no longer means stapling, folding and affixing labels. Our publication is put together on a computer, and laser-printed pages are generated and taken to our printer, who then packages and mails them. That means the drudgery is gone for us, and we can spend our time collecting articles and interesting tidbits for our issues.

If you are interested in joining in the fun, call Central Office at (714) 556-4555 and ask for Roberta, our fearless leader.

C'mon aboard!

AA BIRTHDAYS

Birthday Donations...

Many AA members celebrate their AA birthdays by sending a donation to Central Office. These donations help keep the doors of Central Office open, so that new members may get the same help so many of us have received. Some members send one or two dollars for each year of sobriety. Others make a personal donation monthly or on a quarterly basis. This month we'd like to extend thanks to:

Casey M.	Dana Point	4 years
Big Tim S.	Newport Beach	5 years
Jane E.	Not shown	7 years
Dayna G.	Irvine	7 years
Dell S.	Huntington Beach	12 years
Sylvia Mc C.	Laguna Hills	15 years

in 5/95



*Happy
Birthday!*

CENTRAL OFFICE'S ACTIVITY OCTOBER 1995

TOTAL CALLS: 5,027	12StepCalls	MeetingInfo	General Info	Customers
OFFICE VOLUNTEERS (MAIN+SATELLITE)	132	2,310	1,824	596
CALL FORWARDING VOLUNTEERS	54	346	364	

BIRTHDAY GRATITUDE FOR:

Name: _____

Sobriety Date: _____

Years: _____

Amount Enclosed: _____

From: _____

*Thank you for sharing
my gratitude.*

Mail to: O.C. Central Office
2712 S. Grand Ave.
Santa Ana, CA 92705

THE LIFELINE 2712 S. GRAND AVE. SANTA ANA, CA 92705

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LIFELINE COMMITTEE:
Allen M., Ellery S.,
Roberta B., Rick C., Jan T.

Tradition of the Month

TRADITION TWELVE

“And finally, we of Alcoholics Anonymous believe that the principle of anonymity has an immense spiritual significance. It reminds us that we are to place principles before personalities; that we are actually to practice a genuine humility. This to the end that our great blessings may never spoil us; that we shall forever live in thankful contemplation of Him who presides over us all.”

Ask Yourself...

1. Why is it a good idea for me to place the common welfare of all AA members before individual welfare? What would happen to *me* if AA as a whole disappeared?
2. When I do not trust AA's current servants, who do I wish had the authority to straighten them out?
3. In my opinions of and remarks about other AAs, am I implying membership requirements other than a desire to stay sober?
4. Do I ever try to get a certain AA group to conform to *my* standards, not its own?
5. Have I a personal responsibility in helping an AA group fulfill its primary purpose? What is *my* part?
6. Does my personal behavior reflect the Sixth Tradition - or belie it?
7. Do I do all I can to support AA financially? Who is the last time I anonymously gave away a Grapevine subscription?
8. Do I complain about certain AA's behavior—especially if they are paid to do work for AA? Who made *me* so smart?
9. Do I fulfill all AA responsibilities in such a way as to please privately even my own conscience? Really?
10. Do my utterances always reflect the Tenth Tradition, or do I give AA critics real ammunition?
11. Should I keep my AA membership a secret, or reveal it in private conversation when that may help another alcoholic (and therefore me)? Is my brand of AA so attractive that other drunks want it?
12. What is the real importance of *me* among more than a million AAs?

—Reprinted from the AA Grapevine Traditions Checklist

WHO - WHERE - WHEN

SPEAKERS IN DECEMBER

To have your speaker meeting listed in **Lifeline**, please call Central Office on or before the 10th of the month.

MONDAY 8:00 PM

- Anaheim, 109 Wilshire
 12 04 Dick B., Moreno Valley
 11 Monty R., Newport Beach
 18 Paul W., Costa Mesa
 25 Glenn "Bigfoot" H., Tustin

SATURDAY 8:00 PM

- Garden Grove, 9645 Belfast Dr.
 Garden Grove Alano Club
 12 02 Dick B., Newport Beach
 09 Tracy M., Fullerton
 16 John A., Laguna Beach
 23 To be announced
 30 Beverly M., Los Angeles

SUNDAY 10:30 AM

- Fullerton
 216 N. Malden
 12 03 Everett W., Long Beach
 (40 years sober)
 10 Emily, Rowland Heights
 17 Harland B., Aliso Viejo
 24 Debbie H., Long Beach
 31 Surprise

THURSDAY 7:30 PM

- Long Beach, 345 E. Carson Ave.
 Big 10 Speaker Meeting
 12 07 Clint H., Los Angeles
 14 Dave S.
 21 Phyllis G., Chatsworth
 28 Angel S., Los Angeles



FRIDAY 8:00 PM

- Huntington Beach, 19900 Beach Blvd.
 Fidelity Federal Bank Bldg.
 12 01 Claudia G., Costa Mesa
 08 Willa G., Laguna Beach
 15 Lamar R. Rancho Santa Fe
 22 Terry F., Vista
 29 Cliff R., Oceanside

SUNDAY 8:00 PM

- Fountain Valley, 10200 Slater
 12 03 Debbie P., Orange
 10 Sandi B., Tustin
 17 Toni L., Bellflower
 24 Kelly D., Oregon
 31 To be announced

FRIDAY 8:00 PM

- La Habra, 631 North Euclid St.
 La Habra Methodist Church
 12 01 Bruce H., Los Angeles
 08 Dale D., Whittier
 15 Eric A., Venice
 22 To be announced
 29 To be announced

SUNDAY 7:30 PM

- Costa Mesa, 2476 Newport Blvd.
 Oddfellows Hall
 12 03 Sherry H., Santa Ana Hgts.
 10 Cliff McK., Laguna Niguel
 17 Jane E., Santa Ana
 24 Hugh G., Costa Mesa
 31 Len B., Costa Mesa

FRIDAY 8:30 PM

- Fullerton, St. Jude
 12 01 Bob B., Carlsbad
 08 Mac B., W. Covina
 15 John S., Huntington Beach
 22 Dennis F., Fullerton
 29 Stan G., Corona Del Mar

SUNDAY 12:00 PM

- Garden Grove, 9845 Belfast Dr.
 Alano Club
 12 03 Trina, Garden Grove
 10 Melissa L., Garden Grove
 17 Jerry C., Westminster
 24 Frank V., Huntington Beach
 31 Jack C., Garden Grove

SATURDAY 8:30 PM

- Fullerton, 109 E. Wilshire
 12 02 Frank O., Santa Ana
 09 Walter C., Anaheim
 16 Walt M., San Diego
 23 To be announced
 30 To be announced

If you don't see your favorite Speaker Meeting listed above, ask the secretary to call in a list of upcoming speakers to the Orange County Central Office by the 10th of the month. Being listed may help increase the meeting size.

Things We Cannot Change...

- Walter A.
 Orange**
- Gene L.
 Carson City, Nevada
 (formerly Newport
 Beach)**
- June Degovia M.
 34 years sober
 Huntington Beach**
- Clarence P.
 Costa Mesa**

UPCOMING CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR AA

The events listed below are for your information only. If you have any questions regarding any event, we suggest that you contact the organization conducting the event.

11th Annual O.C. Convention Planning Meetings

11th OCAAC, March 22-24th, 1996
 Red Lion Hotel, Costa Mesa, CA
 Open planning meetings 7:30 PM at the Roque Center, 9842 13th St. Garden Grv
 Oct. 18, 1995 Jan. 17, 1996
 Nov. 15, 1995 Feb. 21, 1996
 Dec. 20, 1995
 Walk-thru at the Red Lion March 1996

IF YOU CAN talk, stand, sit, smile, saw, paint, hammer, drive, file, type, write, count, breathe or just tell jokes...

WENEEDYOURHELP!

December 31st, 1995

OCYPAA New Years Eve Meeting and Dance
 Anaheim Convention Center
 \$15.00 at the door for the dance
 contact: Ruben (714) 744-9040 or Rob C. (714) 280-1826

January 12-14th, 1996

A.C.Y.P.A.A. 1996
 24th Roundup
 Pleasanton Hilton
 contact: info line (510) 274-4037
 Mail registration to: A.C.Y.P.A.A.
 P.O. Box 328, Danville, CA 94526-0328

February 2-4th, 1996

21st Annual San Fernando Valley AA Convention, Burbank Airport Hilton, Burbank, CA
 Write to: 21st Annual SFVAA Conv. P.O. Box 77277, Northridge, CA 91327-7727

February 8-11th, 1996

32nd Int'l A.A. Womens Conference Salt Lake City Marriott, 75 South West Temple, Salt Lake City UT 84101
 Contact: Debbie (801) 966-6022 or Janet (801) 273-7225; Mail registration 32nd IAAWC, P.O. Box 521451, Salt Lake City, UT 84152-1451

September 5-8th, 1996

39th Annual I.C.Y.P.A.A. Anaheim Hilton Hotel, Anaheim, CA
 Hotline (714) 744-2494, Rob (714) 280-1826
 Mail registration to: ICYPAA, P.O. Box 775, Placentia, CA 92670

March 18-29th, 1997

50th Anniversary Convention of AA in Brazil
 Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
 For info: CENSAA/COC - Av. Rio Branco, 57-s/201, Rio de Janeiro - Brazil Zip Code 20001-004

June 13th-15th, 1997

50th Anniversary Convention of AA in Great Britain
 Wintergardens, Blackpool, England
 For info: The Registrar, Great Britain Convention 1997, P.O. Box 32, South Shore, Blackpool FY4 2UA England



"I detected a new note of sincerity in his Ho! Ho! Ho! I think he's off the sauce."

SUBSCRIPTIONS

GREAT GIFT IDEA!

A gift for a friend, for someone who can't get out to meetings, for a newcomer? All of these are good reasons to give a LIFELINE subscription. All of this for only \$1 a month.
 We make it easy, just one check (we do accept cash).

Number of Subscriptions @ \$12 per year. \$ Enclosed

Name Phone

Street City Zip

Comments:

(Attach a separate sheet for additional subscriptions)

Send To:
The Lifeline
 c/o Orange County Central Office
 2712 S. Grand Ave., Santa Ana 92705

