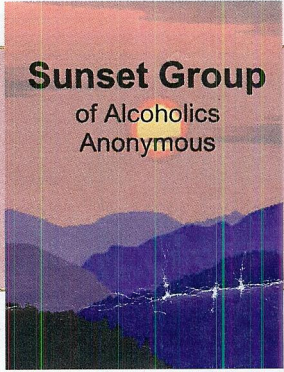


Sunrise Group
of Alcoholics
Anonymous

August Newsletter



Sunset Group
of Alcoholics
Anonymous

The Realm of the Spirit Is Broad

THURSDAY SPEAKERS IN AUGUST

**Aug. 7: Doug R.,
Los Angeles**

**Aug. 14: Bob F.,
Northridge**

**Aug. 21: Judith-Ann
G., West Hollywood.**

**Aug. 23: Luther W.,
Rancho Mirage**

SATURDAY SPEAKERS IN AUGUST

**Aug. 2: Steve L.,
Redondo Beach
Step 2**

**Aug. 9: Bob Z.,
Chatsworth
Step 3**

**Aug. 16: David B.,
Long Beach
Step 3**

**Aug. 23: Karen G.,
West LA
Step 4**

**Aug. 30, Steve L.,
Pasadena
Step 4**

Aaron, an Arizona alcoholic who is now sober fifteen years, tells of being called to the business office of an AA member in a Southwestern city in the mid-nineteen-forties. The business acquaintance had heard about one of Aaron's drinking escapades, and insisted that he get down on his knees and pray to get sober. Aaron was so surprised that he did what the man requested, but then had to go have a drink to recover from the experience! He finally made it back to AA to stay in 1980.

Today, our individual concepts of a Power greater than ourselves vary. Many of us sober up and return to our traditional religious upbringings, or seek out one that meets our needs. Across the country, there are now special interest groups called "Christians in AA," "Baptists in AA," and "Buddhists in AA," to cite a few. But others among us reach far beyond the tenets of churches. There have been AA groups named "We Agnostics" in various cities for a long time.

The Big Book tells us that we do not need to consider another's conception of God: "Our own conception, however inadequate, will be sufficient to make the approach and to effect a contact with Him . . . the realm of Spirit is broad, roomy, all inclusive; never exclusive or forbidding to those who earnestly seek. It is open, we believe, to all men."

The book further explains, "In our personal stories you will find a wide variation in the way each teller approaches and conceives of the Power which is greater than himself." Some of us have taken that idea to heart.

For example, "Dan" in Dallas got sober using a bedpost as his Higher Power. One morning it dawned on him (when he woke up one more time thinking about a drink) that the bedpost never thought about a drink, never needed one, and got along just fine without one. So he made the bedpost his Higher Power and each morning before he left for work he would pat it and say, "If I remember you, I don't

think I'll have to have a drink today." After a year of doing this, Dan woke up one morning and said to the bedpost, "I think we made it," gave it a final pat, went to a meeting, told his "bedpost story," and declared that the time had come for him to find something a little more substantial to rely on as his Higher Power.

"Natalie" in New Orleans had a history of violent sexual abuse from male family members and authority figures and couldn't make herself accept the traditional concept of God the Father. She also rejected the usual AA hugs, and was uncomfortable even holding hands during the prayer at the end of meetings. But she wanted to stay sober and agreed to "borrow" her sponsor's non-threatening father-figure Higher Power until she could find her own. Eventually she found a lion-concept who prowled her house protecting her, and later she became capable of riding the lion safely wherever she went. Natalie's fear of touching or being touched slowly dissipated, she joined a nontraditional religious group, and she is now a trained holistic masseuse.

"Carol" in California made a moving van her Higher Power. She would say "Hi" to her "God concept" every time she saw one of the nationwide moving company's vehicles on the road. Eventually that idea grew into a more traditional deity.

A seven-foot robed black princess, a man who spreads his cape to sweep threats from life's path, a Pac-Man type cartoon figure who gobbles up problems, a jackhammer that rivets into the brain and knocks out the thought of drinking: the variety of unusual concepts we drunks have used to get sober is amazing.

It seems that the important thing, at least in the beginning, is not what concept we use, but simply that we admit there is something in this world that is more powerful than us.

Louisiana D.
Oceanside, California



August Newsletter
(continued)

*"... For whatever life has cost us,
we are very rich."*

– FROM AN ANONYMOUS POEM

**WHERE
WE MEET**

**THE SUNSET
GROUP** meets every
Thursday night from
7 pm to 8:30 pm at
14701 Friar Street,
Van Nuys – at the
corner of Cedros
Ave, near Van Nuys
and Victory Blvds.

**THE SUNRISE
GROUP MEETS ON**
Saturday mornings
at 8:15 am to 9:30
am on the second
floor of Pinz
Bowling Center,
12655 Ventura
Blvd., just east of
Coldwater canyon.

**THE SUNSET
GROUP AA BIG
BOOK STUDY**
takes place every
Tuesday, 7 pm to 8
pm at the Vineland
A.D.H.C. Center,
5629 Vineland Ave,
North Hollywood.
(Parking is at the
back on Ensign
Ave, east side, just
north of the Cri-Help
side gate.)

Seat Of Life

A newcomer reflects on her first year of sobriety

Last week, I had a lovely party on one of those lush, green, misty summer afternoons. The house was filled with good friends in celebration of my first year of sobriety, and my dad's visit. I was maneuvering food plates around the kitchen and talking to a girlfriend, when someone said to me, "That's such a beautiful chair." I looked over to the corner of the living room, and there it was, unoccupied. My beautiful antique carved wood rocking chair, gleaming on the polished wood floor, with my favorite quilt thrown over it.

One year ago, that chair and the quilt were covered in tears, vomit, blood, and likely some urine. Probably the only bodily fluid that didn't leak onto the chair were bowel-moving materials, and maybe some obscure bile-duct secretions — but who knows, given my body's reactions to the large bottles of mouthwash (alcohol content: 26.5%) I was drinking. If I'd had any fingernails, there would have, been large scratches on the arms. A year ago, that chair held me in its arms as I rocked back and forth with shakes, heaves, and despair, as I stared psychotic out at the colorless winter, plotting suicide. No job, no driver's license, and unanswered phone calls from ignored friends. Except for the dogs, I was alone within the excruciating cycle of drinking my half-assed alcohol, blacking out, and the inevitable convulsive withdrawals, panic, and terror. Unspeakable terror. The Horsemen surrounded me, and that little chair held me through all of it.

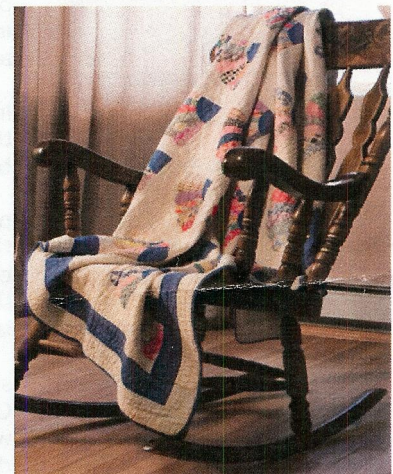
But, on this day, the chair stood clean and beautiful against the window and wore that gorgeous quilt.

The whole house was warm and the smells of good food intermingled with music and my friends laughter. I could see a few books peeking out from a bookcase nearby, from my rushed effort to tidy: The Big Book, a meditation book, *Living Sober*, a book on women pilots of Alaska, and information on a Master's program in environmental science.

Now, when I sit in my chair, I look out the window with hope. When fear grips me, I sit in my chair and face it head on. I cry in it, pray in it, read in it, and reminisce in it. How one little chair can be the seat of such joy, pain, and everything in-between transcends human understanding.

But I do know that God is here today, as he was there then, holding me in the palm of his hand, in the arms of my chair.

Mary C.
Eagle River, Alaska



Contributions: Email Michael B (the English guy at the Literature table) michael@thebucklandcompany.com, or call him at 213-453-7554. Don't be shy. Michael is a writer. Give him a half formed thought. He'll make it work.