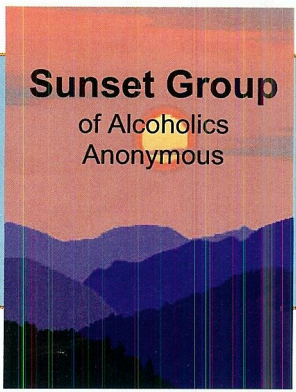


Sunrise Group
of Alcoholics
Anonymous

July Newsletter



Sunset Group
of Alcoholics
Anonymous

Facing the Music

THURSDAY SPEAKERS IN JULY

July 3: David D.,
Dunsmore

July 10: Don H.,
Studio City

July 17: Ruth S.,
San Bernadino

July 24: Candace M.,
Los Angeles

July 31: Ralph W.,
Los Angeles

SATURDAY SPEAKERS IN JULY

July 5: Hector E.,
Los Angeles.
Traditions 1, 2, and 3.

July 12: David B.,
Laguna. Step 1

July 19: Amanda N.,
West LA. Step 1

July 26: Frank C.,
West LA. Step 2

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

For seven years I worked as a musician, cluelessly bolstering my alcoholic résumé. My wife met the bills my gigs didn't cover, so I had time to practice and compose, and eager fans kept me in free booze and dope.

Signposts of the progressing disease came with the highs: corrosive insecurity, long bouts of self-pity, predictable hangovers, angry arguments with other musicians, constant paranoia over weasels in the business taking advantage of us, bitterness and helplessness about not getting the breaks we deserved.

After opening local concerts for a couple of big name groups and cutting a record, I dissolved the group in a tequila-fueled snit over another musician quitting the band. I moved away, took a job in another field, and, three weeks later, sold my instrument and equipment.

With a little over two years' sobriety, I completed Step work with a sponsor and began practicing my instrument again. As with my failed marriage, music was something I needed to come to terms with. The old magnetism was palpable. But without medication, my doubt and stage fright were formidable.

Steps Four through Ten had taught me two things: 1) I didn't have to let fear rule my behavior. 2) It's all right to take action even if it turns out to be a mistake. So I began a sober career in music one day at a time, starting with dinner music at local restaurants on weekends.

At first I was embarrassed and baffled by how clumsy I felt playing without the emotional insulation of alcohol and drugs. But I persisted and gradually grew less self-conscious.

But the music business is show business. Verbal promises are worth about as much as the breath they're made with, and there are always lots of verbal promises.

So, two years later I was finishing a summer of playing seven nights a week, when the bass player I'd hired (a self-admitted alcoholic, dry and very sarcastic about AA) told me I was fired, and the club

owner (an active alkie) with whom I'd contracted the gig told me not to come crying to him with my problems.

I had never been fired (and haven't since then). But I vividly remember just before the last set that night one of the waiters drunkenly leaning into me, blowing beer fumes in my face, and telling me how much he liked my playing while tapping me on the chest with the tip of his bottle in what, I guess, he thought was a friendly gesture. To me it was a wake-up call.

With the help and advice of another sober alcoholic, I decided to continue practicing, but also to see what life felt like off the club circuit merry-go-round. I rediscovered the joy and peace of rising early every morning, and of reconnecting with the AA community that makes evening meetings. I also began to write stories and poetry in my precious early morning hours.

Five weeks later, a sober contact offered me a solo job playing four nights a week in an upscale restaurant. I had to decide between the draw of two things that I loved: playing music or having the kind of life and keeping the kind of hours that suited my sober constitution.

I had comprehended and come to value serenity, and had come to know a new freedom. These were no longer abstract terms easily dismissed. I wanted not just sobriety, but a sober life.

So with the sadness that accompanies the break-up of any long term relationship, I turned down the offer.

What I've discovered I want is not just a freedom from fear, but freedom to live quietly and at peace with myself away from seeking others' adulation.

Sobriety itself is like that. I have to want it and care about it. If others don't know about it or understand it, that's no matter to me. Having had a spiritual awakening, my life is no longer my own. And I see plenty of proof that I'm more useful to myself and to others that way, even if there's no one dancing and cheering at the end of the day.

Ernest S.
York Harbor, Maine



July Newsletter (continued)

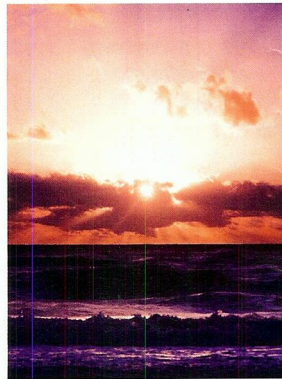
Don't miss this important workshop!
"PRINCIPLES FOR RECOVERY FROM A SPIRITUAL MALADY."
Led by BOB D of Las Vegas
Sunday 20 July 2008. 9am - 5pm with a catered lunch.
14701 Friar St., Van Nuys, CA 91401
(Corner of Victory & Cedros near Van Nuys Blvd.)

WHERE WE MEET

THE SUNSET GROUP now meets every Thursday night from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at 14701 Friar Street, Van Nuys - at the corner of Cedros Ave, near Van Nuys and Victory Boulevards.

THE SUNRISE GROUP meets on Saturday mornings from 8:15 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. on the second floor of Pinz Bowling Center at 112655 Ventura

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



Belinda writes:

The Sunrise/Sunset Steering Committee meets quarterly to deal with the annual workshop, group participation at conventions, annual elections and financial contributions to area offices.

The next meeting is scheduled for 7:15 p.m. on Monday, 25 August, at a member's home - an announcement of exactly where we'll meet will be made closer to the date.

You become a voting member at the second meeting you attend. To add an item to the agenda, please see Belinda or send it to bwt719@hotmail.com.

Up Until This Morning's Sun

It's so so far now
 from the little room full of toys,
 the "I love you Mom and Dad"s, the joy,
 the goodnight stories,
 the rosy-cheeked crushes on little boys,
 the sweet innocence lost. So young.

Something was wrong.

It's so so far now
 from the multi-colored psychedelic trips,
 the non-sleeping, non-eating,
 non-thinking six dimensional verbal slips,
 the drips, the smoke-filled, hazy rips.
 So fun.

But something was so terribly, terribly wrong.

Its so so far now
 from the pain, the shame,
 the addicted screaming bloody dysfunctional
 agonizing way of lifeless living I claimed.
 The sweating, the shaking, the cursing,
 the enjoyment feigned.

The razor slices up my wrists,
 finding life still in me - then disdain.
 So done.

Something was still so wrong
 I wish I was gone.
 Up until this morning's sun.

- Angela D.
 Written at 6 months sober

Contributions: Like Angela's poem or Belinda's notice, we welcome quotes, announcements, anecdotes, observations, even a favorite poem, related to your AA experience - for the group's newsletter. Just 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.