

the GRAPESCINN

Alcoholics Anonymous of Santa Cruz County
5732 Soquel Drive,
Soquel, CA

HAVE A DRINKING PROBLEM? CALL 24 HOURS — (831) 475-5782

October 2022

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MY AA ADVENTURE: THE EARLY DAYS

Barely six months sober, I am sitting in an AA meeting. I know little and understand less about what 's going on but I'm there. What I've learned I've learned from Nancy, my first sponsor.

To join; you only need to have the desire to stop drinking.

I thought I could sign up, show up, and follow the yellow brick road back into polite society, meaning drinking moderately again (who was I kidding: I never drank moderately; I never had). But I truly believed that, in a few months, and with my superior academic record, I would do a crash course and drink normally.

However, at a meeting, I heard a man ask Nancy: "How long have you been sober?" to which she said, smiling, "Ten years." I'd been searching in my purse for the dollar offering, but I stopped short. Ten years? Couldn't be. She's far too normal looking. And now she's smiling? Why? Why would so lovely a woman need ten years to conquer Demon Alcohol?

I was so wrong. Appalled to learn that AA is a lifetime program, I squirmed, wondering how I could gracefully exit. Why I didn't sneak out the back door had only to do a little to do with my determination to quit drinking and a lot to do with my ex-boyfriend, R, who I imagined was now prancing among all the stunningly gorgeous women in these AA meetings.

The previous summer R and I had filled our cups until they had runneth over all Europe . Fueled with cheap Italian wine or tall frosted mugs of strong German ale, our rancor for one another threatened the tenuous bond we had forged prior to the trip. Finally, he left me, heading to Sweden to meet some woman he'd met along the way, promising to meet up again in London. Fuming with resentment, I caught the next train to Amsterdam. A couple of weeks later, prior to boarding our plane to SFO, I hit the duty-free shop where I found bargain prices on Tanqueray, and ended up



A FULL AND THANKFUL HEART



IN MEMORIAM: ALISA V.

Alisa embarked on her sober journey July 4, 1999 at the Living Sober conference in San Francisco. She was elated to be among the newcomers to stand up and receive their first Big Book. Returning home to Santa Cruz, she joined her home group, Brown Baggers. Thus began a 23-year sojourn in sobriety.

Alisa was passionate about carrying the message to other alcoholics. She was a regular at numerous conferences and retreats—the International Women’s Conference, the Yosemite Summit Conference, the A.A. International Convention, the Lake Tahoe Fall Festival, General Service assemblies, and A.A retreats. She sponsored countless women, served in General Service, and took shifts on the diverter hotline. She hosted birthday parties and baby showers, brought flowers to people who were sick, and gave rides to meetings.

“Alisa WAS the face of A.A.,” said one friend. “She was generous, gracious and big-hearted.”

In her 20th year of sobriety, Alisa was diagnosed with cancer and shared her intimate journey on Facebook. Because of COVID, her wife and friends were unable to visit her while she was in the hospital. When she was at home again, her close-knit group of friends, in and out of A.A[®], each wanted time with her. She welcomed many of us even though it was difficult to parcel out her remaining days.

“We made her our priority,” said another friend.

Alisa passed away at the age of 58, sober and at peace.

“Because of the steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, she was able to die peacefully and with dignity. She was never bitter or sad, but in acceptance. It was beautiful to witness.”

In her copy of Daily Reflections, the entry for March 25 was extensively highlighted, underlined, and punctuated with the drawing of a heart.

“I try hard to hold fast to the truth that a full and thankful heart cannot entertain great conceits. When brimming with gratitude, one’s heartbeat must surely result in outgoing love, the finest emotion that we can ever know.”

“Alisa WAS the face of A.A.,” said one friend. “She was generous, gracious and big-hearted.”

—As Bill Sees It, p. 37
A.A., World Services, Inc.

WOMEN WANT SERENITY



This story by Dossie P. appeared in the March 2002 issue of the GrapeSCINN

Lots of women were showing up at Brown Baggers when I moved to Aptos in 1975. Tuesday around noon, they met upstairs at 17th and Brommer, bringing their brown paper bags, their joys and their sorrows for fellowship in sobriety. They ate sandwiches, drank coffee and sodas, chatted, and readied themselves for the meeting at 1:00 p.m. Veda V.R., a regular at Brown Baggers, decided around 1979 that a women's meeting in mid-county was needed. Now, whether Veda had a resentment or merely felt that too many women were making the 20-mile round trip for a meeting, I don't know...

The group voted to name the meeting "Serenity". It was agreed that I ask the pastor at the little Community Methodist Church on Thunderbird Drive if we could meet there every Friday at 1:00 p.m. We received a warm and personal welcome from the minister, and the transition went smoothly at once. The name of the street amused me; all I could think of was the gallons of cheap Thunderbird wine I had consumed back in the bad old "good old days".

A core of women seems to feel that it is the best place to be on any Friday afternoon. The format includes introducing ourselves one by one around the room. Someone reads a self-selected portion from the Big Book. The traditions are read on the first Friday of the month. The Promises are read on the last Friday of the month. Sharing time is limited to three minutes. You can imagine that this is suggested only and occasionally adhered to. A feeling of warmth and love permeates the little room. The newcomer is greeted, welcomed, and encouraged to keep coming back. Service jobs are shared. Two secretaries alternate weekly.

The name of the street amused me; all I could think of was the gallons of cheap Thunderbird wine I had consumed back in the bad old "good old days".

Intergroup representatives and General Service positions are filled. Coffee and set-up volunteers show up. Cookies are donated by a different member each week. The pull-down shades with the Steps and Traditions are hung up each week for all to see.

Veda now resides in a convalescent home in the Palo Alto area. We congregate each Friday to stay sober, support each other, talk program, and honor the many who have left us: Mona, Bev, Ann, Grace, Gracie & Jane, Dorothy, Maggie, Leela, Peg and surely some whose names I don't recall at the moment. We laugh, we cry, we share, and we stay away from that first lethal drink on day at a time. Serenity yes, for most of us not just on Friday afternoon, but often. Thank you, Veda. Thank you, God.

Dossie P.

MY AA ADVENTURE, CONTINUED

lugging a gin-weighted bag up the steps of the 747 (no help from my fellow drinker). Soon we were seated across the aisle from one another.

He, who had until then seemingly ignored my purchase, now began to harangue me, and we bickered. And bickered.

Until the stewardess announced: Ladies and gentlemen: our flight is delayed an hour, and we will be offering you free drinks until we take off.

Halleluiah! Obviously American Airlines had no idea the identities concealed by the man and woman in seats D3 and D4 who happily gulped as many martinis as they could handle.

When I shut the door of my house where he dropped me late that night, I vowed: I will never ever allow anyone to get close to me again. Amen.

Then I went into my kitchen and opened my gin.

Back in our tiny berg, R and I resumed very separate lives.

At the university, I played an avoidance game. In truth, I hoped never to see him again, but I knew that since we worked in close proximity I could not prevent an eventual sighting.

Meanwhile, having downed most of duty-free gin the last three weeks of summer, I set out to control my drinking. Again.

A month passed, faculty meetings roared to life, and my drinking impulses ignored all my “off” signals. Two months. Three months. Until. One morning my former Europe drinking companion, pounced on little me, toting a hundred-pound bag of resentments and ready to pour them all over him. And it looked as if this was my opportunity.

I heard him call out, increased my stride but too late.

When he touched my shoulder, I knew I was doomed.

He said: (charmingly) Come in.

We sat. He lit a cigarette, puffed coolly, slowly blowing smoke out the open window.

He asked: how’s your drinking?

I : (after uncomfortable pause) A little wine now and then. (surprise: a lie; never “a little”).

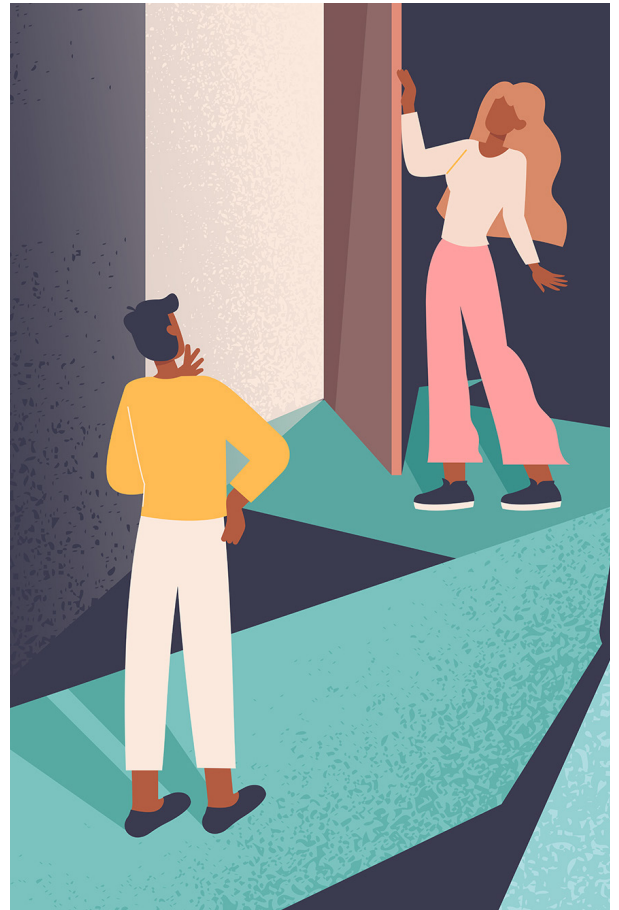
He: I went to AA last night.

I fumed. He was getting well before I was. Well, he was a much bigger drunk than I. (Denial).

And so I wrestled with my Sister, Denial, until three weeks later, when I called Nancy, a woman he’d pointed out in a market and whose anonymity he had flagrantly broken the previous year.

Luckily I’d carefully committed her full name and her AA affiliation to memory. After another year and the tumultuous travels, I would phone her.

And that call would change my life.



Kathy C.



Rick A	2002
Brian O	2012
Lanie C	1989
Eileen E	1998
Karena B	2010
Reb B	2012
Ron H	1997
Gail L	1992
Kristin S	2013
Carolyn M	1984
Stephen H	2013
Coco C	1986
Brian S	2006
Russ A	2006
Tim B	1992
Phil S (Reno, NV)	1976
Jennifer P.	1987
Scott F	2011
Lydia E	2012
Jean W	1978
Roxane	2021
Evan	2019
Marisol	2014
Tony	2012
Alan	2005
Brigit	2000
Douglas	2000
Taylor	2019
Carol	1986

Want to list your
A.A. anniversary in
the GrapeSCINN?
Email your name and
sobriety date to:
grapesccin@gmail.com



NOVEMBER SPEAKER MEETING

SC Intergroup Presents

Birthday Speaker Meeting

Hosted by: Area 11 group

Tara G from Hayward, CA

20 years/December 10, 2001

Saturday • Nov 5th • 7pm

Doors open at 6:30pm

Mid County Sr. Center

829 Bay Ave.

Capitola, CA 95010



GRAPESCCIN WRITING MEETING FORMING NOW!

First Thursday of each month at 7 p.m.

Meeting Format:

1. Serenity Prayer
2. Topic ideas
3. 12 minutes of writing
4. Repeat
5. Maybe share, maybe not
6. Write again
7. Serenity Prayer.

All AA members are invited. No crosstalk of critiquing. No pressure. If you're interested in joining us or want to learn a little more about it, email us: grapesccin@gmail.com

Watsonville Fellowship Halloween Bash

Saturday, October 29 @ 6:00 pm - 10:00 pm
Westview Presbyterian Church 118 1st Street, Watsonville
\$10 at the door

15th Annual Salinas Valley Blues & B.B.Q.

Saturday, October 29 @ 3 - 7:00 pm
Spreckels Memorial Hall
\$15 donation all inclusive

SC Intergroup Halloween Costume Party

Saturday, October 29 @ 7:00 pm - 10:00 pm
Mid-County Senior Center 829 Bay Ave., Capitola, CA

SC Intergroup Birthday Speaker Meeting

Saturday, November 5 @ 8:00 - 5:30 p.m.
Doors open at 6:30 p.m.
Mid-County Senior Center 829 Bay Ave., Capitola, CA

C.N.C.A Election Assembly

Saturday, October 29 @ 7:00 pm - 10:00 pm
Ulatis Community Center
1000 Ulatis Dr, Vacaville, CA 95687
Zoom ID: 892-6443-0517



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



SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

AREA 73 HOSPITALS AND INSTITUTIONS COMMITTEE

- GSR Liaison: 6 months sobriety

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES:

- Salinas Valley State Prison – Needs Visiting Sponsors: Male, 5 years sobriety
- Ben Lomond Fire Camp – Needs Coordinator: Male or female, 3 years sobriety.
- Water Street Jail/Women – Needs Coordinator: Female, 3 years sobriety.
- Juvenile Hall – Needs Coordinator: Male and Female, 3 years sobriety.

**H & I Committee meets
on the 4th Wednesday
of each month at
420 Melrose Ave.,
Santa Cruz (Trinity
Presbyterian Church)**

- Water Street Jail/men – Needs Coordinator: Male, 3 years sobriety

REHABILITATION CENTERS

- Behavioral Health/Dual Diagnosis Facilities:
- Behavioral Health Unit – Needs Secretaries: Male or female, 3 years sobriety.

- Casa Pacific – Needs Coordinator: Male or female, 3 years sobriety.
- El Dorado Center – Needs Coordinator: Male or female, 3 years sobriety.
- Telos – Needs Coordinator: Male or female, 3 years sobriety.

TRANSITIONAL HOUSING FOR HOMELESS VETERANS:

- Paget Center – Needs Coordinator: Male or female, 3 years sobriety
- Meetings at Santa Cruz County Jails (Water St. Men’s and Women’s, Blaine St. Women’s, and Roundtree Men’s Facilities) are restarting as soon as we have cleared volunteers. Secretaries needed all facilities URGENTLY.

If you are interested in any of the above service positions please email: SantaCruzcountyHI@gmail.com

All Jail Facilities: One year sobriety, 5 years since last felony & 2 years since last misdemeanor required. Orientation and clearance required for service at both men’s and women’s county corrections facilities. . You must complete an application before orientation can be scheduled. Live Scan background check cost will be covered by H & I.

All other H & I Facilities: Please visit fillhandisc.org to fill out the volunteer form. We will be in touch with you to initiate your volunteering and assistance in placement into an open meeting.

Inside Visiting Sponsorship Service

What: IVSS provides one-on-one in-person sponsorship to A.A. members confined at Ca. State Prisons. This program has been successfully tested at San Quentin State Prison as role model roll out to other institutions in California, as well as potentially throughout the U.S. and Canada. The response has been overwhelmingly enthusiastic. We currently have over 60 confined alcoholics who are getting the benefits of one-on-one sponsorship.

Why: Due to State Prison regulations and federal PREA requirements, regular H&I meeting volunteers CANNOT sponsor inside members at the institution they serve. Our solution is to create an “inside visiting sponsorship service” under the auspices of the NorCal H&I Committee which operates in addition to, but entirely separate from, our H&I meeting activities at the prisons.

How: A special group of A.A. volunteers go into the prison as VISITORS. The clearance procedure for visitors is very simple – just a basic one-page questionnaire. The volunteer will meet with the A.A. on the inside at least once a month during the normal visiting hours at the facility.

Who: Male A.A. members with at least five years of continuous sobriety, a good working knowledge of the Big Book, and it is suggested to have previous sponsorship experience.

Outside volunteers are matched with inside members requesting the service. After the first meeting both members are free to decide if they want to work together – like all sponsorship, it is entirely voluntary on both sides. This extremely exciting program is a fantastic means of furthering your 12 Step work and helping to ensure the continuation of Alcoholics Anonymous existence!

But what about anonymity? Due to our dedicated P.O. Box and the cooperation of the prison administration, *your anonymity is protected*. Your name and address aren’t revealed.

IVSS is now being rolled out to the Salinas Valley State Prison.

If you have a desire to participate in this ground breaking program (A.A.’s “on the inside” have never had the opportunity to take advantage of a one-on-one sponsor in the eighty plus years that Alcoholics Anonymous has existed) please see the contact information below

“Every new volunteer is another inside member served”

Dave R. at svsp.ivss@gmail.com.

CONTACT THE SANTA CRUZ COUNTY H & I COMMITTEE AT:

SANTACRUZCOUNTYHI@GMAIL.COM

WEBSITE AT HANDISC.ORG