



I Can't, We Can



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December 2023 - February 2024 Edition

Toll-Free Hotline 1(833)4HOPECA (833)446-7322 www.sfvca.org

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cocaine anonymous



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*I Can't, We Can is a bi-monthly publication of San Fernando Valley Cocaine Anonymous. It is intended solely to provide information for the fellowship of Cocaine Anonymous (C.A.). We hope to communicate the experience, strength, and hope of C.A. members reflecting recovery, unity, and service, within the bounds of friendliness and good taste. **This Newsletter presents experiences and opinions of Cocaine Anonymous members. Those opinions expressed herein are of the individual contributors and are not to be attributed nor taken as an endorsement by Cocaine Anonymous, Cocaine Anonymous World Services, Cocaine Anonymous World Service Office, Inc., Cocaine Anonymous of San Fernando Valley, or I Can't, We Can.** The editors reserve the right to edit any submissions in adherence to the Twelve Traditions of Cocaine Anonymous. If you would like to know more about Cocaine Anonymous, the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions, please write and ask for C.A. World Service Conference approved literature at CAWSO, 21720 S. Wilmington Ave., Ste. 304 Long Beach, CA 90810-1641 USA E-Mail to: info@CA.org or by Fax to: (310) 559- 2554, Contact CA by phone at (310) 559-5833. Also note that the C.A. World Service Office web page is: www.ca.org. Please also note this publication and all its contents are copyrighted by Cocaine Anonymous of San Fernando Valley. Any unauthorized duplication or publication is prohibited.*

If Nothing Changes, Nothing Changes

By Bruce B. – Sobriety Date: 10/19/19

As we come through the doors of recovery, it may be sometime before we awaken to the Steps. Initially, it is enough not to return to our underlying addictions. The list goes on an infinitum - - - Cocaine, Meth, Heroin, Marijuana, Alcohol, and all facets of the human condition.

The urge not to scratch that itch, in essence, is our Step One. The practice and familiarity of scratching that itch for our drug of choice is why the professed acknowledgement of Step One is so profound. I remember reading my Step One out loud in a meeting regarding exactly what I did, as that was the practice of that fellowship. It wasn't that I just used, but all the shame-based secrets of how and what I did became an indoctrination of my comprehensive demoralization. The illusion, delusion, and insanity that I could use like others was smashed. I was hugged afterward and told that I belonged.

My addiction had cost me a lot; physically, mentally, and spiritually. What I learned in the Steps was that there were two Powers presented in the Twelve steps. Reading my Step One out loud and the power of the fellowship – we, us, others. Twenty-Five times in the 12 Steps, this Power is presented.

The other Power presented as the cornerstone of change, inspiring the Power of the fellowship, is the power of God. God, Higher Power, Him, is presented Nine times in the 12 steps.

I have surrendered my will over to drugs, sex, booze, food, law enforcement, including money, property, and prestige. These non-omnipotent surrenders are practiced solutions to my life problems of powerlessness and unmanageability. But the surrender to trust God, clean house, and work with others is the legacy of good will we create once we begin the process of doing the Step Work.

We practiced our addictions out there, but we are here in this moment, and the power to change our old ideas and solutions rests upon our ability to embrace change via our indoctrination and practice of the 12 Steps. What the Steps remind me is that what I saw, learned, and practiced became my addictions roaring like a tornado through my life and others'.

Emotions can blind us to where, in an instant, we want to self-medicate with our familiar addictions. Hence the importance of tying in with both Powers presented via the Steps. This is a *we* program, and one day at a time, we are presented with the power of choice between our old ideas and staying the course of change, forced or otherwise. We have a choice to stay sopped, contingent upon our spiritual reprieve, and embrace change. The Step Work works only if we work them.

"What we see we learn, what we learn we practice, and what we practice, we become. For if Nothing Changes, Nothing Changes." [The Change Agent From 30,000 Feet, Chapter 1, Pages 1-2]

2024

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Keep Coming Back,
Sober!

3

Struggling to find a meeting during the holidays?
Visit sfvca.org for virtual and marathon meetings.
Don't let the holidays get in the way of your recovery!

STAYING SOBER DURING THE HOLIDAYS

"One big secret about succeeding in the New Year lies in concentrating more on things that matter most in life, and walking away from those things that are of no value or use." – Bamigboye Olurotimi

Everyone knows the dangers surrounding holidays... drunk drivers, stranger danger, walking alone... but what about the dangers for addicts and alcoholics like us? Firstly, and most importantly, it is vital to remember that ***it is possible to stay sober***. Holidays are no different from any other day: recovery comes first. On page 101 in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous it reads, "our rule is not to avoid a place where there is drinking, *if we have a legitimate reason for being there*." How do you know if this applies to you? Well, let's continue on the same page: "ask yourself on each occasion, 'Have I any good social, business, or personal reason for going to this place? Or am I expecting to steal a little vicarious pleasure from the atmosphere of such places?'" Before you attend whatever you have planned, ask yourself these questions, and be honest with your answers. Call your sponsor or a friend in recovery and talk it through with them. Going back once more into the Big Book, this time to page 102, it reads "But be sure you are on solid spiritual ground before you start and that your motive in going is thoroughly good." These are the simple steps outlined in the book that you can take towards maintaining your sobriety during the holidays, but what happens when something you weren't prepared for triggers your alcoholic thinking? Don't worry, you are not alone, and we are all here to help!

Here are some experiences and words of advice from our fellows:

When I first came into the rooms, I'd always heard people say the holidays can be tricky. Stay close. I thought to myself, "What a bunch of losers!" It's just another day on the calendar. It's no big deal. Then my first sober Thanksgiving was quickly approaching. All of a sudden, I was overwhelmed by these feelings of loneliness, sadness, and guilt. I was replaying all the times I had not been present with my friends and family during the holidays; too high or too shameful to show up and be counted on. My pink cloud started to disappear with old thoughts of isolation. Then I remembered those two words so often repeated in the rooms, stay close. I quickly signed up to be of service at the Thanksgiving marathon. I did whatever they needed. I went to multiple meetings at the event. I stayed to the end and helped clean up. The holiday passed and I felt good about myself and realized that this is what I needed going forward. After that realization in my early sobriety, I was of service at every Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's event; staying close and being of service is what got me through those dangerous thoughts in my head during the holidays. Always remember, you may feel lonely, but you are never alone. We are all here to help. Stay close.

- Craig H. - Sobriety Date: 07/21/11

My head and my heart tend to be in a constant battle, especially around the holidays. My heart tells me to be there with and for my family during the holidays, to help relieve their stress, and to be selfless. Then I remember the knowledge I've gained from others in recovery, that it's OK to be selfish when it comes to my recovery. It is not my responsibility to cater to my family's needs if it jeopardizes my sobriety. This means I have every right to be absent from the gathering for an hour or two to attend a meeting or to get in contact with one of my fellows. I can't be there for my family if I am not first there for myself. So, I do what is necessary for myself, my sobriety, and my overall wellbeing. I repeat to myself the Serenity Prayer, reminding myself to accept the things I cannot change (my family's views and opinions about how I choose to spend my time during the holidays), to have the courage to change the things I can (how I act and react to my stressors), and the wisdom to know to the difference. This has been a daily key in my sobriety, and a vital step in my routine during the holidays. Put yourself first, and the rest will come. May G-d bless you and keep you.

- Aleah S. - Sobriety Date: 07/20/22

The Holidays in general can be a little tricky for all of us (non-addicts and alcoholics as well). There is something about the financial aspect, location and commuting, time off work, pressure of showing up on time and most of all the family dynamics. If you are anything like me, I had a lot of issues surrounding the holidays and being around family. I would have rather been anywhere else than with my family, sad but true. I wanted to be around no one when I was on a using and drinking spree, which was always. Now that I am sober many of these insecurities have left but some lingering PTSD and issues surrounding family it is always smart to have some plans in place to help stay sober through the holidays. I am going to lead with never feel guilty about going to a meeting with family around. Hopefully they support you in your recovery and will support your hour or so of absence to regroup, recenter and stay connected with your program. Have alternative beverages always available, lots of water, soda, juice, whatever just always have a substitute for booze. I do not have any issues being around alcohol. My sister drinks wine which was my drink of choice and I do not need to ask her not to have it in the house, however, if you cannot be around it, or feel uncomfortable, simply ask your family to respect your sobriety and to please not drink in front of you or have it in the house. If that cannot be accommodated, then pass on the gathering. Your sobriety is paramount then needing to please family. Lots of prayer and conscience contact with God. Have your sponsor on speed dial and a Big Book close by. Stay sober and God Bless.

- Kelly C. - Sobriety Date: 03/26/20

Holidays can be difficult in early sobriety. We may be away from our sober network and around family or triggering situations. We can get through any situation if we stay connected! Here are a few suggestions: Get numbers and phone lists from the meetings you attend. Call your sponsor and sober friends for support.

- > Go to a meeting—in person or online. There are often marathon meetings lasting 24 hours or more during the holidays.
- > Find a sober event to attend. If money is an issue, ask about "angel tickets" for newcomers.
- > Be gentle with yourself. If you are around toxic people or situations, take a walk or find a quiet place to be. Breathe and remember this too, shall pass.

- Thea R. – Sobriety Date: 06/02/15

Staying sober through the holidays can be a challenge for many of us. I used the hardest during the holidays to deal with my loneliness. It took years of work just to be OK with everyone being so damn jolly! The solution is always going to be helping others. Being of service always has a positive impact on me. I have learned I don't need to drink when everyone else is. It's OK if I don't feel like everyone else looks. I also make an effort not to let my personal feelings ruin it for my family, especially my kid. Navigating holidays is complicated but the solution is to apply the spiritual principles and help others.

- Stuart G. – Sobriety Date: 04/02/09

Wow, the holidays can be so challenging with having family gatherings. Personalities and opinions abound! A time of expectations, hopes, disappointments or hurt just waiting to pop up. That's how it was for me in my early sobriety. Over the years as my life improved and as my circle of chosen family expanded happiness and joy started to break through. In all cases the common thread is maintaining a strong connection with my tools of recovery: meetings, sponsor, fellowship...and my phone! It's amazing how much a quick text exchange with the right person can help re-focus us on solutions and release all sorts of toxic or negative feelings. A quick dose of laughter and connection can turn things around so quickly! Just knowing we are not alone and there is always someone available to connect with is invaluable. Always know where your posse will be, whether it's a meeting or just connected by phone. We do this thing arm in arm...all year round! Here's to Holiday Cheer!

- Annie C. – Sobriety Date: 05/02/85

When I was new in recovery, I would participate in my treatment center's Dinner Speaker event or local area marathon meetings. After some time, I started going to marathon meeting events in different areas to hear from different fellow addicts in my fellowship, which was always a really good experience. There have also been times where I would volunteer at my local church or the mission on skid row to help feed the homeless. What I thought would not be as rewarding or fun was actually one of the best experiences, to get out of self and not just worry about my recovery, but to show up for others out there was definitely my most spiritually fed experience and has paid 10-fold. Even with volunteering, I still have time to go to a fellow addict friend's house for dinner to celebrate the holidays or catch the backend of a Marathon Meeting event. Point is, there's always something to do, whether it's before or after spending time with family. You'll always have meetings, dinner events, or dances to go to, or trudging buddies to hang with. If you don't go looking for some, go make some, or be there for somebody else in need. You will be blessed.

- Jorge S. — Sobriety Date: 07/04/06

During the holidays, I make sure to prioritize my program. Because of the hectic and sometimes depressing nature of the winter season, I remain in constant contact with my sponsor. I look at my schedule ahead of time to ensure I can attend meetings and stay in touch with my sober community and people who I feel I can relate to. I am aware that I personally struggle during this time of year and know to be gentle with myself and not put too much pressure on anything I do. I try to be a witness to my emotions rather than let them debilitate me and remind myself that I have been here before, have gotten through tough times, and I can do it again. I make sure I also prioritize prayer and meditation because making them a habit is truly the difference between living in constant chaos and feeling serene and content. Lastly, a huge reason I have been able to stay sober for the last nine years is because no matter what, drinking/using is never an option for me. I have many different ways I could choose to react to any given situation, but picking up is simply never on the table and I do not allow my brain to even entertain the idea.

- Jenny W. — Sobriety Date: 06/03/14

I've stayed sober through the grace of God and the rooms of Cocaine Anonymous. That year I had about 3 major holidays: my birthday (June 7th), Thanksgiving, and the stretch between Christmas and New Years. I was in treatment through all of those celebrations and/or working in a detox. I remember the ball dropping as I was sitting with a client, and she cried to me about missing her family's celebration. In my head I was like "lame, this is boring", but God put me exactly where I needed to be. Before sobriety, my favorite part of the winter holidays in my hometown of New York City was Coquito (eggnog + tequila, the Caribbean way) and I used to fill up on that before I ate. I love my family, don't get me wrong, but it was straight to the bottle from 2019-2021. But it's nonessential to me now. My best piece of advice is to stay reasonably busy for that first year (or two).

- Nia B. — Sobriety Date 04/21/22

The holidays are a special time and for an alcoholic like me it's extremely important that I remember the holidays are just another day. Another day to live "one day at a time". I need to not allow myself to not romance the old high or believe this special time is a reason or an excuse to be different than I am. Which what I am is someone who cannot drink and or use in a fashion that is one of a "normal" person. I give myself permission to be an alcoholic and a drug addict. And in that, I give myself permission to be a Sober n' Clean alcoholic and drug addict. On the daily and yes, during the holidays. Keeping busy with sober activities, get togethers, making calls to people in recovery and interacting with people in recovery who have been there already and who may be there themselves now. Reaching out to others who may be in a new place of feeling, acting, being. Checking in on others is necessary, and in my opinion, an act of love. We are not alone. Individually, we may not know what to do, but collectively as a group we can take care of each other and get through life, experiences, situations and, yes, the holidays together. My first few holiday seasons were a lot. A lot of feelings. It was different and new. I felt the fear and I showed up anyway. I did it scared. And I was amazed and in Awe of my Higher Power. With my Higher Power, some willingness, and the fellowship I was granted the ability to go through the holidays "one day at a time". Clean and sober. I still ask my Higher Power for help, guidance, an open mind, and heart especially during the Holiday Season. (I've found this to be important n necessary. I would suggest if someone is having feelings, fears or concerns about the holidays to remember and act in accordance with something similar to this... At this special time, it is still another day. Reach out, take the body to a safe place, and invite the mind to come with. Go to a meeting, a marathon meeting, a sober get together. All of the Programs have marathons during this time. And if no one is having a get together that we are aware of... then please step up and create a get together yourself and involve others in this sober social creation. Creating a get together does not have to involve a lot of money. Invite it to be "everyone let's do something". Meet up at a park or a coffeehouse and ask your Higher Power to go first and then follow your HP with intent. The fact is we all have feelings and alcoholics are sensitive people, so include others to be a part of. I have met some of the most important people by happenstance. And I've come to know in my heart n soul that those happenstance experiences/situations were actually my Higher Powers plans for me. I would've missed it if I didn't just show up and be there. And please remember the fact is we all have feelings and feelings are not the facts, but they are valid. So be gentle with yourself and others throughout the Holidays and all the days.

- LKCD — Sobriety Date: 08/07/89

Life does not care that we got sober. It will continue to go on. This is something that took me some time to understand. I remember in early sobriety, when I was 10 months sober, I had been distancing myself from my family because they're "normies", but I decided I wanted to spend some time with them. It was 4th of July weekend and we all decided to go to the parade in LA to watch the fireworks. It started off great. I got to spend time with my family, and they all respected my sobriety. They never pressed me about smoking or drinking, but I started to get uncomfortable with all the drinking that was going on around me. At first, I felt guilty because I wanted to leave, and the fireworks had not even started. I didn't want my family to think that I didn't want to be around them, but this was about me, not them. So told them I was going to head home and so I did. I ended up going to a meeting and seeing some fireworks with my fellows. Looking back, I can see that my feet were properly trained, and I had a strong foundation. I was taught that if you sit in the barber chair long enough, you're going to get your haircut. So, I removed myself from the situation. I put myself first. I was aware of my truth: that life does not care I got sober, and the world does not stop because I feel uncomfortable. People are going to drink or smoke and do what they do, and just because I don't do those things, it does not mean I have to stop living life. I understand holidays can be hard, but you have to remember to always put yourself first. We become selfish to be selfless. You are not alone... we are all here for you.

- Jacob C. — Sobriety Date 09/27/16

The holidays can be a really difficult time for so many people. My first year of sobriety, 4 months sober, my brother invited me to his house to be with my mom and everyone. I was really apprehensive to go because I wasn't ready to be with them so early in my sobriety, but I felt guilty not going. When I talked to my sponsor about it, she invited me to spend Thanksgiving dinner with her instead and told me that my family would be fine without me there. She told me that by not being there, my family would actually be able to enjoy their Thanksgiving because they wouldn't have to worry about me. They knew I was safe in treatment and wouldn't have to deal with me showing up late or being too loaded to show up at all. She reminded me that I've ruined enough holidays for them. She reassured me and I didn't feel guilty anymore, because for the first year, my family was able to enjoy their holiday and not worry about me. It took all the pressure off of me not wanting to be with my family. I realized that what worked for me in early sobriety was sticking with the rooms during the holidays and going to marathon meetings. But what really helped me was to think of it as just another day and to not make such a big deal out of it like I always did. I had to remember that my sobriety has to come first. When I think of it as just another day in the week, it's so much easier to get through it. As the years go by, it is no problem for me during the holidays at all if I'm around family or not. I take it one day at a time and avoid any triggers. A piece of advice I can offer is that if you have to be with family, you should have a backup plan on how much time you spend with them. When you're new, family time can be a strong trigger, so you must protect yourself.

- Stacy A. — Sobriety Date: 11/29/15

SFVCA HOTLINE

(833) 4HopeCA (833) 446-7322

One phone call can save your sobriety AND your life

Trusted Servants

Attend SFVCA's Area Meetings to see how you can be of service!

2023 Area Service Board

Chair – Michael H. Vice-Chair- Bob E.
Treasurer- Stuart Secretary- Kelly
Director at Large- Bob C.

2023 Committee Chairs

Archives – OPEN Advisory – OPEN
Chips & Literature – Joseph M. Directories – Ruben V.
Finance – Stuart G. Hotline – Chanelle
H&I Rep – Annie C. Newsletter – Aleah S.
Internet – Ruben V. Special Events – Bobby Jr.
Public Information – Kelly C. Unity – Anthony W.
Structure & Bylaws – Daniel S.

2023 World Service Delegates

Misty C. Daniel S. OPEN

Area Service Committee

The Area Service Committee (ASC) meets the second Monday of every month at 7:30 pm

Zoom:

Zoom ID: 839 3060 5063 **Password:** 915337

In Person:

Saint Mark's Episcopal Church Room 9
14646 Sherman Way
Van Nuys, CA 91406

This meeting is open to the entire Fellowship. Stop by and see where you can be of service. Join a committee: Public Information to help get the word out, Archives to help preserve our history, Chips and Literature to help support the meetings, Newsletter to help produce a newsletter like this. Whether you have a passion or a curiosity, come join us and check us out. The 7th Tradition states, “we are self-supporting through our own contributions”...of both time and money.

2024 Trusted Servants

Area Service Board

Chair – Stuart G. Vice-Chair- Bob C.
Treasurer- Bob E. Director at Large- Carla S.

2023 Committee Chairs

Secretary- Jenny W. Advisory – OPEN
Archives – Tim N. Directories – Ruben V.
Chips & Literature – Joseph M. Hotline – OPEN
Finance – Bruce B. Newsletter– Aleah S.
H&I Rep – Annie C. Special Events – Anne M.
Internet – Ruben V. Unity – Anthony W.
Public Information – OPEN CPC - Lee

Structure & Bylaws – OPEN

2023 World Service Delegates

Kelly C. OPEN OPEN

WHO IS A C.A. MEMBER?

While the name “Cocaine Anonymous” may sound drug-specific, we wish to assure you that our program is not. Many of our members did a lot of cocaine; others used only a little, and some never even tried coke. We have members who drank only on occasion, those who casually referred to themselves as drunks, and others who were full-blown alcoholics. Lots of us used a wide variety of mind-altering substances. Whether we focused on a specific substance or used whatever we could get our hands on, we had one thing in common: eventually we all reached a point where we could not stop.

According to C.A.'s Third Tradition, the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using cocaine and all other mind-altering substances. Whatever you may have been using, if it led you to this meeting, you're probably in the right place. Over time, virtually every single one of us has realized that our real problem is not cocaine or any specific drug; it is the disease of addiction.

It can be tempting to focus on our differences rather than our similarities, but this can blind us to potential sources of support in our recovery. As we hear other members' stories, the most important question to ask ourselves is not, “Would I have partied with these people?” but rather, “Do these people have a solution that can help me stay sober?” We encourage you to stick around and listen with an open mind.

With its all-inclusive Third Tradition and First Step, Cocaine Anonymous welcomes anyone with a drug or alcohol problem and offers a solution. C.A.'s Twelve Steps are not drug-specific, and Cocaine Anonymous is not a drug-specific Fellowship. It doesn't matter to us if you drank or what type of drugs you used; if you have a desire to stop, you are welcome here!

Read more in Hope, Faith, and Courage; Volumes I and II

What does our SFVCA Area do?

The 5th Tradition states: Each group has but one primary purpose — to carry its message to the addict who still suffers. In order to do that, we as an Area need funds to help make that happen.

The Area has expenses like rent, chips and literature, printing directories, event flyers and the newsletter. In addition, the Area covers the costs for our Hot Line, website, Archive storage, Public Outreach material, liability insurance for our meetings and events, and taxes. The Area also sends our Delegates to the World Service Conference each year.

This is why it is so important that at the beginning of every month, after the meetings' expenses are paid, any surplus money is donated to Area, just like we do for H&I. If a meeting has more money than they need for expenses and their prudent reserve, a motion is made to donate to Area and the GSRs bring the donation to the Area meeting on the 2nd Monday of each month. At least once a year the Area evaluates their financial condition and contributes to CA World Services to support their costs in producing materials and carrying the message at the world level.

All efforts made by members of the fellowship are done in the spirit of giving back what has been so freely given to us! It is not about money, property, or prestige but rather the focus is always on carrying the message of Hope, Faith, and Courage to help others to recover.

THERE'S NO BETTER HIGH THAN WITH H&I

Do you remember a C.A. panel coming in to speak to you when you were in a treatment center?

NOW IT'S YOUR TURN!

From detox centers to psych wards, sober livings to prisons, share your story with the people who need it most. You never know whose life you will be changing by carrying the message of Hope, Faith, and Courage to these facilities.

Join us on the first Monday of every month at 7:30 PM to become a Panel Leader or Panel Speaker. You can also scan the QR code below to add your name to our CA Panel Speaker List and someone will call you to join them on a panel.



SCAN HERE
TO ADD YOUR
NAME TO THE
PANEL SPEAKER
LIST

H&I Business Meeting Information

<p><u>In Person:</u> Saint Mark's Episcopal Church Room 9</p> <p>14646 Sherman Way Van Nuys, CA 91406</p>	<p><u>Zoom:</u> Zoom ID: 849 9795 3184</p> <p>Password: SFCVA</p>
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You need 6 Months to lead a panel . 90 Days to speak on a panel. There is a panel waiting for YOU!

2023 H&I Donations

Contributors	Annual Total Donated
Oldtimer/Newcomer	\$499
Renegades in Recovery	\$291
Grateful in Granada	\$1,204
The Light	\$292
Tarzana Babies	\$355
Love and Tolerance	\$50
We Be Clean	\$0
Bagels by the Beach	\$0
Sunday Funday	\$0
Saturday Night Live	\$25
Sisters in Sobriety	\$25
Turning Point	\$0
The C.A. Meeting	\$50
Hot Topics	\$15
Area Business Meeting 7th	\$365

These donations go toward the cost of pamphlets and Big Books to be given out at panels. Donations to H&I are separate from donations to Area, so that Area does not have to carry the costs of H&I funding. As we grow with more panels, the costs will increase.

A big thank you to our 2023 H&I Board Members

Director: Annie C. Secretary: Kelly C
Panel Board Chair: Diane H.
Literature Person: Brandon S.

During the first 3 or 4 months of sobriety I kept hearing about H&I panels, both in CA and AA. I heard that 85% of alcoholics/addicts doing regular H&I service stay sober. I heard how one person's 15-minute share helped someone in dire circumstances overcome their problems and get clean and sober. The more I heard the more interested I became. I finally got up the nerve and asked Kevin J, then secretary at Granada, if I could be a speaker on his panel some time. If you know Kevin, then you know I was on a panel the very next night!

I had only shared my story a handful of times and my hands were shaking badly when it was my turn to speak. I was so nervous. I think I only spoke for 5 minutes, but I saw how the clients were listening to us and how grateful they were after. It was a beautiful experience and started a fire inside me to do more. I now have 3 regular monthly panels and have friends throughout the community AND I'm still sober! This last year I served on the H&I Board as the Panel Board Chair and learned how gratifying it is to serve on committees for our community. But best of all, I have learned how important it is to carry the message to those who may not know there's a way out of their misery. I am a grateful H&I alcoholic addict.

- Diane H., 2023 H&I Panel Board Chair

Welcome to our 2024 H&I Board Members

Director: Annie C. Assistant Director: Kelly C. Treasurer: Aleah S.
Panel Board Chair: Julie D. Secretary: Nia B. Literature Chair: Brandon S.
Assistant Literature Chair: Tawnee L.

EVENTS

Mark Your Calendar

HOLIDAY MARATHON MEETINGS

12/25/23

LOCATION:
TDH 17635 VANOWEN ST.
RESEDA, CA

FOOD & FELLOWSHIP
DOORS OPEN @11AM
FIRST MEETING STARTS @ 11:30AM

MORE DETAILS TO FOLLOW

IN THE SPIRIT OF TRADITION SIX CA IS NOT ALLIED WITH ANY SECT, DENOMINATION, POLITICS ORGANIZATION OR INSTITUTION

You're not alone this holiday season! Though most places and businesses are closed on December 25th, the fellowship of Cocaine Anonymous remains open. Our disease doesn't take any days off, so our recovery doesn't either! A marathon is back-to-back meetings all day long in one location. This way, if you need a meeting before or after (or both) attending your holiday plans, it is available to you. Don't have any plans? Now you do! We look forward to celebrating the holiday with you with food, fellowship, and recovery. ***See flyer above for details***

What is a C.A. Convention and why should you go?

Conventions are a time and place where members of recovery gather together and have fun together. It is the perfect place to meet new people and to celebrate another day sober. Conventions are usually held in hotels and last between 3-4 days long. The convention committee works vigorously with the hotel to block out guest rooms, portions of the hotel, and the Banquet Hall, so that we can gather freely and be ourselves. But remember, we represent C.A. in our attendance, so always be respectful of our meeting and gathering places. Conventions include Workshops, Games, Events, Marathon Meetings, Merchandise, and a Clean Time Countdown (a personal favorite). Fun in recovery is possible, and a convention is a great way to prove that! Join us March 15-17, 2024 for the Unity of the Valleys Convention and experience the magic firsthand! ***See flyer below for details.***

SGPVCA, SFVCA & WIECA
PRESENT

MARCH 15-17, 2024

UNITY OF THE VALLEYS

CONVENTION

HILTON ORANGE COUNTY
COSTA MESA
3050 BRISTOL STREET
COSTA MESA, CA 92626

REGISTER TODAY AT:
UNITYOFTHEVALLEYS.SQUARE.SITE

In the spirit of Tradition Six, "C.A. is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution."

Visit unityofthevalleys.square.site for information on future Unity of the Valleys events and more.

The Unity of the Valleys presents a
New Year's Eve Bash

Black Tie & Tennis Shoes

2024

December 31, 2023
6:00 PM

924 West Huntington Drive
Monrovia, CA 91016

For more information and tickets, contact Elizabeth S. at esaldebar@aol.com

A C.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the C.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.

A sober New Year's Eve is possible! Prioritize your sobriety and celebrate with like-minded individuals in recovery. This event provides you with all the fun and enthusiasm New Year's Eve has to offer, without the temptation of drink or drug. Come and join your fellows in welcoming in the new year, SOBER! ***See flyer to the left for details***

A Quiet Peace * Daily Meditations

C.A. FRIENDSHIPS

December 31

My father always told me that I'd be lucky to have one good friend who I could count on to tell me the truth no matter what it was, to hold me when times were tough, and to play with when times were good. Today I have more of these friends than I could ever spend time with.

Hope, Faith and Courage Volume II, page 124

Most of my life, I was uncomfortable around people. I was afraid of them and unsure of myself. I was resentful and didn't trust anyone. I found great comfort in my lone wolf approach to life. When I came into Cocaine Anonymous, I kept hearing that I should just jump in and thereby become part of the Fellowship. I certainly didn't believe I could do this, especially sober! While I enjoyed meetings, particularly the stories, solutions, laughter and our common bond, I had a hard time connecting with these same people outside the rooms, or even chatting with them before or after the meetings. I still felt hopelessly alone.

Working the Steps and insightful sponsorship changed all this for me. After I completed the Steps once through, I found myself attracted to the Fellowship differently. For perhaps the first time in my entire life, I felt useful. I had developed a deep caring for my sponsor, and my sponsor felt the same about me. We had already trudged quite a bit on my first journey through the Steps. I started to come around more and to chat with fellow members socially. I even started to do things with these people like going for coffee or attending a concert as a group of sober recovering addicts. Close, enduring friendships magically materialized, many of which are still with me, well into my third decade of sobriety. Today, my favorite place in the world is a meeting, convention or gathering of Cocaine Anonymous.

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Am I feeling uncomfortable in any area of my life? Today I invite my Higher Power to join me and show me what I need to do to be useful and happy. May I always be the friend to others which I would like them to be to me.

WHAT BROUGHT ME HERE

January 1

*Ultimately, in despair, I called the Cocaine Anonymous hotline. I was sure it wouldn't work for me, but I had no one else to call.*

Hope, Faith & Courage, page 36

When I found Cocaine Anonymous, I learned that addiction is a progressive illness, one that is chronic and potentially fatal. I was relieved to be told that addiction is not simply a moral problem, but rather a true illness over which the will alone is usually powerless. All the same, I must take responsibility for my own recovery. There is no secret, no magic. I have to quit and stay sober, but I don't have to do it alone.

Newcomers are welcomed to C.A. with more genuine warmth and acceptance than you can imagine--for newcomers are the lifeblood of the program. In great part, it is by carrying the message of recovery to others like myself that I keep my own sobriety. I help myself by helping others.

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I pray that I will be able to join the Fellowship and not attempt recovery alone. May I continually be empowered to take responsibility for my actions, helping myself by reaching out to others.

* Purchase a copy of 'A Quiet Peace' from the literature person at any meeting, or from SFVCA's Area for 365 daily meditations.

R B E B I T S E R V I C E O
F P R H E F A P L C O S H G
I G D E H A S B O H A L B O
S B A O A I S T T M E C D D
N E P I D T R U S T I T E R
I F S B E H H C P I D B Y P
D H O P E L B E S L R H I T
C N P G C O A E F C O S R N
R S O B E R L Y E T S T I G
N B N P F D I A G F N M U P
F G E S I C B D S O O L C A
S C D L L E T G O F P F E N
G L A O C Y I O D B S B U E
N S Y T I H R F E F C H P L
I O A G P B U E N S F E B M
T A T M T N T H V F P L H F
E B A D E G A R U O C D S R
E L T C F L S M L I C A P G
M E I G B R G E H B M E H C
I P M H I D I A O E F U R S
C S E L T E F H S R B T M T

BREATHE FAITH SOBER LIFE ONE DAY AT A TIME
RECOVERY COURAGE MEETINGS GOD SPONSOR
TRUST LET GO PANEL HOPE SERVICE

Ask yourself these questions before solidifying your holiday plans:

- 1. Do these plans include of a safe environment?
- 2. Am I going for the right reasons?
- 3. Do I have a backup plan if I need to leave my environment?
- 4. Who are some sober contacts I can reach out to?
- 5. What practices can I utilize to remain calm in a stressful situation?
- 6. Where are the closest meetings? What virtual meetings available?
- 7. Do the people I'm surrounding myself with respect my sobriety?
- 8. Am I spiritually fit for this gathering?
- 9. Should I put a time limit on my attendance?
- 10. Am I putting my sobriety first?
- 11. Have I talked this through with my sponsor?

My New Way of Life

By Anonymous

You don't understand my new way of life.
You see me changing in positive directions,
Growing into someone you can be proud of,
And yet it's not enough for you.
Lucky for me, I no longer crave your approval.
Like drink or drug, I no longer need it.
I no longer desire it.
I no longer want it.
To be proud of myself,
of the progress I've made,
That is my only desire.
That is what I strive for.
No longer am I incapable of love,
From myself and from others.
No longer am I a lost cause

With no future, no respect, no hope.
I am radiant, I am kind, I am respected.
I have faith, I have hope, I have courage.
I am proud of me.
I am proud of who I've become,
And who I am continuing to grow into.
I have found my people.
People I can call family.
People I can call when in need.
People who will not judge me for my faults,
But love me through the solution.
You don't understand my new way of life,
And I don't need you to.
I am sober, I am proud, I am me.

The S.F.V.C.A. Newsletter

I Can't, We Can

is pleased to accept your original stories and articles on C.A. recovery, the Steps, Traditions, Concepts of Service, cartoons, poems, drawings, etc. for publication in our bi-monthly newsletter. All newsletter items are reviewed and approved by the Pacific South Regional Trustee prior to publication.

Please email (preferred) to sfvcanewsletter@gmail.com or give to your GSR

A SIGNED COPY OF THE FOLLOWING MUST BE INCLUDED WITH YOUR SUBMISSION:

I, _____, hereby give SFVCA and the SFVCA Newsletter , *I Can't, We Can*, permission to reprint my original article entitled _____ in any future publication. I understand materials submitted may be edited for publication, or may not be used, at the discretion of the Editors. Original materials will not be returned. All future publication rights remain those of the original author and all original rights are reserved.

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This form can be found on sfvca.org – Click on “GSR Report and Other Downloads”, then “I Can't, We Can Newsletter”