

# The Education of Rip Van Winkle

He woke up to a very different AA

I wanted to write this article to remind us all of the importance of AA's primary purpose: "to help the still suffering alcoholic." When any-one anywhere reaches out, the hand of AA *must* be there.

Through the grace of God and AA, I obtained sobriety in March 1980 and didn't pick up a drink or mind-altering drug for almost eleven years. However, in 1991 I had a slip. The relapse was my fault. I did things I shouldn't have done and didn't do some of the things I needed to do. During the years from 1985 through 1990, my involvement in the Fellowship had been minimal, and the last year I had stopped attending almost entirely.

After thirty days in a rehab, I had the old AA enthusiasm in me once again, and I actually left the rehab with a glow and a reasonable semblance of serenity. I firmly believed that, just like the last time, the members would love me until I could again learn to love myself.

1 Unfortunately, after attending a number of meetings, I felt like Rip Van Winkle after his very long sleep. The Fellowship that saved my life in 1980 was no longer the same AA in 1991. Unfortunately, unlike Scotch, it hadn't seemed to improve with age.

A few examples. The first meeting out of rehab I said that I was new and needed help. Out of a room of about sixty people not one gave me a phone number or even spent time talking with me. This group had an interim sponsorship program; I signed up but no one called. This happened at another group a week later. I signed the book and again no callers.

I attended another meeting that advertised an interim sponsorship program. They couldn't find me one that day but a member told me he would call me. He never did.

I finally did land an interim sponsor who lives within five minutes of me. He knows I don't have a car and that it's hard for me to get to certain meetings since some aren't close to public transportation. I thought he would offer to pick me up for meetings (that's how we did it in the old days) but so far he hasn't.

The point isn't having to walk to a meeting, but rather that sponsors in the past went out of their way to take sponsees to meetings with them. We did this



# E.V.I. News

July, 2000

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EVI Office new evening hours:  
til 8:00 pm on Thursdays

Emerald Valley Intergroup  
1259 Willamette St. Eugene, OR  
97401 (541) 342-4113

# Intergroup:

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## EVI Office

1259 Willamette  
Eugene, OR 97401  
Monday-Friday 9:00 am-5:00 pm  
Thursday 9:00am- 8:00pm  
Saturday 9:00 am - noon  
Drop by for a visit!

## EVI Web Site

[www.efn.org/~eviaa](http://www.efn.org/~eviaa)

Meeting schedules, business meeting minutes, and much more.

The little squiggle in the address is found right next to the exclamation point on the keyboard. Save a book mark or favorite and check back often!

## E.V.I. News

Emerald Valley Intergroup's Newsletter for the A.A. Community in Lane County

EVI News is a monthly newsletter of the Emerald Valley Intergroup. It is about, by and for the members of Alcoholics Anonymous fellowship. Opinions expressed herein are not to be attributed to Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole, nor does publication of any article or event or notice imply endorsement by either Alcoholics Anonymous or EVI. (Exceptions: Quotations from A.A. books or pamphlets which are reprinted with permission of A.A. World Services, Inc.) EVI News is produced to support communication within the fellowship; please respect the anonymity of any A.A. member mentioned herein. EVI News reserves the right to edit any submissions for clarity, length, language, and editorial policy. Contributions gratefully accepted for consideration for publication.

Submissions due last Monday of each month. To submit articles or event information, mail them or drop them off at the EVI office c/o EVI Newsletter. Submissions can also be e-mailed to: [eviaa@efn.org](mailto:eviaa@efn.org)

Newsletter & Web Site Committee meetings are held the last Monday of each month at 7:30 pm at the E.V.I. office at 1259 Willamette, Eugene, OR 97401

to get to know the newcomer and also to help make his or her entry into AA a little easier. Have we forgotten the terror of walking into a new meeting all alone?

I originally got sober in a rural area on Long Island where people would drive miles out of their way to take me to a meeting. Many times we would go out for coffee (the meeting after the meeting). When I was sober long enough to sponsor people I did it the same way. What was passed on to me by my first sponsor I tried to pass on to my sponsees. I immediately invited the newcomer out for coffee and shared my story with him. If this was good enough for Dr. Bob and Bill W., I guess it was good enough for me. I did this not because of altruism but because this is the way I was taught to stay sober.

Of course, there were always some people who didn't go out of their way for newcomers. Members got comfortable with certain people and didn't always reach out. Yet this was the exception rather than the rule.

There were always a few solid members of the group who actually showed by their actions, instead of just mouthing platitudes, that the newcomer is the most important person in the room. It seems to me that people are now so preoccupied with their "issues" (other than alcohol) that reaching out has become the exception and not the rule.

I originally started writing this to dissipate my anger so I wouldn't pick up a drink, and whether it gets printed or not, it has achieved that purpose. But I also hope, if it is printed, it will open up some members' eyes, get them to do a little soul-searching, maybe read the Big Book and *Doctor Bob and the Good Oldtimers*, Let them ask themselves when was the last time they invited a new member out for coffee?

One last point. My case isn't by any means an isolated one. To keep my sobriety, I also go to an out-patient substance abuse clinic. The vast majority of the people in the groups there have had the same unpleasant experiences with AA as I've had. A professional in the field, who is also recovering, told me that he also has seen the changes I'm speaking of.

AA isn't going to fall apart because of the topics that are usually debated in the Grapevine. AA can survive dual addiction and special interest groups and all the other pet peeves of some members. If AA disintegrates it will be because somewhere along the line the majority of members will no longer know or remember that you can't keep it unless you give it away.

Michael N. Rego Park, N.Y.  
*August 1993 Grapevine, used with permission*



The deception of others is nearly always rooted in the deception of ourselves.  
*Bill W., Grapevine, Aug 61*

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It was several days of sheer agony before I began to recover my wits and discover, for myself, that I would have to go through with making my Ninth Step amends as my sponsor suggested or risk drinking again. There was no escape. And so finally, late one afternoon, I made my way to my boss's office. I had decided that I should share this dark deep secret first with him before word reached him from another source once I started my amends-making. To my astonishment, he was warm, understanding, and sympathetic. I left his office feeling several tons lighter, and the way was cleared for me to make all the amends I needed to make.

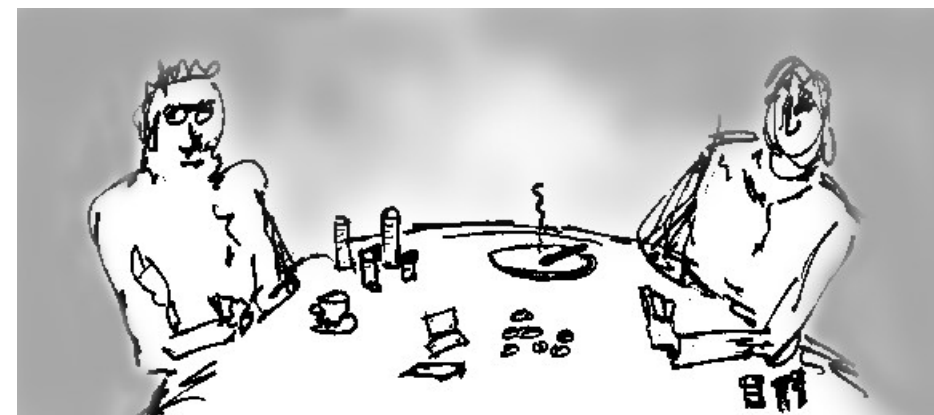
My first sponsor used to say that to survive in the AA program, you had to continue to surrender at deeper and deeper levels. I certainly understood that intellectually. But it's only through day-to-day living that I've really come to appreciate what that means. The surrender process was essential for me when I finally took my First Step; it's equally indispensable to me now as I learn a little more each day about how I can live comfortably in my own skin.

*B. B., Longview, Wash. Grapevine, August 1993 used with permission*



"Whenever I have a problem, I ask myself, "How would a grownup handle it?""

*reprinted from Feb 1981 Grapevine*



Okay, ante lost job, I'll see your divorce, and raise you a D.U.I.

# Rule 62:

We heard a story about an armored truck which had inadvertently got caught in a funeral procession for several blocks, directly behind the hearse. Two dipsos, emerging from a bar, watched the cortege pass by. The one of them said to the other, in awe, "Well, waddya know. You can take it with you!"

One of these fellows was later picked up by the police, and during the course of his interrogation, fingerprints of his right hand were taken. After it was done, the sergeant directed him to wash up. The drunk looked at his hands, one ink stained, the other relatively clean. "Should I wash both of them?" he asked. The sergeant hesitated a moment. "No, just the one," he replied. "I want to see how you do it."

When I admitted I was an alcoholic, all I did was make it unanimous.

Ask an alcoholic what time it is  
..... and he'll tell you how to build a clock

A committee is group that keeps minutes and loses hours. Milton Berle

Lady Astor: "Mr. Churchill, you're drunk!"  
Winston Churchill: "Yes, and you, Madam, are ugly. But tomorrow, I shall be sober."

The church is near, but the road is icy. The tavern is far, but we will walk carefully. Russian Proverb.

The worst thing about him is that, when he's not drunk, he's sober. W. B. Yeats.

One of the disadvantages of wine is that it makes a man mistake words for thoughts. Samuel Johnson.

An atheist is a man who has no invisible means of support. Fulton J. Sheen

## 12 Step Lists:

Groups, EVI Reps, etc., please turn in your sign up sheets for the 12 Step list so we can get a new diverter packet out

thanks,  
Frank K.



**Contributions:**  
 (June/year to date)  
 As Bill Sees It 0/25.00  
 Attitude Adjustment 121.23/998.36  
 Autumn Group 0/0  
 Brown Bag Group 0/0  
 Cottage Grove Gratitude 10.00/30.00  
 Cottage Grove Noon 10.00/10.00  
 Downtown AM group 39.97/552.29  
 Drop The Rock 248.53/248.53  
 Fireside group 0/0  
 First Monroe Group 0/0  
 First Things First 32.49/142.49  
 Four Corners 10.00/50.00  
 Freedom Of Choice 0/61.00  
 Friday Back Road Bunch 0/0  
 Friday Big Book Study(M) 0/74.00  
 Friday Physical Awakening 0/78.13  
 Fri night young people 0/180.00  
 From the Heart 0/100.00  
 Gratitude Group 0/60.15  
 Harrisburg Group 0/0  
 Jasper Group 0/60.00  
 Last Chance Study Group 0/0  
 Last House on the Block 0/0  
 Life By The Book 0/0  
 Lowell Lakeside 0/80.00  
 McKenzie Bridge 0/60.00  
 Monday Mens Stag 0/50.00  
 Monday Night Cont. Study 0/0  
 Monday Night New Group 0/0  
 New Freedom 0/525.00  
 New Freedom 2 0/448.60  
 Physical, Mental, Spiritual 0/75.00  
 Plug in the Jug 10.00/50.00  
 Saturday Night Beginners 0/0  
 Saturday Step 0/132.00  
 Sober Awakenings 0/600.00  
 Sobriety for life 0/99.00  
 Springfield Monday Night 0/110.00  
 Stairway to Sobriety 0/120.00  
 Sunday Morning Big book 0/120.00  
 Sunday Night 12x12 0/20.00  
 Men's Sponsorship 0/85.00  
 Sunday Women's Step Stdy 0/0  
 There Is A Solution 0/0  
 Thursday Candlelight 0/0  
 Thursday Night Group 0/0  
 Thursday Voyagers Group 53.10/53.10  
 Tuesday Beginners 0/0  
 Unknown 0/115.87  
 We Need Each Other 0/0  
 Wednesday Mens Noon 0/60.00  
 Wednesday Men's Stag 0/90.00  
 Who am I Group 0/84.00  
 Womans Road to Recovery 60.00/180.00  
 Women's How It Works 0/72.00  
 Women In the Solution 0/0  
 Total Contributions (month/year to date)  
 Group ytd 595.32/5,809.30  
**Fundraising:**  
 EVI Speakers Meeting 500.00/1,000.00  
 Faithful Fivers, individual 372.99/846.09

## E.V.I. Business Meeting:

Maybe it was the weather, but we did not have enough EVI reps at our last Business Meeting to conduct business. (Our bylaws require a quorum of 21 group representatives). This number was set high, to insure all decisions are reached with adequate representation from the groups, so if you are an EVI rep for your group, please make an effort to attend.

We did do committee reports.

The EVI business meeting is held on the second monday of every month, at the EVI office, 1259 Willamette St., Eugene. The only requirement for being an EVI rep is that your group has elected you, other than that - show up!



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The drunk lapsed into grumbly silence. "I would like to add that 'middle-class' is not the worst thing in the world. Sobriety is the ultimate goal here. I spent a lot of drinking time assuming the world was filled with outrageous asses. But when I came here desperate for answers, people seemed very fine indeed. I stopped using my highly developed, exquisite sensibilities — all they'd done was keep me sodden drunk — and I allowed people to love me. It all began with a sponsor who was very like me — and he had been a dishwasher when he first got sober."

A smile appeared on the face of the speaker. The drunk spoke directly to the college instructor. "Can I talk to you after?"

"Surely."

I did not hear anything else. I went home thinking about my exquisite sensibilities. The words kept running away with my mind. I realized that the subway was not my problem. It was my *high horse* that was making my trips difficult. I thought about it on my ride to work next morning. I watched people—not crowds. I saw that they had trouble and joy the same as I did. I watched one particularly lumpy woman. I did something new. I smiled. She smiled back. My teacher friend had been right. She had exquisite sensibilities also.

I have not hated subways since that meeting.

Not as much anyway.

*E. S., Brooklyn, N. Y. Grapevine, March 1974 used with permission*



Be not afraid of life. Believe that life is worth living, and your belief will help create the fact.  
*William James*

## A World Full of Other People

I DID NOT want to attend a meeting. It had been a bad day. Sobriety was looking as if it might not be all it was cracked up to be. Some of my old feelings were rearing their ugly heads. The subway ride home after work was always less than a joy. It was only thirty-five minutes long, but it offended me this night.

My back ached, my feet hurt, and my lowly job seemed dismal. Serenity? Hell, no! I had none that night after my bout with billions of mad New Yorkers in our frantic underground.

I mean—how could an elegant gentleman such as I be expected to fly along alcohol-free when the world was filled with. . . other people? A few might be okay, but the majority of my co-inhabitants of dusty New York that night seemed gross. One by one, they might be God's children; but taken together, they were a swinish bunch. How could a person with my highly developed tastes endure all of them? And stay sober.

No. It wouldn't do. I would have to move into the apartment building next to my place of employment. I would eliminate the multitude. And I wouldn't tell my AA group. They would only mouth sappy things like *Easy Does It* and *Think* and "You can't afford it." I would have none of that throbbing logic. I would delete subways and mobs from my life and not discuss it at a closed meeting. The group really did not understand all the intricate twists to my personality, anyway.

I don't know why, but I went to a meeting that night. I walked in and sat down. They were about to begin. I did not talk. Why should I? They wouldn't understand. (In retrospect, I am not sure what it was I thought I had that humanity could not comprehend.)

The speaker droned on. I fidgeted in my hard chair. I puffed tasteless cigarettes. I drank bad coffee. I stared at people across the room. One woman had a wart on her nose. One guy had on his usual unpressed suit. Another obviously did not realize that the program worked best when you did not drink.

My litany of grouses ended when I heard a boozy voice berating the speaker: "AA is too middle-class for me. . . . I have a master's degree in medieval art. . . . I don't belong here. . . . I can't get a job except maybe as a dishwasher. . . . What can I possibly learn from a lousy truck driver like you?"

The speaker tensed up. The group moved restlessly. A member stuck his hand up. I knew him. He was a college instructor, and I had always thought him too prim and proper. He spoke in a well-modulated voice. "I'd like to say to our newcomer that there are far worse jobs than dishwashing."

"Name one!" hollered the drunk.  
 "Keep drinking—you'll find out."

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## Currently Available Service Positions:

### EVI Service Committees:

**Vice-Chairs** for the following committees:

**Answering Service (Diverter)** - Helps keep folks organized to answer the phone when someone calls AA. (after hours when the office is closed) Also updates the twelve-step list.

**Office Volunteer Coordinator** - just what the title suggests: trains, coordinates our volunteers at the EVI office.

**Activities** - (rotates to chair in September). Have new ideas for fun and fellowship? Here is your chance.

**Public information** - takes speakers into schools, and in general lets the public know that AA didn't die out in the '40's, and is, in fact, alive and well. We could particularly use someone with some enthusiasm for getting some public service spots on local TV and radio.

**Hospitals.** Coordinates bringing meetings and info into local hospitals, Lane Psychiatric, and the Johnson unit. You don't have to be crazy to do this.

**Cooperation with Professional community.** Helps local Doctors, Clergy, Counsellors, lawyers, etc understand what AA is (and isn't). Bridge building with folks who have contact with folks like us.

### Other volunteer opportunities:

**H&I** has a constant, and varied need for people willing to do a little to a lot of service work. The opportunity for this type of service has really expanded, and H&I has been doing a great job, but they need the AA community to step up and volunteer. This is real service work.

**EVI Office Volunteers** work a four hour shift, once a week, or every two weeks. Not very demanding, bring a good book; but you do get to answer the phone, talk to folks who stop by, etc. If you have a little time available, whether you are a year sober, or twenty, this can be pleasant service work, and worth doing.

**Twelve-Step list.** If you would like to be on the list that is called by the office or the diverter for twelve step calls, there are sign up sheets going around, or stop by the office. People available during the day, and folks willing to give rides are particularly helpful.



- People:**
- VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR**  
Gus P. 688-8454
  - LITERATURE**  
Rich F. 744-7902, Dave S. 465-1767
  - ANSWERING SERVICE**  
Frank K. 345-7131, Don 463-8075
  - ARCHIVIST/HISTORIAN**  
Linda 345-5827
  - PUBLIC INFORMATION (PI)**  
Jim P. 684-0619 Michele S. 485-6916
  - COOPERATION PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY (CPC)**  
Gene C. 726-7457 Don T. 485-5470
  - ACTIVITIES**  
Linda L. 345-5827
  - E.V.I. NEWSLETTER**  
Matt D. 302-6865, Robert S. 463-8075  
Website/Michael W. 343-2566
  - E.V.I. SPEAKER MEETING**  
John G. 741-7163 Al D. 345-2058
  - OUTREACH**  
Bill L. 607-8793, Myron 345-2058
  - HOSPITALS & INSTITUTIONS (H&I)**  
Chair / Harold B. 342-1557  
barton@continent.com  
Secretary / Gus P. 343-4815
  - COOPERATION WITH TREATMENT FACILITIES (CTF)**  
Tim A. 726-8558, Bob T. 302-3040
  - HOSPITALS**  
Susan J. 895-4421
  - CORRECTIONS**  
Karl B. 345-7466 karl@rpginvest.com.  
Scott H. 747-7417  
Jail/Co-coordinator / Scott H. 747-7414  
Co-coordinator / Lee E. 726-6669  
ITU coordinator Jack C. 463-1040  
Alma Work Camp coordinator Karl B.  
Pathways coordinator Gary C. 935-2557  
Garver B. 302-8156  
Haag Home / Gary R. 485-7777  
Randy G 541-466-3027  
Serbu Detention Bob T. 302-3040
  - E.V.I. STEERING COMMITTEE**  
Chair/Ed R. 726-9490  
edrogers@efn.org  
Vice-Chair/Chris H. 345-7405  
chelmern@efn.org  
Secretary/Deana. 345-8750  
Treasurer/Gary R. 485-7777  
At-Large/Michael W. 343-2566  
m@mlwebb.com  
At-Large/Angel L. 431-4924  
angel@efn.org  
At-Large/Bill N. 747-7486  
rubberspur@aol.com  
At-Large/Dann L. 484-2330  
dann@lowinsure.com  
Treasurer / Gary R. 485-7777  
Vice Treasurer / Mel M. 345-4450

BOOKKEEPER / Bev.

## A Deeper Surrender

Almost three years ago I moved from a relatively large urban area to a smaller town. At the time, I had just celebrated my second AA birthday and felt well-grounded in the program. My sponsor told me that I would undoubtedly miss my AA friends and the meetings where I had gotten sober, but he knew that once I was settled in the AA program in my new community, everything would be fine.

The move went well and before long I had started my new job. I began to attend AA meetings in my new community, but found it very difficult to adjust. My new home was a mill town, and as a "professional" person I found it hard to relate to anybody I heard in the meetings I was attending. To make matters worse, I did encounter one gentleman in a meeting - himself a professional - who I thought would make a good sponsor. When I asked him and he declined I was crushed.

This began for me a rather long difficult period during which I attended meetings but didn't commit myself to any friendships within the Fellowship. As soon as a meeting was over. I'd be the first one out of the door. My weekends were invariably spent in the nearest large city, where I used the hustle and bustle to distract me from the reality that I was becoming increasingly isolated and alone.

After about a year of this I finally reached my bottom. Following a community-wide AA event, I found myself walking out with the man whom I had asked to be my sponsor when I first moved to the area. As I shared about my many troubles - not the least of which was his refusal to sponsor me - I started crying as pent-up emotions spilled over. He listened attentively and then nonchalantly suggested that I ask him again to be my sponsor. I thought this was nervy - he ought to be asking *me* - but I complied. He agreed to sponsor me, but wanted me to start working the Steps all over again. I was, of course, insulted.

Like it or not, I was going through the Steps one more time, just to satisfy my new sponsor, one of the last of the great Big Book thumpers. After a period of time, as I adjusted to his style of sponsorship, I got more comfortable. All went well until one day, as we sat in a local coffee shop discussing my Eighth Step amends list. As he scanned the names - almost all of whom were colleagues where I worked - he suggested that doing my Ninth Step with these people would involve telling them that my amends was part of a program of recovery from alcoholism. It was now that I learned the true meaning of the words "aghast" and "thunder-struck." I was speechless. How could I possibly share the fact that I was a recovering alcoholic with people who worked under me? Word about the fact that I was an "alkie" would spread all over work. I was finished. My sponsor left me sitting in the coffee shop to stew in my juices.

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"Nobody ever commits a crime without doing something stupid."  
Oscar Wilde

## July Calendar:

### E.V.I. and District Committee Meetings:

- |      |      |  |
|------|------|--|
| 1st  | Mon  | Steering Committee 5:30  |
|      | Mon  | Speaker Mtg Committee 7:30 779 V St. Springfield               |
|      | Tue  | District 20 7pm Creswell Library - Lisa B 302-9255             |
|      | Tue  | District 33 6:30 Woodland Apt. Tom S. 686-8388 (moved to EVI?) |
|      | Wed  | District 19 6:30 Bruce H. 302-0501                             |
|      | Fri  | Answering (?)  |
| 2nd  | Mon  | EVI Business Meeting 6:30 Tues                                 |
|      | Wed  | District 6 6:30 Larry W. 334-3609                              |
|      | Sat  | EVI Speakers Meeting, 7:30 Country Club Rd Sun                 |
| 3rd  | Mon  | Public Information 6:30  |
|      | Tue  | Office Volunteer 5:30  |
|      | Wed  | Activities 7:00  |
|      | Thur | Cooperation Prof. Community                                    |
| 4th  | Mon  | Newsletter 7:30 Tue Wed Thur Fri Sat Sun                       |
| Last | Wed  | H&I Committee 6:00   |
| Last | day  | Literature Committee 6:30                                      |

\* H&I Service Meetings are now listed in the back of the new meeting books!



## 5 Fellowship Events:

(not AA or EVI endorsed or affiliated: events of, by or for the AA fellowship)

- July 14- 16 Summerfest! - see below
- July 14-16 1st Klamath Roundup. Write: 6715 Eberlien, Klamath Falls, OR 97603. E-mail: millwrite@aol.com
- July 29 Cottage Grove Alano Club Second Annual Picnic -see below
- July 29-30 South Coast Roundup - Brookings, OR  
<http://www.harborside.com/cc/aa/pages/SC.html>  
info and registration
- Sept 22-24 SkyCamp Mens Retreat  
Retreat Master Ken D., Chef Pam Ryan,  
\$75 per person, fliers out soon, or contact Frank K. 345-7131 for more info.

**Summerfest 2000**  
July 14, 15, 16  
A Social Event at the Eugene Hilton  
Speakers:  
Giusseppe D. , Montebello CA  
Jan M. , Vancouver WA  
Ajit S. , Irvine, CA  
Cahuenga B., West Hollywood  
Bob E. , Los Angeles, CA  
John A., Dallas, TX  
Dances: Friday and Saturday 10pm-1am  
registration: at the event

**Cottage Grove Alano Club Summer Picnic**  
Saturday, July 29th  
11:00 AM til dusk -open A.A. meeting @ 8:00 pm)  
Baker Bay Park at Dorena Lake  
35635 Shoreview Dr.  
(park fee is \$3.00 per car load)  
Bring side dishes, desserts, and utensils.  
see flier for details.



- New Meeting:
- Open Womens's Step & Tradition Study Group  
Alano Club 519 E. Main St  
- call the club for day and time, they didn't tell us.
  - Gone but not Forgotten:  
Life by the Book
  - Reported Missing (Is this meeting still alive?)  
Womens Continuous Study

Have a blast at the International? - write it up for the News!

Ever wonder where those stories and articles in the Grapevine come from? - Somebody writes them... If your not quite ready for a national audience, try it here first.

Had a neat experience of AA in action? - share it!

Get sober in unusual circumstances? - Tell us!

Got a pet peeve - put it in writing.

see page 2 for how to submit your article.