



Issue January—March 2011

# C.A. San Diego Newsletter

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<http://www.casandiego.org>

## Recovery In Service Work

Life was a whole different story a decade ago. Living in drug houses, getting raided by the police, having helicopters flying overhead at 3 am, if I was lucky enough to be living in a house. There were times when I was living in my car and visiting my stuff in storage. Digging in garbage cans in search of spectacular treasure. Eating a candy bar in a 24 hour time period was a good day... To this day I still occasionally catch myself looking at trash outside of houses that are moving or have done spring cleaning. Is that sick or what??

What does one do when the game is gone? When the shadows that were once so inviting now illicit fear and doubt??

I had no social skills, none to speak of. I either cried and complained or acted better than you be-

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cause I was so afraid of you. Coffee and cigarettes were my only friends when I got here. Let me tell you what one does, at least what this one did to overcome that discomfort of early sobriety.

My sponsor told me to get a commitment right away when I graduated from a recovery home. I didn't ask questions, I just did it.

I became a chip chick, and real quick, my social skills were forced to come alive. People noticed that I was becoming a regular and were saying hi to me everywhere I went, I didn't know any of them!! I started getting invited after meetings to coffee or dinner with the group. I was forced to remember names and interact with people on a level I was unused to. Remember I'm the girl that hid out in garages and behind closed doors for years with my drugs, now I'm interacting with people that talk?? That want to go places and do things?? I definitely felt out of my element, but at the same time, I was getting a feeling of being a part of something. I never felt that before and it was a nice feeling... it made the meetings seem less daunting.

Eventually someone asked me to lead a meeting. Oh, was I terrified! My ears were red. What did I have to share? Who would want to hear from me? I shared for 3 minutes, inside shaking the whole time. To this day I am grateful for that experience, one addict helping another. I learned I am not alone no matter how much my disease would like me to think I am a unique snowflake and that no one can relate.

My sponsor asked me to go to a service assembly. I went and I have one word to describe it~ BORING!!!! I was so bored, that I went up to someone passing out flyers and asked him, begged him to let me help. He assigned me an area, and I accosted peo-

ple with flyers, brochures, and directions to meetings, groups, archive rooms etc. Guess what?? I had a blast and met so many people from all over California!! The day just flew by. Someone even asked me if there was a prize for passing out the most flyers.

One day an opportunity presented itself for me to be a GSR at a meeting. I went to my first Area meeting. OMG ... Gladiator school. I had never been around so much passion with so little bloodshed. The fire was lit and has burned ever since.

There has not been one immature action, passionate outburst, floor stomping, door slamming embarrassment that I have not been a participant in. I have done it all and no one has said "boy she is f-ed up"! Nope, just growing pains. That's all. Growing up happens publicly around here. Those of us who choose to be accepted around here for our imperfections because we are choosing to go beyond what is comfortable. We are choosing to learn new ways. Embracing new ideas. No one gets booed off the stage.

Here's the most potent sound bite of all. People with service commitments make it. My closest friends are all in service positions and their time just keeps adding up. Some say time doesn't matter. It's not the quantity I'd like to stress. It's the quality. Have fun, join special events or CA celebration committee. Reach out with Public Information. Get connected with Phone Lines. Try being a GSR. Develop your footing. Find your passion. Turns out drugs didn't destroy my life, they just postponed my having one. Recovery has shown me a new way and service is the path that I have chosen. I encourage you to get your feet wet with a commitment and quickly you will see the road of recovery is one with endless possibilities.

~Cai~

# One Last Party

Sitting in my apartment looking at the television in the dark because the bills went unpaid once again. Maybe I would have had enough money if I didn't feel the need to numb myself from the world.

Most mornings started with my having to pick up the bottles and little bags before I had to go pick up my son and fake being a loving person or even worse, a good role model. The one thing I didn't want to become was my father, but there I was putting my one year old to sleep, not being able to sleep myself. To me that was the worst feeling, lying there in the middle of the night looking up at the roof. At four in the morning the only thing I could hear was my sons breath as he slept next to me. Every breath was a dagger to the heart, a reminder that no matter how much I loved him I couldn't stop using.

What do you do when you realize your best plans and ideas have backfired? What do you do when everyone you look up to is more messed up than you are? What do you do when life comes down and gives you a black eye? They didn't teach me that in school. I was taught math, which only helped me in my using. My first thought was to end it all. I figured my son would be better off without me than to be brought up with a father like the one I had. I figured out I was no longer using to hide from you or the world, I was using to hide from the man looking at me in the mirror. So this is the way it was going to end and if it was done I was going out on a good one, one last party before I had to explain my actions to whatever is up there in the sky. Maybe this isn't how it was for you, and hopefully it wasn't, but this is how it was for me....

Three in the morning and it was just myself and my father left in the living room. I don't know why

My dad said what he did, and at the time I thought it was the most fucked up thing I'd heard. Turns out it was what I needed to hear, funny how life throws those lines at you. Anyways, good old dad looked at me and said, "Son, the last line is for you because I love you". As I was taking it all in I saw a picture of my son from the day he was born hanging up on the wall behind my father. I could never imagine saying that to the one person I would die for. The night ended with a fist fight and every bottle I could find to drink. The next morning I awoke to blood covering my chest and face and vomit all around me. To make things worse, "someone" had soiled and wet my pants. Coming to and awakening in every bodily fluid I could think of I looked over and saw a picture I didn't even know I had. It was a picture of me holding my son, with both of us laughing.

Somehow I knew my son saved my life that night and now it was time for me to save my life. This was the first time I decided to try to get sober. I have tried to get sober for my son, mother, father, girlfriends.....if there's one thing I've learned it's that anything worth having has to come from within, no one can stop another from using, it is something you must want yourself.

I feel the need to tell you, the reader, I have never told that much about my past. I figure people hear enough "war stories" in meetings. I believe I am not an addict because of the things that happened to me. I am an addict because the only way I know how to deal with life is to get loaded. I will say...if you have been raped, cheated, have a disability, an addict family, beaten or wronged by someone you're supposed to be able to look up to, you are not alone.

Don't think my life was all bad, I

Had some really good times. What I ask myself now is, are those great times worth the end result?

In the next couple of days I was in a rehab thinking I had nothing in common with anyone that was showing up for the meetings. Turns out I have more in common than I would care to admit. I have found a family and even more, a home. A place where people can relate to a bad mental day. A place where people thought like I did and have done the things I have done. People who have turned their lives around. I wanted what I saw in their eyes, I wanted to take "the weights out of my backpack". I wanted to know how to love myself. Most important, I wanted to know how to love myself. Most important, I wanted to know how to deal with life without using the answer came when I finally actually started to read this book they told me was my new way of life. I'll admit, at first it was a paperweight and I didn't understand a thing. If you are in that position now, OPEN AND READ THE BOOK! Truest me on this one, the answers are in there if you look for them.

In this program I can finally live. In this program I can love another, because I can now love myself. Today when my son says "I love you daddy" I get choked up because I can actually feel it instead of just hearing it. I'm not saying that this program makes life easy, life just sometimes sucks. It's been 18 months in this program for me and more than half of that time has been in hospitals coming or going into surgeries. Life has given me a health complication that I've been battling way before I got sober. Today I can deal with it because of good friends and even more important, the 12 steps. The steps have given me a reason and a way to live, for that I will always be grateful to the people who have shown me the way. To those people I love you and cherish you all.

*~Blaine~*

# C.A. Service Page

**Area Chairperson**  
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**Hospitals & Institutions**  
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**Structures & Bylaws**  
Mike S.

**Literature**  
Tom B.

**CA Celebration**  
Ken S.

**Newsletter**  
Cai P.

**Alternate Delegates**  
Eric F.  
  
Ken S.

**The CA San Diego Area Newsletter Committee would like to hear from you!** We are looking for cover stories, poems, comics, games, or something you think is pertinent to be added to our next newsletter. Please remember to keep it recovery related.

**Contact :**  
Cai Pamplin

**Or mail your submissions to :**  
**Cocaine Anonymous**  
**PO Box 261411**  
**San Diego, CA, 92126**

## ***Develop your footing~ find your passion***

San Diego Cocaine Anonymous needs your support to stay strong & keep San Diego Area unity alive!! Whatever your interest, get involved. Whether you want to take on a commitment or just help out, we would love to have you!

Call any of the above numbers for more information on how you can get into the middle of the circle of recovery.

~ Newsletter Chair~

**Question for the day:** Are you in the solution or in the problem?

# Using Dreams... And Gratitude!

Today I am truly grateful for the process of recovery that I am living. Last night I had a using dream, a vivid one! I woke up and realized it was a dream, a nightmare, and was instantly on my knees thanking my Higher Power for it! It was awful, lots of consequences, lots of pain, lots of tears.

Early in recovery I hated them, they triggered a lot of emotions and feelings. Today I am grateful for the reminder of where my life would be if I were to pick up just one. JUST ONE... that's all it would take cause it's not the caboose that kills you, it's the engine of that damn train! It's not the last one...it's the first one. If I picked up, it would be an emotional and spiritual death, right from the start. Today I don't allow myself to go there, I stay connected to my recovery... and am grateful for the reminders that my Higher Power gives me, in whatever ways he sees fit to get my attention.

~Jeff~

## T.I.M.E. ~ Things I Must Earn

How often have you attended meetings and observed the inner happiness of some members? They weren't using, had self-respect, and they seemed to enjoy a freedom that we desperately wanted. In early recovery, many of us still felt fearful, helpless and hopeless. We felt vulnerable and exposed, because we didn't have our drug of choice to help us fill the spiritual void we still felt inside. What did these people hold inside that we couldn't find?

We didn't use, just like them, went to meetings, just like them, we listened, just like them, and we did what they told us to do; we kept coming back. So what was wrong with us? The short answer: nothing. We were doing what we're supposed to do.

Our fellow members did not receive their gifts of recovery overnight. We can't expect instant miracles in all areas of our lives just because we put down that fix, pill or drink. However, we are experiencing the one promise our program has to offer. We never have to drink or use again ~ we are relieved of the obsession. If you think about your own personal past, that alone is a miracle.

And just because we don't have the inner peace that we observe in others, it may be that we just haven't looked deep enough.

For example, do the never-ending thoughts of using still take up every moment of your day, and invade your dreams every night? Are you regaining your health? Can you actually hold down food when you eat? Can you actually stand to look yourself in the mirror today? Paying a few bills? Do you want a better life for yourself? Are some (or all) things a change from the way your life was before when drinking and using? Well, those fellow members you see who are happy, joyous and free felt the same.

One thing they discovered in their process was: T.I.M.E.—Things I must Earn. Over time, the changes they needed to make involved letting go of their old, negative thought patterns which seemed to “protect” them in their once fear-driven lives. When they quit recycling those old concepts, they were open to working the Steps, revealing their true nature to their sponsors, and developing a loving relationship with the God of their understanding. They acquired the willingness to, and then made those changes, little by little. They earned their serenity over time, not overnight.

Now, today, I can get out of my own way and start helping myself. I can find the happiness, self-respect and freedom that I see in others by being open to the changes I need to make. I can listen to my sponsor and fellow members on a deeper level about the changes they made, and I can pray to my Higher Power for the willingness to follow their suggestions.

Am I willing to allow myself T.I.M.E.?

~Cai~

# The Prayer That changed my life....

*God, I know I have failed you,  
Yet I know I only have to walk  
into your open arms  
That you never turned your back  
on me.  
You have waited patiently for my  
return,  
Loving me the entire time.  
Heal my heart, for I return with  
many holes, and thousands of  
failings  
And yet I know you love me.  
Give me peace, God  
And I return to you singing your  
praises*

~~~~~

I Wrote this prayer in rehab after a very intense session with my Higher Power. My sponsor told me to get down on my knees and beg to have the obsession removed. I begged God to take me back, and relieve my obsession.

It was my 3rd day in a residential treatment facility . I don't know how long it lasted, although it felt like hours, where it was just me with my Higher Power in deep meditation. It filled me with such peace to know that God stood by me the whole time, waiting with open arms for me to walk back towards him.

I once knew and had an amazing relationship with God, but in my fear of cancer as well as the return of it again and again, my faith was tried. I decided to take fate into my own hands and deal the final blow myself.

Having the relationship with My Higher Power filled me with even more shame than I was already plagued with.

I knew I was luckier than most in this battle, I knew His saving graces, I knew His love, I knew how many times He had carried me and yet I still made the decision to take "fate" into my own hands. Since that day, my obsession to drink and use has been removed. I am no longer plagued with the constant need to put myself in situations that cause me or others around me harm.

In the process of learning how to depend on God to guide me, instead of my wants and needs, I instinctively know what to do as I live (for the most part) in God's will.

I am happy, joyous and free today from the pains of addiction.

I am able to go places now that I thought I would never be able to go again once I walked into the program of Cocaine Anonymous and began participating in my recovery.

I can go to bars to see my friends play in bands, I can do Karaoke, dinner and dancing. I go with friends

who are also in recovery and we have a blast! I don't worry about taking that first drink , which I know will lead me to a lot of drugs. I also know that God is with me at all times and when I get uncomfortable, it's ok to leave. How simple that choice is. Just leave.....

I am so grateful I can lead a full healthy life full of fun, joy, sorrow, and pain yet still surrounded by so much love..... A love I never understood, even as a wife, a mother, grandmother, daughter, sister or friend.

Nothing I had made me feel the love I feel today. I never felt as if I belonged, I never felt complete, never felt comfortable and most important, I never felt worthy of any of it. Drugs filled that void inside for so long.

Gratitude today is looking at all the faces in my life and knowing with my whole heart that God put each and every one of them in my path. Because of His complete and unconditional love for me, which I see today reflected in the eyes of those I love.

Because of that one act, out of sheer desperation, I was able to surrender to Gods love of me and today I can fully love myself which is the most important love of all.

~Hedy~

## The 4th Tradition

**"Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or CA as a whole"**

Recovery happens through the sharing that we do in our meetings. Many of our traditions, the 4th included, limit or prevent situations that would take the focus away from our primary purpose.

What this means to us is that normally we, as a group, can meet and

have the meeting the way we choose, without controversy from those who may choose to do it differently. We also realize the freedom that comes from not being "in charge" of any other group or how they choose to design their meetings. Each group's meeting format is just a detail to give the meeting some structure, and has little to do with one addict helping another. We do have to be aware that at some point a groups action could affect other groups or CA as a whole

When this situation arises it is always important that we use loving guidance when we approach a group affecting others.

In my 9 years of sobriety I cannot remember a time when a group purposely set out to affect other groups or CA as a whole. My experience has been that this tradition simply reminds us to show up and share recovery in our meeting and not get side-tracked by any other organizational details or opinions about other groups

~Cai~

**The stories herein are views of the individual contributors. No endorsement by CA is to be implied.**

## Birthdays

Cai 10/06/2000  
Kevin N. 10/09/2007  
Courtney 10/12/2009  
Michelle G. 10/21/2000  
Mike G. 11/02/1992  
Donovan J 11/05/1999  
Randy S. 11/10/2006  
Grace L. 11/11/2004  
Barbara N. 1/18/1994  
Mike L. 11/9/1995

*if your Birthday didn't make it in  
the newsletter, now is the time to  
act!!*

*Pick up that heavy phone and give  
me a call or send me an email, text,  
etc to ensure it makes it in here  
next time (while you're at it, why  
not put a little story together too :)*

*~Cai~*

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the fellowship of Cocaine Anonymous.*

*We hope to communicate the experience,  
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recovery, unity and service, within the bounds of  
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Anonymous, The Twelve Steps and The Twelve  
Traditions, please write and ask for C.A. World  
Service Conference approved literature at  
CAWSO, 3740 Overland Ave., Suite C,  
Los Angeles, CA 90034*

*Email to: [info@CA.org](mailto:info@CA.org)*

*or by Fax to: (310) 559-2554*

*You can call CA by phone at (310) 559-5833.*

*Also note that C.A. World Service Office Web  
page is: [www.ca.org](http://www.ca.org)*

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## Poetry Corner

### Tears

Gentle, soft, almost undetectable  
Untraceable after having fallen  
A path of joy..... Or sorrow, more likely  
Just a glimpse as she turns her head  
Averting her eyes out of embarrassment  
Quickly brush it away,  
Desperately try to hold it in  
Can't let anyone see her hurt  
A wall built to hide behind  
Keep everyone out and all the secrets in  
No one should see  
No one can know  
Don't let it show  
Strengthen the barriers over the years  
To hide the fears, the failures, the faults  
Until these walls come crashing down  
In a pile of rubble and ashes  
Beneath which....the tears still lay  
The pain as fresh as it was the first day  
....now ready to heal.

*~AEV~*

### Stranded as My Wishes

From anywhere starting over  
With cause to roam places unknown  
I become part of my experiences  
Daily on the pursuit for a muse  
Art weeps in a tone  
Heard by creatures longing  
Such like children playing  
Games without motives  
Stranded as my wishes  
Finding out pleasure  
Means you are  
Now vulnerable

*~MC~*