



# DISPATCH

What **your** district is talking about.

First Quarter 2013

## District 5 Committee

- › Joe C., District Committee Member Chair
- › Kristine G., Alternate District Committee Member Chair
- › James H., District Registrar
- › Keith S., District Secretary
- › Joey P., District Treasurer

## Newsletter Editor

- › Kristen C.

## Tustin Meeting Celebrates 22 Years

➤➤ In January 2013, an iconic – and often controversial – meeting celebrated 22 years of helping alcoholics meet one hour a day at 5:30 p.m., one day at a time. The Rush Hour meeting has had many homes over the last two decades and currently calls The Rio at La Veta and Tustin Ave. in Orange its homebase Sunday through Friday, and meets at the Ugly Mug in Old Orange on Saturday nights.

David N. of Tustin led the anniversary meeting and shared his experiences with Rush Hour, and its founder, Allen A. Here, David recounts the history of a colorful meeting founded by a colorful character:

### THE STORY OF THE "BANDIT WITH A HEART" WHO FOUNDED RUSH HOUR

The "Rush Hour" meeting which currently meets in Orange seven days a week from 5:30-6:30 p.m. was founded by Allen A. on January 15, 1991.

Allen became "the bandit with a heart" when, sometime back in the 1970's, he robbed a bank in Manhattan Beach and afterwards locked the bank manager into the trunk of his own car at gunpoint before making off with the stolen money.

Feeling guilty, Allen later called the police department to let them know the manager was trapped in the trunk of his car in the bank parking lot. The next day an article ran in the local newspaper entitled "Bandit with a Heart" which told of the bank robber with a conscience.

Subsequent crimes continued to land Allen in jail, and soon he was struggling with sobriety, knowing full-well his misdeeds were fueled by alcohol and drugs.

After a drinking related hit-and-run accident, Allen fled to Hawaii to escape his arrest warrant. While in Honolulu, he attended an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting, called Rush Hour, which met one hour a day, five days a week at 5:30 p.m. on Kalaakua Avenue. Soon his conscience was burning about fleeing the accident and warrant in California. He knew in order to stay sober he had to return to face his charges and make amends.

It was shortly thereafter I met Allen one summer morning in 1990 as he attended our 6:00 a.m. meeting. Allen was quite a sight, wearing a straw hat and sporting a large scar on his forearm, a constant reminder that he had accidentally shot himself with his own .45 revolver while chasing after his methamphetamine cook one time in the desert.

He approached me for help to face his hit-and-run charges since he knew I was an attorney and I agreed to represent him. It was during this discussion when he showed me his copy of the Honolulu meeting directory and asked if we had a "Rush Hour" meeting in our local area. I told him



Photo courtesy of [www.area09.org](http://www.area09.org)

**Your District 5** Serving Cowan Heights, Lemon Heights, Orange, Orange Park, Santa Ana, Tustin and Villa Park.

District 5 meetings are held the second Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m., Church of the Foothills, corner of Newport Ave. and Dodge in Tustin.

no, there was no meeting of that nature. But we had more pressing matters to deal with: his court appearance.

With the help of men in the program willing to stand up for him, and being honest with the judge about his willingness to face his charges and do whatever was necessary to make amends, Allen was allowed to pay his fine and walk out of the courtroom. I was only about four years sober at the time and still remember this as one of my great experiences of how AA really works.

With the warrant off his back and amends made, Allen set out to start a meeting so his daily fellowship schedule could resume. In January of 1991, Tustin High School was willing to give our group a chance to start a "Rush Hour" meeting. We met in a classroom with a handful of people – maybe six or seven – at each meeting. However, we were told we had to have an insurance policy for \$1,000,000.00 to cover any liabilities the school might face if one of us got injured. We certainly were not in a position to do such a thing and soon had to move our meeting location.

Allen discovered Church of the Foothills up the road and asked me to come with him to talk to the Pastor in my suit and tie, as he had also brought me along at Tustin High, feeling that a lawyer would help to give our meeting some credibility.

The pastor welcomed our new little group and it began to thrive. The meeting became so popular and so many people came there with court cards, that a stamp had to be manufactured that said "Rush Hour" so that the secretaries had time to sign all of the cards.

After a number of years, growing pains and increased rent forced the meeting to relocate yet again, this time to a bank on the corner of Prospect and 17th Street in Tustin. Unfortunately, after a couple of years at that location, the bank did not like "the crowd" the meeting attracted and Rush Hour had to relocate once more, this time to the Knights of Columbus on Main Street in Tustin.

Eventually restaurant owners and shopkeepers neighboring the meeting tired of (again) "the crowd" and managed

to get the room closed tight to Alcoholics Anonymous, ousting all the Tustin AA meetings that used the facility. Rush Hour languished in two different parks through the summer of 2008 until the group finally settled into its current location at the Rio in Orange. It was the last meeting from Knights of Columbus to find a permanent location, and not too soon, as Fall weather was looming.

Sadly, Allen did not stay sober. He started smoking marijuana and drinking again, finally dying of congestive heart failure due to alcohol abuse. Allen's effort to create a meeting in the manner of his beloved Hawaiian group that helped him get sober has been responsible for *so many* people attending Rush Hour, getting sober and maintaining sobriety. Allen's story is not too unlike the story of Bill Wilson's friend Ebby (who sat across from Bill at the kitchen table, proclaiming he had "got religion"), who, although he played an integral part in shaping the spiritual aspect of the program as we know it, died drunk. Thank goodness that the message carries on and endures long after the messenger is gone.

I have been blessed to have had this experience with my good friend Allen and I was able to help him in his later years, even when he could not maintain his sobriety. Through this experience I have been one of the fortunate ones who has been able to stay sober and I am grateful that AA lives on in the Rush Hour meeting and in so many of the other meetings in our great Orange County area. ▲

## What is the history of your meeting?

Let other members of AA in District 5 know the history of your meeting. Join us at the next District 5 meeting the second Thursday of the month and ask for the Newsletter Editor, Kris C. to submit your story.

### For Your Information!

Be on the lookout next quarter for the District 5 newsletter email address! Until then, see your GSR about any questions or concerns you may have about what's going on in your district! Better yet, stop by the next District 5 meeting.

## Upcoming Events

### DISTRICT 5

- › Next General Service Representative meeting: March 14 at 7:00 p.m., Church of the Foothills at Dodge and Newport in Tustin.

### AREA 9

- › Area 9, the area in which District 5 resides, is having its next Area Service Committee Meeting (ASC) at Cesar Chavez Park, 401 Golden, Long Beach, CA 90802 on March 10.

### MOVIE NIGHT AT THE ARCHIVES!

7111 Arlington Ave, Suite B, Riverside CA.  
951-785-0845.

7:00 p.m. Cost is FREE!

- › When Love is Not Enough (2010) Sat. Mar 16
- › Clean and Sober (1988) Sat. Apr 20
- › 28 Days (2000) Sat. May 18
- › Come Back Little Sheba (1952) Sat. Jun 15

For all events, reports, guidelines and other information relating to Area 9 - including our GSO Delegate Report, please visit [www.area09.org](http://www.area09.org). You can also find information about our district by clicking on the District 5 tab.

## A Packet Debate

►► Last December, District 5 General Service Representatives discussed use of "packets" in some groups to aid newcomers in Alcoholics Anonymous in working the 12 steps. A request was made to submit an agenda item from the District to the upcoming General Service Conference asking for an official statement from the GSO differentiating conference-approved literature from non-conference approved literature used by members of Alcoholics Anonymous.

After lengthy debate, the group agreed by majority consensus that although "packets" are NOT Alcoholics Anonymous approved literature, nor endorsed by the district, the use of such additional tools, much like recovery-related books on meditation, workbooks, etc., cannot be monitored and any issues arising from the use of the packets should be dealt with at the individual group and/or member level. The representatives voted not to submit the request to the GSO for consideration as an agenda item at this time. ▲