

# Recovery Times

A newsletter from Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office VOL 28, NO 9 Sept. 2004

## *I Found Hope in AA*

I came in to AA as a miserable and unhappy soul. I'd just lost my job and gotten my first DUI and was ordered to attend three meetings a week for ninety days. After the first ninety days I had to come to one a week for another ninety days because I had to take a six month DUI course given by a local medical school in order to get back my drivers license. Now this wasn't really what made me miserable; what made me miserable was the judge telling me that if I was caught "with any measurable amount of alcohol in my system" for the first year of my probation I would go to jail for six months. And he said that he was adding a stipulation that meant at any time - not just while I was driving. A year without the only thing that kept me going was impossible to imagine. My best friend had just been taken from me and there was nothing I could do about it. I hated that judge! I came into the rooms not knowing what I'd find but maybe, just maybe, it would help keep me out of jail for the next year.

I'd been to a couple of AA meetings before arriving this (hopefully) final time, but the only things I heard then were things I couldn't relate to. Those people had lost family, jobs, had gotten in trouble with the law and had experienced other things I'd never experienced. I mean I've never even had a husband to lose, so how could I be like all of them? And I'd never done anything so horrible to get into serious trouble; so I didn't understand how they could accept me. This time things were a little different. I heard someone at a meeting early on say the only reason they didn't lose a family was because they were never fortunate enough to gain one. Well, that I sort of understood except that I hadn't wanted a family before I got here because they would have taken away my valuable drinking time, and I couldn't have that. At least I had some common ground with some AA members now. I'd lost a job and gone to jail because of my drinking. So I decided it really could help keep me out of jail.

That one thought, that AA could help, hasn't just saved my life; it gave me life! I've learned more about life, love, friendship, and happiness in the past couple of years than I learned in the first 29 years I was alive. I have more

*Continued on Page 5*

# Calendar Events

## Upcoming Events

### **26th Annual Ventura County AA Convention**

September 10-12, 2004

Hyatt Westlake Plaza

Info: [www.vcaac.org](http://www.vcaac.org)

### **53rd Southern California Convention**

September 24 - 26, 2004

Town & Country Hotel, San Diego, CA

Info: [www.aasocal.com](http://www.aasocal.com)

### **First Santa Clarita Valley A.A. Convention**

October 22-24, 2004

College of the Canyons

Info: [www.scvaaconvention.com](http://www.scvaaconvention.com)

### **17th Annual Inland Empire Convention**

October 22-24, 2004

Hilton Hotel, San Bernadino, CA

Info: [www.ieaac.com](http://www.ieaac.com)

### **2005 International A.A. Convention**

June 30 - July 4, 2005

Toronto, Ont

Registration forms available in August 2004

Info: [www.alcoholics-anonymous.org](http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org)

Registration forms for the events above are at the  
[Intergroup Meeting](#) or at [Central Office](#)

## SERVICE COMMITTEE SCHEDULE

- Sept. 20, 2004 **SFV H&I  
THIRD MONDAY**  
8pm Business Meeting  
Get Acquainted Workshop, 7pm,  
5657 Lindley Ave.  
\*\*\*\*\*
- Oct. 4, 2004 **G.S. Districts #11, 16  
FIRST MONDAY**  
6pm, 11455 Chandler Blvd, N. Hollywood  
\*\*\*\*\*
- Oct. 4, 2004 **G.S. Districts #17  
FIRST MONDAY**  
6pm, orientation, 6:30pm meeting  
5000 Colfax (church), N. Hollywood  
\*\*\*\*\*
- Oct. 5, 2004 **G.S. Districts #2  
FIRST TUESDAY**  
6:30pm, 4011 Dunsmore  
La Crescenta  
\*\*\*\*\*
- Oct. 6, 2004 **G.S. District #1  
FIRST WEDNESDAY**  
6:30pm, 7552 Remmet  
Canoga Park  
\*\*\*\*\*
- Oct. 6, 2004 **SFV Board of Directors**  
6pm, Central Office  
\*\*\*\*\*
- Oct. 9, 2004 **G.S. District #7  
SECOND SATURDAY**  
Agua Dulce Woman's Club  
33201 Agua Dulce Cyn Rd  
Sharon G. (661) 951-0372  
\*\*\*\*\*
- Oct. 11, 2004 **SFV Intergroup  
SECOND MONDAY**  
6:30 pm Orientation  
7pm Business Meeting  
St. Innocents Church  
5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana

## Valley Events

### **SFV H&I 23rd Annual Birthday Meeting**

and Spaghetti Dinner

Thursday, October 28, 2004 6:00 PM

St. Innocent Orthodox Church

5657 Lindley Ave. Tarzana

As of publishing time - no other valley  
events have been submitted

## Special Events

### **CENTRAL OFFICE**

SFV AA Convention will be held  
on January 28-30 2005 at the  
Burbank Hilton, Burbank, CA.  
Registration forms coming soon.

# Service Opportunities & News

## Service Opportunities in the San Fernando Valley

### PUBLIC INFORMATION COMMITTEE -

Provides information to the general public about what A.A. does and does not do. Could always use volunteers, especially young people and Spanish speaking A.A.'s for health fairs and to speak at various schools and businesses. Contact Central Office (818) 988-3001.

### HOSPITAL AND INSTITUTIONS COMMITTEE -

Carries the message of Alcoholics Anonymous into hospitals, prisons & treatment facilities to those who are unable to get out to meetings. Meets the 3rd Monday of the month 8:00 PM @ St. Innocent's Church, 5657 Lindley Ave, Tarzana, CA. Info: Sarah G. (818) 894-9921.

### SAN FERNANDO VALLEY INTERGROUP -

Elected Intergroup representatives maintain and develop policies for Central Office, and inform other IG Reps about Alkathons & fund raisers, etc. Meets second Monday, monthly, St. Innocent's Church, 5657 Lindley Ave, Tarzana, CA. Orientation 6:30pm, Meeting at 7:00pm. Contact: Central Office at 988-3001.

### SAN FERNANDO VALLEY CONVENTION -

Volunteers are welcome to participate in the planning of the 2005 Convention. The Committee meets the 3rd Tuesday of each month (except February and March); 7 PM at St. Innocent's Church, 5657 Lindley Ave, Tarzana, CA.

## Central Office News

### San Fernando Valley Central Office is On the Web

The SFV Central Office website is now available for Internet browsers. On the website, you can find a map to our office in Van Nuys, a listing of upcoming events in the Valley, service organization information and links to other cool A.A. websites. Our meeting schedule is also accessible on the website. Meetings are listed by day, Sunday through Saturday. Check it out: <http://www.sfvaa.org>

### Do you have an article for the Recovery Times?

Email it to us at: [sfvaanews@sbcglobal.net](mailto:sfvaanews@sbcglobal.net)

### **San Fernando Valley Central Office Intergroup Representatives Meeting August 9, 2004**

Sarah G. Chairperson – Meeting opened at 7:00 pm

Treasurer's Report; See Insert

*Service Committee information - see page 2 and 3 of the Recovery Times for more information*

Old Business: None

New Business: .None

Birthdays Cinde - 12 yrs, Angela - 5 yrs, Kane - 14 yrs,

*Motion to adjourn 7:30 PM*

*The long form of the Intergroup Meeting Minutes for August is available at Central Office or at the Intergroup Meeting. These minutes are pending approval on Sept 13, 2004*

*Next Meeting - Sept. 13, 2004*

*Prepared and submitted by: Jennifer J. Recording Secretary*

## **HAPPY BIRTHDAY!**

### **August 2004**

<b>Soshe</b>	<b>6 years</b>
<b>Randy H.</b>	<b>7 years</b>
<b>James Francis D.</b>	<b>8 years</b>
<b>Jay B.</b>	<b>9 years</b>
<b>Joan E.</b>	<b>17 years</b>
<b>Iris N.</b>	<b>27 years</b>

#### Your Birthday Gift to Central Office

*Many A.A. members share their birthdays with those who need the same help and opportunity that A.A. gave to them.*

*By sending a donation to Central Office you share your birthday with Recovery Times readers. Send a dollar (\$1.00) a year - or \$1.00 for each year of your sobriety - or send as much as you wish to give to celebrate your birthday. The amount doesn't matter - it's the "counting" that counts.*

*May your special day be filled with joy from morning until night, and may the "24's" that lie ahead be especially glad and bright.*

## *That Old AA Briefcase*

It was in the first quarter of the last year of the past millennium that I met up with that old AA Briefcase. I had smacked into another bottom, over a New Year's drinking spree, which had left me homeless, suicidal, and physically ill while attempting to detox on my mother's couch. It was difficult to continue functioning full time at my place of employment which was a minimum wage fast food place. At some point I said, "Please, someone help me!"

I didn't know it but I was getting closer to that AA briefcase. Something had been put into motion. My New Year's resolution to just stop drinking had already been changed to cutting back slowly by drinking only beer and using sedatives. It wasn't looking too promising until I met someone at a bar who suggested that I try AA. I had been going to bars to ask people for advice on how to stop drinking because I believed that was the best place to find drinkers. Incredibly, this logic worked well for me.

The very next evening I went to this suggested AA meeting. It was amazing. I felt like I was at home. I grabbed onto AA like my life depended on it - which it did. I continued to go to meetings and I got a sponsor. We began working together on the Steps and my life began to change. My road toward sobriety was by no means easy, but it's the best thing that's ever happened to me. And I was soon to be given one of the greatest gifts in sobriety.

It was sometime in my first 90 days that the election took place; the group was electing a new secretary. I heard someone nominate me and then I heard someone second it. They said, "All in favor" and people raised their hands. Then they said, "You're it." And I said, "Uh, uh, what do I do?" and the other secretary showed me the meeting format and the briefcase. He showed me the treasury bag and handed me the keys to the church.

Up until this time I had thought that these people were just like me. I thought that they understood because their stories were so much like mine. I now began to have my doubts. If these people understood what I was like they certainly wouldn't have given me more than \$120 and the keys to a church. But I walked across the street and waited, in the dark, for my bus to take me downtown.

I soon decided that it must be a trick so I counted all the money (at least \$20 was in change) and I corrected the balance. I organized the briefcase and decided to buy all the change so that the treasury would be more organized. I was still worried even after doing all these things. Eventually, I called my sponsor and told her the entire story. I explained to her how I usually carry money, in the evenings, which I felt would be much safer than a briefcase. She suggested that I just carry what was needed for the meeting, and that maybe I could ask the group to elect a treasurer. It was several months before I got around to asking for a treasurer because I wanted everyone to think that I could handle everything myself.

That AA briefcase saved my life. I was handed an honor and a gift of service. Today, I know how lucky I was to have been given such a gift so early in sobriety. I have been able to be active in many different service positions. My favorites are coffee-maker and door-greeter, but I will never forget that AA briefcase.

*Diane V., from The San Diego AA Coordinator, March 2003*

## I Found Hope in AA (continued from Page 1)

friends that I can count on than I ever would have imagined. And I mean really count on! Two of them recently spent a Saturday at the hospital, instead of finishing their Christmas shopping, because I was in pain and they wanted to be sure I was going to be ok. The people I used to call my friends would have found out about it as they sat at the bar drinking and probably would have thought about checking on me, but they wouldn't have sat in the hospital for 5 hours.

I still don't have a family of my own yet, but I know that will happen when I'm really ready. Besides I have so many people in my life now who treat me like I am part of their family. People in AA have invited me to their homes for holidays and other special occasions, which never happened when I was drinking. Also I've called my sponsor on a couple of occasions and her teenage daughter has invited me to the movies and her basketball games. Another time I was asked for help with homework while I was on instant messaging. I'm very fortunate to have these kinds of people all around me now, even though I may not think I deserve it. But someone thinks I do, and who am I to argue?

The thing I find most amazing is that now I have hope for the future. The future used to create fear when I thought about it because it could only bring more of the same pain and sorrow I had always known. Now the future is full of possibilities, most of which I can't even imagine. I hope you stay on the path of AA long enough to find the miracle you're hoping for.

*Anonymous*



### *Co-founder Quotes*

#### ***R.S.V.P. - Yes or No?***

*Usually, we do not avoid a place where there is drinking - if we have a legitimate reason for being there. That includes bars, night clubs, dances, receptions, weddings, even plain ordinary parties. You will note that we made an important qualification. Therefore, ask yourself, "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?" Then go or stay away, whichever seems better. But be sure you are on solid spiritual ground before you start and that your motive in going is thoroughly good. Do not think of what you will get out of the occasion. Think of what you can bring to it.*

*If you are shaky, you had better work with another alcoholic instead!*

The Big Book, pp. 101-102

#### ***One Fellowship - Many Faiths***

*As a society, we must never become so vain as to suppose that we are authors and inventors of a new religion. We will humbly reflect that every one of A.A.'s principles has been borrowed from ancient sources.*

A.A. Comes of Age, p. 231

## *I Jump When I'm Asked To!*

The long form of Tradition Three starts out by stating “Our membership ought to include all who suffer from alcoholism.” I interpret this as saying that it would be ideal if everyone who suffers from this fatal disease could and should be a member of this fellowship. Consider some numbers if you will. The latest estimate of the world population is around 5.8 billion people. A conservative estimate is that alcoholism affects at least 5% of our population. That means there are at least 290 million people in this world with our disease. The unfortunate reality is that our fellowship is estimated at about 2.7 million members worldwide. This means that just under 1% of the world’s alcoholics are sober in AA. Pretty staggering when you think about it.

Tradition Three goes on to say “Hence we may refuse none who wish to recover.” To me, this means that anyone who believes themselves alcoholic has a home in Alcoholics Anonymous. Regardless of any other malady you need help with, if you are an alcoholic and wish to recover from alcoholism, the doors of AA are open to you. As our co-founder Bill W. says in the Twelve and Twelve, “No matter who you are, no matter how low you’ve gone, no matter how grave your emotional complications - even your crimes - we still can’t deny you AA.” And why would we? Alcoholics Anonymous saved my life, plain and simple. Why would I deny that same life-saving grace to any other alcoholic? Bill added to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tradition, “Nor ought AA membership ever depend upon money or conformity.” I understand the money issue. Most alcoholics of my type owe a lot of money when they arrive at the doors of AA. If wealth had anything to do with membership, I doubt many of us would make the grade. To me, conformity is the bigger concern. You see, I was in and out of our fellowship a couple of times without experiencing sobriety as I know it today. I was still restless, irritable, and discontent, even though I went to a lot of meetings. The difference today is a direct result of my conformity. Conformity to the AA way of life. When I was drinking, I had to be in control. I had to be the one calling the shots. You would say zig, and I would zag. You would say jump, and rather than ask you “how high?” I would ask myself “what’s in it for me?” And I would only jump if I thought I would get something out of it. Be it by my sponsor, my group’s conscience, my boss, my family, or you name it, I need to jump when I’m asked to do so. When I do, I conform to the AA way of life as I know it. Conformity makes me one among many, a part of. It was my desire to be different and in control of my life that almost killed me.

That is the difference I see today. The difference between those who “wish to recover” and those who HAVE recovered is the willingness to go to any lengths to stay sober. And it is my responsibility to every suffering alcoholic I meet to convey to them that a desire to stop drinking gets them in the door of AA, but turning their life and will over to a power greater than themselves will be what keeps them here.

*By Skip I., Wayzata, Minn., from Mirus, the Greater Minneapolis Intergroup newsletter, March 2002*

## Meet Me in the Stairwell

You say you will never forget where you were when you heard the news on September 11, 2001. Neither will I.

I was on the 110<sup>th</sup> floor in a smoke-filled room with a man who called his wife to say "Goodbye." I held his fingers steady as he dialed. I gave him the peace to say, "Honey, I'm not going to make it, but it is OK. I am ready to go."

I was with his wife when he called as she fed breakfast to her children. I held her up as she tried to understand his words and as she realized he wasn't coming home that night.

I was in the stairwell of the 23rd floor when a woman cried out to Me for help. "I have been knocking on the door of your heart for 50 years." I said, "Of course I will show you the way home - only believe in Me now."

I was at the base of the building with the priest, ministering to the injured and devastated souls. I took him home to tend to his flock in Heaven. He heard my voice and answered.

I was with the crew as they were overtaken. I was in the very hearts of the believers there, comforting and assuring them that their faith had saved them.

I was in Texas, Kansas, London. I was standing next to you when you heard the terrible news. Did you sense Me?

I want you to know that I saw every face. I know every name - though not all know Me. Some met Me for the first time on the 86th floor. Some sought Me with their last breath. Some couldn't hear Me calling them through the smoke and flames: "Come to Me ...this way..take My hand."

Some chose, for the final time, to ignore Me. But I was there.

I did not place you in the tower that day. You may not know why, but I do.

However, if you had been there in that explosive moment in time would you have reached for Me?

September 11, 2001 was not the end of the journey for you. But someday your journey will end. And I will be there for you as well.

Seek Me now while I may be found. Then, at any moment, you know you are "ready to go."

I will be in the stairwell of your final moments. God.

From Scuttlebutt, Lisbon, NO

**Newletter Subscription:** If you wish to receive your copy of the Recovery Times at your home, please complete this form and return with a check (\$7 donation to cover delivery cost) to:

San Fernando Valley Central Office  
7417-E Van Nuys Boulevard  
Van Nuys, CA 91405

### Current Information

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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Renewal

Additional Contribution \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Moving ???:** We need your former address as well as your new address to correct our records. Fill out both forms and mail to the address above.

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Address \_\_\_\_\_

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