

RECOVERY TIMES

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The Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office Newsletter

Railroaded

Talked into service, a reluctant teen meets the AAs who convince him to stick around

My sobriety date is April 7, 1986. I was 17 years old in 1986. I'd had my first drink at age 8 and had started to use drugs at 9. I now have a life I believe would have never happened if it weren't for Alcoholics Anonymous.

When I first came in, it was difficult for someone my age to feel accepted and to want to be a part of something so big. I went to a treatment center first, but was introduced to AA the first night there. There were no adolescent centers at the time.

I didn't have a desire to stop drinking and never thought that I would stay sober for any period of time. My counselor, for whom I will be eternally grateful, was sober in AA for seven years. She spent two hours a day with me, which was three times more than any counselor spent with any of the other clients. Trust me, I didn't want to be there! She made me read three stories in the Big Book: "Too Young," Railroaded Talked into service, a reluctant teen meets the AAs who convince him to stick around "A Teen-Ager's Decision" and "Freedom From Bondage." She explained the malady of the disease and she explained to me that I was there because I had a disease. She also said that if I could get sober and stay sober I would be able to help many more young people who were going to come to AA.

When I left to go home, I had no intention to stay sober or help anyone. I went back to a small town in the Midwest, where I was introduced to a new AA group. I wasn't welcomed very well because I am dually addicted. I would share about both



addictions and they would share that they were "real alcoholics."

I didn't read that part in the Big Book about a real alcoholic. I was asked to leave that group and was physically removed and was told not to come back until I could talk about my alcoholism.

Knowing what I have learned today about the Traditions, I wish someone had taken me aside and explained Tradition One and Tradition Two. I didn't come back to another AA meeting until almost eight months later, when I moved to the Central Valley in California. I met my sponsor a few weeks later. God put a young punk kid and a grown man who didn't have a son together. For the next 20 years that man showed me the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. He had me get a service sponsor for the Twelve Concepts for world service. But I didn't like AA for over a year and wouldn't admit that I was an alcoholic for that period of time.

What happened was that I was railroaded into being an alternate general service rep when I was sober for a year and a half. I was 19. At an assembly, a lady who was a district committee member gave a report, during which she said that she sobered up at 20 years old and had 10 years of sobriety. Again, God put the exact person in my life. I

(Continued, Page 5)



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Pacoima 55th Anniversary Alcañon

Aug. 13 – 15, 2010, opens 7:30 p.m. 8/13
12502 Van Nuys Blvd., Pacoima, CA

Pacific Regional Forum

August 27 - 29, 2010
Marriott, Torrance, CA

Ventura County AA Convention

Sept. 3-5, 2010
Westlake Hyatt Hotel
www.vcaac.org

The Great Outdoor Beaver Meeting,

Sept. 2 – Sept. 5, 2010
Beaver, UT
www.greatoutdoorbeavermeeting.com

20th Annual National/International Native American Indian AA Convention

Sept. 9 – 12, 2010
Riviera Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas, NV
www.nai-aa.com

59th Southern CA AA Convention

Sept. 24-26, 2010
Town & Country Hotel, San Diego, CA
www.aasocal.com (626) 806-6977

7th Annual Santa Clarita Valley AA Convention

Oct. 15 – 17, 2010
Hyatt Valencia, Valencia, CA
www.scvaaconvention.org (661) 310-0384



THINGS WE CANNOT

CHANGE: If you are aware of the passing of a member of our Fellowship, please call us at (818) 988-3001 or email an obituary to: sfvaanews@sbcglobal.net.

NOTE: Book Sales will be closed at Central Office on Monday, Sept. 6, 2010 due to the Labor Day holiday.

SERVICE COMMITTEES SCHEDULE:

SFV H & I: Aug. 23, 2010:

7 p.m. Get acquainted workshop
8 p.m. Business Meeting
5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana, CA

Gen Service, District 11: Sept. 6, 2010

6 p.m. New GSR orientation/ 6:30 p.m. Bus. Mtg
315 W. Vine Street, Glendale, CA

Gen Service, District 16: Sept. 13, 2010

6:15 p.m. meeting
15950 Chatsworth, Granada Hills

Gen. Service, District 17: Sept. 6, 2010

6 p.m. New GSRs./6:30 p.m. Bus. Meeting
5000 Colfax, N. Hollywood

Gen. Service, District 2: Sept..7, 2010

6:30 p.m. Business Meeting
4011 Dunsmore Ave., La Crescenta

Gen Service, District 1: Sept. 1, 2010

6:30 p.m. Business Meeting
7552 Remmet, Canoga Park

SFV Central Office Board Mtg: Sept. 8, 2010

6:30 p.m., Valley Central Office

Gen. Service District 7: Sept. 11, 2010

9 a.m. Business Meeting
Agua Dulce Women's Club
33210 Agua Dulce Canyon Road

SFV Intergroup: Sept.13, 2010

6:30 Orientation, 7 p.m. Business Meeting
St. Innocent Ch., 5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana

OPPORTUNITIES TO BE OF SERVICE:

Your Central Office needs telephone volunteers for all shifts (especially midnight – 9 a.m.). If you have a year or more of continuous sobriety, you can sign up at the office or online: www.sfvaa.org/involve.html



SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES IN THE S.F. VALLEY:

Public Information Committee: Provides information to the general public about what A.A. does & doesn't do. Can use volunteers, especially young people and Spanish-speaking AAs, for health fairs and to speak at schools & businesses.

Hospitals and Institutions Committee: Carries the message of AA into hospitals, prisons, and treatment facilities to those who are unable to get out to meetings. (See Pg. 2 for schedule). For more info, call Central Office: (818) 988-3001.

San Fernando Valley Intergroup: Elected Intergroup reps maintain & develop policies for Central Office and inform the groups about sober events/fundraisers. (See Pg. 2).

San Fernando Valley Convention: Volunteers are welcome to participate in the planning of the 2011 Convention. The Committee meets the 3rd Tuesday of each month (except Feb. & March) at 7 p.m. at St. Innocent Church, 5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana.-

CENTRAL OFFICE NEWS:

Having a Birthday? By sending a donation to Central Office, your birthday will be posted in Recovery Times. Send \$1.00 per year of your sobriety (or just send as much as you wish to donate).



August Birthdays: Ginny B. – 10 Years

Has your meeting changed? If your meeting info changes, i.e. location, time, meeting name or type of meeting, we want to know. Please provide any meeting updates to us in writing by mail or delivered in person during regular office hours to: Central Office: 7417-E Van Nuys Blvd., Van Nuys, CA 91405.

Live 24/7 Phone Service: Whether you are reaching out for help from another AA member or surfing the Web, you can find the Valley Central Office any hour of the day or night. Visit us at: www.sfvaa.org for meeting info, upcoming events, service meeting info, and links to other cool AA websites or call to speak with a sober AA member: (818) 988-3001.

Intergroup Reps Needed: If your meeting/group does not currently have an Intergroup Rep, please consider appointing someone to this important position. Intergroup reps provide an important service to the group by sharing information on upcoming AA events in the San Fernando Valley. The SFV Central Office exists to aid the local AA groups in their common purpose of carrying the AA message to the alcoholic who still suffers. **The SFV Central Office coordinates a monthly meeting for all Intergroup reps on the 2nd Monday of each month at St. Innocent Church, 5657 Lindley Ave. in Tarzana.** New Intergroup reps should arrive for the 6:30 p.m. orientation, followed by the regular meeting at 7 p.m. **For more information on serving as an Intergroup rep, call SFV Central Office: 818 988-3001.**

Central Office: IGR Meeting, July 12, 2010 – No meeting was held this month as the meeting room was locked.



TWO AAS FROM L.A. SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCES AT THE 75TH AA INTERNATIONAL AA CONVENTION IN SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS:

With 60,000 AAs flooding the Alamodome in San Antonio July 1 – 4th, AA's showed that city how well alcoholics in recovery can get along, even in large numbers! Here are some impressions shared by San Fernando Valley AAs who attended the convention:

Doug R. (Pacoima/Dunsmore) shares: "The S.A. World Convention was remarkable. Outstanding events: The first speaker at the big meeting Friday night was a Hispanic man who went over the allotted 20 minutes. His talk was terrific and no one minded. But the best part was that the second speaker, Mari G. from Canada, cut her talk short to make up the difference; an act of humility which probably went unnoticed by most of the attendees.

For the first time in the 5 internationals I've attended, every one of the "Old Timers" was concise, appropriate and inspirational. One of them said he just signed up for the free T-shirt. Another said he avoided all the scheduled meetings (except for the big arena meetings) and spent his time walking the convention center halls talking to alcoholics from all over the world. There were 575 old timers with 40 years or more, nearly twice the number of previous conventions.

There are too many great meetings and speakers to be considered for inclusion. But the impression we leave on the non alcoholic bystanders is worth mentioning. One San Antonio cop, asked if he observed any trouble said, 'No trouble at all. This was like a Baptist convention with tattoos'."

Andrew G. (San Fernando) shares: "The International Convention was one of the greatest experiences of my recovery. For 3 days, the streets of San Antonio were filled with happy, joyous and free alcoholics. Everywhere I went people were friendly, kind, courteous and patient. I had impromptu meetings while in line for coffee, at traffic signals, and on shuttle busses. I had the pleasure of meeting and talking with AAs from all over the world including India, New Zealand, Scotland, Ireland, South Africa, Canada, Great Brittan, Spain and Italy, just to name a few. While riding a downtown street car, I was introduced to a gentlemen from Tanzania who had the privilege of carrying his country's flag as part of the opening ceremony. The entire streetcar was filled with alcoholics who spontaneously gave him a standing ovation.

The opening ceremony and flag procession were moving and extremely emotional for me. For the first time I got a glimpse of the enormity of the fellowship and the miracle of recovery that happens every day all over the world. At the Old Timers Meeting we had a sobriety count-down where every alcoholic was asked to stand and we counted-down slowly: one year or less, please be seated; two years or less, three years... When I sat down at five years or less, complete strangers congratulated me and I was overcome with gratitude. The last man standing had 63 years of sobriety!

I made the decision that as long as I am sober and alive, I will never miss another International Convention. I am already making plans to attend the 2015 event that will be held in Atlanta, Georgia!"

(Railroaded, cont. from Page 1) didn't understand anything they were talking about. All I knew was that there was a lady who'd gotten sober young, and I was amazed. When I left that weekend I had the desire to stay sober and I was ready to admit that I was an alcoholic. In fact, I wanted what she had and I got the bug for general service. I came back home with a fire that hasn't left me. I was on a mission.

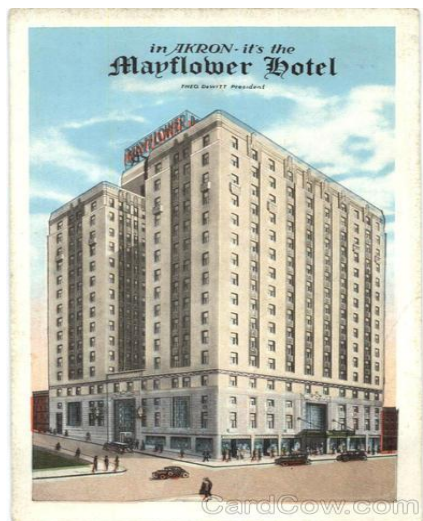


The day my counselor said to me that I could help so many young people if I stayed sober rings true every day of my life. I got involved in my home group, and started speaking at schools and at youth corrections facilities and juvenile institutions.

I still have the energy and the love for AA that was given to me by my sponsor, who passed away almost three years ago with over 30 years of sobriety. At the age of 41, I'm now almost 24 years sober and still involved in general service. *Shaun G. Manteca, Calif.*

LOCAL AAS JOURNEY TO FOUNDERS' DAY IN AKRON, OHIO

This article was written by John M. (Burbank Group) who took this trip with Pam P. in June 2010.



A sort of “hadj” [a religious or spiritual journey] for alcoholics – that’s my feel for the event which the Akron, Ohio Intergroup stages every year on the weekend closest to June 10, Dr. Bob’s sobriety date. And although Akron is a long way from Mecca, it sure seems to be a Mecca for our kind.

His story has always had a spiritual impact on my life. How could I feel any other way when I visit the town so pivotal to the history of our spiritual fellowship?

Leave alone for the moment that some of the warmest most welcoming people in our fellowship reside in Northeast Ohio. And let’s also ignore for now the blessing of hearing some of

the best speakers the eastern United States and Canada have to offer.

Imagine the impact of standing on those same spots where our collective fate turned as providence had its turn. The lobby of the Mayflower Hotel where Bill could have fallen drunk, the gatehouse of the Siberling Estate where our cofounders first met.

Though I’ve been to the Founders’ Day celebration several times, I’m sure I’ll return again and again. No visit has been the same as any other, and besides, it does me good to go to Mount Peace to visit Bob and Anne and give a heartfelt “Thank You.” *John M.*

Co-Founder Quotes:

"Such is the paradox of A.A. regeneration: strength arising out of complete defeat and weakness, the loss of one's old life as a condition for finding a new one."

A.A. Comes of Age, p. 46

Truth, the Liberator

"How truth makes us free is something that we A.A.'s can well understand. It cut the shackles that once bound us to alcohol. It continues to release us from conflicts and miseries beyond reckoning; it banishes fear and isolation. The unity of our Fellowship, the love we cherish for each other, the esteem in which the world holds us – all of these are products of the truth which under God, we have been privileged to perceive."

Bill W., Grapevine, August 1961



Expressions Heard Around AA:

"We admitted that we were powerless over alcohol; that our LIES had become unmanageable."

"Don't tell God how big your problems are – tell your problems how big your God is."

"If I could drink like a normal person, I would drink all the time!"

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"An alcoholic is a man with two feet firmly planted in mid-air." July 1944

"Lest we forget, it's well to remember the old saying that nobody can go from heel to halo in three weeks." Jan. 1946

"Definition for WILL-POWER Our WILL-ingness to use a Higher POWER." Sept. 1946

"Burning the candle at both ends is a poor way of making ends meet." March 1948

"Liquor doesn't drown your troubles--it only irrigates them!" March 1948

"Let each of us be diligent about taking the inventory--but be sure it is our own and not the other fellow's." Jan. 1949

DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO CONTRIBUTE? Email: sfvaanews@sbcglobal.net or by mail to the address below.



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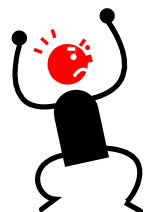
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Grapevine Humor



Watertown, NY

1. "Psst! Mildred ... we told him to *discuss* his bottom, not *show* it!"— *David T., The Third Tradition Group, Lambertville, NJ*
2. "They told me this was a program of change. Anybody have any?"—*Gary F., NJ*
3. "I was nervous about speaking. Now that I think about it, my sponsor said to 'imagine *them* in their underwear.'"—*Steve S., Laguna Beach, CA*
4. "I hope he does not show us his shortcomings."—*Paul S.*
5. **Winner: "You gotta give Charlie credit. He must have made that amends to the IRS!"**—*Joe H., Vancouver, British Columbia*
6. "I'm still coming up from rock-bottom. Can't even afford a smoke unless it's second-hand!"—*Leslie M., Pottstown, PA*
7. "Ever try to twelfth-step a cat?"—*Mike M., Watertown, NY*
8. "Aren't you glad I didn't lose everything?"— *Van O., Marietta, OH*
9. "Thirty-two years! And every day is better!"— *John H., Club 24, Cleveland, OH*
10. "Hello, my name is Tom and I am an alcoholic. I was asked to speak on short notice."— *Rich B.*
11. "OK, *now* I'm ready to go to any length to get what you have."— *Joe G., Cobble Hill, BC*
12. "I'm Jim and I'm an alcoholic. I want to bare all in telling my story."— *Jim C.*
13. "When they said alcohol strips you of everything, I didn't think they mean *this*, too!"— *Anonymous*
14. "This will be a *short* meeting."— *B. M., Edmonton, AB*
15. "I do have my pride left, so I didn't lose everything."— *John B., Athens, TX*



"Resentment is the "number one" offender. It destroys more alcoholics than anything else. From it stems all forms of spiritual disease, for we have been not only mentally and physically ill, we have been spiritually sick." (Page 64, Big Book of AA, 4th edition).

San Fernando Valley Central Office

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Van Nuys, CA 91405

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