

RECOVERY TIMES

Vol. 36, No. 5, May 2012

The Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office Monthly Newsletter

Note: Central Office will be closed for literature sales on Monday, May 28th however the office will remain open for phone calls.

A.A. on the Road & the “Res”

Recently, I had the opportunity to travel to north central Arizona on a week's vacation with a non-sober organization. To prepare for this trip, I did what I normally do when going on a trip: I looked up the A.A. meetings in each city I was visiting. I was fortunate to discover that during the four days I was to spend on the Navajo Reservation, there were two meetings. I then tried to contact someone at each of the two locations to make a local connection. In almost all the cities I've visited, there is someone willing to meet an A.A. and take them to a local meeting. **(Central Office also provides this service to those visiting the San Fernando Valley).**

For one of the meetings, I was able to connect with someone to make arrangements so I set out on my trip knowing that I would be able to get to at least two meetings during my vacation.

Shortly after my trip began, I realized that our Group Leader was a heavy drinker and had plans to hold “Happy Hours” at each of our locations. Since drinking was going to be a major focal point for the Group, I decided to try to get to the first A.A. meeting on my own. It was in a remote town in a church on the Navajo reservation near Monument Valley. Since I didn't have a car, I asked the hotel clerk to call me a cab. To my surprise, there were no cabs in town so I asked if I could pay someone to drive me there. As she was saying, “No,” another hotel employee walked by and offered to drive me to the church. That was my first “God-shot” on my trip.

Once at the meeting, I introduced myself to the other A.A.s, the majority of whom were native Navajo men. While a few were friendly, I noticed they were talking in their own language around me and that most preferred not to make eye contact. “Joe,” the A.A. with the most time told me that his meeting had a difficult time with sobriety. Many people came in on court cards but didn't stay around long enough to get a sponsor or work the Steps. He said this was because they felt it violated Native traditions.

I also noticed that the meeting did not observe the 7th Tradition of collecting donations to pay for meeting expenses. When I asked about that I was told that they did not pay rent because there was no priest at the church and hadn't been for a long time.

There were about a dozen people at the meeting and once it got started, people shared about a topic from “As Bill Sees It.” The mood lightened up a bit with the unity we all achieved by sharing and when it was over, I returned to my hotel with the desk clerk who had come to pick me up. (I was told that it was not safe for ladies to walk around at night by themselves due to the high rate of alcoholism, so I was glad I had a ride to and from the meeting).

The next night, I attended another meeting on the reservation just outside of Canyon de Chelly in northeastern Arizona. My local contact, Bob G., came to meet me at my hotel and introduced me to the regulars at his meeting, which was held in a local recovery and counseling center that was affiliated with a Catholic Church. I was one of three non-native people at that meeting which included four women and eight men. Next door to the A.A. meeting house was the church, which was built like a Navajo Hogan with eight sides and its front door facing the east. On four of the walls in the church (the four



directions) were paintings of the Four Sacred Mountains recalling the sacredness of all of God's creations. While the church was not where the A.A.s gathered, I was glad to be able to visit such a unique religious institution that combined the two cultures. **-Continued, Next Page-**



The meeting I attended was a Leader/Participation meeting and went an hour, which is typical of the meetings here. It was a good meeting with a welcoming feeling to it. To show my appreciation, I left them a stack of Recovery Times, Grapevines and other meeting literature (including some L.A. meeting directories!). From speaking to the locals here, I learned that they have a difficult time stocking literature due to the financial instability on the reservation where there is an approximately 75% unemployment rate (according to my local A.A. contact). When the meeting ended, I was invited to come back in July for their annual A.A. Round-up where meetings are held atop the mesas.

By visiting both towns on the reservation, I was able to enjoy breathtaking scenery: where grand mesas and buttes rose up to the sky, red dirt sand dunes contrasted with the green desert vegetation, and where horses and sheep grazed freely by the roadsides.

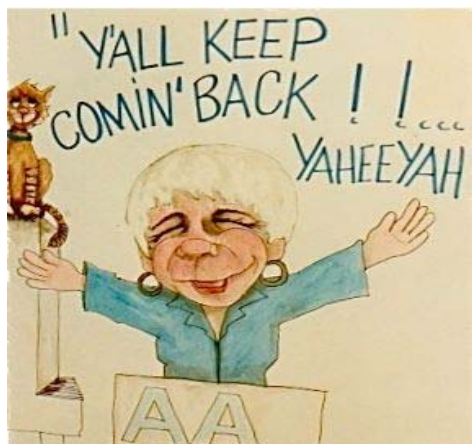
After leaving the reservation, I stayed in the town of Cottonwood outside of Sedona where I attended my last A.A. meeting that week. The group that I had been traveling with was busy celebrating with drinks at a local restaurant and I needed somewhere to go while they were partying. So I called the Cottonwood Alano Club to see if I could get a ride – and Mary was kind enough to come get me at my hotel.

I reached the Alano Clubhouse about halfway through their first evening meeting and met about 25 local A.A.s before the meeting ended. Soon after, there was a Speaker Meeting so I stayed for that one too and got to meet about 75 others who came for the later meeting. After that meeting ended, Mary and Stephanie drove me back to my hotel and we exchanged phone numbers and addresses, promising to stay in touch.

With the three meetings I was able to attend, I got to see a new side of A.A. in a part of my own country that I had never experienced. Having the support of sober people while on a trip away from home kept me grounded when I was feeling resentful about 'the drink' and in gratitude when I was feeling lonely.

For those who may be taking a trip out of town in the near future, I recommend that you get a list of meetings in the area where you are visiting, then try to contact the local Alano Club or Central Office there. Having a local contact will help you meet other sober people in your area while providing them an opportunity to pay a 12-Step call on you.

Anyone who is interested in donating Big Books or any other A.A. literature to those on the reservation, please send an email to: Editor, Recovery Times, at: xnowisthetime@aol.com with "Donate Big Books" in the subject line. Your donations could make the difference for the still suffering alcoholic who wants help. Pat K., Sunland



**Ode to Alabam Carruthers,
the late, former "First Lady" of Radford Hall.**

Illustration by Leslie Z. Sobriety Date: 9/2/81

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

23rd Annual Mountain High Conference

May 11-13, 2012
Lake Arrowhead, CA
www.mountainhighconf.com

Sober in the Sun

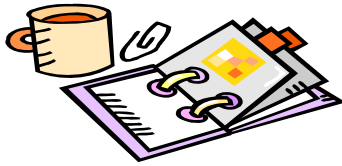
LGBT AA Conference
May 10 – 13, 2012
Hotel Zoso
Palm Springs, CA
www.soberinthesun.net

Verde Valley Round-Up

May 11-13, 2012
Dead Horse Ranch State Park
Cottonwood, AZ
www.verdevalleyroundup.org

28th Tri-State Annual Round-up

May 17 – 20, 2012
Riverside Resort Hotel & Casino
Laughlin, NV
www.tristate-roundup.com



Calendar of Events: June

22nd Annual H & I Bike-N-4-Books

June 2nd 7 a.m. (check-in), noon (lunch)
Speaker Meeting to follow
Woodley Park, Picnic Area #3
Van Nuys, CA
www.sfvhi.org

33rd Annual Woman to Woman

June 1-3, 2012
Mount Saint Mary's College Campus
Los Angeles, CA

A.A. Desert Pow Wow

June 7 – 10, 2012
Indian Wells, CA

22nd June Lake Kampvention

June 22 – 24, 2012
Oh Ridge/Inyo Campground
June Lake, CA
www.kampventionjunelake.org

The 12 Steps through Word Search. Each month, Recovery Times features the Step of the month. This month, MAY, we are featuring Step FIVE. **Find the words to Step FIVE below:**

“Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.”

A	G	O	D	A	N	D	T	O	W	B	O	B
R	U	T	V	D	R	S	O	U	R	I	W	E
N	Q	H	U	M	A	N	I	R	O	L	M	Y
A	F	E	A	I	L	E	S	S	N	L	J	R
T	M	R	N	T	O	V	E	E	G	O	R	Y
U	U	A	D	T	H	E	S	L	S	E	S	W
R	O	U	D	E	F	O	U	V	D	E	R	A
E	E	N	T	D	A	L	B	E	I	N	G	Y
A	N	O	T	H	E	R	S	S	H	E	L	P

Quotes from our Founders

"When I was driven to my knees by alcohol, I was made ready to ask for the gift of faith. And all was changed. Never again, my pains and problems notwithstanding, would I experience my former desolation. I saw the universe to be lighted by God's love; I was alone no more." **Bill W., Letter, 1966**

"Calm, thoughtful reflection upon personal relations can deepen out insight. We can go far beyond those things which were superficially wrong with us, to see those flaws which were basic, flaws which sometimes were responsible for the whole pattern of our lives. Thoroughness, we have found, will pay – and pay handsomely." **12 & 12, pg. 80**

"The problem of resolving fear has two aspects. We shall have to try for all the freedom from fear that is possible for us to attain. Then we shall need to find both the courage and the grace to deal constructively with whatever fears remain." **Grapevine, Jan. 1962**

Service Opportunities

Central Office Board Mtg: Wed., June 6, 2012, Central Office, 7417 Van Nuys Blvd., Ste. E., Van Nuys, 6:30 p.m. **Phone Shifts:** Central Office needs telephone volunteers for all shifts (esp. midnight – 9 a.m.). If you have a year or more of continuous sobriety, you can sign up online: www.sfvaa.org **OR CALL: (818) 988-3001.**

SFV Intergroup: Mon, June 11, 2011: 6:30 Orientation, 7 p.m. Business Meeting, St. Innocent Ch., 5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana The SFV Central Office coordinates this monthly meeting for all **SFV** Intergroup on the 2nd Monday of each month.

Public Information Committee: Provides info to the general public about what A.A. does. Need volunteers, especially young people and Spanish-speaking AAs, for health fairs & speaking at schools & businesses. (818) 988-3001.

Valley Hospitals and Institutions Committee: Carry the message of A.A. into hospitals, prisons and treatment facilities to those who are unable to get out to meetings. Call Central Office if interested. 7:00 Orientation, 8 p.m. Business Meeting, 5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana. **Next meeting: Monday, May 21st.**

Gen Service, District 1: Wed., June 6, 2012, 6:30 p.m. Business Meeting, 7552 Remmet, Canoga Park

Gen. Service, District 2: Tues, June 5, 2012, 6:30 p.m. Business Meeting, 4011 Dunsmore Ave., La Crescenta

Gen. Service District 7: Sat., June 2, 2012, 9 a.m. Bus. Mtg, Agua Dulce Women's Club, 33210 Agua Dulce Cyn. Rd.

Gen Service, District 11: Mon, June 4, 2012, 6 p.m. New GSRs/6:30 p.m. Bus. Mtg., 315 W. Vine Street, Glendale, CA

Gen Service, District 16: Mon, June 4, 2012, 6:15 p.m. meeting, 15950 Chatsworth, Granada Hills

Gen. Service, District 17: Mon, June 4, 2012, 6 p.m. New GSRs. /6:30 p.m. Bus. Meeting, 5000 Colfax, N. Hollywood

THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE.

TIM N. – 26 YEARS & VICKY C. – 47 YEARS.

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

CENTRAL OFFICE NEWS: HAVING A BIRTHDAY? Celebrate it with A.A. by sending a donation to Central Office. We will post your birthday here, below. Please consider making a \$1.00 donation for each year of your sobriety. You'll be helping Central Office reach alcoholics over the phone lines 24-hours a day/7-days a week. **This month's birthday celebrants are:** David S. – 1 Year, Patricia K. – 24 Years, David W. – 24 Years, Elenor D: 29 Years, Bob F. – 31 Years, Jack L. – 31 Years, Mike E. – 31 Years, and Arnold S. – 34 Years.

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. **HAS YOUR MEETING CHANGED?** If your meeting info changes (location, time, meeting name or type of meeting), let Central Office know. Please provide meeting updates in writing by mail or delivered in person during office hours.

Central Office: Notes from IGR Mtg. April 9, 2012:

- **IGR Chair Cheryl A.** opened the meeting with *The Serenity Prayer*.
- **Recording Secretary Dawn H.** accepted a motion for approval of the minutes from March's Intergroup Meeting. The minutes were approved as submitted.
- **Treasurer Brian H.** reported that Central Office is in the red <\$493.73> MTD and in the black \$1,349.19 YTD. Worker's Compensation rates for Central Office have increased leaving us approximately \$2,000 behind last year's YTD at this time. Brian requested that meeting treasurers be made aware of the importance of sending in group donations to Central Office in a timely manner. A full Treasurer's Report is available in this month's *Recovery Times*.
- **Executive Secretary Bob F reported** Everything is fine with Recovery Times and the Internet site at www.sfvaa.org. New meeting directories will be printed soon. The volunteer staff is running well but Central Office can always use new volunteers, especially with summer/vacation months ahead.
- **Vice Chair Andre W** introduced four new IGRs. Amy from the Monday night Women's Nitty Gritty Discussion Meeting in Sherman Oaks; Mike B. from the Saturday morning Sunrise Meeting on Pass Avenue in Burbank; Daniel from H&I; and Maria from the Tuesday night Layers of the Onion Meeting in North Hills. IGRs were reminded to encourage recruitment of IGRs from meetings that are not currently represented. There are currently 300+ groups in the San Fernando Valley, with only 50-60 meetings represented monthly at IGR.

H & I: Amy announced the 22nd Annual Bike-N-4-Book fundraiser will take place Saturday, June 2nd at Woodley Park, Picnic Area #3. All are encouraged to come out and support this event which raises money to replenish H&I's literature fund. **H & I** needs sober alcoholics to take panels into the L.A. County jails. Jail clearance is required and those who are interested were encouraged to attend the upcoming H&I meeting the 3rd Monday of the month at St. Innocent. Orientation: 7 PM, meeting: 8 PM.

San Fernando Valley AA Convention: Joel announced meetings are on again for planning of the 2013 SFVAA Convention to be held February 1-3, 2013. The Planning Committee meets on May 15th at St Innocent Church at 7:00 p.m. Volunteers are welcome.

Old News: Literature Sales are CLOSED the last Friday of each month. Central Office doors remain open; phones are still answered. Reminder for groups to report upcoming group events, and remove expired Group event flyers from literature tables. Continue to send meeting changes IN WRITING to Central Office.

Intergroup Rep. Birthdays:

- Michael – 27 years on 4/30
- Bob F. – 31 years on 4/30

The meeting adjourned with the Lord's Prayer at 7:15 p.m.

Staying for the Miracle



An old timer looks back upon her drinking life as she celebrates 34 years

My story began when I first got drunk at the age of 16 when I was a junior in high school. There were three of us girls and each of us had our boyfriends with us. At New Years, one of the guys had a car and some booze. I should have given it more thought, but as the first bottle went around, I guzzled it down in less than an hour. I was drunk out of my mind. I threw up, blacked out, and the rest of the night, the others wanted to throw me in a ditch out in the farming area of Brawley, Calif. The guys finally took my friend Rosalie and me to a local bunkhouse and threw us in bed. **(Continued, next page)**

(Cont. Pg. 5) When I came to there in the morning, I went home. My mom asked if I had been drinking. I said yes and proceeded to throw up. I missed two days of school. I had all the symptoms of alcoholism from the start, but did not have the knowledge about the disease that I have now after all these years.

Rosalie and I went on up to San Diego to study nursing at Mercy College. My years of nursing college were always spent drinking and getting over hangovers. With only months to graduation, I got a 6-month suspension for being drunk at one of our dances. It was the longest suspension in the history of the college.

While my friends graduated and took the state board examination, I went back to Brawley to serve my suspension. I worked as a nurse locally and my drinking continued even as I worked. I studied my tail off for some medical tests I would be required to pass. I passed the tests, finished my last 6 months in school, graduated and passed the State Boards.

It was around this time that I fell in love with my first husband. Wayne worked in his father's grocery store until our first child was five months old. His father sold the store and Wayne was unemployed for several years. In the meantime, we had three more children. I was working at a hospital but quit and told Wayne he would have to get a job. He began working on a oceanographic research ship, which would be out to sea for approximately 300 days and in port 2 or 3 times a year long. We agreed that was not a good idea as it left me alone with all the kids too long. Things got really bad and we divorced. I told him to either take me and the four kids or the ship. He took the ship. After the divorce, he rarely came to visit.

Up to that point in my life, I was more of a periodic alcoholic. After the divorce, I became a daily drinker. I had to drink to survive. My oldest child was seven when my husband and I divorced and she became my helper and made sure I was sober at times to feed them all and care for them. My mothering ability became horrible and I was verbally and physically abusive.

Soon, I moved back to Brawley and bought a house steps away from my parents. Despite that proximity, my mother didn't realize how out of control my drinking was. I once drunkenly threw her out of my house and yet she didn't realize.

A few years later, I decided to move back to Brawley. My reason was that I hated Brawley and had to get out to save my life. I uprooted the kids from school again. I was always upsetting their lives. Back to San Diego we went.

My drinking became so bad towards the end that some how Michelle, my oldest, more or less became mother to us all until I got sober. I had continued to work as a nurse to support us since their father's contribution was never enough. I was working nights in a psychiatric unit where I had access to narcotics. By then, my drinking had progressed to a crazy state, and I had numerous alcoholic and drug-induced suicide attempts. Our Big Book tells us about the alcoholic leading a double life and for me those two lives began to collide. I was working as a nurse in the psych ward during the week, and being admitted as a patient on the weekends.

When I was 42, a patient came in with alcoholism and other problems, and I asked her what an alcoholic was. She said you have to go to an AA meeting and find that out. I asked, "Where is AA?" She told me it was in the phone book. She said, "Call that number and ask them for the time and location of a meeting and go to it." I asked her to take me when she got out of the hospital. That was June 2, 1976, but I drank again, so my sober date today is 9/5/76 and has not changed since then. AA got me sober and changed my life completely-an everyday miracle for AA's.

AA and sobriety have worked miracles in my life and taken me into new opportunities to be of service. At 62 years of age, I went back to school to get a master's degree in marriage and family therapy. With that degree, I was offered a job in Bisbee, Arizona, counseling men at the Douglas Prison with felony DUI and drug offenses.

(Cont. Pg. 6) I was 65. I was able to buy a house in Bisbee, and the job gave me some bit of financial security for the first time in many years.

Off and on throughout these years, my kids did not want to speak to me, and family relations were strained for a few more years. The kids had a family reunion after I was 30 years sober and invited me. I went and the kids were kind to me. Many fences were mended.

In the past year, my kid's father has been quite ill, and I often visit Wayne with them. My continuing amends with him has been to tell him I've always loved him and old resentments and hurts have been forgiven.

As I live the present chapter in my life, I must share my miracle in my on-going saga of life. I was recently diagnosed with cancer of the colon. The doctors removed what they could and started chemotherapy saying they could not cure it, but arrest it, maybe.

When my oncologist told me he couldn't cure me but could keep me in remission for some good period of time with chemotherapy, I told him to go ahead and get me through at least until September, so I can get my 34-year token!

On Sept 5, I will have 34 years of sobriety. My life in AA has been a string of miracles from the very beginning to the present. One of my most grateful moments has been when I asked my third daughter if she would give me a token on my approaching anniversary. Without missing a beat she said yes, and I almost fainted! It means so much to me, and the love I feel for her is overwhelming. This is a true full cycle 9th Step amends for us both.

—*Charlene E., San Diego, Calif.* Reprinted with permission, Copyright ©1944-2011 The AA Grapevine Inc. All Rights Reserved. Reprints by permission only.

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Recovery Times is published monthly, 12 months a year, by the Central Office of Alcoholics Anonymous of the San Fernando Valley (SFVAA). The views expressed in the articles are not necessarily those of A.A. Please send any announcements, stories with an A.A. message or sober jokes to Editor Pat K. at: xnowisthetime@aol.com. Submission does not guarantee acceptance.

San Fernando Valley Central Office

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