

RECOVERY TIMES

Vol. 36, No. 6, June 2012

The Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office Newsletter

Note: Central Office will be closed for book sales July 4th.

28 Years

Life is Good: A member reflects on her 28th anniversary

I used to love to cry. I never knew why melancholy appealed to me so much. Looking over my past yet another time, it all makes sense. But now the opposite is true. There is nothing better than a good belly laugh. It took my 28th year of sobriety to answer a lot of the questions I thought had no answers and the answers have come easy to me now. Life is good. Who would have thought that at 53 years of age I would finally turn in to the woman I dreamed of as a child?

I remember it as if it were yesterday as I watch my daughter getting ready for a night out. How fast the time has passed. The circle of life. I am my mother and my daughter is me. It's the same thing, just different faces. I often think how smart that man upstairs is. He puts things together in such a clever way and when we are ready, the mystery becomes the final puzzle piece. I just want to glue it together quickly so I can hold on to this very fleeting time of gratitude and sadness and utter joy all in one big precious moment of time.

My early years were filled with real-life tragedy. My best friend was raped and murdered at the age of six, my cousin died in the Vietnam War, and on the home front my other cousin died of a drug overdose. Grandma and Grandpa followed suit. I was 10 years old and already a professional mourner. I didn't know how to feel sad then. I knew I felt scared of the dead cold corpses that I was forced to see at the funeral services but I never talked about it. Instead I cried a lot at things like movies and books. It was okay to cry for characters that weren't real to me. Somehow, even as a child I knew my boundaries. I couldn't ask my mother too many questions. She had her hands full raising three children and working every side job she could squeeze into her nights while my dad was on a drunken binge.

Many times Mom would make me go across the street to the local bar and try to get him to come home. I never thought much about that either. I just knew I would do anything to keep things okay. Funny, I never thought I would turn into my father. You would have thought I would have known better. But then again, who would have told me?

By age 11, I was drinking every weekend. It was easy to get my older friends to buy alcohol for me. Somehow, there was alcohol wherever I was. By the time I was 15, I had tried many different drugs to top off the alcohol. Things were great when I was drunk. I loved being free of pressure. If I wasn't drinking I was starving myself on some fad diet or bingeing on everything in sight. I was anorexic and bulimic at the same time. I used food, drugs and alcohol to numb me all my adolescent years. If I didn't have anything, I couldn't deal with reality. A therapist was not an option in my home. I didn't even know such a thing was necessary for me. In other words, I thought it normal to be totally messed up.

At the age of 18, I married and began a career in the fashion business and attended Fashion Institute of Technology at night. It was a hectic time for me and I loved every minute of it. Keeping busy was another way to block my feelings I later found out. My dad died before I was 20 and I was divorced shortly thereafter. I hated the world and at the same time I had a drive in me that wouldn't let me go.

(Continued on Page 5)



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

The Valley Club Summer Alkathon
June 8 – 10, 2012, starting at 8 p.m.
8728 Corbin Ave, Northridge, CA

Founder's Day Herald
77th Anniversary of A.A.
June 8 – 10, 2012
Akron, Ohio: Birthplace of A.A.

A.A. Desert Pow Wow
June 7 – 10, 2012
Indian Wells, CA
www.desertpowwow.com

28th Annual South Bay Roundup
July 5 – 8, 2012
Torrance Marriott
3635 Fashion Way, Torrance, CA
www.southbayroundup.org

20th Annual AA Santa Paula Pig Roast
July 20 – 22, 2012
Lake Casitas
11311 Santa Ana Road, Ventura, CA

29th Anniversary AA Foothill Roundup
July 27 – 29, 2012 Flintridge Prep Academy
4543 Crown Ave, La Canada, CA
www.foothillroundup.org

61st Annual So. CA. AA Convention
Sept. 28 – 30, 2012
The Legendary Town & Country Resort Hotel
San Diego, CA
www.aasocal.com

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES IN THE SAN FERNANDO VALLEY:

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 at the office or online: www.sfvaa.org/involve.html

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

SERVICE COMMITTEES SCHEDULE:

SFV H & I: Mon, June 18, 2012: 7 p.m. Orientation/
8 p.m. Business Meeting
5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana, CA

Gen Service, District 11: Mon, July 2, 2012
6 p.m. New GSR orientation/ 6:30 p.m. Bus. Mtg
315 W. Vine Street, Glendale, CA

Gen Service, District 16: Mon, July 2, 2012
6:15 p.m. meeting
15950 Chatsworth, Granada Hills

Gen. Service, District 17: Mon, July 2, 2012
6 p.m. New GSRs. /6:30 p.m. Bus. Meeting
5000 Colfax, N. Hollywood

Gen. Service, District 2: Tues. July 3, 2012
6:30 p.m. Business Meeting
4011 Dunsmore Ave., La Crescenta

Gen Service, District 1: Wed., July 4, 2012
6:30 p.m. Business Meeting
7552 Remmet, Canoga Park

SFV Central Office Board Mtg: July 5, 2012
6:30 p.m., Valley Central Office

Gen. Service District 7: Sat., July 7, 2012
9 a.m. Business Meeting
Agua Dulce Women's Club
33210 Agua Dulce Canyon Road

SFV Intergroup: Mon., July 9, 2012
6:30 Orientation, 7 p.m. Business Meeting
St. Innocent Ch., 5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana



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.

San Fernando Valley Convention Committee: Volunteers are welcome to participate in the planning of the 2012 SFV AA Convention to be held in Woodland Hills at the Warner Center Marriott. The Committee meets the 3rd Tuesday of every month at 7 p.m. at St. Innocent Church, 5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana.

San Fernando Valley Young People in AA: Committee Meeting is held the 1st Sunday of each month at Unit A., 10641 Burbank Blvd., NoHo.

San Fernando Valley Intergroup: If your meeting/group does not currently have an Intergroup Rep, please consider appointing someone to represent your meeting. Intergroup reps provide an important service to the group by sharing information on upcoming AA events in the Valley. 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., Tarzana. New Intergroup reps should arrive at 6:30 p.m. for orientation. Main meeting is 7 p.m. **To serve as an Intergroup rep, call Central Office: 818 988-3001.**

CENTRAL OFFICE: 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.

HAVING A BIRTHDAY? By making a \$1.00 donation for every year of your sobriety, you can support Central Office in reaching out to alcoholics all over the county. Please send your donation in during the month of your birthday so we can acknowledge you in the correct issue of Recovery Times. 🎵🎵🎵 **Happy birthday to you!** 🎵🎵🎵 **Happy birthday to you!** 🎵🎵🎵 **This month's sober birthday celebrants are:**

Corliss B. - 4yrs, Ray G. – 11 yrs., Angel S. – 13 yrs., Anonymous – 14 years, Kitt H. – 24 yrs., Nic N. – 25 yrs. and Anonymous – 30 years.

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.

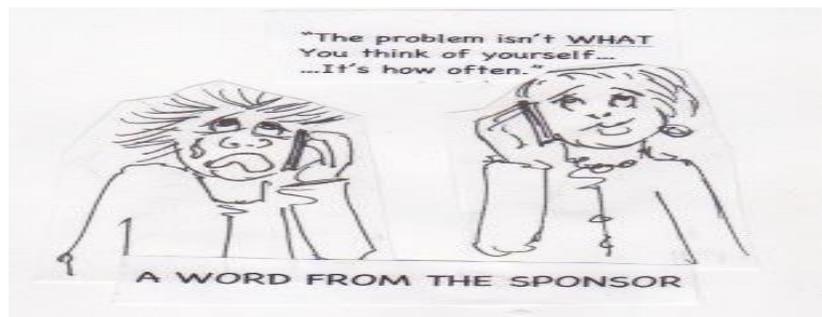


Things we Cannot Change: If you are aware of the passing of a member of our Fellowship, please call us at (818) 988-3001 or email an obituary to: sfvaa@sbcglobal.net.

Don H. (Dunsmore)– 45 Years



Illustration by Leslie Z.





Heard Around A.A.

"Put down the telescope and pick up the mirror because that's who you have to work on."

"Discipline equals blissipline."

Co-Founder Quotes:

Healing Talk:

"When we consult an A.A. friend, we should not be reluctant to remind him of our need for full privacy. Intimate communicate is normally so free and easy among us that an A.A. adviser may sometimes forget when we expect him to remain silent. The protective sanctity of this most healing of human relations ought never be violated.

"Such privileged communications have priceless advantages. We find in them the perfect opportunity to be as honest as we know how to be. We do not have to think of the possibility of damage to other people, nor need we fear ridicule or condemnation. Here, too, we have the best possible chance of spotting self-deception."

Grapevine, August 1961

Central Office: IGR Mtg Notes of May 14, 2012

- Chairperson Cheryl A. opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. with *The Serenity Prayer*.
- Daniel read "*The Twelve Traditions*".
- Dawn H., Recording Secretary, accepted a motion for approval of Minutes from April's Intergroup Meeting; The minutes were approved as submitted.

Treasurer's Report: Brian H. reported that Central Office is currently in the red \$2,099.29 MTD and \$15.84 YTD. Group and birthday donations continued to be down over the previous year. 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 announced that new meeting directories will be out in mid-May at Central Office. Phone volunteers are still needed, especially with the summer vacations approaching. Those willing to do 12-step work, including being a contact person for out-of-town guests, are also needed. Interested parties should contact Central Office. Everything is fine with the Internet site at www.sfvaa.org. Prospective volunteers who just want to observe how Central Office operates are welcome to drop by the office during business hours.

Co chair Andre W. welcomed three new IGR reps and reminded everyone to encourage recruitment of IGRs from meetings that are not currently represented.

General Service District 11: *John M. announced* the next Area Assembly for Area 91 will be May 20th at Lake Isabella. There will be a Delegate's Report, as well as a report on PRASA from those who attended.

H & I: Amy announced H&I's 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.

Santa Clarita AA Convention, Bernard: The SCVAA Convention will take place October 19-21, 2012, at the Hyatt Valencia. All are welcome to attend and help support it.

San Fernando Valley AA Convention: The 2013 SFVAAC Planning Committee meets on Tuesday, June 19th at St Innocents at 7:00 p.m. All are welcome to help plan the 2013 convention February 1-3, 2013.

IGR Rep Birthdays:



- Lloyd: 9 years on 5/16
- Scott: 9 years on 5/16
- Andre: 19 years on 5/20



(Continued from Page 1) Lucky for me, even the alcohol did not kill my desire to work and be creative but it sure made things more difficult and I certainly was sidetracked many times along the way. The last five years of my drinking were scary. I never knew how I was going to make it to work and yet there I was. Money was big with me. I managed to hold my job and get a summer rental--my ruination and my destiny. My last drink was at that summer rental on July 17, 1981.

Deep in depression and physically sick, I cried out for help to my A.A. boyfriend, Steve C. He gladly took me to a meeting and I have been having a love affair with A.A. ever since. Once in a while I get startled by the conflicts that arise with the "work" and the "Big Book thumpers" that insist, "my way or the highway." But then, I go back to Bill and Bob and I get all my answers. There is always a spiritual solution and I chose that way. Nothing will keep me away from A.A. and I am comfortable with my deep commitment to the program of recovery and helping others.

My husband, Dick, also in the program and sober 27 years, is a Godsend to me. He is my A.A. gift. After we parted back in 1976 due to drinking, we remarried on March 29, 1986, 90 days after we got together again, sober this time. My sponsor made me read page 99 in the Big Book everyday to remind us that two drunks had a lot to work out. Today, our marriage is good and our daughter Rachel is 19.

All of my life I have been a "pusher". I would always be conscious of the fact that if I gave myself a break I would never be able or want to continue my hectic pace of life. Sadly, I was never enough. This pushing poured into every area of my life, not just work: home life, raising my daughter, relationships with friends, church and hobbies. I was relentless with myself. Finally, I was forced to change my life style when I had several bouts of health gone bad. My boss of 25 years even let me work at home full time. In no time at all, I was looking into further education and decided to become an Interfaith Minister. So now I am dealing with two careers and loving them both.

I now realize that if I did not have the "pusher" gene, I might have not come out of this life alive. There is something to be said for a drive that won't quit. I am fortunate enough to love what I do. Work will not harm me. It is my attitude about work that will bring me down if I let it. I am reminded everyday that I am not a victim. I have choices and I choose to be a woman who is self-supporting and helpful to her husband. I am forever grateful for the many opportunities to be useful and of service to others and to know we only pass this way once.

There are days I am doubtful that I will have enough money to enjoy the twilight years, if, God willing, I stick around. Having had cancer three times and treating myself five times a week on home Dialysis has been a challenge, but I have emerged gracefully, thank you God. I take time now to break away from work with mini vacations: an hour with a friend, a swim in my pool, girls night out, a date with my husband, shopping with my daughter, dinner in Little Italy and a great massage. But as for work, I want to do more for others and less for me. I get boring. I will work creatively till the day I die.

I have mastered the art of mid-life crisis. I have changed the old voice of worry, sorrow and pain to a new recording of joy, enthusiasm and inspiration. I search for others that are on similar journeys and share the splendor of what we still have ahead of us. I know now when I feel anxiety of what is ahead, it is just FEAR. False evidence appearing real. What really matters is as long as I am breathing, everything has a way of working out. My youth is over, but my life and the joy in it is up to me. I am eternally grateful for all the women and men in A.A, my mom, and my sponsor Mary who have blazed the trail for me. And a grateful woman is a powerful woman! I know if I continue seeing the good that A.A. has given me, God takes care of the rest. I am dreaming of the best that's yet to come. I march forward like a faithful soldier and know with God's help all things are possible. —*Francine H., Staten Island, N.Y.* Reprinted with permission, Copyright ©1944-2011 The AA Grapevine Inc. All Rights Reserved. Reprints by permission only.



Circle of Friends

This week, my A.A. Clubhouse lost one of its oldest members: Don H. had 45 years of sobriety and was a fixture around the Club. He was there when I arrived and stayed active sponsoring members of our fellowship, though he was often in poor health and had lost his home and all his possessions to a fire in the past year.

One of Don's favorite expressions was "Be gentle with yourself." This was mentioned by one of the people who attended his memorial at the Club. It was a full house on

Saturday afternoon as people came to fill the seats to pay their last respects to him.

As is the case at these types of events, there were tears, there were jokes, and there were stories about how he impacted different people's lives. What I loved most about the man was that he continued to have a strong presence at many of the meetings I attended and he wasn't shy about sharing his opinion when asked.

At his funeral, his family brought in one of our well-loved sober priests, Father Terry, to administer the rituals and to keep the service focused on sobriety. The Father talked about Don's years of sobriety, following a steadfast path that kept him close to his family and the program. It was a chance for those who knew him from the community to meet his family, while our Memorial at the Clubhouse gave his family a chance to know him as we did.

When a member of our program passes, they are never forgotten. As one person said, their spirit lives on in the walls of the Clubhouse and their stories will continue to be told as long as there are people who remember them.

Our sober community came together to remember the man and the meaning he brought to so many others during his time here. We are truly a Circle of Friends who help one another through the tough times in life and in death. As it states in the AA Credo: "When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there. And for that, I am responsible."

Editor, Pat K.



Ounces of Prevention. What to do when the craving strikes:

Keep an indexed notebook of member's names with you for phoning and writing A.A.s. Call a member when you have jitters, depression, discouragement, resentments. When you can't sleep, write a letter to an A.A. in Service or on the road and out of touch. Put a habit-forming reminder in your shaving or make-up kit. This starts the day with a definite statement that you won't take a drink. Make a hospital call. When you feel low, get to the next meeting, anywhere in the area; or go to one of the A.A. luncheons. Never let yourself get hungry. For that five o'clock time try a light snack, a frosted chocolate. Copyright ©1944-2011 The AA Grapevine Inc. All Rights Reserved.



Please Support Your Central Office. We really could use more support by sending a Representative from your group to the IGR meetings. We meet the 2nd Monday of every month at St. Innocent Church at 5657 Lindley in Tarzana. Please Come! We would love to see you!

Newsletter Subscriptions: If you would like a copy of **Recovery Times** mailed to you, please complete this form with your address and a \$7.00 check (donation to cover cost & delivery) to: **SFV Central Office, 7417-E. Van Nuys Blvd., Van Nuys, CA 91405**

Name: _____

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(Please circle): New Renewal Additional Contribution

Moving? Please give us your former address:

The 12 Steps through Word Search. Each month, Recovery Times features the Step of the month. This month, JUNE, we are featuring Step Six. **Find the words to Step Six below:**
"Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character."

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

Can you find all the words? Look closely and read across as well as up and down.

San Fernando Valley Central Office

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