

The Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office Newsletter

We Are Responsible Group: Dedicated to the Newcomer

Dedicated to help the newcomer in sobriety, the We Are Responsible Group in the east San Fernando Valley holds nine meetings a week – including 10:30 a.m. meetings Monday – Friday – to give newcomers a place to go and add structure to their sobriety. Founded in 2,000 by Dick G. (21 years), the meetings are structured and operate with a code of civility which serves as “living traditions” for the Group.



Dick G. has founded several meetings during his sobriety including the “Jugpluggers” meeting in 1993 that met at 10:30 a.m. at the Unitarian-Universalist Church, 12355 Moorpark Street in Studio City, as well as the 3 p.m. “Happy, Joyous at Three” meeting at that location in 1994.

“At that time, there were no afternoon meetings in the Valley,” says Dick, “and I wanted to provide a place for newcomers to go for a meeting.”

The 10:30 a.m. (Jugpluggers) meeting at Moorpark lasted for ten years before folding. In 2000, Dick helped form the “We Are Responsible” Group with five initial meetings at 10:30 a.m., Monday – Friday, at 5000 Colfax (@ Addison). He recalls, “For the first two years, there would only be only 4 – 10 people in the room, but then it started to grow. It takes a tremendous amount of patience and dedication to start a group. There’s a huge amount of change in Los Angeles and it is also hard to get people to be secretaries and sponsors nowadays.”

As the group expanded, so did their meetings. Today, the We Are Responsible Group holds nine meetings a week. Two are newcomer meetings, two are participation and five are literature-based.

Says Dick, “We basically stick to the Big Book as its written and show the newcomer how to use the literature to maintain sobriety. We’re very newcomer-oriented. It would be very hard to walk in new and not get a half a dozen phone numbers. Also, we get the newcomer involved in service.”

Of the nine meetings a week, two are run by and for newcomers: For the first 2/3’s of the meeting, the newcomers share first. The old-timers who attend show up to help them get started.

Additionally, the Group encourages newcomers to participate in fellowship providing free rides to fellowship, which is held after every meeting. Dick notes, “We’re extremely democratic: There are no gurus at our Group. Nobody tells anybody what to do. However, we do have Group guidelines. We ask people, out of respect for the group, to read the guidelines that are the “living traditions” of our group:

1. We’re a literature-based group. Five of nine meetings are literature meetings.
2. We operate on a set of guidelines. We have a structured meeting based on basic civility. We ask people not just to check in but to share A.A. solutions for their way of life. (Continued, Page 5)



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

9th Annual Santa Clarita Valley Conv. of A.A.

October 19-21, 2012

Hyatt Valencia & Santa Clarita Conference Ctr.,
24500 Town Center Drive, Valencia CA

www.scvaaconvention.com

28th Santa Barbara Convention

October 19- 21, 2012

Goleta, CA

www.sbaaconvention.org

25th Annual Inland Empire Convention

October 19 – 21, 2012

Hilton Hotel San Bernardino, CA

www.ieaac.org

SFV H & I 31st Annual Birthday Dinner Fundraiser

Thursday, October 25, 2012, 6 p.m.

St. Innocent Orthodox Church, 5627 Lindley St., Tarzana

\$10.00 tickets

Lake Havasu City Roundup

November 8 – 11, 2012

Nautical Beachfront Resort

Lake Havasu City, Arizona

www.thenautical.net

3rd Annual Take Your Sponsor to Breakfast Bkfst.

Saturday, Nov. 17, 2012, 8 a.m.

Disabled American Veterans Hall

6543 Corbin Ave., Woodland Hills, CA

Tickets: \$10.00 (fundraiser for Central Office)

46th Annual Las Vegas Roundup

November 22- 25. 2012

Riviera Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas

www.lasvegasroundup.org

SERVICE COMMITTEES SCHEDULE:

SFV H & I: (3rd Monday) Mon, Oct. 15 2012:

7 p.m. Orientation/ 8 p.m. Business Meeting

5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana, CA

Gen Service, District 11: Mon, Nov. 5, 2012

6 p.m. New GSR orientation/ 6:30 p.m. Bus. Mtg

315 W. Vine Street, Glendale, CA

Gen Service, District 16: Mon., Nov. 5, 2012

6:15 p.m. meeting

15950 Chatsworth, Granada Hills

Gen. Service, District 17: Mon, Nov. 5, 2012

6 p.m. New GSRs. /6:30 p.m. Bus. Meeting

5000 Colfax, N. Hollywood

Gen. Service, District 2: Tues. Nov. 6, 2012

6:30 p.m. Business Meeting

4011 Dunsmore Ave., La Crescenta

Gen Service, District 1: Wed., Nov. 7, 2012

6:30 p.m. Business Meeting

7552 Remmet, Canoga Park

SFV Central Office Board Mtg: Nov. 7, 2012

6:30 p.m., Valley Central Office

Gen. Service District 7: Sat., Nov. 3, 2012

9 a.m. Business Meeting

33210 Agua Dulce Canyon Road, Agua Dulce, CA

SFV Intergroup: Mon., Nov. 12, 2012

Orientation: 6:30 p.m., Business mtg: 7 p.m.

St. Innocent Ch., 5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana

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 or call Central Office: 818 988-3001.

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.

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.



Heard Around A.A.

"I like everybody else a lot better when I like myself."

"Drinking is just a symptom of the disease."

"The only meeting you're ever late for is your first."

"SLIP: Sobriety Loses its Priority."

Quote from our Founders:

"Though it is traditional that our Fellowship may not coerce anyone, let us not suppose even for an instant that we are not under constraint. Indeed, we are under enormous coercion – the kind that comes in bottles. Our former tyrant, King Alcohol, always stands ready again to clutch us to him."

"Therefore, freedom from alcohol is the great 'must' that has to be achieved, else we go mad or die."

Bill W. Letter, 1966



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: 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. 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. **To serve as an Intergroup Rep, call Central Office: 818 988-3001.**

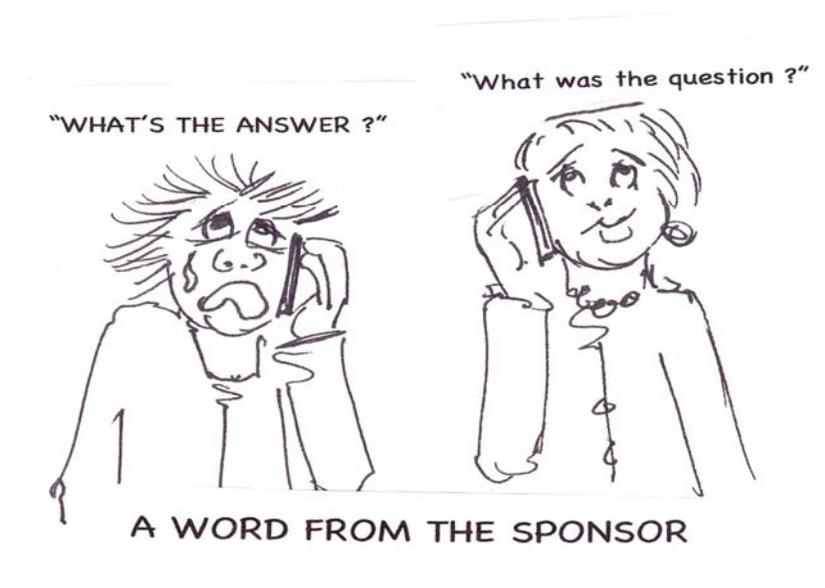
CENTRAL OFFICE: LIVE 24/7 PHONE SERVICE: Whether you are reaching out for help from another AA member or surfing the Web, you can find the Valley Central Office any hour of the day or night. Visit us at: www.sfvaa.org for meeting info, upcoming events, service meeting info, and links to other cool AA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

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.

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. This month's sober birthday celebrants are: **Anonymous 16- Years, Lyn W. – 23 Years, Bob G. – 28 Years & Joan McF – 49 Years**

DEATHS: 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. **Louise H. – 25 Yrs, Ozzie L. – 33 Yrs, & Doyed B. W. – 36 Yrs.**

Illustration by Leslie Z:



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.

Intergroup Rep Board Meeting Notes: September 12, 2012

Chairperson Cheryl A. opened the meeting at 7:02 p.m. with *The Serenity Prayer*. Eileen read the Twelve Traditions. Cheryl accepted a motion for approval of Minutes from August's Intergroup Meeting. The minutes were approved as submitted.

Treasurer's Report: Brian H. read the August treasurer's showing \$220.25 MTD was brought in. However, year to date is negative \$1,440.11, compared to last year's negative balance of \$2369.93. Brian added this is due to Group donations being up as well as the Desert Pow Wow's donations to Central Office. A full Treasurer's Report is included in the Recover Times.

Executive Secretary, Bob F. reported that volunteers are fine but the office copier died. A new one was purchased and is now working. He asked that groups make sure Central Office knows about any sober member's deaths and/or meetings that are no longer running. Additionally, tickets for "Take Your Sponsor to Breakfast" are now available with a limit of 250. The event is in November.

Recovery Times: Everything is supremely excellent with the newsletter.

Internet – Everything is running smoothly with the www.sfvaa.org website.

Co chair Andre W. welcomed seven new IGRs.

San Fernando Valley Hospital & Institutions Committee.

Santa Clarita AA Convention: Bernard encouraged everyone to attend the Santa Clarita Convention on Oct. 19.

San Fernando Valley AA Convention: Joel announced that the Marathon Meetings are now open for sign-ups for the 2013 SFVAAC Convention February 1 – 3. Planning meetings are held every month at St. Innocent. All are welcome to help plan the 2013 convention.

General Service District 1: Wayne announced Area 93's Workshop for **Oct 6**, 10am-1pm Group & Personal Inventory, Free lunch, History of AA in the Valley.

Group Announcements: Unit A – Whitney invited everyone to Unit's A's annual Halloween Party, Oct. 31.

IGR Rep Birthdays: Marla: 17 Years, Teresa: 10 Years, and Anna – 3 Years.

Motion to adjourn was recognized and seconded. The meeting adjourned with *The Lord's Prayer* at 7:17 p.m.

Group Announcements: Motion to Adjourn: 7:23 p.m. with the Lord's Prayer.

A Living Hell

I was born two and a half months early and had to wear corrective braces as a child. This cost my family a lot of money and I think it caused them to think of me as a burden. At Christmas times, my brother and sister got nice toys and I didn't. I guess they had spent enough money on me.

I began to drink at a very early age. When I drank, I would feel no pain. I had finally found relief. At this time, I never knew I would drink for the 39 years.

The alcohol started out being my escape but eventually caused even more pain than I was already in. It also caused all sorts of trouble.

I was either in jail, prison, or the mental health institution. I knew in my heart that I could not continue drinking. When I made the choice to stop, I knew it would not be easy. I had to decide whether I would die from this disease or begin to live life on life's terms.

I never knew who I really was because I was always drunk. Today, I am finding out that I'm not perfect. I am getting to know myself through the program of AA, the Twelve Steps, sober friends, and God.

I will never forget the living hell of being a practicing alcoholic. Now I live my life as a sober alcoholic. Today, I am 5 ½ years sober. And I serve as the District Corrections Chair. —*Steve S. McAlester, Okla. AA Grapevine Inc., All Rights Reserved. Reprints by permission only.*



We Are Responsible Group, (cont. from Page 1)

We have a rule that people not share if they are on mind-altering medication. This was controversial when it started but there has to be a place people can go where they are not listening to people, who are on mind-altering medication, share.

Despite not having a Clubhouse where the meetings are held, the We Are Responsible Group has held their meetings at several different locations for the past 12 years. Current locations are:

- Monday – Friday, 10:30 a.m., Faith Presbyterian Church, 5000 Colfax (@ Addison)
- Thursday, 7 p.m., Women's Stag, 5000 Colfax Ave.
- Thursday, 7 p.m., Men's Stag, Unitarian-Universalist Church, 12355 Moorpark
- Saturday, noon, United Methodist Church, 4301 Cahuenga @ Whipple
- Sunday, 4:30 p.m., 5000 Colfax Ave.

With nine meetings each week and a Steering Committee of 17 members, the We Are Responsible Group continues to provide a place where newcomers are made to feel welcome and some of the old traditions of A.A. can still be found. Editor, Pat K.

Grapevine Quote: Is the Newcomer the most important person in the room?

"I do not agree that the newcomer is the most important member at any meeting. Equally important are those old-timers who showed me the way, and any middle-timer who may be today suffering. If newcomers are indeed the lifeblood of AA, old- and middle-timers are its skin and backbone."

New York, N.Y., June 1970, From: "Fifth Tradition," I Am Responsible: The Hand of AA

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Does God ever give you more than you can take?

I've heard the saying in meetings, "God will never give you any more than you can take." Well I've thought about that as I've seen people in genuine pain share their losses at meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous through the years. Sometimes, it seems that tragedy happens in threes (at least that's what my Dad told me!) and at other times, the pain seems unbearable to take.

I think a better expression would be "God often gives you more than you can take so you can reach out to others (and God) to ask for help." For in asking for help, we admit our powerlessness and truly turn our will and our lives over to the God of our understanding. Editor Pat K.

Honest, Open and Willing

The spiritual journey may start in many places, but the destination is always the same

As stated in our big book in Appendix II, open-mindedness

is one of the essentials of recovery. When I reached Step Three, the necessity of trusting in something higher and wiser than myself was explained to me. Starting out by faith in a group of new friends, my faith grew to the power behind the love of a grand fellowship, next on to the faith in a God of my understanding and finally, as I see it for now, a trust in a Higher Power of which is beyond where words could even begin to describe.



I've experienced many times of where I reach an understand of my Higher Power that is so real and joyful that my mind says "Now I've got it," but in doing so I close my mind to anymore understanding for I've just told myself that I have no more to learn. Today, for the purpose of my spiritual growth, I try not to do that, I do my best to continually keep an open mind.

It has been explained to me that the spiritual journey can start in many places, and take many different courses along the way, but the destination is always the same: to realize that the joy is in the journey itself and getting 'there' isn't all that important anyways.

My journey began with the AA program, and now I'm on that path. I continue to attend AA for opportunities to help others, to remind me of the basic daily things I must do, to continue to learn and for fellowship in a spiritual community of people. My sobriety and new life depend upon my continued participation yes, but that's not only why I do it today—not just because I have to, but because I want to.

AA recovery points the way. It doesn't necessarily claim to be 'the' spiritual way, yet points and opens the way to guide one to find his or her own spiritual path. My AA program keeps me on course. My spiritual life is the journey itself.

I have found that the spiritual path is best experienced by action. This action can take the form of thoughts, actual physical action, intentions, willingness and speech. The spiritual path is a changing one. There is an old saying that states "you cannot step into the same river twice." That is because it is always flowing and ever

changing. To grow I must change too. Open-mindedness is the key.

My sponsor told me that when considering new spiritual ideas, if I find some of these ideas beyond understanding, or conflicting with my own ideas, to simply skip over, thinking to myself, "I do not understand

this yet." The yet is the key, leaving an open-mind for growth.

I then take what I can use and put the rest aside for later review. Today I trust that I come into my spiritual awakening and growth as life sees fit. Not faster or slower than the next person, but right where I am supposed to be at just the right time. As stated in the Spiritual Appendix of the book, "Do not let any prejudices you have against certain spiritual terms keep you from asking yourself what they mean to you." That is open-mindedness in a nutshell. Despite my prejudices or judgments, I openly try it all. What do I have to lose? I only lose when I don't try. The HOW of the program—Honesty Openmindness and Willingness—for me works something like this: Honesty: I need help. Open-mindedness: I think you can help me. Willingness: I'm going to try. —Russ K., New Oxford, Pa. AA Grapevine Inc., All Rights Reserved. Reprints by permission only.



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. In October we are featuring Step Ten. Find the words to Step Ten below: **"Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it."**

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

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

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