

The Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office Newsletter



Love in the Program

In the first days and weeks of my sobriety, I was told repeatedly not to get into any new relationships in my first year. Of course, I balked at that. I mean, after all, I was giving up the biggest thing in my life – drinking, which enabled me to “have” barroom afterhour relationships. I had already surrendered the alcohol – now my sponsor wanted me to surrender “LOVE?”

So I rebelled and found someone in the rooms that looked attractive to me. I operated out of my old, established routine of qualities I needed to look for in a relationship: He had to be cute, good looking, and buff. That was about it! It was not so much based on “who” he was, as “how” he looked and “how” I looked beside him. My picker was clearly broken, but I didn’t know that at the time.

Of course the relationship with the A.A. guy I chose didn’t work. He was about a year sober and I had three weeks. When I told my sponsor that we were breaking up, I recall that she smiled and then told me that “God was having the last say over my self-will.”

I understand now that any decisions I made at that point in my sobriety were made by a woman who was still, emotionally, age 16 – the year I started drinking alcoholically. That was the year that my emotional growth stopped. So despite the fact that I had gotten older, my needs were still very immature and any decisions I made were based on what I needed, rather than what I could give to a healthy relationship.

In fact, I had no idea what a healthy relationship looked like. The majority of my alliances were people I met in bars while drinking – or as I got older – who I met online. My goals were about immediate gratification and when that stopped happening, the relationship was over. Consequently, my relationships were short-lived, for the most part.

After starting work on the 12 steps of A.A., I knew I had to allow myself room to grow if I wanted to become the person I was meant to be and that meant I needed to stay out of relationships for a while. As I spent more time in service and recovery, taking commitments and giving back to others, I started to change. With those changes, my choices changed and opened up. Later on, I was able to meet someone with whom I spent four pretty good years in a close relationship of love and trust. And while it didn’t result in permanency, it was better than anything I had experienced before – and yes, that’s without the need to drink to enjoy my intimate time! **(Cont. on page 4)**

CALENDAR OF A.A. EVENTS

28th Annual Orange County Convention, March 29-31, 2013, Hilton Costa Mesa

32nd Annual So. CA H & I Conference April 12-14, 2012, Doubletree Hotel, Anaheim, CA

29th Annual Tri-State Round up, May 16-19, 2013, Riverside Resort Hotel & Casino, Laughlin, NV

A.A. Desert Pow Wow, June 6-9, 2013, Renaissance Esmeralda Resort, Indian Wells, CA

29th Annual South Bay Roundup, July 4-7, 2013, Torrance, CA

21st Foothill Roundup, July (TBA), La Canada, CA

35th Annual Ventura County A.A. Convention, August 23-25, 2013, Westlake Village, CA



SERVICE COMMITTEES SCHEDULE:

- **SFV Central Office Board Mtg: Wed. March 6, 2013**, 6:30 p.m., Valley Central Office
- **SFV Intergroup: Mon., March 11, 2013**, New IGRs: 6:30 p.m./Bus. mtg: 7 p.m., St. Innocent Church., 5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana
- **Gen Service, District 1: (1st Wed.) March 6, 2013**, 6:30 p.m. Business Meeting, 7552 Remmet, Canoga Park
- **Gen. Service, District 2: (1st Tues.) March 5, 2013**, 6:30 p.m. Business Meeting, 4011 Dunsmore, La Crescenta
- **Gen. Service District 7: (2nd Sat.) March 9, 2013**, 9 a.m. Business Meeting, Women's Club:33201 Agua Dulce Canyon Road, Agua Dulce, CA
- **Gen Service, District 11: (1st Mon.) March 4, 2013**, 6 p.m. New GSR 6:30 p.m. /Bus. Mtg., 315 W. Vine Street, Glendale,
- **Gen Service, District 16: (1st Mon.) March 4, 2013**, 6:15 p.m. meeting, 15950 Chatsworth, Granada Hills.
- **Gen. Svc., District 17 : (1st Mon.) March 4, 2013**, 6 p.m. New GSRs/6:30 p.m. Bus. Mtg, 5000 Colfax, Noho.
- **SFV H & I: (3rd Monday) February 18, 2013**: 7 p.m. Orientation/8 p.m. Bus. Meeting, 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. See information above.

San Fernando Valley Convention Committee: Volunteers are welcome to participate in the planning of the 2014 Convention. The committee meets on the 3rd Tuesday of every month starting in April.

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: Central Office of the SF Valley is open for calls 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 Rep Board Meeting

Notes: January 14, 2013

Quotes from A.A.'s Founder and others

"We now fully realize that 100 percent personal anonymity before the public is just as vital to the life of AA as 100 percent sobriety is to the life of each and every member." **Bill W.** AA Co-Founder

"Once the alcoholic understands the desirability of accepting reality, to the best of his ability and within the limits which we all have, he has taken a step toward maturity. The difference between the mentally healthy person and the unhealthy one is the ability to face the realities of life."

*Marvin A. Block, MD, friend of AA,
February 1974 From: "Alcoholism
and Alcoholics Anonymous"*

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Heard Around A.A.:

"My disease is not impressed by my years of sobriety."

"My story never changes but my perception changes all the time."

"You not only need to hear it, you need to share it."

"Stay on the train – the scenery will change."

"Sitting on bar stools, I was 'isolating' in public."

"A.A. is like a building: If we hang on from the edge, we are going to fall off."

"If we practice what we wish to become, we will become what we practice."

Vice Chairperson Andre W. opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. with *The Serenity Prayer*. Scott M. read "*The Twelve Traditions*". Dawn H., Recording Secretary, accepted a motion for approval of Minutes from December's Intergroup Meeting; the minutes were approved.

Treasurer Brian H. said Central Office finished 2012 in the black \$1,338.91. Group donations and Gratitude Month (November) accounted for year-end numbers; however sales were down significantly from the previous year. Brian asked the IGRs to think about fundraising efforts to replace the aging computer system at Central Office. We will require four new computers, and would prefer not to have to cash in CDs to cover this cost.

Central Office: Everything is going well at Central Office. Our volunteer staff is currently running well, but due to flu season (which can result in last minute absences), Central Office can always use new volunteers. Interested parties should contact Larry at Central Office.

Website: Everything is running smoothly with the www.sfvaa.org website. We are averaging 200 hits a day, with an average search time of 4.5 minutes.

Recovery Times Everything is extremely fabulous with the newsletter.

Acknowledgment of Outgoing Chair –Our incoming Chair, Andre W., presented our outgoing chair, Cheryl A., with a plaque, acknowledging and thanking her for her service to Intergroup. **Co chair Bill S.** welcomed seven new IGRs. 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. Orientation for new IGRs begins at 6:30 p.m. prior to monthly IGR Meeting.

General Service Report: General Service District 1: *John said the next Area Assembly is being held on 2/17/13 at the Wilkinson Senior Center in Northridge.* All are invited to attend.

San Fernando Valley AA Convention: *Joel invited everyone to attend the 38th Annual SFV AA convention February 1-3, Warner Center Marriott, Woodland Hills.*

There were 37 **certificates awarded for perfect attendance** throughout 2012. In addition, six groups were especially recognized for a full decade of continuous attendance: Pageturners BB Study, Wed., Granada Hills; The Week that Was, Fri., Granada Hills; Winners Attitude Adjustment – Daily, NoHo; Unity, Service, Recovery, Tu-Th-Northridge; Feelings Discussion – Sat., Van Nuys and West Valley Speaker Meeting – Fri., Woodland Hills.



IGR Rep Birthdays Chelsea – 2 years
Ryan – 2 years, Tom – 5 years
Laurie – 5 years, Carrie – 10 years
Don – 23 years

Josh S. was nominated to fill a vacancy on the board.

Motion to Adjourn: 7:31 p.m. with the Lord's Prayer.

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: **Roy G. – 20 Years, Tanya A. – 25 Years, Frances K. – 28 Years**

DEATHS: THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE: Mike M. – 30 Years, Gillian McD.– 11 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



ONE LAST GOODBYE:

Two A.A. members who recently departed were Central Office volunteers.

If you had ever called Central Office and got a British-voice on the other end, it was probably **Gillian McD.** who was a longtime volunteer on the phones at Central Office of the San Fernando Valley. Gillian began working the phones in February of 2006 and was a calming presence until health problems forced her to leave in 2011. Phone volunteer Raine C. recalls,

"Gillian was incredibly funny. She had a wonderful sense of humor and she really cared about everyone who she spoke with. She was wonderful on the phone." Pat A., another Central Office phone worker says, "Gillian was very kind to me and helpful. She particularly loved going on H & I panels. She was a great person." Bob F. adds, "Gillian was marvelous on the phone and always very positive. She had a very pleasing attitude in the office." Gillian passed in November 2012. A memorial was held for her at Unity Church in Burbank where she was a regular attendee. She will be missed.

Mike M. worked at Central Office as a volunteer in the late 80's and 90's. Larry B. remembers Mike as soft spoken, eager to help others in need. He was dedicated to the A.A. program and was an active volunteer on the phones.

Love in the Program, continued from page 1

If you are new to sobriety, give yourself a chance to find out who you really are before you jump into a relationship. In the past, when choosing someone out of loneliness, I usually found someone who was just as lonely as me, but that wasn't enough of a reason to be with that person and when it failed, I would be even worse off because of the rejection.

Now, despite being single, I am no longer lonely. I have a Higher Power that is loving and healing my old wounded heart. With each meeting of A.A., each phone call from a sponsee, and with each email or story I read about someone being helped in this wonderful, beautiful program, I feel love. In fact, my life is full of love and that's something I never would have expected to find without alcohol. Anonymous, Los Angeles, Jan. 2013

LET GO, LET GROW

A Mother's Thoughts on Raising Her Children in Sobriety



I am a garden variety alcoholic; there is nothing special or unique about my character defects. I am selfish and vain, and my ego often gets in the way of my usefulness to others. I ask my higher power on a daily basis to remove these shortcomings. Sometimes I manage to surrender long enough to do some good.

Motherhood affords me endless opportunities to practice the principles of the program. It also tends to bring my character defects right to the surface. I often experience a fear of inadequacy, which I will tend to mask with defensiveness and a spirit of defiance for conventions. Again, there is nothing remarkably unique about this quality.

Like most mothers, I want the best for my child. Normal instincts make me protective, "mother knows best," and all that; but as an alcoholic, my problem is with instincts gone awry. My ego takes everything a few more clicks to the left, and suddenly, I am the *only* one who knows how to care for my child. I want to be the *only* one who teaches him. *All knowledge must spring forth from my bounty!*

If a well-meaning friend instructs my tot to say, "please" or "thank you," my feathers get a little ruffled. "Are they implying I haven't been teaching my child proper manners?" I wonder. If a family member wrangles him from wandering from the table at a restaurant, I chide, "He's fine. I've got it." I mean, how dare they suggest I do not have control? And if a *stranger*, of all people, offers a warning, like, "oh, watch out! Don't fall!" when he's playing out in public, it just about brings my blood to a boil, to think they have the gall to intimate that I'm not paying enough attention to my child's safety! Me, me, me, it's all about my ego and my fear. It is only by the grace of my higher power and the steps of this program that I do not get into embarrassing fights on playgrounds and in the supermarket.

Of course my sober mind knows this is ridiculous. My child's growth depends greatly on learning, and will only reach his potential through a multitude of lessons, taught by many teachers. My ego wants all the credit, but that does not serve him, or me. Thanks to sobriety, and the steps, I can be there for my child. I can be a wonderful example and a fantastic teacher. And I can step aside and watch him learn from others, too, and feel proud and grateful for his independence.

I still have all my character defects, and they can easily rear their heads when I am trying to run the show. I am grateful for the tools I have learned in Alcoholics Anonymous, the simple skills necessary for sane living and serenity. Cindy L, La Crescenta, CA.



We've heard in A.A. "Feelings are not facts." Do you have any thoughts you would like to share about your recovery concerning your feelings? Please email editor at: xnowisthetime@aol.com and put "feelings" in the subject line.

The Best Is Yet To Come

Grateful even in the face of life's trials and tribulations

"My name is Craig and I am an alcoholic." That statement tells the reader the most important fact concerning my life—that I have a progressive, fatal disease that if left untreated will result in an untimely death.

I grew up in an upper middle class house where all was seemingly well. My parents behaved almost God-like. It was not intentional that I was unable to see their imperfections. It was just that they were raised in upper middle class families where their respective fathers were doctors who had transferred impeccable behaviors to their offspring.

I didn't pick up my first drink until a year after the big wild rock concert at Woodstock. Three more years at prep school and it was off to college. Divine Providence landed me in a large city with a high concentration of colleges and universities. I remember being dropped off near Boston and finally away from parental control.

I thought I had arrived after all those years of being raised strictly and formally, enduring an early curfew, and rules that hampered my social life. All that was about to change.

The first three years were a blur. It was like one long massive party. The last year and a half, I lived in a fraternity. The partying escalated as a relationship I was in came to an end. I treated my emotional pain with alcoholic oblivion.

I suffered a psychotic breakdown during my senior year. My life would never be the same. I was in a psychiatric hospital for just over two years. Upon release, I went back to my B.P.P. experiment which only lasted 15 months. (That stands for the beer, pot and pizza experiment.)

I lost my mind a second time and returned to the hospital for three more years. Looking back, I realized that I lost any belief that God had anything useful for me and my life.

A few years later, I landed in jail for a third and fourth time. The latter charge was for a felony. In between these criminal charges, I collapsed and was brought back to the hospital.

During some of this time, I lived at one of Hartford's male shelters. The shelter closed early that winter at March's end. This led me to a place where I finally conceded to a power greater than myself on Tuesday, January 12, 1988.

I now have 23 continuous years of sobriety. In more recent times, I have lost both my father and mother. However, the beauty of life's trials and tribulations is that I have been given the gift of sobriety and have been able through difficult events to trudge the Road of Happy Destiny. I will keep coming because the best is yet to come! —*Craig J., Bristol, Conn.*



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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

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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 Tradition of the Month. In February we are featuring Tradition Two: **"For our Group purpose there is but one ultimate authority – a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern."** Can you find all the words? Look closely and read across as well as up and down. (Note: Last "s" is missing from SERVANTS).

E	X	I	S	A	U	T	H	O	R	I	T	Y	S	C
X	X	A	F	G	X	G	E	E	X	X	H	A	E	O
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A	R	T	H	G	O	V	E	R	N	N	O	U	R	E

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