

RECOVERY TIMES

Vol. 38, No. 11, November 2013

The Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office Monthly Newsletter



FRIENDSHIPS MADE THROUGH A.A. ARE LASTING ONES

I wish that it had been different. I wish that I had been different. As hard as it was to be a friend to me, it was triple hard to be a friend to myself. That night in the car, following yet another drunken debacle of a night out, the grace of God entered my life while I was in a grey-out, tethered to reality briefly while slipping in and out of my black-out. I'm living proof that God loves fools and drunks; I count myself in both categories. Friendships made in AA are lasting ones, and through the gift of sobriety, friendships made outside of AA also have a fighting chance.

My drinking that night was like any other, excessive. I had long since given up trying to imitate sanity. Although still playing the part of the happy-go-lucky, lets-go-out-and-party girl in the barrooms, I knew well that feeling of dread that I would soon be overcome by the skeletons of alcoholism that haunted me daily; that, through many failed attempts to reign-in my drinking behavior, I knew I was powerless to stop. This night, my friend was not trying to help me or to talk to me about my drinking, but was instead looking at me with terror in her eyes. For a moment, that brief moment of clarity, I saw myself for who I was, reflected in her fearful eyes. I had no control over the car I was driving down Rt. 91, couldn't see the exit ramp through my grey-out haze, couldn't comprehend the serious danger to myself and others that I posed, couldn't separate the darkness of the night from the darkness of my soul, and couldn't see any way out.

Somehow, we both made it home that night. Somehow, when I woke up the next morning, I knew that I had had my final blackout the night before. Somehow, I knew that it was over. Having been so thoroughly perverted by alcoholism that I could have killed my friend in that car that night broke through the thick denial that permeates the disease. Caring about her would be the beginning of the way out. Caring about me was not yet a possibility.

I didn't know just then how self-love, love for others, social conscience and God consciousness was going to develop throughout the years of my recovery in Alcoholics Anonymous. I have had to break through the walls of denial many more times, realizing that I have many other problems and character flaws to face and try to heal. It has by no means been easy. It has been made easier, however, by a friend who accepted my amends, and by my bond with a loving God who trusts me and works with me. My friend has continued to roll with me on this journey, not without bumps in the road, but as a steady presence of God's grace in my life, a friend. Yes, friendships made through AA are lasting ones.



Maura A., Ludlow, Massachusetts, Printed with permission.

CALENDAR OF A.A. EVENTS

Unit A Thanksgiving Alcañon: November 28th, 10641 Burbank Boulevard, NoHo

Burbank Group Thank-A-Thon: Nov. 28 & 29, 8 a.m. - 10 p.m. both days, 3217 Winona Ave., Burbank, CA

SFV Convention: January 31 - Feb. 1, Warner Center Marriott, Woodland Hills, CA

SERVICE COMMITTEES SCHEDULE:

- **SFV Central Office Board Mtg: Dec. 4, 2013,** 6:30 p.m., Valley Central Office
- **SFV Intergroup: Mon., Dec. 9, 2013,** New IGRs: 6:30/7 p.m., St. Innocent Church., 5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana
- **Gen Svc, Dist. 1 (1st Wed.) Dec. 4, 2013,** 6:30 p.m., 7552 Remmet, Canoga Park
- **Gen. Service, District 2: (1st Tues.) Dec. 3, 2013,** 6:30 p.m., 4011 Dunsmore, La Crescenta
- **Gen. Svc Dist. 7: (2nd Sat.) Dec. 14, 2013,** 9 a.m., Women's Club:33201 Agua Dulce Cyn Rd, Agua Dulce, CA
- **Gen Service, District 11: (1st Mon.) Dec. 2, 2013,** 6 p.m. New GSR 6:30 p.m., 315 W. Vine Street, Glendale,
- **Gen Service, District 16: (1st Mon.) Dec. 2, 2013,** 6:15 p.m. meeting, 15950 Chatsworth, Granada Hills.
- **Gen. Svc., District 17: (1st Mon.) Dec. 2, 2013,** 6 p.m. New GSRs/6:30 p.m. Bus. Mtg, 5000 Colfax, NoHo.
- **SFV H & I: (3rd Mon.) Nov. 18, 2013:** 7 p.m. Orientation/ 8 p.m. Bus. Meeting, 5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana
- **SFV AA Convention Planning Committee:** Tues., Nov. 19, 2013, 7 p.m. St. Innocent, Tarz (see address above)

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, please call Central Office: 818 988-3001.

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

SF Valley Hospitals and Institutions Committee: Temporary contacts are needed to pair the alcoholic leaving rehabilitation, treatment or jail with AA in their home community. Contact Central Office for information. H & I also needs volunteers to 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 (SFV H & I).

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 the 1st Sunday of the month at Unit A., 10641 Burbank Blvd., NoHo.

San Fernando Valley Intergroup: Your Central Office holds a monthly meeting for all Intergroup reps on the 2nd Monday of each month at St. Innocent Church, 5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana. 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.**



- **A.A. Central Office maintains LIVE 24/7 PHONE SERVICE** for A.A.s. Visit: www.sfvaa.org to find meeting info, upcoming events, service meeting info, or download a copy of Recovery Times.
- **Want to be of service?** Why not answer phone calls and help others?
- **HAS YOUR MEETING CHANGED?** Please provide meeting updates in writing to: **The Valley Central Office, 7417 Van Nuys Blvd., Ste. E., Van Nuys, CA.**

Got a story, poem or artwork that is A.A.- related that you want to share? Stories should be 250-500 words. Please email to Editor of Recovery Times at: xnowisthetime@aol.com. Submission does not guarantee publication but we will definitely take a look at what you send and see if we can use it. Thanks!



SAN FERNANDO VALLEY CENTRAL OFFICE
Minutes of October 14, 2013 Intergroup Representatives Meeting

OPENING: Andre W. at 7:00 p.m. with *The Serenity Prayer*

- Jim read "*The Twelve Traditions.*" Dawn H., Recording Secretary, accepted a motion for approval of Minutes from September's Intergroup Meeting; the minutes were approved as submitted.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Brian H.

- Central Office is in the black \$798.81 MTD, and in the black \$397.42 YTD. Brian thanked the groups for their continued support as this is far ahead of where we were last year. It is also one of the few times that we have been in the black as we enter Gratitude Month in November.
- A full Treasurer's Report is available in the *Recovery Times*.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S REPORT: Bob F.

- Everything is running smoothly at Central Office. Relocation possibilities are continuing to be explored; however, the medical marijuana facility has relocated and the situation with the parking and bathrooms seems to be improving.
- Our volunteer staff is currently running well, but Central Office can always use new volunteers. Bob suggested that groups can also take "group commitments" to volunteer at Central Office, and interested parties should contact Larry at Central Office.
- Everything is running smoothly with the www.sfvaa.org website.
- *Recovery Times*: Everything is phenomenal with the newsletter.

MEETING - RELATED BUSINESS: Bill S. welcomed one new IGR this month: Michelle representing the Burbank Group. 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.

Service Representatives

- General Service District 17: Aimee: The next Area Assembly will be held in November at the Elks Lodge in Van Nuys. All are welcome to attend, and volunteers are needed.
- San Fernando Valley Hospital & Institutions Committee: Daniel - The 32nd Annual H&I Fundraising Dinner will be October 24th at St. Innocent. Tickets are \$10.
- Santa Clarita Valley AA Convention: Bernard B. - The 10th Annual Santa Clarita Valley Convention is coming up this weekend, October 18-20. The Saturday night speaker is Lorna K.
- San Fernando Valley AA Convention: Joel S. - The 39th Annual San Fernando Valley Convention will take place January 31-February 2, 2014. Requests for marathon meetings are available for those groups wishing to participate again this year. Once again, it was announced that this year, all convention participants who wish to attend the Friday Night Opening Ceremony and the Saturday afternoon Longtimers Meeting MUST be registered.

OLD BUSINESS: 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.

NEW BUSINESS: None

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM AA GROUPS: Michele: Unit A is hosting its annual Thanksgiving Alcahthon on November 27-28th. Norm: Offered a big thank you to the members of the Intergroup Board of Directors who participated in the Unity Day Event. It was a great success. Sue: Area 93 is hosting a Literature Workshop on Saturday 12/7 at the Simi Valley Senior Center. There will be speakers and panelists, with topics including conference approved vs. non-conference approved literature, AA literature in the digital age, and more.

Andre W.: Groups should bring at least 350 flyers for upcoming events so that each meeting can have at least 5 copies. Flyers must be for "AA-related events" (with an AA Meeting).

ACKNOWLEDGE BIRTHDAYS FOR THE MONTH OF OCTOBER – Dave 17 years

VACANCIES ON BOARD: None.

CLOSING: Motion to adjourn was recognized and seconded. Meeting adjourned with *The Lord's Prayer* at 7:24 p.m. Prepared and submitted by: *Dawn H., Recording Secretary*

CELEBRATING AN A.A. ANNIVERSARY? 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. For September, we thank the following for their contributions: **Cindy - 1 Year, Paul D. - 13 Years, Jorge H. - 16 Years, Anonymous - 17 Years, Frank K. - 29 Years, Ken M. - 30 Years, Mary Jane A. - 31 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: svvaa.org.

Betty Mcl - 16 Years, Linda L. - 31 Years

Please Support Your Central Office by sending a representative from your group to the Intergroup monthly 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 our **Recovery Times** mailed to you, please mail us your name and address along with a \$7.00 check to cover cost & delivery to: **San Fernando Valley Central Office, 7417-E. Van Nuys Blvd., Van Nuys, CA 91405.** Please tell us whether it is for a new subscription, a renewal, or if you are enclosing an additional contribution, and if moving, please also give us your former address.



Bridging The Gap Needs Volunteers

Congratulations San Fernando Valley AA! You have put Bridging the Gap on the AA Map!

Bridging the Gap is part of A.A. worldwide and serves those that are alcoholics on their release from treatment or incarceration. Through SFV H&I, our panel members have been carrying the message of AA. The message is further carried by our SFV Central Office, our Districts and Area 93.

Bridging the Gap is basic 12-Step volunteer work and is a vehicle for an AA member to meet and take a newly

released alcoholic to six AA meetings. Bridging the Gap is a way for a real person to be the face of AA upon release.

I recently attended the Bridging the Gap Conference in Chicago. The next Conference will be in Kansas City in 2014.

The panel I participated in was 'How we use the BTG website.' If you google "Bridging the Gap" you will see hundreds of entries, so first of all, the website is Bridging the Gap World Wide www.btgww.org. The website, www.AA.org also has a link to the BTG pamphlets we use.



At our workshop weekend this year a panel of judges at the conference expressed their gratitude for AA and their frustration at seeing alcoholics before them in court, over and over. Treatment facility directors have the same dilemma. Alcoholics graduate and relapse in large numbers.

Why have Bridging the Gap? When newly released alcoholics come back into the world they are often overwhelmed, excited, fearful, doubtful, and determined to start over. Then they pass a bar, or a drug dealer. Just one! And so, they are on the road of recidivism, which is going in and out of prison, treatment, jail, and the consequences continue. The first 48 hours are critical and known as the 'window of opportunity'.

The other way to do it is to ask for a volunteer in AA by way of Bridging the Gap. It is pre-arranged so that the first person they see is the face of AA.

I first heard about BTG in 2006. I became very interested in learning how we can reach out to the alcoholic. Staying sober in a treatment facility is one thing and staying sober outside is another. In our prisons, for the most part, there is no treatment for alcoholism except for one panel a week of AA. Here is how it works. The BTG pamphlet is given out to our panel leaders and sent in to our Central Office by the individual about to be released. The Bridging the Gap committee receives it and a volunteer is contacted in any part of the country. When we put a dollar in the basket and our groups send it to AA, this is one of the ways that dollar is used, in the form of service literature that GSO provides. It takes a lot of cooperation from all entities. Remember how we end our meetings. 'Let the Hand of AA always be there and for that I am Responsible.' Well, it is working.

At the upcoming SFVAA Convention in January 2014, there will be a booth for Bridging the Gap, next to the Central Office booth. You can also call Central Office: Bob and Larry welcome your calls. 818 988- 3001.

The first BTG conference was in 1991 in Iowa. The Midwest has been host to this conference many times, which has led to the AA population being well informed. We will have an opportunity to host this event in 2016.

H & I meets every third Monday at 7 PM at St Innocent's Church 5657 Lindley Ave, Tarzana. Let the Hand of AA always be there... Janeen P. Bridging the Gap/District 1/Area 93

Ways to be of Service: 1. Volunteer to mop the floor or clean coffee cups, set up or break down a meeting.

2. Give another A.A. a ride to and from a meeting. Pick someone up that doesn't have transportation.

3. Take a commitment at the meeting, District or General Service level. There are always open commitments.

4. Go on an H & I panel to a hospital, recovery house or jail where people can't get out to a meeting.

5. Work the phones at Central Office for an afternoon or an evening.

6. Be a good example of the program and be of service to someone who needs help.

7. Donate what you can to financially help the program of A.A. - either to your Group, Central Office, or another entity of Alcoholics Anonymous.



Full House at Burbank Group for October Sponsorship Workshop

All who worked on the recent Sponsorship Workshop held Sunday afternoon October 6th at the Burbank Group WISH TO EXTEND A GIGANTIC THANK YOU to all the attendees of the workshop. Thanks to lots of personal announcements by friends at meetings, plus a really great flyer portraying the picture of the Man on Bed which was widely distributed, there was a terrific turnout of 64 souls. Everyone was fed well and had a table full of desserts and the A.A. hallmark, a bottomless pot of coffee, to provide sustenance for the bracing discussion we had from OUR GREAT PANEL of six sober members centered around our theme of **“One alcoholic helping another alcoholic.”**

The panel started off with a discussion of presentation material drawn from the wealth of truly inspiring quotes found in The Big Book, Chapter 7, Working with Others, and the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions describing a sponsor taking a sponsee through the Steps. We went through all Twelve Steps with each panel member taking a Step and then rotating through a discussion of Steps 1 through 12.

The discussion after our lunch/dinner break was full of lots of interactive audience participation and panel discussion of the A.A. Conference-approved pamphlet “Questions & Answers on Sponsorship,” which looks at sponsorship both from the viewpoint of sponsee and sponsor. On Page 7 of the pamphlet it starts off with a description of how Bill and Bob (co-founders of A.A.) helped each other: “Alcoholics Anonymous began with sponsorship. When Bill W., only a few months sober and was stricken with a powerful urge to drink, this thought came to him, ‘You need another alcoholic to talk to. You need another alcoholic just as much as he needs you.’ He found Dr. Bob, who had been trying desperately and unsuccessfully to stop drinking, and out of their common need A.A. was born.”

Great Stuff! And it is still the bedrock upon which strong sobriety is built today, that working with others and carrying the message will keep you sober when the going gets rough. We wrapped up the day with discussion of two wonderful A.A. pamphlets: “Avoid Playing God” and “Why We Were Chosen.”

The seed idea for the workshop was to look at an important element Recovery, a component our three legacies: Unity, Service and Recovery. The universal symbol of A.A. is the triangle within a circle, with each leg of the triangle supporting the other; each being absolutely necessary for the whole structure to stand strong. So we started off our commitment to the three legacies of A.A. with a discussion of Recovery; and hopefully, there will be two more follow-on workshops in the near future on the other two equally important legacies, Unity and Service. It was a welcome refresher course, so to speak, not really uncovering or discovering of anything new and different, but rather reviewing and re-energizing our recovery program by sharing our experience, strength and hope in an in-depth discussion of an important tool in our spiritual tool kit we use to maintain contented and useful sobriety.

In closing, Page 27 of the Questions & Answers on Sponsorship says: “Most present members of Alcoholics Anonymous owe their sobriety to the fact that someone else took a special interest in them and was willing to share a great gift with them. Sponsorship is merely another way of describing the continuing special interest of a seasoned member that can mean so much to a newcomer turning to A.A. for help. Individuals and groups cannot afford to lose sight of the importance of sponsorship, the importance of taking a special interest in a confused alcoholic who wants to stop drinking.”

Respectfully and lovingly submitted by **Pam H., Burbank**



The 12 Steps through Word Search. Each month, Recovery Times features the Tradition of the Month. In November, we are featuring Tradition Eleven: **"Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films."** Can you find the words to the 11th Tradition? Read sideways, up and down and diagonally.

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

Gratitude



Artwork: Leslie Z.

November is Gratitude Month. Your Central Office appreciates any donation, large or small. Every little bit helps to keep your Central Office open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Our phone system is one of the A.A. central offices that picks up calls from other cities and states when their volunteers go home for the night. Whenever anyone, anywhere reaches out their hand, we want the hand of A.A. to always be there -- and for that we are grateful.

Love and Tolerance is our code.

**San Fernando Valley Central Office
7417-E. Van Nuys Boulevard**

Van Nuys, CA 91405

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED