

RECOVERY TIMES

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The Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office Monthly Newsletter

A Never-Ending Adventure: One man's story of how important emotional balance becomes as the desire to drink fades. **"The problem I have with my emotions is that they try to run away with me."**

When I entered rehab 24 years ago I told them that I only had two emotions. I was mad or I was okay. That wasn't really true. I had all the emotions. I just didn't know how to recognize them or deal with them. They had me do a little exercise. For several days I couldn't talk. I had to walk around the unit and if someone said something to me I could only respond with feeling words. I also wasn't supposed to use any feeling word that had anything to do with anger. I could use words like "happy," "sad," "fear," "shame," "remorse," "depressed," "grateful," "arrogant"—those were all okay, but no anger. It forced me to stop and think a little before I reacted to what was going on. The exercise was one of those things I hated about being in rehab. I hated it, but it also worked. It worked as a start.

The process of dealing with my emotions has been a never-ending adventure. I say adventure rather than struggle because I don't like to look at things too negatively. Being an alcoholic isn't a problem that I have to solve. It's a continuing reality of my life. The emotions are part of it. The emotions are a very active and involved part of it. As the years go by, at least for me, the desire to drink fades into the background. I simply have other ways to celebrate, relax, mourn, and generally cope with the day. Drinking isn't the first thing that pops into my head anymore. I mostly need to maintain an awareness of when the idea of drinking tries to sneak up on me. The emotions, on the other hand, are something that I don't even want to fade into the background.

The problem I have with my emotions is that they try to run away with me. I need to keep a handle on my emotions, especially anger. Many of us seem to have baseline type reactions to things. When we don't know what else to do, we drink. On the emotional side, some of the more common baseline reactions are fear, shame, and my personal favorite, anger. There seems to be some sort of center of gravity that just keeps taking me back there. Early in sobriety the biggest problem I had in dealing with my emotions was that they were so irrational, and I dealt with them so irrationally. I had to relearn my emotions. If I started to feel mad about something I quite literally had to make myself stop and think if the feeling was rational. Most of the time the feeling wasn't really anger, I was embarrassed or hurt or fearful or something else. Then, instead of taking that feeling and stuffing it in a box of anger I had to let myself feel the real emotion.



One particular instance occurred during treatment. As I was approaching discharge I was talking to the counselor about my aftercare plans. I was talking about heading off to the mountains and spending a week or so communing with God in a silent retreat. The counselor told me that she thought that was a really good idea. My knee-jerk emotional reaction was to disagree with her. I realized that the only reason she told (cont. pg. 6)



CALENDAR OF A.A. EVENTS

Dec. 31, 2013: New Year's Eve Dance Party, Burbank Group, 3217 Winona Street, Burbank, CA91504 (Don. \$10)

Jan. 9, 2014 - Jan. 12, 2014: 24th Annual River Round Up, Don Laughlin's Riverside Resort, Laughlin, NV

Jan. 31, 2014 - Feb. 2, 2014: 39th Annual SFV Convention: Warner Center Marriott, Woodland Hills, CA www.sfvaaconvention.org

Feb. 6, 2014 - Feb. 9, 2014: 50th Intl. Women's Conference, Honolulu, HI www.internationalwomensconference.org

SERVICE COMMITTEES SCHEDULE:

- **SFV Central Office Board Mtg: Jan. 8, 2014,** 6:30 p.m., Valley Central Office
- **SFV Intergroup: Mon., Jan. 13, 2014,** New IGRs: 6:30/7 p.m., St. Innocent Church., 5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana
- **Gen Svc, Dist. 1 (1st Wed.) Jan. 1(?), 2014,** 6:30 p.m., 7552 Remmet, Canoga Park
- **Gen. Service, District 2: (1st Tues.) Jan. 7, 2014,** 6:30 p.m., 4011 Dunsmore, La Crescenta
- **Gen. Svc Dist. 7: (2nd Sat.) Jan. 11 2014,** 9 a.m., Women's Club:33201 Agua Dulce Cyn Rd, Agua Dulce, CA
- **Gen Service, District 11: (1st Mon.) Jan. 6, 2014,** 6 p.m. New GSR 6:30 p.m., 315 W. Vine Street, Glendale,
- **Gen Service, District 16: (1st Mon.) Jan. 6, 2013,** 6:15 p.m. meeting, 15950 Chatsworth, Granada Hills.
- **Gen. Svc., District 17: (1st Mon.) Jan. 6, 2014,** 6 p.m. New GSRs/6:30 p.m. Bus. Mtg., 5000 Colfax, NoHo.
- **SFV H & I: (3rd Mon.) Dec. 16, 2013:** 7 p.m. Orientation/ 8 p.m. Bus. Meeting, 5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana
- **SFV AA Convention Planning Committee: Tues., Dec. 17, 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.**

SAN FERNANDO VALLEY CENTRAL OFFICE

Minutes of November 2013 Intergroup Representatives Meeting

OPENING: Andre W. at 7:00 p.m. with *The Serenity Prayer*. Charles read "*The Twelve Traditions*." Bob F. accepted a motion for approval of Minutes from October's Intergroup Meeting; the minutes were approved as submitted.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Brian H. reported that Central Office is in the red \$467.96 MTD, and in the red \$70.50 YTD. Brian thanked the groups for their continued support. A full Treasurer's Report is available in this issue of the *Recovery Times*.

Quotes from our A.A Founders

"We now know that we do not have to run away, nor ought we again try to overcome adversity by still another bulldozing power drive that can only push up obstacles before us faster than they can be taken down." **AA Co-Founder, Bill W., March 1962, "What Is Acceptance?"**

"I'd like to develop Step Eleven further -- for the benefit of the complete doubter, the unlucky one who can't believe it has any real merit at all As he goes along with his process of prayer, he begins to add up the results. If he persists, he will almost surely find more serenity, more tolerance, less fear, and less anger. He will acquire a quiet courage, the kind that doesn't strain him. He can look at so-called failure and success for what they really are.

Problems and calamity will begin to mean instruction, instead of destruction. He will feel freer and saner ... His sense of purpose and of direction will increase. His tensions and anxieties will commence to fade. His physical health is likely to improve. Wonderful and unaccountable things will start to happen. Twisted relations in his family and on the outside will unaccountably improve.

"Even if few of these things happen, he will still find himself in possession of great gifts. When he has to deal with hard circumstances he can face them and accept them. He can now accept himself and the world around him." **Bill W., June 1958, "Take Step Eleven"**

Date to Remember: Bill W.'s birth date: Nov. 26, 1895.

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 outstanding with the newsletter.

MEETING - RELATED BUSINESS: Bill S. welcomed six new IGRs this month: Bobby representing the Universal "Try God Group" in NoHo; Sheryl A. representing "God's in Charge" in Canoga Park; Judy G. representing Radford Hall/Daily Reflections; Vahag representing the "Barefoot Meeting" in Burbank; April C. representing "Third Traditions" Speaker Meeting in Reseda; and Debbie S. representing "Winners Attitude Adjustment" in NoHo. 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

San Fernando Valley AA Convention: *Joe/ 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 Long timers 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: 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).

BIRTHDAYS FOR THE MONTH OF NOV:

Sheryl A. - 1 year, Barb - 11 years, J. P. - 17 years, Neva S. - 22 years, & John M. - 25 years.

VACANCIES ON BOARD: None.

CLOSING: Motion to adjourn was recognized and seconded. Meeting adjourned with *The Lord's Prayer* at 7:26 p.m.

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:



DEATHS (THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE) Fisherman George - 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: sfvaa.org.

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 **Recovery Times**, please send your name, address and payment for \$7.00 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.



- **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*



"I sincerely hope you're not texting your 5th step to me."

definitely take a look at what you send and see if we can use it. Thanks!

"My Favorite Things" (Illustration and poem by Leslie Z.)

"Newcomers, old-timers, Lots of Church Basements
Speakers' opinions, (I feel a resentment)
I'll call my sponsor, my temper is heating
Next thing you know, I'm sent to a meeting

When my brain breaks, and my faith stalls, and my day is sad...
I simply remember the hell I was in
And then I don't feel so bad."



Angst and Wine (sung to the tune of "Old Lang Syne")

There was a time I'd lose my car,
Now all of that's behind,
Farewell to jails and lawyers' fees
And days of angst and wine

Chorus: Those days of angst and wine, my friend
I almost lost my mind,
Let's raise our cups of coffee, and
Good-bye to angst and wine.

(poem by Leslie Z.)



A HAPPY
NEW YEAR

Meeting Notes: New home: Ala-Nest: 10824 Topanga Canyon Blvd. (Unit 1)

Historical Information on A.A.

1934 (Dec. 11): Bill W. takes his last drink and enters Towns Hospital in NYC.

1937 (Dec. 12): Bill W. meets with Rockefeller Foundation hoping to raise money.

1938: (Dec. 5). Bill W. begins writing the Twelve Steps using the Oxford Group ideas while "plugging the holes an alcoholic might wiggle through."

1939 (Dec. 19) First A.A. meeting in Los Angeles in a private home.

1940: (Dec. 4) St. Louis A.A. group is founded.

1942: (Jan. 9) Drunks Are Square Pegs is published.

1943: (Dec. 2) San Quentin News reports "Mr. Bill" speaking to 300 inmates at their A.A. mtg.

1943 (Jan. 12) The press report about the first A.A. group in Pontiac, Mich.

1944: (Dec. 3) Australia is the first country outside of the U.S. to hold A.A. meetings.

1947: (Dec. 17) The Alano Club opens in San Diego with one member and one dollar.

1949: (Dec. 7) St. Ignatia accepts the Poverello Medal of St. Francis on behalf of A.A. from the Franciscan College of Steubenville, Ohio.

1949: (Dec. 25) Dr. Bob's last visit to St. Thomas Hospital's alcoholic ward where he helped thousands of drunks.

1951: (Jan. 29) The A.A. Grapevine publishes a memorial issue on Dr. Bob

1971: (Jan. 24) Bill W. dies in Miami, FL

1971: (Jan. 26) The New York Times publishes Bill W.'s obituary on Page 1

1984: (Jan. 7) Pass It On, the story of Bill W. and A.A. is published.

Continued from Pg. 1: A Never-ending Adventure

me that it was a good idea was because it was a bad idea and her agreeing with me was her way of dealing with my emotional tendency to oppose anything anyone told me. I was suddenly very aware of the fact that I was going to really need to work on that. At the time I didn't think of it as a sudden spiritual awakening. I do now.

The feeling of fear that made me want to avoid the Fourth and Fifth Steps was precisely what the Fourth and Fifth Step would take away. The feeling of shame that would stop me from making amends was precisely what the Ninth Step was designed to deal with in the first place. I had what the professionals would refer to as "dysfunctional coping mechanisms." If I had a good strong feeling my first impulse would be to drink. My next impulse would be something like defiance or arrogance, basically something along the lines of, "This is my turf, and you're not welcome here."

One of the most emotionally trying times in my life was my divorce after 14 years of sobriety. The proximate cause of the divorce was the relapse of the girl I had met in AA and married. I experienced the full range of emotions in all their glory. Fear about what was going to happen to me and the kids. Fear for her. Shame over the failed marriage. I didn't really notice at first, but as time went by there was an overwhelming feeling of loneliness. At that time I came up with a little saying that has really helped a lot ever since. Feel the emotions, but act rationally. I can't say that I was always perfect. I would let myself feel the feelings. Then I would ask myself, "What's the smart thing to do next?" That put the brakes on some potential bad reactions.

The secret of dealing with things that give me a sense of shame, guilt, or remorse is to make amends and then allow myself to be forgiven. After that, I need to stop repeating the same mistakes.

I put a lot of effort into understanding my own emotions and that has put me in a position to sometimes help others. The best example of this would be my kids. As they have progressed through adolescence we have talked about emotions a lot. One big issue I talk about with the kids are their emotions related to their mother. It's been about 10 years since she relapsed. They have often been told that there is nothing they can do. We have taken it another step. I've told them that they can do nothing in several different ways. They can do nothing because they don't care, but that's not true. They can do nothing because they've given up hope, but that's not true either. They can do nothing because they are simply waiting for something beyond their control to change. That's where everyone is right now. It's okay to feel some hurt, some fear, some anger, and some love. But they don't need to feel any guilt, because they haven't done anything wrong.

In the meantime we all try to feel the emotions without letting them run away with us. We feel the emotions and we try to act rationally. There are things that we can't control that make us feel bad. At the same time we all try to go about our day as best we can. I think my kids are doing pretty well. For myself, I know there's still plenty of room for improvement. My emotions are never going to go away. I hope in the future I can feel bad when bad things happen and good when good things happen. I also hope that my behavior gives me a lot of things to feel good about.



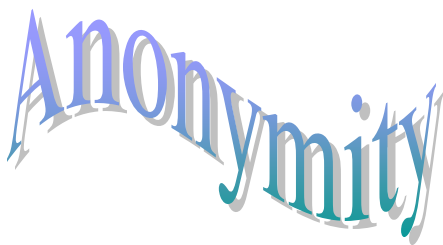
—Tom K., Millard, Neb.

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The 12 Steps through Word Search. Each month, Recovery Times features the Tradition of the Month. In December, we are featuring Tradition Twelve: **"Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities."** *Can you find the words to the 12th Tradition? Read sideways, up and down and diagonally.*

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



What does anonymity mean to A.A.?

Members of Alcoholics Anonymous make a point of carrying the message about their own recovery in A.A. on a person-to-person basis - but never disclose the membership of others. In this way, they may serve as examples of recovery and thus stimulate active alcoholics to seek help. In the public media, however, such as TV, radio, films, press and the Internet, A.A. Traditions urge members to maintain strict anonymity for three reasons:

1. We have learned from our own experience that the active alcoholics will shun any source of help which might reveal his or her identity.
2. Past events indicate that those alcoholics who seek public recognition as A.A. members may drink again.
3. Public attention and publicity for individual members of A.A. would invite self-serving competition and conflict over differing personal views.

Anonymity in public media guards the unity of A.A. members and preserves the attraction of the program for the millions who still need help. Copyright 1971 A.A. World Services, Inc.

San Fernando Valley Central Office

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