

RECOVERY TIMES

Vol. 40, No. 2, February 2014

The Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office Monthly Newsletter



Even Her Disabilities Couldn't Keep Her Away From A.A.

I started to lose my hearing when I was 30 years old. I was married at the time and the doctors first told me they thought it was a tumor, which sent my drinking into overdrive. Later, they learned that it was caused by otosclerosis, which required that I use two hearing aids, which made me feel horrible about myself.

Ten years later, my life became unmanageable with my husband's and my drinking. My children, who were then ages 12 and 15, were running the household and even taking care of my husband and I, serving us drinks and cooking our meals. My husband and I were both cheating on each other and I thought that if I could find one more diet and I looked good, my life would be happy.

A lecture on a new diet took me to another 12 Step program where I started hearing about A.A. from the other members. One of the men in that program told me about Windsor Club in Glendale which he said was a nice place, so I talked a friend into going there with me, but I never got out of the car.

A few weeks later, I made an appointment with a minister to talk to her about my husband's drinking. I thought my Higher Power was angry at me because I couldn't stop drinking. After I called my minister, drunk, she pointed out that my real problem was alcoholism and took me to my first A.A. meeting in March of 1980. I continued to go for 23 years. During that time, I worked the Steps, had sponsees, and several sponsors.

About 15 years into my sobriety, I became completely deaf and I got a hearing assistance dog who I named Kramer, and he became my lifeline to the world. He signaled me when the phone rang, when someone spoke to me, and when someone came in the door.

Things started to go downhill again when my high school sweetheart - my husband of 42 years - passed away. I had to sell my home and tried living with my son for a while but that didn't work out. During that time, I learned that I had Parkinson's Disease, which made it difficult to walk. I then moved into an apartment but as my disease drew worse, it became so difficult to move that I had to use a power chair in addition to the hearing devices and I also had to give up my car.

That made me feel really inadequate and also required that I ask my A.A. friends for rides to and from meetings. I got so depressed that I increased my meetings although it was difficult to get there. I spent a lot of time crying at meetings over my declining health and my grief and depression over my situation. Then my dog died and I got really despondent.

I got a new hearing assistance dog, Amber, two months later and that helped me feel less alone. But my health continued to decline and I started losing my power of speech. When that happened, I started thinking about ending it all because I felt that I no value. I tried to carry out that mission in September of 2009 by taking what

(Continued, Page 5)



SERVICE COMMITTEES SCHEDULE:

- **SFV Central Office Board Mtg: March 5, 2014**, 6:30 p.m., Central Office
- **SFV Intergroup: Mon., March 10, 2014**, New IGRs: 6:30/ General Meeting: 7 p.m., St. Innocent Church., 5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana
- **Gen Svc, Dist. 1 (1st Wed.) March 5, 2014**, 6:30 p.m., 7552 Remmet, Can. Pk.
- **Gen. Service, District 2: March 4, 2014**, 6:30 p.m., 4011 Dunsmore, La Crescenta
- **Gen. Svc Dist. 7: (2nd Sat.) March 8, 2014**, 9 a.m., Women's Club:33201 Agua Dulce Cyn Rd, Agua Dulce, CA
- **Gen Service, District 11: (1st Mon.) March 3, 2014**, 6 p.m. New GSR 6:30 p.m., 315 W. Vine Street, Glendale,
- **Gen Service, District 16: (1st Mon.) March 3, 2014**, 6:15 p.m. meeting, 15950 Chatsworth, Granada Hills.
- **Gen. Svc., District 17: (1st Mon.) March 3,** 6 p.m. New GSRs/6:30 p.m. Bus. Mtg., 5000 Colfax, NoHo.
- **SFV H & I: (3rd Mon.) Feb. 17, 2014:** 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, 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 meets 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: 818 988-3001.**

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 January, we thank the following for their contributions: **DEATHS (THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE)**



Artie L. - 3 Years, Sarah M. - 26 Years was a longtime phone volunteer at Central Office.

If you are aware of the passing of a Fellowship member, please call us at (818) 988-3001 or email 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.**

San Fernando Valley Central Office

Minutes of January 13, 2014 Intergroup Representatives Meeting

OPENING: Andre W.

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

TREASURER'S REPORT: Andre W. on behalf of Brian H.

- Central Office ended the year in the black \$9,638.33.
- Gratitude Month (November 2013) brought in over \$10K.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S REPORT: Andre W.

Central Office:

- Everything is running smoothly at Central Office.
- Volunteer staff is running well, but Central Office can always use new volunteers. Interested parties should contact Larry at Central Office.
- Everything is running smoothly with the www.sfvaa.org website.
- *Recovery Times*: Everything is fabulous with the newsletter.

MEETING RELATED BUSINESS:

- Introduction of New Intergroup Representatives – Bill S.
welcomed 5 new IGRs: Jessica – Just the Black Print meeting in Sherman Oaks; Janine – Monday Night Women's Book Study in Northridge; Lorraine – Women's Q&A Panel on Fridays at Cabrito House; Justin – Jack Lomas Men's Stag in Encino, and the Thursday Discussion Group; & Tracee – Saturday Morning Burbank Women's Group. **IGRs were reminded to encourage recruitment of IGRs from meetings 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 mtg.**

- Acknowledgment of Outgoing Chairperson

Bill S., IGR Board of Directors Chair for 2014, presented our outgoing Chair, Andre W., with a plaque in gratitude for his service to Intergroup. Thank you, Andre!

Service Representatives

General Service District 17: Aimee

- District 17 will be hosting the Area Assembly on February 16th at St. Francis Xavier Church in Burbank, from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Volunteers are needed and all are welcome to attend.

San Fernando Valley Hospital & Institutions Committee: Daniel

- Daniel expressed his gratitude for the continuing support of H&I, and welcomed any interested parties to attend the upcoming monthly meeting.

San Fernando Valley AA Convention: Joel S.

- The 39th Annual San Fernando Valley Convention will take place January 31-February 2, 2014. Central Office will host a marathon on Saturday, 2/1/14, at 2:00 p.m. with a topic of "We Are Not A Glum Lot."

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.

Quotes from our A.A Founders

"We shall always have to deal with the fearful forces which are released when the human ego runs amok -- the same forces that are shattering the world of our time. Deliver us from temptation must therefore continue to be a prime ingredient of our every attitude, practice, and prayer." AA Co-founder Bill W., November 1960; "*Freedom Under God: The Choice Is Ours.*"

"By helping to insure the sobriety of others to come, we insure our own sobriety today." Rochester, N.Y., October 1987; "*The Rise and Fall of a Home Group, The Home Group: Heartbeat of AA*"

"Life is travel -- enjoy the journey, bumpy roads and all." New York, N.Y., May 1977; "*You and I Need Each Other*"

"When things go well, we must never fall into the error of believing that no great ill can befall us. Nor should we accuse ourselves of 'negative thinking' when we insist on facing the destructive forces in and around us, both realistically and effectively. Vigilance will always be the price of survival."

AA Co-Founder, Bill W., November 1960; "*Freedom Under God: The Choice Is Ours.*"

Copyright c. 1944-2012. AA Grapevine, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Reprints by Permission Only.

NEW BUSINESS: Perfect attendance certificates were presented to 40 groups for their service to Intergroup.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM AA GROUPS & SEVENTH TRADITION:

- Andy: The San Fernando Group's Valentine's Day Dance is February 8th at 10PM.
- Bill S.: Reminder that 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" (defined as "an event that includes an AA Meeting as part of the event").

ACKNOWLEDGE BIRTHDAYS FOR THE MONTH OF JANUARY – (51 YEARS OF SOBRIETY! ☺)

- Allison – 1 year on 1/2
- Andy – 2 years on 1/29
- Ryan – 3 years on 1/2
- Tom – 6 years on 1/7
- Carrie – 11 years on 1/20
- Antoinette – 28 years on 1/9

VACANCIES ON BOARD: Cheryl A. was nominated and unanimously approved as 2nd Alternate.

CLOSING: Motion to adjourn was recognized and seconded. Meeting adjourned with *The Lord's Prayer* at 7:31 p.m.
Prepared and submitted by: *Dawn H., Recording Secretary*



Murphy's Laws of Sobriety

1. The more cautiously you walk with a cup of coffee in an A.A. meeting, the greater your chances of somebody bumping in to you and spilling it.
2. Whatever you don't want to deal with is always the topic of every A.A. meeting you go to.
3. The more you resent your sponsor, the happier she is to see you.
4. The harder you work on a character defect, the more glaring it becomes.
5. Whenever a speaker says he is not going to give a long drunk-a-log, a long drunk-a-log ensues.
6. The less you work the principles, the greater the personalities.
7. The more you want to speak, the less you will be asked. The less you want to speak, the more you will be asked.
8. When you finish working all the steps and start to feel really good, a catastrophe always happens so that you have to start working them all over again.
9. The speaker will always focus on the one person in the room who isn't listening.
10. Wherever you put the cream and sugar in an A.A. meeting it's always in the wrong place.
11. When your fear of financial security is finally removed, so is your job.
12. Whenever you keep hearing the same speaker at every meeting you go to and you go out of town to a new meeting, he will be the main speaker.
13. Anything done in your home group more than once, which is totally illogical, will probably become a tradition.
14. When you feel your worst and go to a meeting, somebody always comes up and tells you how good you look.

Submitted by Robin F., Burbank



Continued, Page 1

should have been a lethal combination of anti-depressants and pain killers. Fortunately, the facility where I lived sent someone to check on me and I was taken to the hospital in the nick of time. My stomach was pumped and I was put on a 72-hour hold which lasted 12 days.

While I was in the psych lock-down, I went to an A.A. meeting put on by H & I. And when I got out of there, I immediately resumed my meeting schedule. When my next birthday came around, I took a 29 cake thinking I was still sober. But my sponsor pointed out to me that I was not as sober as I thought, due to my long-term love affair with vicodin, morphine and valium. I then changed my sobriety date and started as a newcomer again.

It took a lot of humility to stand up and say I was a newcomer after all those years of being at meetings. But I knew I had to be honest with myself, as well as others.

After that failed suicide attempt something amazing happened. I started to get well. I changed doctors and my new doctor changed my medications which, it turns out, were causing a lot of the symptoms of Parkinson's to be worse. I got off of vicodin completely, which was conflicting with my anti-depressant medication, so I no longer was feeling depressed. My speech improved as did my motor skills so I no longer had to use the power chair. Best of all, my hearing was restored after a cochlear implant so I no longer had to use a hearing aid or other devices at meetings to follow along.

I continue to go to three A.A. meetings a week, I work the Steps, I pray and meditate and I am constantly in touch with my Higher Power for strength and support. I have found the Promises really are coming true for me.

A few years ago, I thought my life was over and I was ready to pack it in. But with the help of my Higher Power and the program of A.A., I have been given, not just a second chance, but a third chance to live and be a contributing member of A.A. and a part of my family and a group of friends who have stood by me through all the difficult years.

Being handicapped is difficult but it is possible to maintain a positive frame of mind if you work this program. Thankfully, my sponsor has stayed with me through this journey of 30 years in the program. One of these days, I hope to sponsor a newcomer again and share what I have learned about the value of sobriety.

Bonnie C., Tujunga, CA

Got a story, poem or artwork that is A.A.- related that you want to share? Stories should be 500 - 700 words. Please email to "Editor, Recovery Times" at: xnowisthetime@aol.com. Stories must include your phone number and/or email contact info. We welcome all A.A. submissions but only publish those that are about Recovery and A.A. and which follow our format. We look forward to hearing from you!



CALENDAR OF A.A. EVENTS

26th Annual Big Island Bash: Keauhou, Hawaii April 11-13, 2014

Tri-State Roundup: Laughlin, NV May 15-18, 2014

South Bay Roundup: Torrance, CA May 23-26, 2014

AA Desert Pow Wow: Indian Wells, CA June 5-8, 2014

Foothill Roundup: La Canada, CA August 1-3 2014





We Who Are Next In Line

I am a 22-year old alcoholic. After several years of hard drinking, I was dying of alcoholism. Doctors had told me I was incurable and hopeless. I began to recover through the program of Alcoholics Anonymous, and by the grace of a very loving God and A.A., I'm still sober three years later.

Because of my recovery, I was allowed to pursue a lifelong dream and I enlisted in the Air Force. This has given me the opportunity to attend AA meetings in different states and other nations, and I have noticed something interesting in my travels.

Where a meeting allows people to talk about drug addiction, it usually allows them to talk about everything else under the sun and they invariably do. In these meetings, that have little regard for AA Traditions. There seems to be more people who go back to drinking, more people who don't practice the Twelve Steps, more people who don't have (or don't use) a sponsor, and more people who don't extend a safe welcome to visitors or pay much attention to newcomers.

However, on the other side of the coin, meetings that insist on discussing topics related to recovery from alcoholism only and stand by it are often meetings that make sure a new person is welcome and given phone numbers with maybe a pamphlet or two; meetings that make their visitors feel like they've come home, meetings that get involved with Hospitals and Institutions committees and their service centers.

These meetings produce a different result. The old-timers are there and they have a respected voice because of their tested experience. People at those meetings have and use sponsors and they talk about how they've applied the AA program in their daily lives. They have more solutions and talk less about problems, more peace and less turmoil, and more people who stay recovered and less who go back to drinking again.

Bill W. was right: AA cannot fix the world. AA's Twelve Steps and Traditions can be applied universally to everyone's benefit, but AA itself must forever remain by and for alcoholics. To mix up our primary purpose - freedom from alcohol - with drug addiction and overeating and other destructive dependencies erodes the unity that binds us together; unity we must keep to survive.

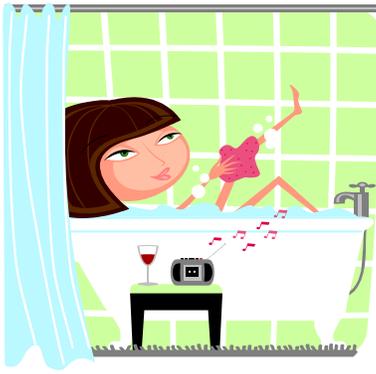
It's not a matter of exclusivity; it's a matter of the survival of AA's very existence. Since the Fellowship's early days, we have had the Twelve Steps to guide us. But the bedrock of AA has always been one drunk talking to another. Through this, the depth of understanding is reached that gives hope to a desolate alcoholic's heart. One drunk to another not one addict to an alcoholic or one codependent to an alcoholic.

One day it will be left to the young people now in the Fellowship to carry on the original spirit and traditions of AA, even though the buzz words and trends will come and go. It will be up to us to teach newcomers how to maintain the type of sobriety that achieves the promises of the Big Book and dispels some of the fables of recovery popular today. It will be up to us to help the newcomer from the street dry out, shakes and pukes and all. We will be left to teach the little things: how to sit at the front, not back of the room; say hello to the new guy; wash coffee cups and ashtrays. One day it will be up to us to uphold the Traditions. It will be up to us to keep it simple.

Today young people are learning from the last generation of AA's who got the message straight from the original old-timers. We must be diligent in preserving the AA way of life through our actions and our participation at meetings amid an ever growing attitude of "I come first" rather than "sobriety comes first."

There are many catch-words but only one program of recovery outlined in the Big Book. Old-timers, there are still some of us who desperately need you and value what you have to say. Young people it's our responsibility to follow in their footsteps.

Jenifer C, Bury St. Edmunds, England, 1994. Permission to Reprint/ AA Grapevine (I Am Responsible) 2005



Lost But Not Forgotten

I heard today about the death for a middle-aged, healthy woman who I had known through a business affiliation. Iris was a lovely, outgoing, bright woman who had a captivating presence. Then, suddenly, she died. I had wondered what the cause of her death I was afraid to ask. Was it suicide over the loss of the husband she had just divorced? Was it a heart attack?

In talking with another friend, I found out the cause her untimely death. It was a drug interaction caused by a single glass of wine. Apparently, she had seen a dentist earlier that day for a simple oral surgical procedure and he had prescribed some painkillers. She had been instructed not to drink alcohol with these meds but apparently, she didn't think a glass of wine would hurt her. That night, she went to bed and never woke up.

After hearing about this, I thought how typical that response is for those of us who are alcoholic: We never think a simple glass of something is going to hurt us -- or anyone else for that matter. But it does and the results can be quite catastrophic: from the guy who has a drink on his way home and mows over a woman walking her baby in the crosswalk to the person who is driving too fast around that dangerous curve and loses control of his car. The stories go on and on...

Most of the time, we never know the real reason why a person had died. Other times, we know only too well that it was the direct result of alcoholism.

For those of us who are lucky enough to be sober, the gift is that we are here today. Tomorrow, we have to make another decision to NOT pick up the drink, and for those of us who do, we get to live another day.

Editor

Daily Reflections Word Search. Each month, we feature a puzzle from a page in Daily Reflections. Today's reading is from January 27: "Freedom From Guilt." Where other people were concerned, we had to drop the word "blame" from our speech and thought. Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, Pg. 47. Read sideways, up and down and diagonally.

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

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

Van Nuys, CA 91405

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED