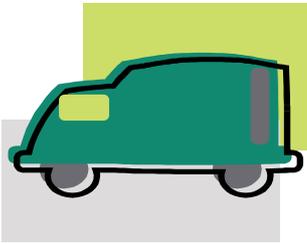


RECOVERY TIMES

Vol. 41, No. 4, April 2014

The Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office Monthly Newsletter



A Local Story

I've been asked, "When did you know you could do this A.A. thing?"

When I showed up, I knew for sure I had come to the last house on the block. It was a gray day in November, I was homeless, and I was stuck in Burbank (which I soon found out was "The Sobriety Capital of the World"), oh Lord.

There was Bob T. at the door at the Burbank Group on Angeleno, the effusively happy greeter. I looked at him and all I could see were the differences. He shook my hand and asked if I was new. I was beat up so badly I couldn't even lie so I told him I was. He pointed to the coffee and he said I should sit next to him. I got the coffee and sat on the other side of the room and stayed to myself.

Three days later was Thanksgiving. I awoke from the first good sleep I'd had since day one (Boy, those guys at the Victory House could snore). I left the house at 6:30 a.m. for the Unit A club in North Hollywood. They were having their Thanksgiving Alcañon and I thought I could hide out in the back by myself all day. I got my coffee, sat down and wouldn't you know it -- some guy sat down next to me and started chatting me up. I got up and left and was back at Victory House by 9:30 a.m.

Out of 80 residents, only 3 of us were left in that living room watching the Twilight Zone Marathon. Great! I was sitting by myself with two other losers when down the hall, I heard someone yelling to someone on the staircase, "Who wants to ride the sobriety bus?" That's what Bob yelled from the landing. No one outside of the house was allowed to go past that point. There was Bob standing there with that wide grin on his face. I now know that God leaves us our shortcomings for a reason. Here was this guy, two years sober, being happy and of service and all I could think of was how pitiful he was. He reiterated, "Who wants to ride the sobriety bus?"

I looked at the other two guys then at Bob and somebody said, "I'll go." I looked around and it was me who had answered him. Off we went in that pimped 1969 Econoline van with the green shag carpet on the dash and all that stuff hanging off his rear view mirror -- onto the happy road of destiny!

He took me to KCB (Keep Coming Back) Club in Glendale. It was a bombed out old beer bar filled with hairy-knuckled bikers, turned into an A.A. club. We walked in and were blasted by the smell of old stale beer in the carpet. Bob gave me up immediately with a point of fingers, "He's new." Thanks Bob! And then, wouldn't you know it the biggest guy in the room who comes over to me and announces, "I'm Ray." I said, "Hey Ray." He then said, "Look, we are just about to sit down for our Thanksgiving dinner." I had a feeling he was going to ask us to leave and come back when the meeting began but he didn't. He pointed to all the food and the mismatched dishes and aluminum foil and said something that blew my mind and made it possible to stay in A.A. for these several decades. He said, "You are more than welcome."

Meegan K., Burbank





SERVICE COMMITTEES SCHEDULE:

- **SFV Central Office Bd. Mtg: May 14, 2014**, 6:30 p.m., Central Office
- **SFV Intergroup: Mon., May 12, 2014, New IGRs**: 6:30 p.m., General Meeting: 7 p.m., St. Innocent Church., 5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana
- **Gen Svc, Dist. 1 (1st Wed.) May 7, 2014**, 6:30 p.m., 7552 Remmet, Can. Pk.
- **Gen. Service, District 2: (1st Tues.) May 6, 2014**, 6:30 p.m., 4011 Dunsmore, La Crescenta
- **Gen. Svc Dist. 7: (2nd Sat.) May 10, 2014**, 9 a.m., Women's Club:33201 Agua

Illustration by Leslie Z.

Dulce Cyn Rd, Agua Dulce, CA

- **Gen Service, District 11: (1st Mon.) May 5, 2014**, 6 p.m. New GSR 6:30 p.m., 315 W. Vine Street, Glendale,
- **Gen Service, District 16: (1st Mon.) May 5, 2014**, 6:15 p.m. meeting, 15950 Chatsworth, Granada Hills.
- **Gen. Svc., District 17: (1st Mon.) May 5,** 6 p.m. New GSRs/6:30 p.m. Bus. Mtg., 5000 Colfax, NoHo.
- **SFV H & I: (3rd Mon.) April 21, 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 2015 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 each year of your sobriety, you can support Central Office in being there for alcoholics calling our phone number from 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 March, we thank the following for their contributions: **Belinda T. - 9 Years, Kay G. - 20 Years, Bonnie H. - 23 Years, Jana D. - 27 Years, Gus D. - 27 Years, Maggie M. - 30 Years, Learning to Live Men's Stag - 140 Years (10 men)**

DEATHS (THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE): Cheryl B. - 2 Years (Hole in the Sky) 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. 91405.**

Quotes from our AA Founders

"We are losing all fear of those violent emotional storms which sometimes cross our alcoholic world; perhaps it bespeaks our confidence that every storm will be followed by a calm; a calm which is more understanding, more compassionate, more tolerant than any we ever knew before."

AA Co-Founder, Bill W.,
August 1946, "Who Is a Member
of Alcoholics Anonymous?"

The Language of the Heart

"In AA, we discover that it is impossible to give without receiving, or receive without giving." *North Hollywood, Calif., February 1993*
"The Gift of Sobriety"

"I can't imagine anything that would make me so mad, glad, or sad that I would want to go back to what I was before AA."
Napa, Calif., February 1993
"The Meaning of Success"

"My emotional bottom came in sobriety ... I actually had to sit and feel all those feelings I had worked so hard to drown out with alcohol."

New York, N.Y., January 2006
"Attitude Adjustment"

Beginner's Book: Getting and Staying Sober in AA

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Love and tolerance is our code.

SAN FERNANDO VALLEY CENTRAL OFFICE

Minutes of March 10, 2014 Intergroup Representatives Meeting

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

TREASURER'S REPORT: Brian H. reported Central Office is in the red <-\$1,128.22> MTD and in the black \$6,649.07 YTD. Brian thanked the groups for their ongoing support, and asked for continued generosity as we plan the move for Central Office. A full Treasurer's Report is available in the Recovery Times.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S REPORT: Bob F. stated that everything is running smoothly at Central Office in terms of operations, but they are still looking to relocate in the very near future.

Our volunteer staff is currently 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 superb with the newsletter.

MEETING - RELATED BUSINESS: Neva S. introduced 4 new Intergroup representatives were introduced: Roxanne – representing Odyssey House, Q&A Meeting; Alex – Tuesday Night Steps and Traditions, Studio City. Loretta – Tues. Women's Participation Meeting, noon, Cabrito House. Chris – Tues. Night Layers of the Onion Big Book/Step Study. IGRs were reminded to encourage recruitment of IGRs from meetings that are not currently represented. There are currently 700 meetings 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 Hospital & Institutions Committee: Daniel H&I's annual literature fundraiser, Bike-N-4-Books, is coming up on June 14th at Woodley Park. All are encouraged to support this event. He expressed gratitude for the continuing support of H&I, and welcomed anyone interested to attend the upcoming monthly meeting. There is an urgent need for people with jail/prison clearance to take panels into the various institutions. Clearance requirements are different for different agencies, and all were encouraged to attend the upcoming H&I orientation and business meeting to learn more.

Santa Clarita Valley AA Convention: Bernard B. reported the dates for the convention are October 17-18-19, 2014 at the Embassy Suites in Santa Clarita. This year's theme is "No Middle of the Road Solution." The annual spaghetti dinner fundraiser will be held April 26th, with a suggested donation of \$20.

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. Please send meeting changes IN WRITING to Central Office.

NEW BUSINESS: A motion was made to add the following language to Central Office's bylaws: "*The Board of Directors will conduct an annual compensation review in December, for the following fiscal year, in perpetuity.*" Following a brief discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM AA GROUPS & SEVENTH TRADITION:

- **Laurie:** The Foothill Roundup will take place August 1-3.
- **Sandy R.:** The Woman to Woman Retreat will take place May 30-June 1 at Mount Saint Mary's College.
- **Dave:** The 39th Annual Great Outdoor Beaver (Utah) Meeting and AA Campvention will take place over Labor Day Weekend (August 28-31) in Beaver, Utah.
- **Bob F.:** Happy Campers, "best meeting under the stars," begins March 15th in Lake Piru, and runs through October. Come for the day, or camp overnight.
- **Bill S.:** There are several conventions and round-ups coming up soon, including the 30th Annual Tri-State Roundup in Laughlin (May 15-18), the 30th Annual South Bay Family Roundup in Torrance (May 23-26), and the A.A. Desert Pow Wow in Indian Wells (June 5-8).
- **Bill S.:** Reminded groups to 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 FEBRUARY/MARCH

- Leslie – 1 year on 3/12
- Tegan – 3 years on 3/7
- Lisa – 5 years on 2/14
- Patricia – 5 years on 3/20
- John – 8 years on 3/19
- Janine – 27 years on 3/7
- Cheryl – 28 years on 3/17

VACANCIES ON BOARD: There are currently no vacancies on the Board.

CLOSING: Motion to adjourn was recognized and seconded. Meeting adjourned with *The Lord's Prayer* at 7:22 p.m. Prepared and submitted by: *Dawn H., Recording Secretary*

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

29th Annual Orange County A.A. Convention, Hilton Hotel, Costa Mesa, April 18-20, 2014 www.oacaac.org

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

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

H & I: 24th Annual Bikin' 4 Books: Woodley Park, Van Nuys, Picnic Area #3, June 14, 2014

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

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

11th Annual Mountain AA Conference: Big Bear Performing Arts Center, August 16 - 17, 2014
www.mountainaaconference.com



Why We Need H & I

I have the privilege of being a sober member of Alcoholics Anonymous. As an H&I member, I am touched by those alcoholics who are incarcerated or in treatment facilities and their struggles with consequences of their drinking. These alcoholics have helped me stay sober when there were times life got tough. In return, I



wonder what I can say to them, so I pass on what was said to me through the years. 'No human power can relieve us of our misery, do what we do. Go to meetings, work the steps and pray to the God of your understanding, and the peace of sobriety will come to you.'

H & I supports Bridging the Gap as a way for newly released alcoholics to have contact with a sober AA member and take them to meetings. H & I is in need of more panel members to carry the message of sobriety. Janeen P., SFV H&I

H & I of the San Fernando Valley has an urgent need, right now, to fill 15 new panels at the following correctional facilities: Twin Towers, Men's Central Jail, CRDF Women's and Wayside. To become eligible to serve on a panel, you must first attend H & I of the SF Valley's monthly orientation meeting on the 3rd Monday of the month (next one is April 21, 2014, 7 p.m. at 5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana). Learn how to be of service to those in institutions by getting involved in H & I.

A Person Affected by H & I

I remember the day I gave AA a shot. I was in a local treatment facility. On the first day there they had me go to an AA meeting. They knew I was brand new and had me go up to the podium. I said that I didn't know about AA and that I didn't think it was for me.

Afterwards someone came up to me and told me I was in here for 30 days and what did I have to lose? At that moment the mixture of demoralization and desperation gave me a moment of clarity and humility and I said, "Okay, why not?"

After many panels and meetings I was thoroughly convinced that I would have to attend AA after I finished their program. A panel with some local people that attended a meeting a couple of blocks from my house came in and shared their experiences before and after the meeting and disclosed the location of their home group. As soon as I got out, I went straight there, found a sponsor, and began my journey in AA.

Anonymous

Feeling "Different"

I remember when I was new I felt as I always had: outside looking in. The differences: They were smarter, had more money, knew what they were doing, were more attractive, had an emotional life... they were better than me. But as I stayed and followed my sponsor, stopped thinking and started doing, serving coffee, being a treasurer - what did I find? My thoughts had changed, my connection with my Higher Power became REAL, not just words, and I felt by the time I had finished my 5th and 6th steps (1/2 way through, as the Big Book says), that I was at least "as good" as all and now had the opportunities and could move forward.

I started introducing myself to attractive people, sitting with smart people, and going to events with music, people - all AA people. From there, I went back to school, earned a Masters degree, worked out and got

healthy, started a savings account and interviewed for a better job. What changes! All came from staying sober.

I no longer feel different. I feel the same as my brothers and sisters. Today, sober with sponsees, a sponsor, a job, a car, peace of mind, friends and an understanding of humility, I have all I have ever wanted. Life is good!!! Anonymous

Miss Know-It-All

“Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path,” is one of the quotes that I have been meditating on and eventually have had a spiritual awakening as a result. I have been a member of A.A. since 1995 and now have 6 years in the program.

I have begun to wonder why I just started understanding How It Works. As I inventoried this issue I realized that I had NOT followed the path! Why, because my name is KIA (Know It All).

I had not met my sponsor or anyone whom I thought was as smart as me. I was over - educated. Finally a man in a suit joined the group and he had a university degree and just “looked” smart. He loved to read and was also interested in A.A. history. We hit it off and he became my sponsor. He was the only one, up to that point, that I would LISTEN to. Later I found out he was as sick as the rest.

Becoming open and willing to learn, be teachable, is what happened to me. He took me to meetings with him – The Old Timers –whom he like to serve. He would pick them up, at least 2 or 3, and me. I hated it at first; they bored me to tears telling their stories about the 1st sponsor they had, the quotes that sponsor told them and then they would begin to tell a laundry list of menial sounding stories. I still go to those closed meetings with them. Now I see that it is important to get those old timers to the meetings so we can follow their path. The laundry lists are how to live sober on a day to day basis; the calm, boredom or serenity that they have found and how they live moment to moment.

I had a machete and the 12 Steps & 12 Traditions as my map for living. Being as clever, intelligent and just being me, KIA, I trudged from 1995 until 2007 cutting out my own path; running into lions, tigers and bears; coming back bleeding and injured. The old timers and my sponsor patched me up and told me to start on the path again and don’t give up.

I know they are the elders who know the pitfalls in the road, where the blind spots are and have the patience to let me stay lost in the jungle but never letting me stray too far away from the sound of their voice. Now I can hear them and their personal slogans. I will be a keeper of those slogans which helped to keep me sober. Their voices play like music to my ears, now I have learned their tune. No longer do I risk relying on my intelligence because it was my best thinking that got me here! Kathy G., Bakersfield, CA



DON'T WANT TO GO BACK TO SLEEP

Nearly 3 years ago, I don't know what happened: Call it a moment of clarity, divine intervention or an awakening, but alcohol had cracked my mind open. Everything I was doing wasn't working anymore. I had stolen everything I could from my family and burned every bridge I crossed. September 20, 2011, I snapped out of a fog and in that moment I felt like I had surrendered to alcoholism. I know about A.A. - Heck, I had been

raised in A.A. My mom has been a long - standing member and I vowed I would never fall prey to alcoholism. Hell . . .

I don't know when my first drink was. I don't really think that matters as I believe I really drank myself into my disease. The weight of the world finally caught up with me and I couldn't save 'us' anymore. It was time to retire as the helper, the problem solver or better yet, the know -it-all. Coming to A.A., I hit the ground running. My way wasn't working and I came to believe that A.A. was working in your lives right away. I had seen it happen with my mother and I was receptive to the abundance of love in my first meeting.

My first year in sobriety I really clung to the idea that this was a process of reveal and release. I hadn't thought much of God before A.A. and what I did think was a whole lot of contempt prior to investigation.

I believe, through the process of the 12 steps and continuing to enlarge my spiritual life on a daily basis, that I have had my own personal experience with a God of my own understanding. I have awakened and continue to awaken more every moment. A.A. and the 6th & 7th steps have really opened the door spiritually for me. Step 11 has changed my life. The process of meditation, real meditation, not reading or contemplating, has improved my conscious contact with God and my relationships with family and co-workers. Thanks to AA and a god of good, my life has become amazing in just a short amount of time. It's a daily reprieve and I always ask my sponsees, "What have you done today to enlarge your spiritual life and secure your sobriety?"

Keith V., Simi Valley, CA

Daily Reflections Word Search. Each month, we feature a puzzle from a page in Daily Reflections. Today's reading is from March 15th, The God Idea. *"When we saw others solve their problems by a simple reliance upon the Spirit of the Universe, we had to stop doubting the power of God. Our ideas did not work. But the God idea did. "* **Big Book, page 52.** Read up, down, sideways and diagonally to find the words.

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

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