

RECOVERY TIMES

Vol. 41, No. 5, May 2014

The Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office Newsletter

Not Bored, On a Board

When I first joined A.A., I used to think recovery would be a boring existence: *What do you mean, don't drink for the rest of my life?*, I used to think. *What else is there to do?* But then, I would hear, during announcements at meetings, that there would be a business meeting on such and such a date or such and such a time, and that all who wanted to know what went on with the Group are welcome to attend. So at about eight months into my recovery, I attended my first business meeting and came out of it with meeting hall keys and a service commitment to secretary the Saturday 7 a.m. Question and Answers meeting. I can't begin to describe the exhilaration I experienced by having been given my very own keys to our meeting hall! Now it was our meeting hall! But it came with a small price; it meant now I had to attend all business meetings.



So a couple of months later, I became the Group's Intergroup co-representative and then later, full-fledge rep. I so wanted to do a good job that as time went by, and I started to learn all the service lingo, my reports started becoming more extensive. After about a year of Intergroup meeting attendance, my IGR reports started getting so long that group members that sat through our business meetings would express their exasperation at having to endure my boring reports. This caused a problem for me and after praying about it, one day it occurred to me that I could post my reports on our bulletin board. And at our business meetings, all I had to announce was that the IGR report is posted on the bulletin board - for those who wanted to keep abreast of A.A. matters at the Intergroup level.

When my term was over and it was time to rotate out of my Intergroup commitment, I found that we didn't have a General Service Representative. Wow, I thought, this is the 'big time.' I didn't think I could handle such a commitment like serving as our Group's GSR, but something told me, "Hey, what's the worst that can happen if I couldn't cut the mustard?" So by the time I left my first GSR meeting, I was totally convinced, "Hey, I can do this! It's not too much different than IGR service. I'll learn the lingo like I learned it at Intergroup."

Before I knew it, I was soon more than a GSR; sixteen years later, I have been active at different capacities in General Service. In *The Promises*, it states, "That feeling of uselessness and self pity will disappear." Not only have I been blessed with that promise, but my recovery has been anything but boring.

Anonymous in L.A.

Calendar of Events:

30th annual Tri-State Roundup, Riverside Resort Hotel & Casino, Laughlin, NV: May 15-18, 2014

30th Annual AA South Bay Roundup, Torrance, CA: May 23-26, 2014

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

24th Annual Bike-N-4-Books: Woodley Park, Picnic Area #3, 6350 Woodley Ave, Van Nuys, CA June 14, 2014

22nd Annual AA Foothill Roundup: Flintridge Prep, 4543 Crown Ave., La Canada, CA., August 1-3, 2014



Illustration by Leslie Z.

SERVICE COMMITTEES SCHEDULE:

SFV Central Office Board Mtg: June 4, 2014, 6:30 p.m., Central Office

SFV Intergroup: Mon., June 9, 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.) June 4, 2014, 6:30 p.m., 7552 Remmet, Can. Pk.

Gen. Service, District 2: (1st Tues.) June 3, 2014, 6:30 p.m., 4011 Dunsmore, La Crescenta

Gen. Svc Dist. 7: (2nd Sat.) June 14, 2014, 9 a.m., Women's Club:33201 Agua Dulce Cyn Rd, Agua Dulce, CA

Gen Service, District 11: (1st Mon.) June 2, 2014, 6 p.m. New GSR 6:30 p.m., 315 W. Vine Street, Glendale

- **Gen Service, District 16: (1st Mon.) June 2, 2014,** 6:15 p.m. meeting, 15950 Chatsworth, Granada Hills.
- **Gen. Svc., District 17: (1st Mon.) June 2, 2014,** 6 p.m. New GSRs/6:30 p.m. Bus. Mtg., 5000 Colfax, NoHo.
- **SFV H & I: (3rd Mon.) May 19, 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 A.A. 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. (See next page for more info under SF Valley AA Convention).

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 May, we thank the following for their contributions: **David S. - 3 Years, Steven M. - 32 Years, Jack L. - 33 Years, Mike E. - 33 Years, Bob F. - 33 Years, Arnold S. - 36 Years.**

DEATHS (THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE): **Art M. - 29 Years, Barbara C. - 34 years, & Betty J. - 40+ Years.** 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. (818) 988-3001. 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.**

APRIL 2014 INTERGROUP MEETING, SAN FERNANDO VALLEY CENTRAL OFFICE



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



TREASURER'S REPORT: Brian H. reported: Central Office is in the red <-\$934.46> MTD and in the black \$5,714.61 YTD. Group donations are down approximately \$3,300 from last year, and the groups were encouraged to request their treasurers to send in contributions on a timely basis. 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. said: Everything is running smoothly at Central Office in terms of operations but we 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.
- The 75th Anniversary commemorative edition of the original Big Book is available at Central Office for \$13.08 (including tax). There are 400 copies available on a first come/first served basis.
- Everything is running smoothly with the www.sfvaa.org website. Everything is fabulous with the Recovery Times.

MEETING RELATED BUSINESS: Introduction of New Intergroup Representatives, Neva S. welcomed two new IGRs this month: Duffy – representing the Monday Night North Hills Speaker meeting & Frank representing the Friday Night "Scandalous Pigs" meeting in Glendale. IGRs were reminded to encourage recruitment of IGRs from meetings that are not currently represented. There are currently 791 meetings and 300+ groups in the San Fernando Valley but 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 1: John said District 1 hosted the pre-conference workshop before sending our delegate, Sharon, off to the Area Assembly in New York.

San Fernando Valley Hospital & Institutions Committee: *Daniel reported that 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 (and stay for the BBQ!). 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. announced the dates for the convention: October 17-19, 2014 at the Embassy Suites in Valencia. This year's theme is "No Middle of the Road Solution." The registration website should be up and running by April 24th.*

San Fernando Valley AA Convention: *Joel S. said the dates for the convention are Jan 30, Jan 31, and Feb 1, 2015, and will be held at the Warner Center Marriott in Woodland Hills. The first planning committee meeting is April 15th at St. Innocent Church, 5657 Lindley Ave. in Tarzana at 7PM, and all are welcome to participate.*

IGR MINUTES, CONTINUED

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: No attendance certificates were awarded this evening.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM AA GROUPS & SEVENTH TRADITION:

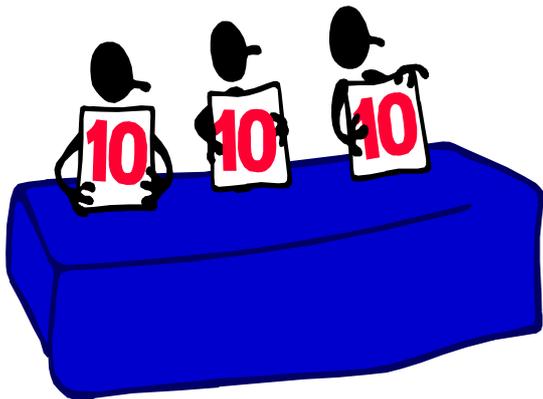
- **Andy:** The San Fernando Group is hosting its annual Springfest Alcathon over the Memorial Day Weekend (May 23-26), with a Meeting & Dance on Saturday, 5/24, beginning at 8PM. Tickets are \$5/person or \$7/couple. Flyers are available on the back table.
- **Serena:** The Serenity Seekers Women's BB/SS moved to the SpiritWorks Church on Pass Avenue in Burbank. They meet Tuesday night from 7-8PM, and all ladies are welcome.
- **Jessica:** The Thursday Night "Just the Black Print" Meeting has moved to the church on Dickens Avenue (behind Fat Burger).
- **Bob F.:** Happy Campers, "best meeting under the stars", began March 15th in Lake Piru, and runs through October. Come for the day, or camp overnight. Flyers are available on the back table.
- **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 APRIL

- Debbie – 1 year on 4/1
- Dustin – 1 year on 4/26
- John – 4 years on 4/15
- Chris – 5 years on 4/4
- Bernard – 20 years on 4/29
- Richard – 24 years on 4/5
- Bob F – 33 years on 4/30

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

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



My First Experience In A.A.

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

Afterwards, someone came up to me and told me that 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, "Why Not?"

After many panels and meetings, I was thoroughly convinced that I would have to attend A.A. after I finished the program. A panel with some local people that attended a meeting a couple of blocks away from my house, came in and shared their experiences before and after the meeting. Then they 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 A.A. **Anonymous**

Quotes from our Founders

"We are sure there must be a million alcoholics who would join Alcoholics Anonymous tomorrow if only they knew what we do. We keenly realize that any fundamental disunity among us could instantly disillusion tens of thousands who would again turn their faces to the wall. Hence those disruptions common to great wealth, power, or controversy ought never be for us. Too many of the 'million who don't yet know' would surely die."
AA Co-Founder, Bill W., Oct. 1949, "We Approach Maturity"

"Finally came April 1939. The book was done. Tales of recovery for its story section had been supplied by Dr. Bob and his Akron brethren. Others were supplied by New Yorkers, New Jerseyites. One came in from Cleveland and another from Maryland.

Chapters had been read and discussed at meetings. I had thought myself the author of the text until I discovered I was just the umpire of the differences of opinion. After endless voting on a title for the new work we had decided to call it *The Way Out*. But inquiry by Fitz M., our Maryland alcoholic at The Library of Congress disclosed the fact that 12 books already bore that title. Surely we couldn't make our book the 13th. So we named it Alcoholics Anonymous instead!

Though we didn't know it, our movement then got its name -- a name which because of the implication of humility and modesty has given us our treasured spiritual principle of anonymity."

Bill W., July 1947, "Book Publication Proved Discouraging Venture"

The Language of the Heart

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79th FOUNDERS' DAY CELEBRATION

This June 6, 7 & 8th in Akron, Ohio, the Birthplace of A.A., sober alcoholics from all over the world will congregate at the University of Akron to acknowledge the founding of Alcoholics Anonymous. There will be fun, fellowship and meetings for 3 days, plus many other unique events. Here's a look at what will take place in

June in Akron, Ohio:

Friday, June 6th:

- A.A. 12 Step Panel: One step per hour from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.
- A.A. Early Bird Meeting - "Take your sobriety and go beyond your sobriety."
- Actors Guild Play: "The New Guy"
- Reunion En Espanol: Open discussion.
- A.A. Old Timers' Panel
- A.A. & Al-Anon Meeting - "The Joys and Challenges of Working an A.A. & Al-Anon Program."
- Serenity Singers
- Young People's Meeting
- All-Night Alkathon A.A.

Saturday, June 7th:

- Bus Tours of Historic A.A. Sites
- A.A. Archives - located in Akron Intergroup Office
- The 12 Traditions - "Why it Works"
- A.A. Speaker Meeting
- Grapevine 70th Anniversary Celebration
- Actors Guild Play "The New Guy"
- A.A. Speaker Meeting
- Reunion En Espanol AA
- The History of Our Big Book
- Serenity Singers
- A.A. Speaker Meeting
- Dance! Dance! Dance!

Sunday, June 8th

- Motorcade to Dr. Bob's Grave - Memorial tribute to Dr. Bob & Anne Smith (A Must See: Over 1,000 motorcyclists participate in this procession led by the police!)
- A.A. Spiritual Panel Meeting
- A.A. Closing Speaker Meeting - "Page 151"

For more information, go to: www.akronaa.org

* Additional Al-Anon meetings and activities, not listed. Founders' Day is a service of the Akron Area Intergroup Council of A.A.

An AA Pilgrimage: The Wilson House, Vermont

The time was anything but lost. If anything, it was probably the antithesis of Ray Milland's epic struggle in his "Lost Weekend." In my 23 years of alcoholic drinking, I had enough lost weekends and mid-weeks as well to scare even the screen version of Ray Milland's character into sobriety. It is often shared somewhat tongue-in-cheek at meetings that religion is for those who want to go to heaven and spirituality is for those of us who have been to hell and don't want to go back. A normal person would never understand that statement, while a true alcoholic like me needs no explanation.

In July 2010, my wife and I took a day trip from her friend's house in New Hampshire to the Wilson House in East Dorset Vermont. Before we left, we took an application home and filled it out and promptly mailed it in. As God would have it, we had good friends, one of whom was the Episcopal Minister who married us. Bob and his wife Ann C. had volunteered at the Wilson House years before and were staff favorites. This loving couple vouched for us, and our application was immediately accepted.

We arrived at the Wilson House on Saturday morning July 2, 2011, and were oriented by young Tim, the volunteer coordinator. When speaking about the staff at the Wilson House, I think it is appropriate to say that not only were they like family, but dedicated to love and service. If Bill W. had staffed the house, I am sure these would be the people he would have picked. From the start, it was like we had known them all of our lives.

The manager of the House is named Bonnie. She's non-alcoholic, but got involved with the house when she married Ozzie, whose lifetime goal it was to restore the house to its former state. Unfortunately, Ozzie is no longer with us, yet lived to see the Inn restored. Bonnie was set to remarry the current co-manager Tim B. The date was Saturday, July 16, the day we were to leave. Bonnie asked us if we could stay on to manage the Inn that day as the entire staff would be involved in the wedding. We agreed to stay on with trepidation.

Also on staff were the volunteer coordinator's fiancée Liz, Kevin, who is Bonnie's son, and his son Matt. Matt is a delightful young man. Not to be omitted were Robert the jolly cook and his wife, Pat, who oversaw the dining room. My wife did what she was good at which was gardening, helping with the cooking and getting wildflowers for the dining room on a daily basis.

As to my duties: it is ironic that a native New Yorker like me should be assigned the care and feeding of the farm animals behind the Griffith House. First thing every morning, I got Timmy, the goat, his arthritis pill. Timmy was a very playful goat with only one horn. Besides the goats, there was also Alfie the Turkey, and four chickens to feed and water.

As a further test of humility was my next daily task, which was the cleaning of the butt cans. As a former heavy smoker and beer drinker, this was a trying operation. But I performed this task with increasing serenity. My final chore for the morning was to sweep and mop the wraparound front porch. I am an accountant and college professor by trade so these daily tasks--like the AA program--goes contrary to everything I am used to.

As I attended my third AA meeting in the big room in a converted barn, I felt compelled to share. One of the prerequisites to sharing at this particular meeting was to state where you lived and the name of your home group. I stated my name, the fact that I was from Wilmington N.C., that my home group was the Acceptance Group and that it met at Stepping Stones Manor, a men's halfway house. I can't tell you what I shared, but right after the meeting, a younger man in a biker outfit came across to talk with me. He introduced himself and explained that someone he knew well had spent a considerable amount of sober time in Wilmington. I asked him if he could tell me the person's name and he said "Bill M." I was stunned as that happened to be my first sponsor in Wilmington. I told him that after several years, I had been obliged to find a new sponsor since Bill and I had too many differences of opinion; and that if he knew Bill well, he would probably understand. He replied that Bill M. was his father. Open mouth insert foot.

Bill M. and I were bitter rivals for over 13 years. I had tried to make amends to him over our falling out, but he adamantly refused to have anything to do with me. He died of a massive heart attack while visiting a former sponsee in the Midwest. I was out of town for his memorial and felt that our association terminated with his death. I was mistaken. Strange how God works in mysterious ways? I went all the way to East Dorset, Vt. only to meet up with Bill's son from the Virgin Islands, and I was finally set free from this resentment.

I was finished with my morning chores by noon often and I would take a ride on my bike to the town of Manchester some five or six miles south of East Dorset. Here I discovered Burr and Burton Academy where Bill fell in love, became the number one man as the pitcher and captain of the baseball team, and played lead violin in the school orchestra. Next I visited the Bennington County Court House where Ebby was rescued by Roland H. and the judge's son, which led four months later to him carrying the message to Bill W. in Brooklyn Heights, N.Y. Finally, I biked through the luxurious golf course where Bill ran around trying to catch Walter and on to Manchester airport where Bill and Ebby tumbled drunk out of the first flight to open the airport. I no longer had to picture the background to the events I read about. I stood in the very places where our Fellowship began. It is like a kind of holy land to me.

At one of the last meetings I attended at the house, a baseball fan, whom I had been teasing the whole stay at the house, shared his story. Kevin discussed the Steps in a unique manner. He said the first three Steps are the surrender steps, while the Fourth and Fifth were the discovery steps in which you uncovered the problems, and you solved in steps Six through Nine. The latter were the solution steps. Finally in 10, we take daily inventory and when wrong continue to fix the harms we do on a daily basis. In 11, we pray and meditate to maintain our conscious contact with the God we discovered in Step Three. And ultimately in 12, we pass on what we awakened to in the first 11 Steps. I was impressed and learned yet again!

Volunteering at the **Wilson House** brought my program to another level. It is an experience my wife and I were glad we did not miss. Before we left, we made arrangements to volunteer at the house again next year. I would recommend this experience to anyone. However, please don't take our spot. I still have enough self-centeredness not to want to lose something I already have. —*Bill B., Wilmington, N.C.*

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

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