

RECOVERY TIMES

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The Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office Newsletter



The Only Woman in Town: In the 1960s, the small-town meetings in Canada were a man's game.

When I came to AA in 1966 I was 26. I was a divorced single mother, a bit of an oddity in a small town in British Columbia where, at that time, few women attended meetings—especially on a regular basis. The men outnumbered women 10 to one. Back then, many thought that AA women who had a drinking problem and were not closet drunks, had to be loose women and were the lowest rung on the ladder.

Isn't it wonderful that today, in many communities there are meetings just for women? Back then, the speakers—all men—had to have several years, or many months of sobriety. It was suggested that you go to meetings to listen and learn. In the early days of my sobriety, I revered most of the members, but that feeling was not reciprocated. Some members remarked that they thought I was wasting their time because they had spilled more liquor than I had drunk, and because I hadn't sunk low enough!

There may have been a grain of truth in what they said because in my first year I went back out several times and tested myself to see if I hadn't made a hasty decision to come to AA. Fortunately, I failed at being a social drinker, so I kept crawling back. It was a bumpy ride that first year. Now, I realize some of us have to hang on with our very fingernails, take what is handed out and follow suggestions without rebellion. Listening, I discovered, was an acquired skill. I was completely bankrupt: no self worth, no close family, no belief in anyone—least of all God.

Today, I'm grateful to those hard-nosed "old" men who put up with me and taught me that if I wanted what they had, I had to do what was suggested to the very best of my ability, even if I didn't want to or didn't believe it would work for me. I did everything they told me to do. Fortunately, they saw that I was trying hard and wanted something better. Slowly, I learned to help myself.

I managed to get one year in, but because I had slipped three times before, I would not join a group. When my year came up, despite the fact that I didn't belong to a group where I could celebrate with a cake, I was invited one Saturday night after the meeting to a couples' home. Lo and behold, I was given that first-year cake. It's something you never ever forget, no matter who you are, or how long you've been in the program.

That first year, I learned about making amends; how an inventory consists of both the positive as well as the negative character traits we have; I learned not everyone will forgive you when you try to make amends; I learned my family, when I reached out and told them I needed help, took me back—no questions asked; I also learned that nothing they had done had been the cause of my downfall. I learned that even complete strangers could help me to get back on my feet.

I may not have drunk as long as the men I knew at the meetings; I may not have been, as one fellow put it, "hospitalized, institutionalized, everything but circumcised" trying to get sober, but we did have one thing in common: in AA we had found recovery. In my short drinking career I had alienated my family, walked away from a marriage, and taken what my husband cared the most about—his son. I rejected motherhood. I left the country we were living in to return to my homeland, putting thousands of miles between us. I robbed employers by taking paychecks that, in many cases, I didn't earn due to many missed days, and in many cases because of inadequate work performance. I wrote bad checks, drove under the influence, ended up with total strangers in places I had never been before. I lost days I couldn't account for. **(Continued, page 4)**

Calendar of Events:

Stepping Stones Alkathon: 26111 Bouquet Canyon Road, Ste H1-H2, Santa Clarita, **June 6 - 8th, 2014**

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

Unit A July 4th Weekend Alkathon: 10641 Burbank Blvd, North Hollywood: **July 4 - 5, 2014**

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

Pacoima AA Alkathon: 12502 Van Nuys Boulevard, #109, Van Nuys, CA, **August 15-17, 2014.**

Happy Campers Campfire AA Meeting is the 3rd Saturday of each month at 8 p.m. at Lake Piru, campsite #130 (\$13.00 fee per car) **through October.** Come for the day or camp overnight.

The Great Outdoor AA Beaver Meeting, Beaver, Utah, **August 28 - August 31, 2014**



Illustration by Leslie Z

SERVICE COMMITTEES SCHEDULE:

SFV Central Office Board Mtg: July 9, 2014, 6:30 p.m., Central Office

SFV Intergroup: Mon., July 14, 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.) July 2, 2014, 6:30 p.m., 7552 Remmet, Canoga Park.

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

Gen. Svc Dist. 7: (2nd Sat.) July 12, 2014, 9 a.m., Women's Club: 33201 Agua Dulce Cyn Rd, Agua Dulce, CA

Gen Service, District 11: (1st Mon.) July 7, 2014, 6 p.m. New GSRs - 6:30 p.m., 315 W. Vine Street, Glendale

- **Gen Service, District 16: (1st Mon.) July 7, 2014,** 6:15 p.m. meeting, 15950 Chatsworth, Granada Hills.
- **Gen. Svc., District 17: (1st Mon.) July 7, 2014,** 6 p.m. New GSRs/6:30 p.m. Bus. Mtg., 5000 Colfax, NoHo.
- **SFV H & I: (3rd Mon.) June 16, 2014:** 7 p.m. Orient./ 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 meeting time/date 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: 1st Sunday of the month at Unit A., 10641 Burbank Blvd., NoHo.

San Fernando Valley Intergroup: 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 country. 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 celebrate the following birthdays:** Corliss B. - 6 Years, Holly C. - 7 Years, Kitt H. - 26 Years, Walter H. - 27 Years, & the Learning to Live Men's Stag - 12 birthdays - 149 Years.

DEATHS (THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE): **Bonnie C. - 4 Years, Dick H. - 19 Years, Oscar D. - 28 Years and Dick M. - 35+ 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 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: **SFV 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**.

SAN FERNANDO VALLEY CENTRAL OFFICE
Minutes of Intergroup Representatives Meeting, May 12, 2014

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

TREASURER'S REPORT: Brian H.: Central Office is in the red <-\$1,798.78> MTD and in the black \$3,915.83 YTD. Group donations remain down from this time 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. - 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, especially those interested in doing in-person 12-step calls as the requests for these types of calls have increased recently. Interested parties should contact Larry at Central Office.

The iconic 75th Anniversary commemorative edition of the original Big Book is available at Central Office for \$13.08 (including tax). Bob reminded everyone that Central Office IS open on Saturdays and Sundays from 9-5 for literature sales. Everything is running smoothly with the www.sfvaa.org website.

Recovery Times: Everything is stupendous with the newsletter.

MEETING RELATED BUSINESS: Neva S. welcomed new IGRs from Learning to Live BB Study at Cabrito House and A Gathering of Men. IGRs were reminded to encourage recruitment of IGRs from unrepresented meetings. There are currently 791 meetings & 300+ groups in the San Fernando Valley, but only 50-60 meetings represented at IGR. Orientation for new IGRs begins at 6:30 p.m. prior to monthly IGR Meeting.

Service Representatives

General Service District 16: Daniel: District 16's website is up at: <http://www.aadistrict16.com/index.html>.

General Service District 1: John: District 1 will be hosting a Longtimers meeting in September/October and is currently searching for a location to hold approximately 350 people.

General Service District 17: Aimee invited everyone to the upcoming Area Assembly; details are available on the District 17 website at www.district17aa.org.

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 (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. - The convention will be October 17-18-19 at Embassy Suites, Santa Clarita, CA. Online registration is now open. The Women's Day Luncheon fundraiser is June 14th.

San Fernando Valley AA Convention: *Joel S.* - Dates for the convention are January 30 - February 1, 2015 at the Warner Center Marriott, Woodland Hills. The next planning committee meeting will be June 18 at St. Innocent at 7PM, and all are welcome to participate.

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.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM AA GROUPS & SEVENTH TRADITION:

Michele: Unit A is hosting its annual 4th of July Alcathon. No reason to sit home alone this holiday!

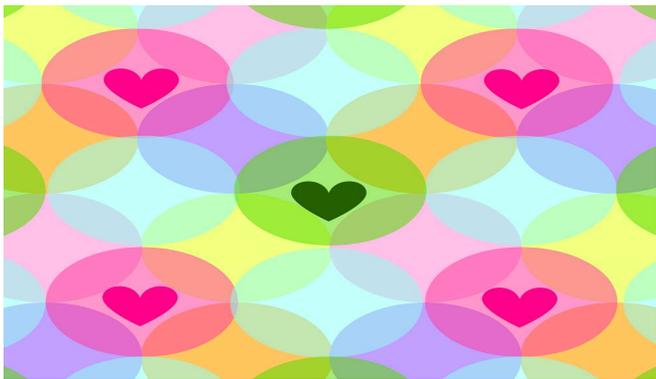
Bill S.: Groups should bring at least 350 flyers for upcoming events so each meeting can have 5 copies. Flyers must be for "AA-related events" (defined as "an event that includes an AA Meeting as part of the event").

IGR BIRTHDAYS FOR MAY: Adrian – 2 years, Judy – 3 years, Loren – 11 years, Scott – 11 years, Lori – 18 years, and Tina – 23 years.

VACANCIES: There are currently no vacancies on the Board.

CLOSING: A motion to adjourn, recognized and seconded. Meeting adjourned with *The Lord's Prayer* at 7:20 p.m. Prepared and submitted by: *Dawn H., Recording Secretary*

The Only Woman in Town, continued, page 1



I neglected my son— I never really knew him.

When I got my year of sobriety I moved to an even smaller town, where there was but one meeting a week, and once again, only men attended the meetings. But it was from this humble start in my AA life that came all the riches that lay in store for me. It was here that, on my second birthday, the wonderful ladies in Al-Anon came to the meeting and brought the cake they had baked to celebrate my anniversary. It was here that, when my house burned down, I got the support I needed. It was here that, as our numbers grew, I found someone like me who came into AA with no belief in a Higher

Power. I even found the strength to reach out, several years later, to the husband I had deserted—and he forgave me! In the ensuing years, I found I could be a successful single parent, be self-supporting, and eventually meet and marry someone who accepted me as I am, and who did care not about my past. I've had such a wonderful life.

Many changes have taken place in the years I've been sober. There are now many meetings in our town, and we even have a Womens' Only meeting. Our numbers have really grown; we have reached out and passed on what we've learned.

As for me, I wouldn't have come this far, sober, some 46 years later, and faced all of life's challenges, even my latest one—becoming a widow—if I hadn't had a program for life and a belief in a Power greater than myself. Without the help of the Fellowship and sponsorship coupled with humility, my life would not be the wondrous thing it is today—full and satisfying. I have all these gifts only because I really wanted what they had and was willing to go to any lengths to get it.

—*Diane W., Williams Lake, British Columbia* Copyright c. 1944-2012. AA Grapevine, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Reprints by Permission Only



**A.A. Co-Founder Bill W.
Quotes from our Founders**

"All A.A. progress can be reckoned in terms of just two words: humility and responsibility. Our whole spiritual development can be accurately measured by our degree of adherence to these magnificent standards." **As Bill Sees It, pg. 271.**

"The trouble with us alcoholics was this: We demanded that the world give up happiness and peace of mind in just the particular order we wanted to get it - by the alcohol route. And we weren't successful. But when we take time to find out some of the spiritual laws and familiarize ourselves with them, and put them into practice, then we do get happiness and peace of mind. There seem to be some rules that we have to follow, but happiness and peace of mind are always here, open, and free to anyone." **Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers, pg. 308.**

"Someone who knew what he was talking about once remarked that pain was the touchstone of all spiritual progress. How heartily we A.A.'s can agree with him." **Twelve & Twelve, pgs. 93/94**

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Love and tolerance is our code.

Let the Music Play: A DJ gets sober and thinks life is over, but the party hasn't really started.

If someone had told me before I stopped drinking that sobriety would be fun, I would've definitely stopped hanging out with them. Alcohol was a God-given, rock 'n' roll rite of passage, and to have fun was to drink to oblivion like my heroes. I was a rebel. But with 15 years sober, it's clear to me that I have much more fun now and create more music and excitement than when I was drunk and partying all the time.



I was raised in Atlanta, Ga., and I grew up loving music. Rock was king, but I started DJ'ing in the local clubs because disco and new wave had arrived. It was new and exciting. As a DJ, I always had access to free drinks, which became a problem fast. I loved getting totally wasted. It made me feel social and relaxed around people. But I drank myself to a point where I thought I had ulcers, so I quit for a while and things improved. But I knew that as soon as I could drink again, I would. Things improved a lot without alcohol, so I started a band and moved to New York City.

New York certainly moved my music career to the next level—and fast. I soon had a huge dance hit, making money like never before. I also decided it was OK to start drinking again. I had hundreds of people dancing to my music and coming to my parties, but now my drinking got heavier and heavier. I was partying hard every night. Soon my skills began to deteriorate. I was a mess. My songwriting came second to my late nights, and my inability to make the right career choices left me with less and less work. I became trapped in a downward spiral that led to depression and feelings that I had lost the chance to use my musical gifts. Things got really dark.

Somehow in my haze, I was able to call a good friend of mine, a former band mate who had gone to AA the previous year. He used to party just like I did. I told him I needed help. He was happy I called. He took me to a bunch of "downtown" meetings. And I stayed. I saw that my friend was determined to stay sober, so I was determined too.

Early sobriety was really tough, but exciting. I learned to listen for the "winners"—people who had lives I admired and who had that joy of living I once had before I was crippled by drugs and alcohol. I found an amazingly patient sponsor who listened to my story and never once made me feel judged. I found new friends who made music, designed clothes and lived the rebel's lifestyle—without the alcohol and partying. Soon I found myself trying new things, like going to art galleries and cultural happenings. I started experimenting writing music in a whole new way.

I was 38 when I came into AA, and I thought my career in music was over. But after three years in recovery, my career exploded. I started a music festival for new artists, and it turned out to be a big hit. I began DJ'ing again, and now I spin all over the world, making friends from Brazil to Australia. I have fun playing music again. I've even written songs that have been sung by top 10 artists.

It's funny, I often feel like a rock star with my new sober life. But I never stop going to meetings. I've been to them everywhere I work. I also never forget how dark my life was just a few years ago. AA replenishes my spirit so I can

thrive as a creative artist. It also teaches me how to give back.

You can definitely call me a grateful recovering alcoholic, because I laugh and have so much more fun now than I ever used to. Thank you AA. I got the life I always dreamed of. —*Larry T., London, England* Copyright c. 1944-2012. AA Grapevine, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Reprints by Permission Only

Taking a Trip? Not Taking a Trip?



Early in my sobriety - when I had about a year sober - I took a trip by myself to a business convention in Nashville, Tennessee. I don't remember much about the convention but I do remember an incident that occurred in my hotel's restaurant. I was partaking in the buffet lunch when I noticed the chef pouring what looked like bourbon on the sponge cake. I quickly blurted out that I was sober and couldn't eat the dessert. The chef replied, "Don't worry: the alcohol burns off so you won't even taste it."

Of course, that was a risk I wasn't about to take. I knew that with being away from home and my meetings, a little thing like this could send me into a tailspin. I immediately looked up A.A. in the phone book and found my way to a meeting. Once there, I was able to share my story with the other A.A.s and we all had a good laugh!

A few years later, I took a business trip to Italy for 12 days. Because I was traveling to four different cities I didn't think I would have time to get to a meeting. However, once I got myself acclimated, I posted on my Facebook page that I was in Florence, Italy looking for an A.A. meeting. Almost immediately, I got two responses from my friends in L.A. and I ended up connecting with a sober A.A., who was also in Florence for a business trip. She met me at my hotel and we walked to an English-speaking meeting which came with a five-course meal, prepared by students at a local culinary institute!!! As we walked back to my hotel that evening over The Ponte Vecchio Bridge over the Arno River, I thought, "How cool is it that I'm in Florence, Italy and just got to go to an A.A. meeting?"



Not long after that, I attended an A.A. convention on the Big Island of Hawaii called "The Big Island Bash." Again, I was traveling alone and a little worried about being lonely or unable to find my way around. This time, a friend suggested that I call the Hawaii A.A. GSO office and ask if someone could help me find some meetings. I left a message but didn't hear back from anyone before I left. But as I was standing in line at the car rental office in Hawaii, my phone rang and it was a woman in Hawaii asking me for my hotel location so she could give me directions to a

beach meeting the next morning.

The following day, I said the Serenity Prayer while watching dancing porpoises breaking the surf just 20 feet from my meeting. From that meeting and throughout my stay in Hawaii, I never felt alone. Whenever I turned around, I was running into someone whom I had met at a meeting or who I knew from other A.A. locations.

Over the years I have been sober, I have attended meetings whenever I have traveled. I always plan ahead now, going online to find out where and when meetings are and then MapQuesting the directions from my hotel. It always gives me peace of mind to know that I can find a meeting when I'm away from home and that friends in A.A. are close and within reach, should I need them.



Whether you are in "Sin City" or London, England, on a cruise ship or in a remote part of Africa, you can always find a meeting. For those people who can't get to a meeting, there is a free newsletter through Alcoholics Anonymous called LIM (Loners Internationalists Meeting) which is a meeting by mail with other alcoholics around the world. I have corresponded with many other A.A.s in other countries through LIM and have made friends in Vancouver, B.C., Tanzania, Scotland, and even Malaysia. We are everywhere and it just takes being willing to connect with others to break the isolation phase.

For anyone who has to travel from time to time and wants to stay connected, you can go to aa.org to find meetings. If you have a Smart Phone, you can also look it up that way. For those who don't have a computer, the good old phone book still lists A.A. central offices in most cities. There are also meetings available on audio, over the phone and on the computer. Go to www.aa.org for more information and never be alone when you are away from home. *Pat K., Sunland, CA*

Daily Reflections Word Search. Each month, we feature a puzzle from a page in Daily Reflections. Today's reading is from *As Bill Sees It*, pg. 37. Read up, down, sideways and diagonally to find the words. **"A List of Blessings: One exercise that I practice is to try for a full inventory of my blessings."**

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

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