

RECOVERY TIMES

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The Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office Newsletter



49 Years + Counting: One Day at a Time

"To be perfectly accurate, we don't anticipate the next day; we do one day at a time," says **Walt K., an old-timer in Alcoholics Anonymous with 49 years of sobriety**. Walt came to A.A. at age 35. His first meeting was the Pathfinders Meeting on Wilshire Boulevard in Los Angeles where he remembers feeling like he didn't belong. "These people were different than I was," says Walt. "There was too much laughter and I didn't understand what was going on."

Looking back, Walt says when he first came to A.A., he was married and was drinking his lunch - and sometimes dinner - at a bar next to where he worked. "There was a cute blond there who was a waitress," he says, "and I became involved with her for about 3 months. She was in A.A. and her sponsor had advised her not to date a married man who was an alcoholic. So she began inviting sober men from A.A. to the bar and putting them in my face while I was trying to drink."

One night, the waitress invited Walt on what he thought was a date to a spaghetti dinner on a Friday night. "She didn't tell me that there would be other people there too," he says. Afterward, she brought him to his first meeting which was a Newcomer's Meeting for those with 3 months to a year of sobriety.

"I went to half of that meeting and then went outside and threw up," says Walt. "Then I continued drinking that weekend but I made the decision to quit. Finally, while in a blackout the following Sunday night, I called my lady friend and begged and pleaded for her to help me. Then I went back to the bar where we had met, but she wasn't working there anymore. However, there was a guy there who she had introduced me to from A.A. and he took me aside and told me about the program of A.A. The following night, he invited me to meet him at a meeting and I went."

Despite feeling like a fish out of water, Walt says he knew that he was an alcoholic and that he had to quit drinking. The fear that he would drink again was what kept him coming back to meetings.

Eventually, he moved his meetings over to the West Valley and then, about 37 years ago, he found the Pacoima Group where he attended his first meeting there on a Friday night. "At that time, it was a small meeting. I met Doris there and I was given the job of taking the Birthday Photos, and that gave me a reason to stay. As I started going to all of the functions, I got to know everybody and Pacoima became my Home Group."

(Continued on page 5)



Calendar of Events:

August 15 - 17, 2014: Pacoima AA Alkathon: 12502 Van Nuys Blvd. #109, Pacoima.
August 15 - 17, 2014: 38th Annual AA High Sierra Campout, Mammoth Lakes, CA (at Pine Glen).
August 28 - 31, 2014: The Great Outdoor AA Beaver Meeting, Beaver, Utah
Every 3rd Saturday: Happy Campers Campfire AA Meeting, Lake Piru. Meeting starts at 8 p.m. Campsite #130 (\$13.00 fee per car) **through October.** Come for the day or camp overnight.

SERVICE COMMITTEES SCHEDULE:

SFV Central Office Board Mtg: Sept. 3, 2014, 6:30 p.m., Central Office

SFV Intergroup: Mon., Sept. 8, 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.) Sept. 3, 2014, 6:30 p.m., 7552 Remmet, Canoga Park.

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

Gen. Svc Dist. 7: (2nd Sat.) Sept. 13, 2014, 9 a.m., Women's Club: 33201 Agua Dulce Cyn Rd, Agua Dulce, CA

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

Gen Service, District 16: (1st Mon.) Sept. 1, 2014, 6:15 p.m. meeting, 15950 Chatsworth, Granada Hills.

Gen. Svc., District 17: (1st Mon.) Sept. 1, 2014, 6 p.m. New GSRs/6:30 p.m. Bus. Mtg., 5000 Colfax, NoHo.

SFV H & I: (3rd Mon.) Aug. 18, 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 July 2014,** we celebrate the following birthdays: **Steve P. - 5 Years, Tony S. - 14 Years, Linda S. - 29 Years, Denise M. - 31 Years**



DEATHS (THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE):

If you are aware of the passing of a Fellowship member, please call us at (818) 988-3001 or email obituary to: sfvaa.org. **Bill D. - 24 Years**

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.** We would love to see you!

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 if it is for a new subscription, a renewal, or if you are enclosing an additional contribution, and if moving, 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. 91405**

"I've been through a lot in my life...
and some of it really happened!"



By Leslie Z.

Minutes from Intergroup Rep Meeting, July 14, 2014

Bill S. opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. with *The Serenity Prayer*.

Scott M. read "*The Twelve Traditions*."

Dawn H., Recording Secretary, accepted a motion for approval of Minutes from June's Intergroup Meeting. The minutes were approved as submitted.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Brian H.

- Central Office is in the red <-\$560.29> MTD and in the black \$2,942.93 YTD.
- Group donations remain down significantly (approximately \$3,265) from this time last year, while personal donations have increased. 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: Bill S. (on behalf of Bob F.)

- **Central Office**
 - 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, with several new volunteers, 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). We have currently sold 719 copies, and more are on order.
 - He reminded everyone that Central Office IS open on Saturdays & Sundays from 9-5 for literature sales. 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.

Seven new IGRs joined the meeting including Kathleen (Sunday night **Sober on the Rocks** meeting), Lisa (Wednesday night "**Try God**" meeting on Colfax), Sharon (Friday night **Q&A Panel** at Cabrito House), Linda (Friday night **West Valley Platt Speaker** meeting), Ron (**We Are Responsible** meeting at Colfax/Addison), Clay (Monday night **West Valley Participation** meeting) and Mary Ann (6:45 a.m. Sunday morning **Wake Up** group in Reseda). IGRs were reminded to encourage recruitment of IGRs from meetings that are not currently represented. There are currently 791 meetings & 300+ groups in the San Fernando Valley, but only 50-60 meetings represented at IGR. Orientation for new IGRs starts at 6:30 p.m. before monthly IGR meetings.

SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES:

- San Fernando Valley Hospital & Institutions Committee: Daniel
There is an ongoing 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.: Dates for the convention are October 17-18-19, and will

Heard Around A.A.

"By the fall of 1937 we could count what looked like forty recovered members. One of us had been sober three years, another two and a half, and a fair number had a year or more behind them. As all of us had been hopeless cases, this amount of time elapsed began to be significant. The realization that we 'had found something' began to take hold of us. No longer were we a dubious experiment. Alcoholics could stay sober." *AA Co-Founder, Bill W., October 1945*

"Life is lived moment to moment ... and every moment provides me with an opportunity for growth." *Madison, Wisconsin, November 2010*

"I still don't know much about heaven, but I've learned some valuable lessons about life on earth." *December 1979*
"The Root of Our Troubles."

"The part of my job that always catches me off-guard is the palpable jolt of pleasure I get from the little ways to be helpful to be of service to others, for which they are so genuinely grateful." *York Harbor, ME, 2001*

"Isn't a donation of my time and services just as important as my donation of cash? What if my home group had money for coffee, rent, and literature, but no one to open the meeting room and make the coffee?" *Manassas, Virginia, July 1992*

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be held at the Embassy Suites, and online registration is now open. The Men's Day fundraiser will be held August 16th

▪ San Fernando Valley AA Convention: Joel S.

Dates for the convention are 1/30-31 and 2/1, and will be held at the Warner Center Marriott in Woodland Hills. Our theme this year is "Attitude of Gratitude" and our colors are blue and yellow. Joel reminded everyone to save the date of August 23rd for the BINGO fundraiser in Reseda.

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:

Lloyd: The Pacoima Group is hosting its 59th Annual Anniversary Alcathon on August 15-17.

Andy: The San Fernando Group is hosting a workshop on "The Concepts," August 9-10.

Bill S.: Upcoming events include the 11th Annual Mountain AA Conference in Big Bear, August 16-17, and the 39th Annual Great Outdoor Beaver Meeting in August 28-31 in Beaver, Utah. 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").

IGR BIRTHDAYS FOR THE MONTH OF JULY

- Ian – 3 years
- Michelle A. – 6 years
- Joel S. – 8 years
- Michele R. – 13 years

VACANCIES ON BOARD: None

CLOSING: A motion to adjourn was recognized and seconded. Meeting adjourned with *The Lord's Prayer* at 7:21 p.m.

Prepared and submitted by *Dawn H., Recording Secretary*

**BE OF SERVICE.
YOU ARE NEEDED!**

49 Years & Counting (continued from Page 1)

Walt says there have been trials and tribulations over the years, specifically it involved whether to maintain or disband the Group. Walt and several others there decided to form a committee to look for a place when they had to move. All told, the Pacoima Group moved five times before arriving at their current location on Van Nuys Boulevard.



To the newcomer, wondering how he or she is going to stay sober, Walt shares these thoughts: "By working the Steps, I came to realize that drinking wasn't going to solve my problems; it wasn't the solution anymore. After the obsession got lifted, I never even thought about it. There's that old adage, 'You just don't drink, no matter what happens.' But you can't remain sober until you go to meetings, get into the Big Book, find a sponsor and start working the Steps."

He adds, "You realize that the Program is based on spiritual principles and that any problem that you have really isn't a problem, per se. You just have a spiritual dilemma. Only by applying spiritual principles to the problem can it be resolved. When you have a problem, you turn it over to God and then you modify your behavior to overcome whatever is bugging you."

God willing, Walt will turn 50 years sober on March 2, 2015.

Ted S. , who turns 50 Years Sober on June 16, 2015 says, "It's an amazement, to tell the truth. Most people are impressed with it. I know I am. I just do it one day at a time, put one foot in front of the other, & do what's indicated."

Ted was 27 when he got sober in Hollywood, California. His first meeting was at the Arlington Group on Wilshire. His first few years after that were at the Central Hollywood Group, Pathfinders Club, and other places while living and working in Hollywood.

The first person he ever heard speak was a guy named Joe Quinn, whom he describes as a 'Dapper Dan.' "He had on a red blazer, white pants and white suede shoes. He had it together! When I heard him say that he was a pathological liar, I thought, you don't want to tell anyone that - especially if you're going to borrow money from them! - but it was the only thing I identified with."

The guy who welcomed Ted to his first meeting was a guy named Ray, who said, "Welcome to the meeting. The coffee is getting ready and the doughnuts are right there. Please avail yourself of our concessions." Ted says, "No one can ever speak badly of him to me because he welcomed me to my first meeting. He was probably God's right hand and my special angel."

When Ted first came to A.A. he says he was in a state of insanity and broken with nowhere else to go but he remembered what his father had said, who was a sober member of A.A. who died with 11 years of sobriety. "He said if you ever have a problem at least you will know where to go, and I had a problem with alcohol," says Ted. "The kindness of the people, and my desperation was what kept me here. I was there to learn, I knew it worked and it was my last option. I knew that you guys were interested and sincere about staying sober. It was one alcoholic working with another and you seemed to understand my plight."

At about two years sober, Ted and his family moved to the San Fernando Valley where he attended meetings at The Nest and Radford Club before moving to Saugus after about four years sober. After his divorce, he continued to attend meetings and helped start the Rafters Group in Newhall. In 1977,

he moved to the City of San Fernando and that same year, he met his future wife Fran at the Radford Club. They married the following year and lived in San Fernando for 16 years.

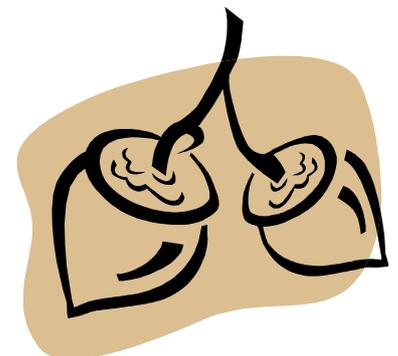
In 1994, the couple relocated to Las Vegas where they started the Double Digit Group, which no longer exists, and worked with many alcoholics before moving back to California in 1999. As an active part of the A.A. fellowship, Ted and Fran were a part of the group that founded Stepping Stones Alano Club In Saugus in 2002, which has since become Ted's Home group.

As far as how a person can stay sober for 49 years, Ted has these thoughts: "That first year was probably the most difficult one, but the next 48 were quite simple. I'm not saying that there weren't some hard times - there were, but nothing a drink wouldn't make worse. As I look back on it now, it's been a very wonderful life. As a result of A.A.'s Twelve Steps and a Loving God who does for me what I could never do for myself, I have been shown how to get along in business, which elevated me to the top of my career.

Because of A.A. I've traveled the world and had much success in my career, and earned the respect of my peers. I have raised four beautiful children, have four grandsons, another two grandkids coming and am happily married for over 36 years. A.A. continues to give me everything I was looking for in the bottle and has done nothing but good for me while asking nothing of me. Everything I give to A.A. is because I am so grateful for it. It is said that gratitude is the aristocrat of all the virtues and I feel very blessed to possess that quality." *Editor, Pat K.*

The Seed Was Planted

It was a cold, bleak day when my grandmother, Mercedes, came all the way from Argentina to visit the family she hadn't seen in over twenty years. With ten years of sobriety, she encountered the disease and insanity of alcoholism. I was seventeen at the time and deeply into the pit of despair. My mother and I were fighting all the time over my drinking and the house was in shambles. My grandmother had no choice but to ask my mother to go to an AA meeting.



My mother called Central Office and two people showed up to take them to a meeting while I hid behind the door, afraid that they would take me with them. I was not ready to ask for help, nor did I feel I needed it. My grandmother left a few days later and I couldn't bear to see her off. My mother got sober and I got stubborn.

Unaware of the incredible powerlessness of alcoholism, I held on to the idea that I could beat it but my grandmother had planted the seed and when I hit bottom on November 9th 2004, I knew where to go. When I was almost a year sober, my grandmother passed away with twenty-two years of sobriety. My aunt called from Argentina to say that she passed away peacefully and that the last thing she did was have an AA meeting at her bedside that morning. At her memorial, my family was shocked at how many people showed up. My grandmother touched so many people's lives through Alcoholics Anonymous and passed away never really knowing the magnitude of her example.

The message for me is loud and clear: that I do not need to know who or how many people I can help. My job is to be of service. My grandmother never knew how she changed my life with her courage and strength.



Whenever I extend my hand to a suffering alcoholic, I imagine my grandmother extending her hand to me. I owe my life to Alcoholics Anonymous and will forever be grateful for what Alcoholics Anonymous has done for our family. **Diana C., Burbank**

Daily Reflections Word Search. Each month, we feature a puzzle from a page in Daily Reflections. Today's reading is from page 215: Those Who Still Suffer: **"For us, if we neglect those who are still sick, there is unremitting danger to our own lives and sanity."** (See full reading below).

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

"I know the torment of drinking compulsively to quiet my nerves and my fears. I also know the pain of white-knuckled sobriety. Today, I do not forget the unknown person who suffers quietly, withdrawn and hiding in the desperate relief of drinking. I ask my Higher Power to give me His guidance and the courage to be willing to be His instrument to carry within my compassion and unselfish actions. Let the group continue to give me the strength to do with others what I cannot do alone."

San Fernando Valley Central Office

7417-E. Van Nuys Boulevard

Van Nuys, CA 91405

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED