

RECOVERY TIMES

Vol. 43, No. 9, Sept 2014

The Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office Newsletter



Tragedy in the Night: His drive to prove he didn't need AA led to a dangerous turn.

I had an alcohol problem for 17 years; I'm now 35. When I drank it caused me many, many problems. I was married twice and divorced twice. I couldn't keep a relationship. At one time, it seemed I had everything I needed and that I could control my alcohol. I had really good jobs, and some of those jobs put me in charge. But alcohol kept me from showing up to work Monday through Friday.

I decided I could quit drinking on my own and prove to everyone that I didn't need A.A. so I went to a rehab for 30 days. When I returned home, I truly felt like a new person. I would even get on my computer and post to everyone my sobriety success from month to month. I was showing up to work every day and even working out in the gym. I kept very busy. My dad told me he was proud of me, and I was really proud of myself. I managed to stay clean and sober for six months.

Then one day, my brother and I had an argument over something stupid and we started fighting in the backyard. We were living together and I knew he was jealous of me being sober. So I packed my things and went to my cousin's house. That was a big mistake—he drinks a lot. Immediately, I felt in my heart that something was going to go wrong. The very same day I moved in, I went to a bar and relapsed, so I threw it all away!

Just one week after I had relapsed, on the night of May 2, 2012, I killed a pedestrian with my vehicle. His name was Mark. I was charged with DUI-related homicide by vehicle, and I'm serving a three to six-year sentence. I take full responsibility and I make no excuses. My heart truly goes out to the man's family.

At first, I just wanted to die since I had failed completely. I asked God to take me from this world because the pain was unbearable. There isn't a day that goes by that I don't think about the pain I've caused everyone. I thought that nothing like this could ever happen to me but I realize that this could happen to anyone who drinks like I did.

If I had been in the A.A. family, I believe I wouldn't be sitting in prison right now. I could've called someone to talk to and my life could've gone a different route. But I chose to be bull-headed; I thought I could manage this on my own. I had too much pride to ask for help. That has changed now. This was my wake-up call.

I'm currently involved in AA meetings here in prison and have the courage to share my experience with others. I'd like to lend a helping hand to other alcoholics and those who are going through tough times. What I feel in my heart is that I want to change my life around completely. I need AA in my life; I need God in my life. I have a 10-year-old daughter and I need to start acting like her father. I'm thankful I have one more chance. I'll take all the help I can get. I'll get involved in A.A. when I leave here, and I'm looking forward to a clean and sober life on the outside.

My message is this: Don't be afraid to ask for help because it could save your, or someone else's, life.

—*Scott T., Bellefonte, Pa.* Copyright by AA Grapevine, Inc. 1944- 2014, All Rights Reserved. Reprints by Permission Only.



Calendar of Events:

26th Annual Soberfest 2014: Sept. 19 - 21, 2014, Kern River Valley Campout, Lake Isabella, CA

Happy Campers Campfire AA Meeting, Lake Piru. Sat., Sept 20: (Every 3rd Saturday): Meeting starts at 8 p.m. Campsite #130 (\$13.00 fee per car) **through October.** Come for the day or camp overnight.

Valley Club Alcathon: Sept. 26 - 28, 2014. 8728 Corbin Street, Northridge.

11th Annual Santa Clarita Valley Convention, Oct. 17 - 19, 2014, Embassy Suites/Courtyard Hotels.

District 1's **Longtimers Event,** Oct. 25, 2014, Camarillo, CA

SERVICE COMMITTEES SCHEDULE:

SFV Central Office Board Mtg: Oct. 8, 2014, 6:30 p.m., Central Office

SFV Intergroup: Mon., Oct. 13, 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.) Oct. 1, 2014, 6:30 p.m., 7552 Remmet, Canoga Park.

Gen. Service, District 2: (1st Tues.) Oct. 7, 2014, 6:30 p.m., 4011 Dunsmore, La Crescenta

Gen. Svc Dist. 7: (2nd Sat.) Oct. 11, 2014, 9 a.m., Women's Club: 33201 Agua Dulce Cyn Rd, Agua Dulce, CA

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

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

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

SFV H & I: (3rd Mon.) Sept. 15, 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: **Demetrius - 1 Year, Terry - 7 Years, Coleen - 14 Years, Brian H. - 14 Years, Randy H. - 17 Years, Lynn W. - 25 Years, Mary Ann B. - 26 Years, Richard F. - 30 Years, Learning to Live Men's Stag - 12 birthdays - 91 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. **Doug O. - 42 Years, Christine M. - 16 Years, Edith & Joe J. - both had 18 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**



Minutes from Intergroup Rep Meeting, August 11, 2014

OPENING: Bill S. opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. with *The Serenity Prayer*. Rick A. read *The Twelve Traditions*. Cheryl accepted a motion for approval of Minutes from July's Intergroup meeting; the minutes were approved as submitted.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Brian H.

- Central Office is in the red <-\$4,101> MTD and in the red <-\$1,541> YTD.
- Group donations remain down significantly from this time last year, while personal donations have increased. Based on this trend, the Central Office relocation is on "hold".
- The groups were encouraged to request their treasurers to send in contributions on a timely basis.
- A full Treasurer's Report is available in the *Recovery Times*.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S REPORT: Bob F., Central Office

Everything is running smoothly at Central Office. 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 820 copies, and have 280 left.

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 phenomenal with the newsletter.

MEETING RELATED BUSINESS:

Introduction of New Intergroup Representatives – Neva S. welcomed two new IGRs this month:

- Sarah – representing the New Start Beginners Meeting on Tuesday night in Chatsworth.
- Dan – representing the Van Nuys Quality of Life Meeting.

IGRs were reminded to encourage recruitment of IGRs from meetings that are not currently represented. There are currently 300+ groups in the San Fernando Valley, with only 50-60 meetings represented monthly at IGR. Orientation for new IGRs begins at 6:30 p.m. prior to monthly IGR Meeting.

SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES:

District 1 is hosting a Longtimers Event in Camarillo on October 25th. Panel speakers will all have 30+ years of sobriety. Tickets are \$10, and more information will be available next month.

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. On another note, totals are still being tallied from the Bike-N-4-Books fundraiser.

Santa Clarita Valley AA Convention: Bernard B. - Dates for the convention are October 17-18-19, and will be held at the Embassy Suites, and online registration is now open.

San Fernando Valley AA Convention: Joel S. - Dates for the convention are 1/30-31 and 2/1/15. It will be held at the Warner Center Marriott, Woodland Hills. Our theme is "Attitude of Gratitude" and our colors are blue and yellow.

Heard Around A.A.

"Throughout the world AAs are twelfth-stepping with thousands of new prospects a month. Between one and two thousand of these stick on our first presentation; past experience shows that most of the remainder will come back to us later on. Almost entirely unorganized, and completely nonprofessional, this mighty spiritual current is now flowing from alcoholics who are well to those who are sick. One alcoholic talking to another; that's all." AA Co-Founder, Bill W., July 1948, "Tradition Eight."

"God has continued to send me many miracles since the first one occurred the day he gave me the courage and willingness to go to my first AA meeting."

Oak Park, Illinois, September 1984, "Powerless Equals Free."

"There is very little in life that I must personally handle or that someone else couldn't do as well. On the other hand, no one else in the world can take my place at my meetings."
Washington Township, NJ

"When I've examined a situation all ways from Sunday, and the only thing I can see are bad consequences, then I can say, 'God, I don't have the least idea what to do.' That seems to be the magic phrase for me. Then something happens, and it is usually an action I hadn't thought of doing, and the result is good for all." Irasburg, Vermont, Dec. 1997, "Distilled Spirits." AA Grapevine
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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:

- Connie and Sean: Central Office's annual fundraiser, the "Take Your Sponsor to Breakfast" Breakfast, will be held Saturday, October 11 at the DAV in Woodland Hills. Tickets are \$10 per person.
- Tami K.: Marathon requests are available for time slots at the convention.
- Jessica.: The SFVYPAA Conference is taking place September 5-7 at the Airtel Plaza in Van Nuys.
- 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 AUGUST

Dave – 8 years
Tracee – 11 years
Brian – 14 years
Marian – 26 years

VACANCIES ON BOARD: No vacancies on the Board.

CLOSING: Meeting adjourned at 7:29 with The Lord's Prayer.

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

UPCOMING A.A. EVENTS, NATIONWIDE:

October: 68th Top of Texas Roundup, Amarillo, Texas (10/2 - 10/5)
The Fellowship of the Spirit, Park City, Utah (10/3 - 10/5)
50th Women's Recovery Workshop, Rock Eagle, Georgia (10/3- 10/5)
Ohio Young People of A.A., Concord, Ohio (10/3 - 10/5)
Woman to Woman, San Diego, CA (10/3 - 10/5)
North Dakota State Roundup, Grand Forks, ND (10/3 - 10/5)
27th Tri-County Conference, Troy, MI (10/3 - 10/5)

Our Goal: Loving Life Without Alcohol



Making Amends

When describing Step Nine in the Big Book it says that *“if we are painstaking about this phase of our development we will be amazed before we are half way through,”* and then it goes on to list the Promises. The information in the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions is a lot more direct about the different approaches we could take and tries to encourage us to exercise caution before we rush in and make some major blunders.

This suggestion, I think, can't be taken lightly. I have heard many horror stories about well meaning people who, wanting to put this step behind them, ran to their friends and loved ones and disclosed things that destroyed any trust they may have had in the alcoholic.

Good judgment, a careful sense of timing, courage, and prudence---these are the qualities we shall need when we take Step Nine.

Sometimes we read the **headline** but fail to read the **entire article**. If we do this when we go through the steps, we can do more damage to our already strained relationships. Making promises to my close friends and family that I'm not sure I can keep, usually falls on deaf ears. But an honest recognition of my past mistakes, without going into too many details, at this time, and a sincere determination to give the program my best effort with the understanding that my behavior will be the measure of my success, is a more acceptable approach.

We know that the road to hell is paved with good intentions. After we have put some time between us and our last debacles, we can revisit those amends and go into details about each event, only after we have run it by an experienced and trusted advisor.

Rushing into an amend that could bring hardship to our unsuspecting family or to other third parties is another mistake that people sometimes make. In Step Nine in the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions, it says that *“WE cannot, for example, unload a detailed account of extramarital adventuring upon the shoulders of our unsuspecting wife or husband.”* I would also include major financial or work related amends that may result in losing your job or create heavy financial difficulties for the family. These should be put off until everyone involved is in agreement, and then, only after talking to someone to make sure that you are not overlooking anything.

How about all those relatives and friends that we haven't seen in awhile but still have an uncomfortable feeling about the way we left that relationship? These people only have a snapshot of what we used to be like. They don't see the day to day changes that we have made in our lives and they assume that we are the same as when we made our last major mistake. For this type of situations, I would consider a slow but sincere process of reestablishing contact with those involved.

I once suggested that, using the opportunity of birthdays and holidays to send cards, can be a nice way to reestablish contact with these people, with a simple *“been thinking about you, hope things are going well for you, Love.....”*

Send these out at each opportunity for a year or two with **no return address** and no expectations, and at some time in the future, you will have to attend a wedding, graduation, or funeral where you will see them again, and you will be amazed at what will happen. My experience has been that the cards create curiosity that sometimes causes these people to talk to each other and they find out that you are trying hard to mend your ways and it tends to disarm them. Now, that would be the

time to put these things to rest. Keeping in mind that, if I can't add the kicker "**I regret what I did, and I don't do that anymore,**" then maybe I'm not ready to make that amend yet.

I hope these ideas will help others to understand that most amends can be made in a positive way and the results are so much better than we ever could have expected. We must do these things if we hope to develop the **serenity and peace** that is **promised**. Rick R., Poway, Ca.

Desert Dry

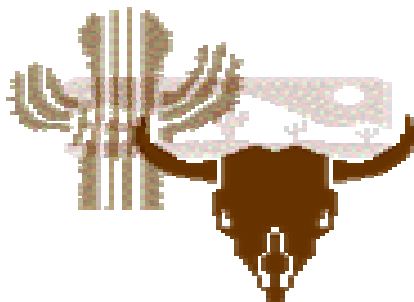
Not drinking and not following the program, she found herself at an emotional bottom

A scorching hot summer in Arizona is a reminder of how dry I was after my first five years in AA. I was so dry that I was combustible. I would be on fire the moment things did not go my way. Today, however, with the approach of September a smile crosses my face as I look forward to receiving my 26-year chip.

But let's start at the beginning. I remember sitting with my sponsor one evening when I had less than a month of sobriety. "Gail," I asked her, "Do you really think I am an alcoholic?"

She did not answer my question. relationships, until it became clear past. It was an eye opener.

It was then that I embraced AA. I passionate interests. I would women's movement, politics and



Instead she asked me about my work life, my to me that I was reviewing the wreckage of my

took it on as I had taken on many of my become a leader in AA just as I had in the environmental issues.

Service became my middle name. After five years of this, and not much program, I decided to return to my Eastern meditation practice. I was ready to leave the hive of AA confident that I would not drink.

But, I was a crusty, dry drunk. I was an alcoholic: self-centered, all-knowing and emotionally immature. I had not stayed for any of the promises to come true for me. I had left too soon and paid dearly for it over the next 18 years. I was a drunk who did not drink. Bitterness and blaming others for my unhappiness took their toll when my partner of many years sought out the company of another and left me. I felt like I had been hit by a truck. I was devastated. This was one of the greatest emotional tsunamis I have ever experienced.

My sister, who has the same amount of sobriety as I do, and follows the program, came to be with me. She was a comfort. On the third day of her visit, she asked me if I wanted to go to a meeting. I felt like a dying woman. "Yes," I said.

We went to a Sunday AA meditation meeting. I felt better in minutes. For the next year, I went to an AA meeting nearly every day. I listened to everything and everyone. As I sat in the rooms, meeting after meeting, I saw that the whole spiritual piece of AA was what I had missed. Now I was soaking it up and becoming less dry.

After that first year, it was no surprise that during some of the readings I would begin to think about what I had to do, or where I had to go after the meeting. That was until one morning when I was sitting in the front row of my home group facing the two framed documents of AA. I read the First Tradition and it was electrifying.

Our common welfare—yes it is our common welfare—should come first. That makes perfect sense to me. Personal recovery—that's my recovery, it means me. I am part of the whole—that depends on AA unity.

I felt embraced by something warm and invisible. A spirit perhaps. Or Bill and Dr. bob. Or maybe just the power greater than all. I have no clue. But I do know that I am where I belong. I am whole and complete with no parts left out. —
Meridith L, Tucson, Ariz.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY: SEPT. 3 - A.A., 24 Hours A Day

"Offer new prospects friendship and fellowship. Tell them that if they want to get well you will do anything to help. Burn the idea into the consciousness of new prospects that they can get well, regardless of anyone else. Job or no job, spouse or no spouse, they cannot stop drinking as long as they place dependence on other people ahead of dependence on God. Let no alcoholic say they cannot recover unless they have their family back. This just isn't so. Their recovery is not dependent upon other people. It is dependent on their own relationship to God."

A.A. Word Search: BRINGING THE MESSAGE HOME

Can we bring the same spirit of love and tolerance into our sometimes deranged family lives that we bring to our A.A. group? — TWELVE STEPS AND TWELVE TRADITIONS, pp.111-12

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



Submitted by Leslie Z.

Do you have an A.A. story you want to share? If so, please submit it to Editor, Recovery Times: xnowisthetime@aol.com. Stories, poems, artwork or jokes will be considered for publishing based on available space and appropriate content. All items submitted should relate to your experience with sobriety in Alcoholics Anonymous.

The 2015 International Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous is Just 10 Months Away! July 2-5, 2015 - Atlanta, Georgia

The 2015 International Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous will be held July 2 - 5, 2015 in Atlanta, Georgia with the theme "80 Years – Happy, Joyous and Free." A.A. members and guests from around the world will celebrate A.A.'s 80th year with Big Meetings held

Friday night, Saturday night and Sunday morning in the Georgia Dome. Other meetings, scheduled or informal, will take place throughout the weekend in the Georgia World Congress Center and local hotels.



San Fernando Valley Central Office

7417-E. Van Nuys Boulevard

Van Nuys, CA 91405

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED