

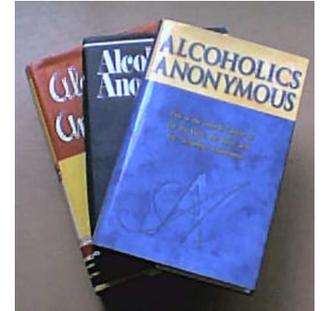
RECOVERY TIMES

Vol. 43, No. 11, Nov 2014

The Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office Newsletter

H & I Keeps This A.A. Sober

There is a saying that those come to H & I never drink. Those who are incarcerated or in hospitals carry the message back to us in their own way. Hospitals and Institutions is a service entity that takes meetings (panels) to treatment centers, jails and prisons for the alcoholics who cannot get to meetings. It is an unusual business meeting; the room is filled with volunteers who want to do service work. It is exciting and the energy is high.



A few years ago, I was in a crisis in my life with my pending divorce and job loss, and my Dad was dying. Then came the day that I wanted to die; a drink seemed like a good idea. I had been taking care of everything except A.A. I was busy, working, taking care of my relationship and thinking about myself. In my early sobriety I had jumped at every request asked of me but through the years I got too busy. My attitude was "let them do it."

Pain is a great motivator and I ran to Central Office to answer phones. I joined H & I and became a GSR for my meeting, and so the grace of desperation was given to me yet again. The desperation lead to humility and then I was teachable.

As I started going on panels (AA meetings inside), sharing my story, even crying at times, I found the alcoholics inside to be the most amazing listeners. I felt myself healing just being in prisons and hospitals with them. One of the panels I take is to Camp 13, which is a women's prison in Malibu. The women are firefighters who travel all over California fighting fires. They love their AA meeting which happens once a week. I admire them so much. They struggle with guilt from the consequences of their drinking and losses yet they continue to show the light of understanding in staying sober.

The first time that I went to the men's prison at Wayside I was a bit intimidated by the 40 seemingly hostile men staring at us. We shared our stories and my perception changed as I realized that I was in an AA meeting with other alcoholics. When we left, they thanked us for coming and I was overcome with a peaceful feeling of doing what I was meant to do as a recovering alcoholic.

One night, I was driving back from the beach with my dogs and I got a call to join a panel for a juvenile facility nearby. My newly-rescued dog, Harry, was not happy being left in the car. I parked away from the facility hoping his barking would not be heard. As it happened, we were taken to a room close to where I parked and it was apparent that Harry was going to be a problem; alcoholics who are 13 to 17 years old are squirmy and do not pay attention in an AA meeting. Our meeting started and it was clear they were not interested. My turn came and I apologized to them for the barking from Harry, saying that he just gotten out of dog jail! As with alcoholics all over the world, humor in our meetings has worked miracles. The boys could relate to Harry. Soon, Harry's situation worked its way into their shares and incarceration.

The 'Music of AA,' our theme at the last SFVAA Convention, continues to beat in our fellowship. It is said that when the heart breaks, it breaks open, letting in more love.

SFV H&I meets the 3rd Monday of every month (Nov. 17th) at St. Innocent Church, 5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana. Orientation is at 7 pm. Business Meeting is at 8 p.m.

Janeen P., SFV H & I Panel Leader, Bridging the Gap Chair



CALENDAR OF EVENTS: NOVEMBER 2014



Radford Hall Comedy Fundraiser: Sat. Nov. 8, 2014, 7:30 p.m. 13627½ Victory Blvd., Van Nuys, CA

Unit A. Thank-A-Thon, Nov. 26 & 27: 10641 Burbank Boulevard, North Hollywood

Burbank Group Thank-A-Thon, Nov. 27 & 28: 3217 Winona Ave., Burbank

Serenity in Yosemite, Nov. 21 – 23, 2014: Yosemite National Pk. www.serenityyosemite.com

48th Annual Las Vegas Roundup, Nov. 27–30: Riviera Hotel & Casino: lasvegasroundup.org

Service Committees Schedule

San Fernando Valley Central Office Board Meeting: Dec. 3, 2014, 6:30 p.m., Central Office, 7417 Van Nuys Boulevard, Suite E., Van Nuys, CA 91405

San Fernando Valley Intergroup Meeting: Dec. 8, 2014: New IGRs: 6:30 p.m., General Meeting: 7 p.m., St. Innocent Church., 5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana.

San Fernando Valley H & I (3rd Monday): Nov. 17, 2014: 7 p.m. Orientation, 8 p.m. Bus. Meeting, St. Innocent Church, 5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana

General Service Dist. 1: (1st Wed.): Dec. 3, 2014: 6:30 p.m., 7552 Remmet, Canoga Park.

General Service Dist. 2: (1st Tues.): Dec. 2, 2014: 6:30 p.m., 4011 Dunsmore, La Crescenta.

General Service District 7: (2nd Sat.): Dec. 13, 2014: 9 a.m., Women's Club: 33201 Agua Dulce Canyon Rd, Agua Dulce, CA.

General Service District 11 (1st Monday): Dec. 1, 2014: 6 p.m. New GSRs - 6:30 p.m., 315 W. Vine Street, Glendale



General Service District 16 (1st Monday): Dec. 1, 2014: 6:15 p.m. meeting, 15950 Chatsworth, Granada Hills.

General Service District 17 (1st Monday): Dec. 1, 2014: 6 p.m. New GSRs, 6:30 p.m. Bus. Mtg., 5000 Colfax, NoHo.

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 Page 4 for more info under SF Valley AA Convention).

San Fernando Valley Young People in AA: 1st Sunday of the month @ 1 p.m. at Unit A., 10641 Burbank Blvd., North Hollywood. (Regular weekly meeting: Monday night at 8 p.m. at Unit A).

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.**

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!



Celebrating an A.A. Anniversary? Please consider making a \$1.00 donation for each year of your sobriety and we will list your name and birthday year in the month of your sobriety. Please send your donation during your birthday month. **For Nov. 2014,** we celebrate: Cindy G. – 2 Years, Anonymous – 18 Years, Elsie A. – 18 Years, Ken J. – 31 Years, and The Learning to Live Men’s Stag (10 men) – 136 Years.



Deaths (Things We Cannot Change): Jesse (Dan) B. – 16 Years, John “Wheels: S. – 25 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.

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 24/7 Phone Service for AAs: **(818) 988-3001.** Go to: 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, Oct. 13, 2014



OPENING: 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 September’s Intergroup Meeting; the minutes were approved as submitted.

TREASURER’S REPORT: *Brian H. reported:* Central Office is in the red <-\$1,323.43> MTD and in the red <-\$1,888.97> YTD. Group donations remain down significantly 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 reminded everyone to promote Gratitude Month in November and to encourage folks to make “conscious donations” in excess of a single dollar to support this annual fundraiser for Central Office. A full Treasurer’s Report is available in the *Recovery Times*.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S REPORT: *Bob F.* stated that everything is running smoothly at Central Office. Our volunteer staff is currently running well, but has been somewhat affected by illness. We can always use volunteers for the midnight-to-9AM shift, and volunteers were encouraged to contact Larry at Central Office. New directories will be available November 2014. The drop-dead date for changes is October 23rd. Please submit any meeting changes to Central Office in writing. *Recovery Times:* Everything is phenomenal with the newsletter.

MEETING RELATED BUSINESS: Neva S. introduced six new Intergroup representatives:

- Laura – representing the Sunrise/Sunset Group.
- Amin – representing the West Valley Participation Group.
- Lynne – representing the Layers of the Onion Group.
- Michael – representing the Sunday "As Bill Sees It" Group at Colfax/Addison.
- Daniel – representing the "Try God" Group.
- David – representing the Toluca Lake Speaker Meeting.

IGRs were reminded to encourage recruitment of IGRs from meetings that are not currently represented. There are currently 782 meetings in the San Fernando Valley, with only 50-60 meetings represented monthly at IGR. Orientation for new IGRs begins at 6:30 p.m. prior to monthly IGR Meeting.

SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES

General Service District 16: Daniel - Everything is going well at District 16. Event flyers are being posted on the website.

General Service District 17: *Aimee* - The Unity Day event was a great success, and Aimee thanked all who participated. Area elections will be held in Solvang in November.

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. Online registration is now open, and registration forms are also being mailed out. All groups wishing to host a marathon were encouraged to submit the necessary form to Joel.

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:

- *Jonathan:* The Sunrise/Sunset Group is hosting its annual Action Step Workshop on Saturday, November 15th from 11AM-5PM at the Sherman Oaks Adult Center. There will be a catered lunch and the speaker is Scott L. from Nashville, Tennessee.
- *John:* The SFVYPAA is hosting a Sober Bowl event on Sunday, November 23rd at North Hollywood Park.
- *Michele:* Unit A is hosting its Annual Thank-A-Thon beginning Wednesday, November 26th.

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 OCTOBER: Daniel – 18 years

Message

"In the first six months of my own sobriety, I worked hard with many alcoholics. Not a one responded. Yet this work kept me sober. It wasn't a question of those alcoholics giving me anything. My stability came out of trying to give, not out of demanding that I receive." Bill W., A.A. co-founder, Jan. 1958

----- Heard Around A.A.

"Spirituality for me is not a question of feeling good (though feeling good is a feeling I like a whole lot). Instead it is a matter of finding from prayer and meditation, from other people, from meetings -- in short, from all the 'tools of recovery' -- the power to do what is good, what is healthy, what brings joy and healing to myself and others." **W. Henrietta, NY**

"I am more a woman of action than a woman in reaction, and hope is more present in my life than insecurity ... As much as I was thirsty for alcohol, today I am thirsty for knowledge."
Montreal, Quebec

VACANCIES ON BOARD: There are currently no vacancies.

CLOSING: A motion to adjourn was recognized and seconded. Meeting adjourned with *The Lord's Prayer* at 7:23 p.m.

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

Central Office of the San Fernando Valley is Moving!

Central Office has been given notice that ALL in our building are going to be removed so that the property can be converted into two large stores. All tenants must vacate by Dec. 12, 2014.

We are currently looking at several locations nearby. We hope to relocate by late November or the beginning of December. All information will be posted on our website: www.sfvaa.org

November is Gratitude Month:

Once a year, your Central Office asks A.A. members around the San Fernando Valley to dig a little deeper. Why? Because Central Office is self-supporting. We need to pay our rent and utility bills every month to keep the phones live, 24-hours a day, 7 days a week (including holidays). Please show your gratitude during November by putting a little extra donation in the basket to support

Looking for Good Reading Material?

Come by Central Office of the San Fernando Valley to make your purchases for your Group. Literature published by A.A. World Services, Inc. is a resource for the recovering alcoholic and for anyone who wants to find out about Alcoholics Anonymous, its history and how it works.

A.A. World Services also publishes and licenses 58 translations of the Big Book and other literature in languages and countries around the world, much of which is available in the literature catalog published by A.A. World Services, Inc.

Got a story, poem or artwork that is A.A.-related that you want to share? Stories should be 400-600 words and can be emailed to: Pat K. at: xnowisthetime@aol.com. Submission does not guarantee publication. Thank you!



East to Joshua Tree

Criss-crossing the 150-degree Mojave can be hellish if you're hung-over.

For the past twenty years (fifteen drunk, five sober), my workplace has been the Mojave Desert. Unbelievably, I used to walk around under a blazing, 115-degree sun enduring killer hangovers. I spent many a night in bars, motels, and campsites, always working toward tomorrow's hangover. I've frequented bars in every town from Lancaster to Landers, Barstow to Banning, Palmdale to Palm Springs and from Needles to Neenach.

I usually didn't drink in the morning or during the day, but "O-beer-thirty" came every afternoon and I typically didn't taper off until the wee-wee-hours of the morning. While camping, of course, I drank liquor all afternoon and took sink baths in rest stops, dismissing anxious looks from suspicious rest stop patrons. Dinner often included a six-pack (or two), a bag of corn chips, and a candy bar (or two) for dessert. I stayed in roach motels rubbing elbows with the scum of the earth, hookers and drug dealers knocking on my door at all hours of the night. My brain cells that weren't baked in the sun like gooseberry pie I pickled in the evening with alcohol.

In the Mojave, ground temperatures can climb up to 150 degrees, and if you're not wearing sunglasses, the sun bouncing up off the reflective white sand can sunburn your corneas. My sandpapered eyelids were habitually scratching up and down over bloodshot, alcohol-soaked eyeballs. On a typical August day in the Coachella Valley, you can drink two gallons of water and (maybe) urinate once, losing most of your water through evaporation. I was so dehydrated, often times I could not drink enough water to either evaporate or eliminate. I'd need to stop a dozen times, huffing and puffing my way up the steep, boulder-strewn mountainsides of southern California deserts, hangovers getting heavier with each step.

During the day, I harassed employees in the office for failing to achieve my overachieving work (so-called) ethics. I was short-tempered and directed temper tantrums at employees, surreptitiously criticizing them for failing to meet unrealistic standards which fluctuated from high to low because of my cyclical superiority and inferiority complexes.

In the field, I surrounded myself with drinking buddies who walked with me all day and drank with me all night. I had home-bars-away-from-home in every town where I'd drink with strangers whom I confused for friends, sharing my misery with old drunks getting older by the drink, habitually occupying the same designated barstools. They'd wave me over and we'd sing along to country music lyrics celebrating adultery.

My outdoor workplaces typically required that I drive 100 miles east to Joshua Tree or 100 miles north to Ridgecrest. My favorite destination was east to Twentynine Palms where after a day of walking the desert, I'd get a fat blue quart of beer, followed by another in Yucca Valley 30 miles to the west, then a quick stop at the Mule Lip Saloon in Lucerne Valley 30 miles further west for several icy cold schooners of beer, and finish with a cold fatty for the final 30-mile drive to my mountain home. The fact that I was drinking and driving never occurred to me, except when I saw police cars. I spent half my time looking in the rearview mirror.

My favorite form of consumption, though, was the "beer-and-a-bump" method. Shooting bumps (shots of liquor) got me where I wanted to be while sipping beer allowed me to hang out all night. But that, as they say, was then and this is now. I still walk 15 miles each day in oppressive heat. At 52, I still keep up with a 22-year-old employee (who also happens to be a sponsee), even in August. I've come to realize, in the absence of pain

these last five sober years, that most of the suffering I endured during fifteen long, hot years getting drunk in the sun, was self-induced.

I've learned that there is no virtue, whatsoever, in enduring self-inflicted pain that can be completely avoided by not drinking. I haven't taken a sink-bath in years, nor have any hookers or drug dealers recently knocked on the doors of the motels I frequent these days. I've exchanged a thousand barroom happy hours for thousands of truly happy hours.

In working several Fourth Steps with two different sponsors, I've come to believe that, then and now, I tend to surround myself with people who provide me with what I need. That used to be drinking buddies, who provided familiar company and substances. Now, it's you guys in Alcoholics Anonymous meetings who provide solutions to problems and demonstrate how to live life on life's terms.

In working my Ninth Step, I apologized to several former employees and made living amends to three by continuing to employ them under very different, much improved conditions. I (mostly) keep my temper and (mostly) allow them to work out their issues amongst themselves, rather than butting in. Where I used to take advantage of friends, I now try to engender an advantageous workplace that is beneficial to us all.

Today, I have a home-away-from-home group in Ridgecrest and a mobile-home group at the 6:30 p.m. men's stag, "It's a Better Deal," in Yucca Valley. Twentynine Palms is still a favorite eastern destination. In fact, I just had a business meeting there the other day at 10 a.m. I left at 4:45 a.m. and fellowshipped with alcoholics at the Joshua Tree Fellowship Hall at their daily 7 a.m. Attitude Adjustment meeting. On my way home at 5:30 p.m., I made happy hour at the HUG (Hesperia Umbrella Group). On any given day, there are dozens of meetings in the 30 miles between Lucerne Valley and Wrightwood, including Apple Valley, Hesperia, and Victorville. This is where I've spent some of the happiest hours of my life.

An antiquated, traditional spiritual says, "I'm using my Bible for a road map. The Ten Commandments tell me what to do." In truth, for me these days, "I'm using my meeting schedule for a road map. The Big Book tells me what to do." —*Ed L., Wrightwood, Calif.* Copyright c. 1944-2012. AA Grapevine, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Reprints by permission only.

A.A. Word Search: Our word search phrase today is from A Daily Tune-Up A.A. Big Book, pg. 85. **"Every day is a day when we must carry the vision of God's will into all of our activities."** Read up, down, sideways and diagonally to find these words.

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

San Fernando Valley Central Office

7417-E. Van Nuys Boulevard

Van Nuys, CA 91405

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED