

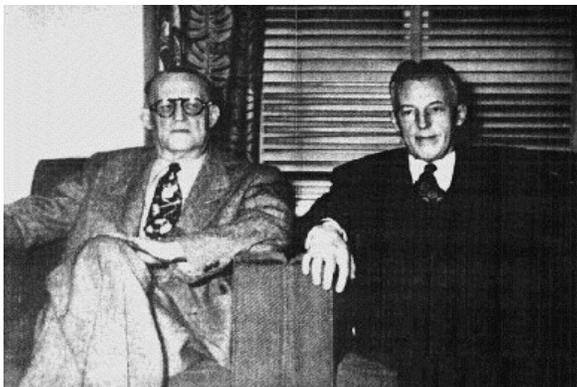
# RECOVERY TIMES

Vol. 45, No. 5, May 2015

The Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office Newsletter

## A Little A.A. History

**On June 10, 1935, Bill Wilson and Doctor Bob Smith founded Alcoholics Anonymous in America.**



I came into Alcoholics Anonymous on June 10, 1981. It was four years later before I discovered my sobriety day is also A.A.'s birthday! On June 10, 1935, 1935, Bill Wilson and Doctor Bob Smith founded Alcoholics Anonymous in America. Having the same birthday as A.A. interests me, and I have been researching A.A. history ever since.

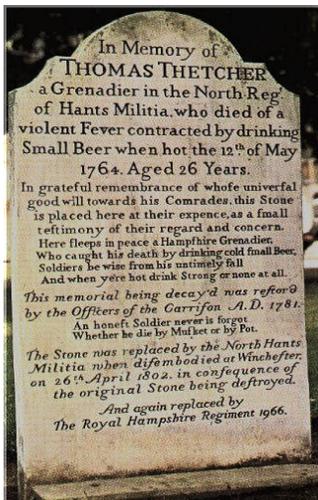
In 2000, my partner and I went to Akron, Ohio where the cofounders of A.A. met. We visited The Mayflower Hotel where Bill W. stayed and I had my photograph taken while on the phone Bill Wilson used to find another alcoholic in Akron. We also went to Doctor Bob's home. He had twelve steps up to his front door! We sat on the porch swing where he and Bill W. spent many hours discussing the fledgling fellowship. We had photos taken at the first A.A. meeting place "Akron, Ohio" and later at Doctor Bob's grave.

To celebrate my 32 years of sobriety, I travelled to Stepping Stones, Bill W.'s home, a short train ride from New York's Grand Central Station. Both Doctor Bob's home and Stepping Stones are museums dedicated to A.A. I sat at Bill's desk where he did most of his writings and was amazed at the amount of books he had collected over the years. I heard recordings of both Doctor Bob and Bill W. The whole experience was very emotional and something of a

pilgrimage for me. Before these two alcoholics met, alcoholics like me were bound to die or go insane. Thanks to God, they did meet and developed a program of recovery and the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. These two men saved my life and the lives of millions of others.

On June 10<sup>th</sup>, we celebrate my 34<sup>th</sup> A.A. birthday and A.A.'s 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. Thanks to God and A.A., I have recovered from a [seemingly] hopeless condition of mind and body. I live a spiritual life today and I am happy, joyous and free. Thank you God and A.A. for giving me a wonderful life.

**Tom E., West Midlands, England** Copyright c. 1944-2012. AA Grapevine, Inc.



SERVICE COMMITTEE SCHEDULE:

**San Fernando Valley Central Office Board Meeting:** June 3, 2015, 6:30 p.m., Central Office, 16132 Sherman Way, Van Nuys, CA 91406

**San Fernando Valley Intergroup Meeting:** June 8, 2015: Orientation for 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): May 18, 2015: 7 p.m. Orientation, 8 p.m. Bus. Meeting, St. Innocent Church, 5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana.

**General Service Dist. 1:** (1<sup>st</sup> Wed.): June 3, 2015: 6:30 p.m., 7552 Remmet, Canoga Park.

**General Service Dist. 2:** (1<sup>st</sup> Tues.): June 2, 2015: 6:30 p.m., 4011 Dunsmore, La Crescenta.

**General Service District 7:** (2<sup>nd</sup> Sat.): June 13, 15, 2015: 9 a.m., Women's Club: 33201 Agua Dulce Canyon Rd, Agua Dulce, CA.

**General Service District 11** (1<sup>st</sup> Monday): June 1, 2015: 6 p.m. New GSRs - 6:30 p.m., 315 W. Vine Street, Glendale

**General Service District 16** (1<sup>st</sup> Monday): June 1, 2015: 6:15 p.m. meeting, 15950 Chatsworth, Granada Hills.

**General Service District 17** (1<sup>st</sup> Monday): June 1, 2015: 6 p.m. Orientation for new GSRs, 6:30 p.m., Business Meeting: 7:00 p.m., 5000 Colfax, NoHo.

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## **OPPORTUNITIES IN THE SAN FERNANDO VALLEY**



**24/7 Phone Service** for AAs. Go to: [www.sfvaa.org](http://www.sfvaa.org) to find meeting info, upcoming events, service meeting info, or download a copy of Recovery Times. **Want to be of service?** We are always in need of volunteers to answer phones, especially on weekends and holidays. 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 (H & I):** Temporary contacts are needed to pair the alcoholic leaving rehabilitation, treatment or jail with A.A. in their home community. Contact Central Office for info. 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 to meetings. See meeting info previous pg. (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:** 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month @ 1 p.m. at Unit A., 10641 Burbank Blvd., North Hollywood. (Regular weekly meeting: Monday night at 8 p.m.).

**San Fernando Valley Intergroup:** Central Office holds a monthly meeting for all Intergroup reps on the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.

**Deaths (Things We Cannot Change):** If you are aware of the passing of a Fellowship member, please call us at (818) 988-3001. **Big John – 38 Years & John F. – 28 Years**

**Has your meeting changed?** Please provide meeting updates in writing to: **The Valley Central Office**, 16132 Sherman Way, Van Nuys, CA 91406. **If you would like a copy of Recovery Times**, please send us your name, address and payment for \$7.00 to cover cost & delivery. Also include information on whether you want a new subscription, are renewing, or if you are enclosing an additional contribution. If moving, please give us your former address.

**Central Office Has Moved to: 16132 Sherman Way, Van Nuys, CA.** (SW corner of Woodley & Sherman Way, west of the Mobile Station). Many people don't realize that Central Office is open every day for book sales (Monday – Sunday) except for holidays. However, we are closed the last Friday of the month for Inventory. Our large warehouse has all of the A.A. approved literature and pamphlets that your group needs, plus medallions and chips. Central Office is a legitimate non-profit. Personal donations cannot exceed \$3,000 per year and must be from members of Alcoholics Anonymous, not from outsiders. **For more info, call: (818) 988-3001 or check out our website: [www.sfvaa.org](http://www.sfvaa.org).**

## **SAN FERNANDO VALLEY CENTRAL OFFICE**

### **Minutes of Intergroup Representatives Meeting, April 13, 2015**

**OPENING: Dawn H.** opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. with The Serenity Prayer

- Pat K. read "The Twelve Traditions."
- Cheryl accepted a motion for approval of Minutes from the March Intergroup Meeting, with corrections.

**TREASURER'S REPORT: Josh S.:** Group contributions are up. MTD (\$731.47) and YTD \$7006.59

**EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S REPORT: Bob F.**

**Central Office** - Everything is running smoothly at Central Office.

**Recovery Times** - Reminder deadline for submissions is 15<sup>th</sup> of the month; send to Pat's e-mail [xnowisthetime@aol.com](mailto:xnowisthetime@aol.com).

**MEETING RELATED BUSINESS: Brian H.:** There were no new Intergroup Representatives this month. 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**

- General Service District 16: Louis is new IG rep
- General Service District 1: John will host secretary's workshop.
- General Service District 17: Paul: Lisa will attending GSR conference, Central California Assembly [www.area93.org](http://www.area93.org).

**San Fernando Valley Hospital & Institutions Committee:** Nancy, Biking 4 Books scheduled for June 13.

**San Fernando Valley 2016 AA Convention:** Joel S. said the next convention will be held January 29 – 31, 2016. Brian will be the incoming Chairperson.

**Santa Clarita Valley AA Convention:** Bernard announced that the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual SCVAAC will be held October 15-18, 2015. Registration is now available online.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

- Literature Sales are CLOSED on holidays and the last Friday of each month. Central Office doors remain open; phones are still answered.
- Reminder for groups to report upcoming group events & remove expired event flyers from literature tables.
- Continue to send meeting changes IN WRITING to Central Office.
- Reminder to those who may have come in late to please sign in on only ONE sign-in sheets.

"I used to be a champ at *unrealistic* self-appraisal. I wanted to look only at the part of my life which seemed good."

AA Co-Founder, **Bill W.**,  
"Humility for Today," June 1961

"In A.A., for instance, we talk a great deal about each other. Provided our motives are thoroughly good, this is not in the least wrong. But damaging gossip is quite something else." **Bill W.**, "This Matter of Honesty," 1961

**Heard at A.A. Meetings:**

"Where else can you get marriage advice from someone who's been divorced 3 times and financial advice from someone who's been bankrupt 2 times? Only in the rooms of A.A., and best of all – it's free!"

"Mean what you say, say what you mean, but don't say it mean!"

"A.A. gives you the pause time between what someone says and your reaction."

"A spiritual awakening is easy: any time any alcoholic anywhere understands any part of the truth, that's a spiritual awakening." Chicago, IL, November 2002

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**NEW BUSINESS:** No attendance certificates were awarded this evening.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM AA GROUPS & SEVENTH TRADITION:**

- Andy: The San Fernando Group will host its 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Springfest Alcahthon from May 22 – 25, 2015.
- Tigran: Windsor Club Dance starts at 10 p.m. after the 8 p.m. meeting on May 16, 2015.
- Lynn: The Great Outdoor Beaver Meeting will be held in Beaver, Utah Labor Day Weekend, Sept 3-6.
- Paul: Solutions Group is presenting "Focusing on the Inventory Process," Thursdays 7:30 – 9 pm.
- Dawn (for Sandy): Registration is open for Woman to Woman at Mt. St. Mary's College, May 29-31.

Dawn H. reminded the IGRs to bring at least 350 flyers for upcoming events. Flyers must be for "AA-related events" (defined as "an event that includes an AA Meeting as part of the event").

**ACKNOWLEDGE BIRTHDAYS FOR THE MONTH OF APRIL – 90 YEARS OF SOBRIETY!**

Aron: 1 year; John B: 9 years; Bernard: 21 years; Richard: 25 years; & Bob F., 34 years

**VACANCIES ON BOARD:** None

**CLOSING:** Dawn H. a motion to adjourn was recognized and seconded. Meeting adjourned with *The Lord's Prayer* at 7:18 p.m. Prepared and submitted by: Cheryl A, Recording Secretary

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**THE RECOVERY TIMES WOULD LIKE TO HEAR YOUR STORY. WE ACCEPT SUBMISSIONS FROM A.A.'S OF UP TO 500 WORDS. PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR SOBRIETY DATE AND AN EMAIL OR PHONE NUMBER.**

Please email Pat at: [xnowisthetime@aol.com](mailto:xnowisthetime@aol.com). We reserve the right to use in print or online any stories submitted that reinforce the message of Alcoholics Anonymous. Thank you for your contributions! Editor

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**RECOVERY + WILLINGNESS = BETTER HEALTH, MORE MONEY IN YOUR POCKET, IMPROVED RELATIONSHIPS, GREATER QUALITY LIFE**

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# After the Blizzard

## After a tragic childhood and years of drinking, she found AA and came in from the cold

There was a blizzard raging outside. My grandmother woke us up and led my two younger brothers and me out of the basement where we had been sleeping. My first gleeful thought was that we would not have to make the seven-hour drive back to our home in New Jersey and would get to spend one more day playing in the snow with our cousins.



As we walked into the living room, I sensed immediately that something was wrong. My grandfather was sitting on the couch and he was crying. We all sat down and my grandmother delivered the devastating news that my parents had been in a car accident the night before. I wanted to be taken to the hospital to see them. Then the news got worse: they were not ever coming home—they were dead. I ran to my parents' bedroom, unable to believe the news. Their beds had not been slept in.

The next few days were a blur. At the wake, a dear friend of my grandmother's told her that if she prayed to Jesus, he would get her through this terrible ordeal. The moment she stepped away, my grandmother grabbed me by the shoulders, looked me square in the eyes, and told me that there was no God, because God would not have taken her daughter nor left my two brothers and me orphans. I had no choice but to believe her.

I was 12 years old and began drinking almost immediately. It was the only relief I could find from the pain and grief of my loss. We never talked about my parents or the accident. It was like they had never existed. The grief was almost unbearable; drinking was my only relief. Any time I could drink, I would, and always to excess. I was miserable and alcohol was my only friend. It allowed me to function and feel comfortable in the world. Without it I felt lost, lonely and constantly afraid. I drank daily through high school and college, and into my 20s and 30s.

The first time I realized I could possibly have a problem with alcohol was at a wedding where I blacked out and woke up not knowing where I was. I knew something was wrong with me, but I didn't really think it was alcohol. Somehow I found myself at my first AA meeting. I really can't remember how I got there, but I felt at home at once. That is, until I noticed the Second Step: "Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity." At that moment, I had the vision of my grandmother's admonition about no God. Suffering from "contempt prior to investigation," I immediately shut the door on the Second Step and made a conscious decision that I would not work the Steps.

Somehow, I managed to stay sober for two years, going to meetings and associating with fellow A.A.s, mostly the men, whom I found much easier to manipulate and get attention from. I actually did not open the Big Book - not one time. Needless to say, when the circumstances arose, I drank. Eleven years later, I had reached the level of pitiful, incomprehensible demoralization that brought me crawling back to A.A. At my first meeting, I felt that I had come home again. This time I made several conscious decisions. I admitted to my innermost self that I was an alcoholic and became willing to do whatever the women in the program suggested, including believing in a Higher Power.

I opened up my eyes and heart and really listened to what the women were saying. My self-esteem was devastatingly low. Slogans like, "Let Us Love You Until You Can Love Yourself," and "Fake It Till You Make It," slowly sank in. I took notes at meetings of the wonderful things I heard that inspired me or resonated with me.

I still didn't think I could have a God in my life, but I was willing to do anything to avoid the pit of alcoholic despair. My sponsor had me write a definition of what I would want my Higher Power to be. I realized I had a dark and punishing idea of what and who God was. This exercise helped me to begin the process of finding a loving and caring Higher Power to turn my life over to.

Slowly, as time went on, I realized that God was doing for me what I couldn't do for myself. I realized that I was no longer "faking it." I really did have a Higher Power in my life and I was restored to sanity. I made friends in the program, friendships that will last a lifetime, friends I can count on and who can count on me. The dark hole of alcoholism was being filled with the fundamental idea of a God who was deep down inside of me. For faith in a power greater than myself, and miraculous demonstrations of that power, are presenting themselves to me every day of my new sober life. —*Jillian O., Novato, Calif.*

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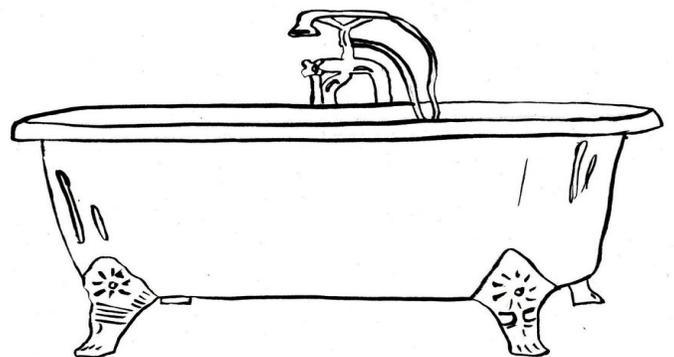


DAYTON, OH. AA MEMBERS - 1942  
MEMBERS DONNED MASKS TO PROTECT THEIR ANONYMITY

## LIKE A WARM BATH

I am so busy all the time. I have my husband of 31 years, my three children, my own travel company, women I sponsor, my AA commitments and my creative life—all to fit into a shrinking 24 hours. Sometimes I think I don't have time to go to all these conferences and conventions, and yet every time I do, I get pumped up with love, faith, gratitude and joy that can be compared to nothing else. It is like a booster shot of love, and the only way you can get it is to show up.

A few days ago, I made a last minute decision to attend a womens' AA conference three hours north of my home with one of my sponsees who was feeling a little down in the dumps. We had just been to a big conference several weeks ago, but I thought this one was "close," which means in the same state. I also wanted to see another sponsee who lived nearby who had just had surgery. I was tired and had not slept well all week: I had a lot for my busy mind to chew on and a body trying to return to the eastern time zone after a recent "gratitude cruise" to Alaska. But I packed a bag anyway.



We arrived on Friday night and went right into the main meeting. The speaker was lovely and spoke on the first three Steps. Yet I sat there with my 37 years of sobriety and in no time at all, I was thinking, Blah, blah, blah, I've heard all this drivel many times. This is boring me to death. I got up not so quietly, as I was

still sitting in the front as I was taught, and while several hundred perfectly still women were wide-eyed and not a bobby pin was moving, I left. I went back to my hotel room as fast as I could, washed up and went right to sleep. I suspected the slumping in my seat also had something to do with my attitude.

The next day my wonderful sponsee, who had tiptoed in the night before, brought me coffee, and I was alive again. After breakfast, we went to hear the first of many speakers for the next two days. Every single thing they said was as if I were hearing it for the first time. The magic took over, the joy reactivated at the root, and I was taking the AA bath once again full of tears, laughter and gratitude. It was proved to me once again that God will meet me anywhere.

The old slogan, HALT—don't get too hungry, angry, lonely or tired—still applies to me every time. I show up because I know every conference or convention will change me and infuse me with the things that are more vital than bread and butter. —*Snow P., Lake Worth, Fla* Copyright c. 1944-2012. AA Grapevine, Inc. *All Rights Reserved. Reprints by permission only.*

**Today's word search puzzle:** TWO "MAGNIFICENT STANDARDS" and can be found in AS BILL SEES IT, p. 271: **"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."** To find the words, look up, down, sideways, backwards and at any angle. Good luck!

D	N	A	L	L	H	R	B	S	T	W	O	U	R	J
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Central Office of SFV

16132 Sherman Way  
Van Nuys, CA 91406

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