

RECOVERY TIMES

Vol. 45, No. 6, June 2015

The Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office Newsletter



Photo Used By Permission: Michael E.

Anonymous to the End

Last summer I visited the Akron cemetery where Bob and Anne lie. Their simple stone says never a word about Alcoholics Anonymous. This made me so glad I cried. Did this wonderful couple carry personal anonymity too far when they so firmly refused to use the worlds "Alcoholics Anonymous," even on their own burial stone?

For one, I don't think so. I think that this great and final example of self-effacement will prove of more permanent worth to AA than could any spectacular public notoriety or fine mausoleum.

We don't have to go to Akron, Ohio to see Dr. Bob's memorial. Dr. Bob's real monument is visible throughout the length and breadth of AA. Let us look again at its true inscription... one word

only, which we AAs have written. That word is Sacrifice. **Bill W., January 1955**
Dr. Bob (A.A. was founded on June 10, 1935. This year marks its 80th anniversary).

Copyright c. 1944-2012. AA Grapevine, Inc.

What Does Anonymous Really Mean?

In The Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous, the long form, Traditions 11 & 12 lay out exactly why anonymity (an-on-im-ity) is so important to our program:



BILL W. and Dr. BOB

11: "Our relations with the general public should be characterized by personal anonymity. We think A.A. ought to avoid sensational advertising. Our names and pictures as A.A. members ought not be broadcast, filmed, or publicly printed. Our public relations should be guided by the principle of attraction rather than promotion. There is never need to praise ourselves. We feel it better to let our friends recommend us."

12: "And finally, we of Alcoholics Anonymous believe that the principle of anonymity has an immense spiritual significance. It reminds us that we are to place principles before personalities; that we are actually to practice genuine humility. This to the end that our great blessings may never spoil us; that we shall forever live in thankful contemplation of Him who presides over us all."

SERVICE COMMITTEE SCHEDULE:

San Fernando Valley Central Office Board Meeting: July 8, 2015, 6:30 p.m., Central Office, 16132 Sherman Way, Van Nuys, CA 91406

San Fernando Valley Intergroup Meeting: July 13, 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): June 15, 2015: 7 p.m. Orientation, 8 p.m. Bus. Meeting, St. Innocent Church, 5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana.

General Service Dist. 1: (1st Wed.): July 1, 2015: 6:30 p.m., 7552 Remmet, Canoga Park.

General Service Dist. 2: (1st Tues.): July 7, 2015: 6:30 p.m., 4011 Dunsmore, La Crescenta.

General Service District 7: (2nd Sat.): July 11, 2015, 2015: 9 a.m., Women's Club: 33201 Agua Dulce Canyon Rd, Agua Dulce, CA.

General Service District 11 (1st Monday): July 6, 2015: 6 p.m. New GSRs - 6:30 p.m., 315 W. Vine Street, Glendale.

General Service District 16 (1st Mon.): July 6, 2015: 6:15 p.m., 15950 Chatsworth, Granada Hills.

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

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES IN THE SAN FERNANDO VALLEY

A.A. Central Office maintains 24/7 Phone Service for AAs. 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?** 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 above. (SFV H & I).

San Fernando Valley Convention Committee: Volunteers are welcome to participate in the planning of the 2015 Convention. (See Page 3 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.).

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! **At the last two Intergroup meetings there were no new IGRs.**

Happy Birthday!



Celebrating an A.A. Anniversary? Please consider making a \$1.00 donation for each year of your sobriety during your birthday month and we will list your name and birthday year in the next issue.

Deaths (Things We Cannot Change): If you are aware of the passing of a Fellowship member, please call us at (818) 988-3001. **Maurice K. – 14 Years**

Central Office's sales office will be closed on July 3rd in observance of Independence Day.

Last December, Central Office Moved to 16132 Sherman Way, Van Nuys, CA. (SW corner of Woodley & Sherman Way, west of the Mobil 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.**

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.

SAN FERNANDO VALLEY CENTRAL OFFICE

Minutes of Intergroup Representatives Meeting, May 11, 2015

OPENING: Dawn H. opened the meeting at 7:01 p.m. with The Serenity Prayer

Tigran read "The Twelve Traditions." Cheryl accepted a motion for approval of April's Intergroup Meeting, with corrections.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Josh S.: Individual contributions and literature sales were down compared to last year. MTD is \$1745.19 and YTD \$6862.42

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S REPORT: Bob F.

Central Office - Everything is running smoothly at Central Office. There are a number of events coming up: Tri State Convention, Pow Wow in Palm Desert, Biking 4 Books, the South Bay Round Up, and the Labor Day Outdoor Weekend in Beaver, Utah Sept 3 – 6, 2015.

Recovery Times – Reminder: The deadline for submissions is 15th of the month. Please send your submission to Pat's e-mail 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 more than 780 meeting in the San Fernando Valley, with only 50 - 60 represented monthly at IGR. Orientation for new IGRs begins at 6:30 p.m. prior to monthly IGR Meeting.

SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES

General Service District 17: Paul reported the Central California Assembly is May 17 in Santa Paula (www.area93.org). They approved a budget for the Oldtimers Event this Fall; Norm brought up the idea of having a Secretary's Workshop.

San Fernando Valley Hospital & Institutions Committee: Biking 4 Books is scheduled for June 13, 2015 at Woodley Park, Van Nuys.

San Fernando Valley 41st AA Convention will be held January 29, 30, & 31, 2016.

Santa Clarita Valley AA Convention: Bernard reported the 12th Annual SCVAAC will be held October 15 - 18, 2015. A Spaghetti Dinner fundraiser will be held on June 20. Preregistration is now available online for: "It Works—It Really Does" at the Embassy Suites in Valencia.

"When we consult an AA friend, we should not be reluctant to remind him of our need for full privacy. Intimate communication is normally so free and easy among us that an AA adviser may sometimes forget when we expect him to remain silent. The protective sanctity of this most healing of human relations ought never be violated."

AA Co-Founder, **Bill W.**, August 1961, "This Matter of Honesty."

"We need to be aware not only of our limitations, defects and shortcomings, but also of our strengths, talents and successes."
West Henrietta, N.Y., October 2007

"I believe in today because it is the only day in eternity that belongs to me."
Atlanta, Ga., Sept 1950

"I do not agree that the newcomer is the most important member at any meeting. In my opinion, equally important are those old-timers who showed me the way, and any middle-timer who may today be suffering. If newcomers are indeed the lifeblood of AA, old- and middle-timers are its skin and backbone. What a bewildered mess we would be in without them!"

NYC, N.Y., June 1970
Copyright c. 1944-2012. AA Grapevine, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Reprints by permission only.

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.

NEW BUSINESS: No attendance certificates were awarded this evening.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM AA GROUPS & SEVENTH TRADITION:

Joshua said **Unit A.**'s annual **July 4th Alcathon** will be held July 3 – 5, 2015. Tigran announced the **Windsor Club's Meeting & Dance** on May 16, 2015. Marianna invited everyone to the Young People in A.A.'s "**Feast on the Steps**" May 17th. Patrick announced the **Burbank Group's** next dance, June 13th after the 8 p.m. Saturday night meeting.

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 MAY – 64 YEARS OF SOBRIETY!

Drew – 1 year, Adrian I. – 3 years, Judy – 4 years, Dan – 8 years, Lloyd – 12 years, Scott – 12 years, & Tina – 24 years.

VACANCIES ON BOARD: None

CLOSING: Dawn H. made 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

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. 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

ARE YOU GOING TO THE AA INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION IN ATLANTA, GEORGIA JULY 2 – 5, 2015? YOU CAN CELEBRATE 80 YEARS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS WITH THOUSANDS OF OTHERS IN SOBRIETY FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD. THE THEME FOR THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION IS "HAPPY, JOYOUS AND FREE."

THE FUNDAMENTALS IN RETROSPECT, BY DR. BOB

It is gratifying to feel that one belongs to and has a definite personal part in the work of a growing and spiritually prospering organization for the release of the alcoholics of mankind from a deadly enslavement. For me, there is double gratification in the realization that, more than thirteen years ago, an all-wise Providence, whose ways must always be mysterious to our limited understandings, brought me to “see my duty clear,” and to contribute in decent humility, as have so many others, my part in guiding the first trembling steps of the then infant organization, Alcoholics Anonymous.



It is fitting at this time to indulge in some retrospect regarding certain fundamentals. Much has been written, much has been said about the Twelve Steps of AA. The tenets of our faith and practice were not worked out overnight and then presented to our members as an opportunist creed. Born of our early trials and many tribulations, they were and are the result of humble and sincere desire, sought in personal prayer, for divine guidance.

As finally expressed and offered, they are simple in language, plain in meaning. They are also workable by any person having a sincere desire to obtain and keep sobriety. The results are the proof. Their simplicity and workability are such that no special interpretations, and certainly no reservations, have ever been necessary. And it has become increasingly clear that the degree of harmonious living which we achieve is in direct ratio to our earnest attempt to follow them literally under divine guidance to the best of our ability.

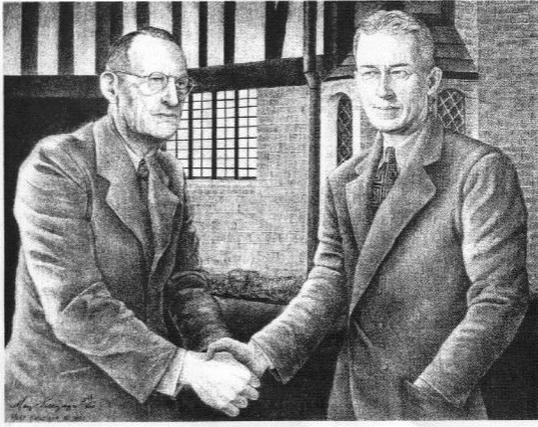
Yet there are no shibboleths in AA. We are not bound by theological doctrine. None of us may be excommunicated and cast into outer darkness. For we are many minds in our organization, and an AA Decalogue in the language of “Thou shalt not” would gall us indeed.

Look at our Twelve Traditions. No random expressions there, based on just casual observation. On the contrary, they represent the sum of our experiences as individuals, as groups within AA, and similarly with our fellows and other organizations in the great fellowship of humanity under God throughout the world. They are all serious, prayerful consideration as the guideposts of AA policy for the individuals, the group, and our various committees, local and national.

We have found it wise policy, too, to hold to no glorification of the individual. Obviously, that is sound. Most of us will concede that when it came to the personal showdown of admitting our lives to Almighty God, as we understood Him, we still had some sneaking ideas of personal justification and excuse. We had to discard them, but the ego of the alcoholic dies a hard death. Many of us, because of activity, have received praise, not only from our fellow AAs, but from the world at large. We would be ungrateful indeed to be boorish when that happens; still, it is so easy for us to become, privately perhaps, just a little vain about it all. Yet fitting and wearing halos is not for us.

We’ve all seen the new member who stays sober for a time, largely through sponsorship. Then maybe the sponsor gets drunk, and you know what usually happens. Left without a human prop, the new member gets drunk, too. He has been glorifying an individual, instead of following the program.

Certainly, we need leaders, but we must regard them as the human agents of the Higher Power and not with undue adulation as individuals. The Fourth and Tenth Steps cannot be too strongly emphasized here, *Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves... Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.* There is your perfect antidote for halo poisoning... So with the question of anonymity. If we have a banner, this word, speaking of the surrender of the individual-the ego-is emblazoned on it. Let us dwell thoughtfully on its full meaning and learn thereby to remain humble, modest, ever-conscious that we are eternally under divine direction.



Alcoholics Anonymous was nurtured in its early days around a kitchen table. Many of our pioneer groups and some of our most resultful meetings and best programs have had their origin around that modest piece of furniture, with the coffeepot handy on the stove.

True, we have progressed materially to better furniture and more comfortable surroundings. Yet the kitchen table must ever be appropriate for us. It is the perfect symbol of simplicity. In AA we have no VIPs, nor have we need of any. Our organization needs no title-holders nor grandiose buildings. That is by design. Experience has taught us that simplicity is basic in preservation of our personal sobriety and helping those in need.

Far better it is for us to fully understand the meaning and practice of “thou good and faithful servant,” than to listen to “With 60,000 members, you should have sixty-stories-high administration headquarters in New York with an assortment of trained ‘ists’ to direct your affairs.” We need nothing of the sort. God grant that AA may ever stay simple.

Over the years we have been tested and developed suitable techniques for our purpose. They are entirely flexible. We have all known and seen miracles – the healing of broken individuals, the rebuilding of broken homes. And always it has been the constructive, personal Twelfth Step work based on an ever-upward-looking faith which has done the job.

In as large an organization as ours, we naturally have had our share of those who fail to measure up to certain obvious standards of conduct. They have included schemers for personal gain, petty swindlers and confidence men, crooks of various kinds, and other human fallibles. Relatively, their number has been small, much smaller than in many religious and social-uplift organizations. Yet they have been a problem and not an easy one. They have caused many an AA to stop thinking and working constructively for a time.

We cannot condone their actions, yet we must concede that when we have used normal caution and precaution in dealing with such cases, we may safely leave them to that Higher Power. Let me reiterate that we AAs are many men and women, that we are of many minds. It will be well for us to concentrate on the goal of personal sobriety and active work. We humans and alcoholics, on strict moral stock-taking, must confess to at least a slight degree of larcenous instinct. We can hardly arrogate the roles of judges and executioners.

Thirteen grand years! To have been a part of it all from the beginning has been reward indeed. **Dr. Bob, Sept. 1948**

Copyright c. 1944-2012. AA Grapevine, Inc. *All Rights Reserved. Reprints by permission only.*



Upcoming Calendar of Events:

July 10 – 12, 2015: **2015 Tehachapi Mountain Roundup.** Info: Bonnie: 661-972-7330

July 31- August 2nd, **Foothill Roundup**, Flintridge Prep, La Canada: <http://foothillroundup.org>.

August 7-9, 2015, **41st Mad Dog Daze**, Hyatt Regency Resort, Indian Wells, CA: www.maaddogdaze.org.

August 27 - 30, 2015: **31st Annual South Bay Roundup**, Torrance Marriott, southbayroundup.org.

September 11-13, 2015: **37th Annual Ventura County AA Convention:** www.vcaac.org

Oct. 2 – 4, 2015: **64th So. CA AA Convention**, Rancho Mirage. www.aasocal.com



Understanding Anonymity

The General Service Office (GSO) approved pamphlet "Understanding Anonymity" explains the reasons why Alcoholics Anonymous, in its early years, chose anonymity as the Twelfth and final Tradition. "Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles

before personalities."

Why is anonymity so important?

There are two reasons identified, dating back to A.A.'s founding in 1935:

"At the personal level, anonymity provides protection for all members from identification as alcoholics, a safeguard often of special importance to newcomers.

"At the public level of press, radio, TV, films and other media technologies such as the Internet, anonymity stresses the equality in the Fellowship of all members by putting the brake on those who might otherwise exploit their A.A. affiliation to achieve recognition, power or personal gain."

So what does anonymity mean in using social media for online posts?

"When using digital media, A.A. members are responsible for their own anonymity and that of others. When we post, text, or blog, we should assume that we are publishing at the public level. When we break our anonymity in these forums, we may inadvertently break the anonymity of others."

"In stressing the equality of all A.A. members – and unity in the common bond of their recovery from alcoholism – anonymity serves as the spiritual foundation of the Fellowship. Back in 1946, Bill W., our co-founder, wrote: "The word 'anonymous' has for us an immense spiritual significance. Subtly but powerfully, it reminds us that we are always to place principles before personalities; that we have renounced personal glorification in public; that our movement not only preaches but actually practices a true humility."

And what about protecting one's anonymity after their death?

"A.A. members generally think it unwise to break the anonymity of the member even after his or her death, but in each situation, the final decision must rest with the family. A.A. members, though, are in agreement that the anonymity of still living A.A. members should be respected in obituaries or in any type of printed remembrance or death notice." (This is why we only use first names and the initial of the person's last name when we acknowledge members of our fellowship who have passed, here in the Recovery Times).



If an A.A. member does want to speak as an A.A. member they may do so, without violating the Traditions, as long as their full name and face is not revealed. In this instance, they are speaking for themselves as individuals, and not on behalf of Alcoholics Anonymous and do not reveal their membership in A.A.

If you have questions about anonymity, go to the GSO website: www.aa.org. Some helpful reading material includes: "Speaking at Non-A.A. Meetings," "A.A. Tradition – How it Developed," and "A.A. Guideline on the Internet," among other readings.

Central Office of SFV
16132 Sherman Way
Van Nuys, CA 91406

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED