

The Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office Newsletter



STORIES MY MOTHER TOLD ME

Even the knowledge that alcoholism was in her family couldn't stop her from becoming an alcoholic herself

I grew up in the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous. AA lingo was a part of my regular vocabulary long before I even learned to read. I remember my mother telling me when I was still quite young, "If you ever drink, you will be playing with fire. Alcoholism can be genetic and it runs on both sides of your family." I thought that having a mother in AA and a father who was a heavy drinker would prevent me from becoming an alcoholic.

When I was in grade school, I started to have the kind of feelings that would lead me to drinking. I was five years old when my parents split up. My mother had gotten sober and my father was still drinking. After their divorce, I became a shy, insecure and withdrawn child. I found it hard to make friends as we moved frequently. My mother and I settled down in Westminster, Calif. when I was eight. Even a more stable life failed to mitigate my insecurities.

Not long later, I was diagnosed with a learning disability. This only bolstered my insecurity. I felt ashamed and apart from the other children. I had always been behind scholastically and now there was a label to set me apart. Grade school felt like an interminable struggle for me scholastically, socially and emotionally. I learned how to cheat my way through school in the fifth grade. My grades began to rise and my confidence went with it. Yet, I still felt like everyone else was part of something and I had missed out.

At 14, I had my first drink. I was finally free. I was free of all the feelings that tied me down. I embraced my first drink like another child might embrace Disneyland. I remember guarding that Goldschlager bottle behind my friend's house with my life. For every shot the other kids took, I took three.

The bits and pieces from that night I remember are a collage of wild, carefree fun. But the picture I got from my friends the next day looked very different. They said that I became violent and promiscuous. I figured they were overreacting. I quickly was transformed from a very shy girl to one of the most popular girls in school. I drank and dabbled in drugs throughout the next years in high school. I ditched class every chance I got to hang out and party. I don't know how I still managed to graduate.

After high school, I enrolled in college. I put a lot of hard work and dedication into my school work while also investing heavily into my drinking career. I could get through the week of school as long as I had a few beers waiting for me after class. Beer and wine would get me through the weekdays until the weekend when I could get completely obliterated.

As my drinking progressed, so did the consequences. I was starting to experience depression and the day-to-day tasks seemed more and more unmanageable. When I graduated college, I landed my dream job in the non-profit sector. Even though I was achieving the things I had hoped for, I was still dogged by depression. The only way I knew how to treat those feelings were by drinking alcohol. The worse I felt, the more I drank. By this time, I was drinking a bottle or two of wine and a few tall cans each night after work. (Cont. Page 5)

SERVICE COMMITTEE SCHEDULE:

San Fernando Valley Central Office Board Meeting: August 5, 2015, 6:30 p.m., Central Office, 16132 Sherman Way, Van Nuys, CA 91406

San Fernando Valley Intergroup Meeting: August 10, 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): July 20, 2015: 7 p.m. Orientation, 8 p.m. Bus. Meeting, St. Innocent Church, 5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana.

General Service Dist. 1: (1st Wed.): August 5, 2015: 6:30 p.m., 7552 Remmet, Canoga Park.

General Service Dist. 2: (1st Tues.): August 4, 2015: 6:30 p.m., 4011 Dunsmore, La Crescenta.

General Service District 7: (2nd Sat.): August 8, 2015, 2015: 9 a.m., Women's Club: 33201 Agua Dulce Canyon Rd, Agua Dulce, CA.

General Service District 11 (1st Monday): August 3, 2015: 6 p.m. New GSRs - 6:30 p.m., 315 W. Vine Street, Glendale.

General Service District 16 (1st Mon.): August 3 2015: 6:15 p.m., 15950 Chatsworth, Granada Hills.

General Service District 17 (1st Monday): August 3, 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.**



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. This month's birthday celebrants are: **Linda G. – 8 Years, Ester G. – 8 Years, Roger P. – 26 Years, Doug R. – 28 Years, Walter H. – 28 Years, Cathy H. – 30 Years., Learning to Live Men's Stag – 5 men, 80 Years & Saturday Morning Women's Meeting – 5 women, 52 Years.**

Deaths (Things We Cannot Change): If you are aware of the passing of a Fellowship member, please call us at (818) 988-3001. **We said goodbye to Cliff S. – 35 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, June 8, 2015

OPENING: Dawn H.

- Dawn opened the meeting at 7:02 p.m. with The Serenity Prayer. Nicole read "The Twelve Traditions."
- Cheryl accepted a motion for approval of Minutes from the May Intergroup Meeting, with corrections.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Josh S.

- Literature sales still down compared to last year, group contributions were up, and personal contributions were down a little; MTD (\$95.57) and YTD (\$6766.85).

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S REPORT: Bob F.

Everything is running smoothly at Central Office. Number of events coming up: Mountain AA Conference in August, South Bay Round Up in August and the 40th Labor Day Roundup in Beaver, Utah (historically, the meeting began halfway between here and Denver).

Recovery Times

- Reminder: deadline for submissions is 15th of the month; send to Pat's e-mail xnowisthetime@aol.com.
- Pat announced that June's edition is about Anonymity. For "Things We Cannot Change," Dawn asked A.A.'s to let Central Office know about members who have passed on.

MEETING RELATED BUSINESS: Brian H.

There were 5 new Intergroup reps this month. IGRs were reminded to encourage recruitment from meetings that are not represented. There are currently more than 780 meetings 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 11: Tigran: Doing 12 Concepts Study
- General Service District 1: John: Wayne, doing a Secretary's Workshop
- General Service District 17: Paul: Producing a flyer for groups that do not have a voice: Old-timers Event to be in the valley this fall.

San Fernando Valley 41st AA Convention: Joel S: Theme for 2016 "We Are Not a Glum Lot." Black and burgundy are the colors; June 16, 7 pm is the next organizing meeting.

Santa Clarita Valley AA Convention: Bernard: 12th Annual SCVAAC is October 15-18, 2015.

"It Works—It Really Does" at the Embassy Suites in Valencia. Pre-registration now available online.

OLD BUSINESS: Literature Sales are CLOSED on holidays and the last Friday of each month, but OPEN on weekends. Central Office doors remain open; phones are still answered.

Reminder for groups to report upcoming group events, and 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: Unit A Annual July 4th Alcathon July 3-5, then young people's dance
- Tigran: Windsor Club Dance and Meeting June 20 (every 3rd Saturday per month)
- Andy: San Fernando Group will sponsor "Twelve Concepts" on August 8, 1pm to 6pm
- Marianna: YPAA Day at Magic Mountain, 6/14/15 9am to 9pm
- Jonathan: Curtain Call Meeting sponsors "Feed the Homeless" at Radford Hall every 3 months.

Dawn H: 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 JUNE – 95 YEARS OF SOBRIETY!

Ty: 5-31-14, 1 year; Sharon: 5-30-12, 3 years; Sandy: 6-2-10, 5 years; Linda: 6-25-07, 8 years; Daniel: 6-16-07, 8 years; Mike: 6-26-96, 19 years; Josh S: 6-1-91, 24 years; Loretta: 6-10-88, 27 years.

VACANCIES ON BOARD: There are currently no vacancies on the Board.

CLOSING: Dawn H. made a motion to adjourn. Meeting adjourned with *The Lord's Prayer* at 7:18 p.m.

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!

(Cont., front page): Stories My Mother Told Me

I was able to hold my job but I was miserable. I could see that my drinking was not that of a normal person. My drinking became problematic at home too. When my mother became concerned about it, I hid the bottles under the bed until no one was home, then I would recycle them for new bottles. She knew my drinking was out of control, but I was not able to hear her concerns.

The program I worked for ran out of funding and I was laid off. I remember feeling relieved. I no longer had to pull myself out of bed each morning with a hangover and wait it out until 5 p.m. when I could drink again. I could drink all I wanted on the weekdays, sleep off the hangovers and collect unemployment. I thought I had it made. But matters began to worsen quickly. My depression got deeper and my drinking became out of control. I would try to go a day or two without drinking and when I succeeded, I thought I was managing well. But I was miserable until I picked up the next drink. I was starting to suffer more severe consequences. After waking up in the drunk tank on New Year's Day, I decided that I couldn't live like this anymore. I accepted my mother's invitation to attend an AA meeting.



Message

"I knew I needed the alcoholic as much as he needed me ... And this mutual give-and-take is at the very heart of all of AA's Twelfth Step work today. This was how to carry the message. The final missing link was located right there in my first talk with Dr. Bob." **AA Co-Founder, Bill W., 1965**

"Peace and enlightenment come when you stop evaluating in terms of good or bad and merely accept all of life as it is and try to learn from it." **El Granada, CA, 1989**

"I think we simply fail to recognize miracles for what they are. Sobriety -- one-day-at-a-time -- is truly a miracle." **Prineville, OR, 2004**

"The wisdom of AA is so deep that it confines its own part in our personal recovery to nothing more than suggestion. AA leaves it entirely up to you and to me to decide, not only whether to use this program, but also how to use it." **Newhall, CA 1975**

"The Fourth Step lets me look at myself, look into my fear of not getting something I want or of losing something I have, get a perspective on my character defects, and move forward to try to establish true partnerships with other human beings." **Riverdale, MI 1997**
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I remember walking into the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous at 28 years old and having an overwhelming sense of peace. I felt at home as everyone in the rooms welcomed me with open arms. Of course it was hard for me to be there at first. I didn't know how to do anything sober especially when it came to socializing, but the feelings of fear and wanting to crawl out of my skin soon vanished as I took the suggestions.

Now AA is an everyday part of my life. I learned that I could have fun sober! This astonished me at first, but now I have more fun sober than I ever did drunk. Life is so much bigger and brighter now that I live sober. AA turned me from a depressed and hopeless woman into a woman who is now happy, joyous, and free. I have a beautiful life today and I owe that all to my High Power, the program of Alcoholics Anonymous, and my mother who led the way.
—*Tanya M., Westminster, Calif.*



Upcoming Calendar of Events:

2015 Tehachapi Mountain

Roundup: July 10 – 12, 2015:

Info: Bonnie: 661-972-7330

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

41st Mad Dog Daze: Aug. 7-9,

Hyatt Regency Resort, Indian Wells, CA: www.maaddogdaze.org.

12th Annual Mountain A.A. Conference: August 14 – 16, 2015, Big Bear Performing Arts Center, www.MountainAAConference.com.

31st Annual South Bay Roundup: August 27 - 30, 2015:

Torrance Marriott, southbayroundup.org.

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

64th So. CA AA Convention: Oct. 2 – 4, 2015: The Westin Mission Hills Resort & Spa, Rancho Mirage, CA: www.aasocal.com.

"The unity, the effectiveness, and even the survival of A.A. will always depend upon our continued willingness to give up some of our personal ambitions and desires for the common safety and welfare. Just as sacrifice means survival for the individual alcoholic, so does sacrifice mean unity and survival for the group and for A.A.'s entire Fellowship." Bill W. Co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous

— AS BILL SEES IT, p. 220



HUMILITY AND HAPPINESS



HUMILITY



In step 7 of the 12x12 it says that "humility, as a word, is often misunderstood." When asked, what is the opposite of humility, my first guess would be "pride." Who could argue that?

It was in my 22nd year of sobriety, when I had a phone call from my first wife's husband at the time and the conversation started going south. I was trying to refrain from bickering with him and when he couldn't get any traction, he made the statement that he had heard stories about me in the past, and that I was no_angel. I thought about for a few seconds and then responded, "I've done a lot of things in my life that I'm not proud of, but I'm not ashamed of anything I've done in the last 22 years." The

call ended peacefully. It didn't occur to me at the time but in that phone call, the *polarity* of pride and shame was evident.

About 16 years later, at a meeting, the discussion of Humility came up and I listened to all the different points of view. The memory of that phone call came back and I questioned where humility fits in. In the 12x12 Step 5, it amounts to "a clear recognition of what and who we really are followed by a sincere attempt to become what we could be." With Pride at one extreme and Shame at the other, I see Humility right in the middle. It simply means doing the things we are supposed to be doing every day, and doing them *without fanfare*. I always knew what I was supposed to be doing but with an overbearing sense of insecurity and neediness, seldom was I strong enough to do the right thing. I developed a sense of unworthiness that prevailed until I found a solution in the bottle, which only deepened my guilt and shame.

Recently, I was doing a little research to find the definition of the word *Happiness* and discovered that it is often described as "*a byproduct of right living, and not an end in itself.*" Happiness is not a goal but the result of *living right*.

A friend once shared at a meeting that *satisfying his wants will never make a person happy*. Another person shared that she had read something that described it like this: "*Happiness is like a butterfly; the more you chase it, the farther away it gets but when you stand still, it will land on your shoulder.*" If my motive is to create happiness, it's probably not going to happen. I believe that this perspective applies to Humility as well. I also believe that right living is a good start. I don't think that anybody can claim humility for themselves but we can see it in others and it seems to be a byproduct of the way they live.

I've known some humble people and they have some things in common: They seldom bring attention to themselves, they never criticize others, they are always comforting, and they are always an asset and never a liability. Humble people do the things they were taught as a child. They treat others with respect. They are: trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient..... Sound familiar? I learned it in the Boy Scouts. I learned the Golden Rule in church, but I was never strong enough to live by it. If you're not sure what you're supposed to be doing, Read the 11th Step Prayer in the 12x12 or The Boy Scouts Laws, or try practicing The Golden Rule. That should be a pretty good start. When I found Alcoholics Anonymous, I was reintroduced to these values and helped to rein in my ego, and today I am at peace with myself and with others. By Rick R., Poway, CA

WHAT DOES AN ALCOHOLIC LOOK LIKE?

Many of us were concerned that we were not going to fit in or find "like minded" people who we could relate to when we came to A.A. The Alcoholics Anonymous website (aa.org) addresses this with the pamphlet "Is A.A. For You?"

Other pamphlets and flyers that A.A. World Services has developed for reading include:

- Young People and A.A.
- A.A. For the Woman
- A.A. for the Black and African American Alcoholic
- A.A. and the Gay/Lesbian Alcoholic
- A.A. for the Native North American
- A.A. for the Older Alcoholic
- Message to Teenagers



- Do You Think You're Different?
- A.A. For the Alcoholic with Special Needs
- A.A. and the Armed Services
- A.A. in Correctional Facilities
- Is A.A. for Me?
- Is A.A. for You?
- Problems Other Than Alcohol

The truth of the matter is that alcoholics come from all cultures, ethnic groups, religions and geographical locations. While different, we are all the same as far as alcohol is concerned. Since its birth, A.A. has brought together divergent peoples for the sole purpose of helping one another. Whether you have one day, one year, ten years or 50 years, if you are an alcoholic, you will always be an alcoholic – and that's what an alcoholic looks like.

Stats on A.A. Membership: As of January 1, 2015, it is estimated there were 60,143 groups in the United States with approximately 1,283,704 members. Canada had 5,079 groups with approximately 89,793 members. Correctional facilities had an additional 1,440 groups with 35,349 members. Outside the U.S. and Canada there are an estimated 48,662 groups with 2 million, 40 thousand, 629 members. Overall, the worldwide total of groups is approximately 115,326 with 2,040,629 members.

A.A. Does Not Keep Membership Records: The General Service Office is aware of A.A. activity in 175 countries, including 61 autonomous General Service Offices in other lands. Though A.A. does not maintain membership records, this information is based on reports given by groups represented by the GSO (General Service Office) and does not represent an actual count of those who consider themselves A.A. members. By Pat K.

What Does An A.A. Member Look Like? Like You.

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED