

RECOVERY TIMES

Vol. 45, No. 10, Oct. 2015

The Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office Newsletter

A New Kind of Love: In sobriety, she learned how to love herself and others



I'm sitting at the base of Greylock Mountain in Atlanta, Idaho. It's very quiet and I have the gift of this opportunity to contemplate. Soon, I will have my three-year sobriety birthday. It doesn't sound like long, but it's not been easy for me.

I am one who has had to work at it. It took lots of changes, transformations, and experiences to get here. It's been worth it, though. My heart is beating a sober rhythm. I feel so clear and am filled with gratitude. I am experiencing a love I have never known and it truly is grace.

I've done a lot of things in my drinking days that I'm not proud of. Even sitting here in Atlanta, I have memories of these woods—falling on the way back to the cabin, of conversations in the bar that are embarrassing to remember, of all that beer breath I woke up with.

I used to drive up here while drinking. It's a miracle that I am not in prison for all the drunk driving I did. I can see that now. Back then, I couldn't see a thing except how to get drunk and stay drunk, and sober up enough just to work, until I couldn't even do that anymore.

Walking into these rooms of AA when I was lost, blind, and when I was at the end, was the best thing I ever did for me.

As I sit here in the mountains, away from the city, away from meetings, away from fellowship, I notice that this love, this peace and serenity I feel is due to finally learning how to care for myself. I am able to sit still and breathe mountain air. I can have a clear, coherent conversation with my friend. I can live and function on a daily basis. I can do all these things without a beer by my side.

Most importantly, I learned how to love. This love is not the slurry, blurry, mushy, crazy, on a buzz, calling people at two in the morning love. This is a love that comes from a place of peace and serenity inside. It is not clouded by alcohol. It is inner truth. It is clear. It is still. It is silence. It is a love I have never known, and I'm so excited for more! I am beginning to experience some happiness.

My heart is full and resonates like a drum to the rhythm of a sober walk. It's because of the program of AA that I am here. For this, I continue to buy a ticket for a seat in this place! What a great ride!

—Brenda M., Boise, Idaho

SERVICE COMMITTEE SCHEDULE:

San Fernando Valley Central Office Board Meeting: Nov.4 2015, 6:30 p.m., Central Office, 16132 Sherman Way, Van Nuys, CA 91406.

San Fernando Valley Intergroup Meeting: Nov. 9, 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): Oct. 19, 2015: 7 p.m. Orientation, 8 p.m. Bus. Meeting, St. Innocent Church, 5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana.

General Service Dist. 1: (1st Wed.): Nov. 4, 2015: 6:30 p.m., 7552 Remmet, Canoga Park.

General Service Dist. 2: (1st Tues.): Nov. 3, 2015: 6:30 p.m., 4011 Dunsmore, La Crescenta.

General Service District 7: (2nd Sat.): Nov. 14, 2015, 2015: 9 a.m., Women's Club: 33201 Agua Dulce Canyon Rd, Agua Dulce, CA.

General Service District 11 (1st Monday): Nov. 2, 2015: 6 p.m. New GSRs - 6:30 p.m., 315 W. Vine Street, Glendale.

General Service District 16 (1st Mon.): Nov. 2, 2015: 6:15 p.m., 15950 Chatsworth, Granada Hills.

General Service District 17 (1st Monday): Nov. 2, 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.

Central Office has 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.

Public Info. Committee provides info to the public about what A.A. does & doesn't do. We 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 2016 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!

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. This month's birthday celebrants are: Frank K. – 31 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 Garrett O. – 40+ 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 with \$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.

THE RECOVERY TIMES would like to hear your story. Please keep it to 500 words and focus on sobriety. Please include your sobriety date and an email or phone number then email Pat at: xnowisthetime@aol.com. Thank you!

SAN FERNANDO VALLEY CENTRAL OFFICE

Minutes of Intergroup Representatives Meeting, September 14, 2015

OPENING: Dawn H.

- Dawn opened the meeting at 7:01 p.m. with The Serenity Prayer. Nicole read the "The Twelve Traditions."
- Cheryl A. accepted a motion for approval of Minutes from the August Intergroup Meeting with corrections.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Josh S.

- Personal contributions are still up and literature sales down compared to last year.
- MTD (\$1738) and YTD (\$1603).
- Group contributions continue to be ahead of last year.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S REPORT: Bob F.

Central Office:

- Everything is running smoothly at Central Office, and the website is fine.
- There will be no written financials until a computer glitch is resolved.
- "Take Your Sponsor to Breakfast" is on 10/17/15 at the Disabled Veterans. Tickets are only available through Intergroup Representatives; this year we have 400 tickets available.
- *Recovery Times*

Reminder: Deadline for submissions is 15th of the month; send to Pat's e-mail xnowisthetime@aol.com.

MEETING RELATED BUSINESS: Brian H.

Six new Intergroup Representatives introduced themselves:

- Kenneth J., *Reseda Big Book Study*, Friday, Reseda
- Karen M., Unit A, *All R Welcome*, Daily, North Hollywood
- Diana N., *Dunsmore Women's Participation*, Thurs 6 pm, La Crescenta
- Cindy M., *Monday Night Women's Book Study*, Northridge
- Sandra., *Hole in the Sky*

Message

"With a recovering alcoholic, action has to come before understanding and faith ... We have to act our way to right thinking, rather than the reverse." *New York, N.Y., January 1968*

From: **"What About This 24-Hour Plan?"**

"The alcoholic slip is not a symptom of a psychotic condition. There's nothing screwy about it at all. *The patient simply didn't follow directions.*" **William Duncan Silkworth, MD,** *January 1947, "Slips and Human Nature"*

"God, help me find the truth but spare me the company of those who have found it."

"Patience is another muscle you have to work to have peace." Anon

"The more you focus on a problem, the larger the problem becomes. The more you focus on a solution, the larger the solution becomes." Anon

"I accepted the invitation to go on a Twelfth Step call and I in turn was twelfth-stepped." *Okmulgee, Okla., May 1994*

"It has to be love, not government that keeps AA stuck together." *NYC, N.Y., Dec. 1969*

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- Anthony, Unit A
- IGRs were reminded to encourage recruitment from meetings that are not represented. There are currently more than 780 meetings in the San Fernando Valley, but only 50 - 60 represented monthly at IGR. Orientation for new IGRs begins at 6:30 p.m. prior to the meeting.

SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES

- General Service District 11: Tigran: District 11 is hosting a 12 Concepts Study the 1st Monday of each month. The Sponsorship Workshop continues until the end of the year.
 - General Service District 1: John, The Secretary's Workshop was a huge success, everyone learned a lot.
 - General Service District 17: Paul: Old Timer's Event will be 11/8/15 1pm at the Wilkinson Senior Center, Northridge, tickets are \$10. Working on a Newcomer Packet.
 - San Fernando Valley Hospital & Institutions Committee: Nancy said the financials are good, but they need panelists for H & I panels.
- Santa Clarita Valley AA Convention: Bernard invited everyone to attend the AA Convention: "It Works—It Really Does" at the Embassy Suites in Valencia, 10/15 - 10/18/15.

- San Fernando Valley 41st AA Convention: Joel S: The committee meets the 3rd Tuesday of each month and is still open for more volunteers and commitments. Tami is the Marathon Meeting chairperson and will handle sign up forms. The convention takes place January 29, 30 and 31, 2016 at the Marriott in Woodland Hills, CA.

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.
- Congratulations to the San Fernando Valley AA Convention Committee for a record-breaking Bingo Fundraiser!
- Continue to send meeting changes IN WRITING to Central Office.

NEW BUSINESS - No attendance certificates were awarded.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM AA GROUPS & SEVENTH TRADITION:

- Tigran: Windsor Club Dance and Meeting takes place every 3rd Saturday with a "Haunted Dance Party" 10pm to 1:30am on Oct. 17th following the regular evening AA meeting.
- Marianna: Young People in AA Convention will be held at the Woodland Hills Marriott over Halloween Weekend.
- Sandra: Hole in the Sky's October Alcañon is: Oct 30, 31 and Nov 1.
- Kim F: Unit A's 34 Year Anniversary Celebration starts 10/17/15 at 7:00 am and goes all day till 8 pm.
- Anthony: Unit A's 7 am meetings need support; Friday Night Live at 8 pm meeting provides pizza.

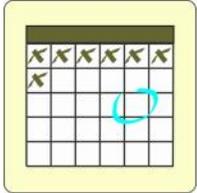
Chairperson Dawn H: Groups should bring at least 350 flyers for upcoming events so that each meeting can have at least 5 copies. Flyers must be for "AA-related events" (defined as "an event that includes an AA Meeting as part of the event"). She thanked Rick, who always shows up early to make the IGR meeting's coffee.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF BIRTHDAYS: SEPTEMBER – 104 YEARS OF SOBRIETY!

Alma: 1 year, Stephanie: 6 years, Nancy: 8 years, Amin: 11 years, Anthony: 25 years, Lyn: 26 years, and John: 27 years.

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

CLOSING: Dawn H. made a motion to adjourn at 7:27 with Alma reading of *The Lord's Prayer*. Prepared and submitted by: Cheryl A. _____



Upcoming Calendar of Events:

Santa Clarita Valley AA Convention: Oct. 14 – 18, 2015: Embassy Suites in Valencia.

Take Your Sponsor to Breakfast: Saturday, Oct. 17, 2015. Breakfast starts at 8:00 a.m. followed by the AA Speaker meeting at 10:30 a.m. (This is a fundraiser for Central Office. Tickets are available from your IGRs).

Unit A's 34 Year Anniversary: October 17, 2015, 7 A.M. – 8 P.M. 10641 Burbank Boulevard, NoHo, CA.

Hole in the Sky's Alcathon: Oct 30, 31 and Nov 1, 21044 Sherman Way, Canoga Park, CA.

Young People in AA Convention: Halloween Weekend, Marriott, Woodland Hills.

Oldtimer Event: General Service District 17: November 8, 2015 at 1 pm at the Wilkinson Senior Center, Northridge, CA (Oldtimers are defined as those clean and sober for 30 years or more). Tickets are \$10.00.

San Fernando Group's New Year's Alcathon: TBA

San Fernando Valley 41st AA Convention: January 29, 30 and 31, 2016, Marriott in Woodland Hills, CA.

Sober in the 70s: She left her old life of drinking behind when she was in her mid-70s

In my middle 70s, I was aware of losing control of my drinking. I thought others didn't realize the extent of my drinking. When attending a party or a gathering of any kind, or if I were driving, I'd abstain from alcohol.

I couldn't stand the idea of a newspaper headline, "70-year-old Grandma Gets DUI." It never occurred to me that I might kill or maim someone. So, I contented myself with punch or water or soda. But as soon as I got home, I'd lay into the booze. I loved the taste of gin, vodka, bourbon, or just about anything. I hid my bottle and drank secretly. Was anyone fooled?



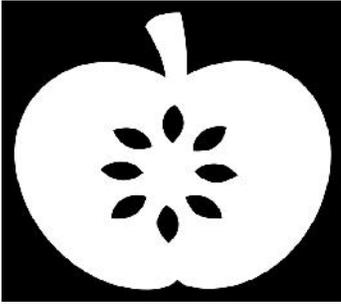
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When I came to realize that even one day of not drinking was impossible, I went on praying and asking God to take away this burden and make me whole again. There were a couple of times when I asked my mate and my daughters if they thought I should go to AA.

They each said "no" and suggested diversionary activities instead. Of course, I took this as a sign that my drinking wasn't so bad after all. Even if their reason for saying that I didn't need AA was due to embarrassment, I took it as a permit to keep on drinking. One day, one of my daughters suspected I was sneaking alcohol and confronted me. I promised to quit on my birthday - two weeks away. The next night, both my daughters sat me down and gently said what I needed to hear. The following day, they took me to my first AA meeting.

Working the Steps and attending meetings, I discovered a new way of living. I am eternally grateful for being in the program and finding the fellowship. It has strengthened my spiritual life and given my life new meaning and pleasantness. I'll never go back to the old one. —**Dorothy M., Shasta Lake, Calif.** Copyright © 2015

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MOTIVES ARE THE SEEDS

In my early days of sobriety my wife came home from an Alanon meeting all excited about what they had talked about. Apparently they were discussing inventories and she explained that when taking her 6th step, it was important that she *examine her motives* before making decisions.

How interesting and profound that statement was at the time and it has come up many, many times since that initial conversation. Since almost *everything we do begins with what we think*, that statement has been a big part of what I believe our goals are supposed to be when we are in the process of cleaning up the wreckage of the past. It also implies that we should examine our motives for what we do from this day forward and be sure that they conform to the spirit of the principles that are suggested in the AA program.

This kind of thinking was foreign to me before John Barleycorn got his grip, but when the alcohol took its toll and I was circling the drain, I was forced to decide what I was going to do with the rest of my life. It became very important to learn and understand what the causes of my failures were in the past and what I could do to correct them.

Like most of us, we have measured our successes and failures based on things we have accomplished, by the things we owned, and where we lived. It made little difference how we acquired those things. How different my thinking is today, compared to how it was back then. I no longer base my success on material possessions. As the old country song says "one rich man in ten with a satisfied mind." This, to me, does not mean that we must take a vow of poverty. To me, this means that if I am honest with myself and that my motives are pure and unselfish, I can be content at any economic level. My *motives* make it so.

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 it is 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 she described as "*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, then it's probably not going to happen. These subtle little gems of wisdom are revealed to me daily and slowly become a part of my mental make-up.

As I look back on my life I realize that I can never recall being truly happy until I learned and understood this concept. As long as my motives for what I did were of a selfish nature or to get the approval of others, I was not getting the results that I was seeking. When I started doing deeds that were based on unselfish motives and doing it *without fanfare*, the byproduct *landed on my shoulder*. Yes, I stopped chasing happiness and started living right, as best I understood it to be, and I have received more than my share of happiness.

Taking Steps 6 and 7 to me is the beginning of a new adventure in making right decisions and it will be a very long process of recognizing my motives and being completely honest with myself about them. Once I discover the proper motive, I must ask for the strength to carry out what I perceive to be the proper action.

Examining my motives has made me look deeper at many of the subtle little differences in the words I use and their causes and effects and for my purposes, I find that my defects of character *cause* my shortcomings. But when I understand my defect, my shortcoming (faulty behavior) can be corrected and when I understand the problem, the troubles can be corrected. These ideas may be hard to grasp in the beginning but if I hadn't started looking deeper into my motives, I may never have resolved the deeper issues. These days, Unselfish Motives are the seeds that all of my thoughts and actions stem from, and that is as simple as it gets.

Rick R., Poway, CA

The Disease Talking:

Here are some thoughts newcomers frequently tell us they thought, right before they took a drink:

I'll only have one.

No one will know if I take a drink.

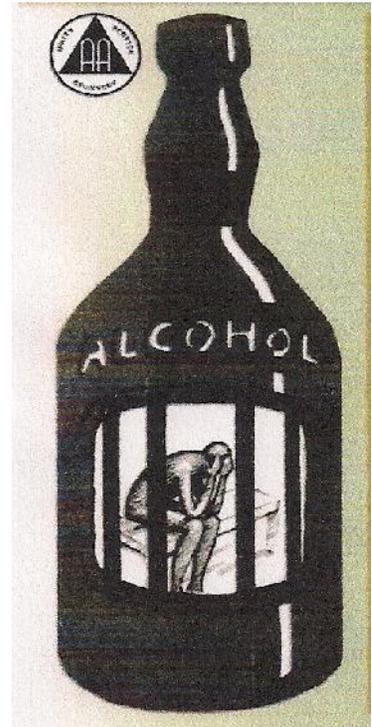
I can stop anytime I want to.

I'm much more 'fun' when I'm drinking.

I "deserve" a drink after the kind of day I had.

It's not going to make me an alcoholic if I only have one drink.

I wasn't as "bad" as those other people in A.A.; I had things under "control."



Can you find the words: **"Our Problem Centers in the Mind"** AND **"Persistence in Prayer"** in this A.A. crossword puzzle? Look up, down, sideways and even diagonally to find the words.



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

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