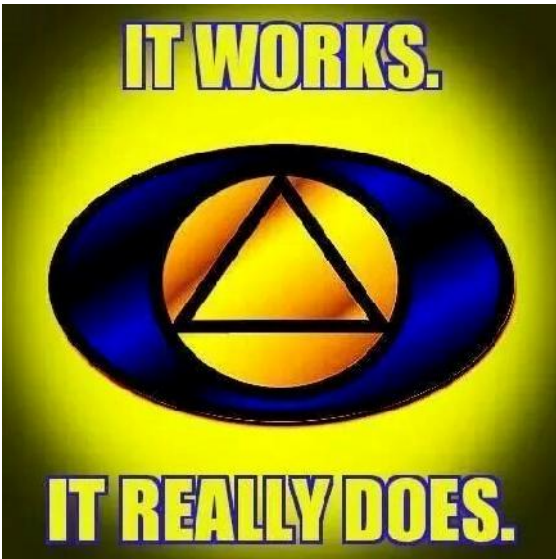


RECOVERY TIMES

Vol. 46, No. 1, Jan 2016

The Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office Newsletter



A.A. Members List Their New Year's Resolutions for 2016:

Another new year: how awesome that we are all here for this occasion! It's like a giant birthday party to celebrate our sobriety and a reawakening to the wonders and miracles that surround us on any given day!

I asked some of the A.A.s I know to tell me their New Year's resolutions. Here they are:

A new life resolution as opposed to a New Year's resolution – and to be present!

To use the Steps for everything in my life.

To forgive myself. If I can forgive myself, I can forgive others.

To not bicker with my husband.

To be of maximum service to God and my fellow alcoholics.

To show up, tell the truth, and to ask for help.

To stay in the now.

To stay sober, one day at a time.

To try and be on time. If I was on time, everything would be much better.

To say thank you to my Higher Power every day.

To eat healthier.

To not drink.

To take off the black hat and live in the light.

To get closer to my Higher Power.

To be more loving toward others and when I can't to at least be kind.

SERVICE COMMITTEE SCHEDULE:

San Fernando Valley Central Office Board Meeting: Feb. 3, 2016 2015, 6:30 p.m., Central Office, 16132 Sherman Way, Van Nuys, CA 91406.

San Fernando Valley Intergroup Meeting: Feb. 8, 2016: 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): Jan. 18, 2015: 7 p.m. Orientation, 8 p.m. Bus. Meeting, St. Innocent Church, 5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana.

General Service Dist. 1: (1st Wed.): Feb. 3, 2016: 6:30 p.m., 7552 Remmet, Canoga Park.

General Service Dist. 2: (1st Tues.): Feb. 2, 2016: 6:30 p.m., 4011 Dunsmore, La Crescenta.

General Service District 7: (2nd Sat.): Feb. 13, 2016, 2015: 9 a.m., Women's Club: 33201 Agua Dulce Canyon Rd, Agua Dulce, CA.

General Service District 11 (1st Mon.): Feb. 1, 2016: 6 p.m. New GSRs - 6:30 p.m., 315 W. Vine Street, Glendale.

General Service District 16 (1st Mon.): Feb. 1, 2016: 6:00 p.m., 15950 Chatsworth, Granada Hills.

General Service District 17 (1st Mon.): Feb. 1, 2016: 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 is located at 16132 Sherman Way, Van Nuys, CA. (SW corner of Woodley & Sherman Way, west of the Mobil Station) and remains open every day for book sales (including weekends) except for holidays and 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.

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 rep to the monthly Intergroup meetings the 2nd Monday of every month at St. Innocent Church, 5657 Lindley, 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 during your birthday month and we will list your name and birthday year in the next issue. This month's birthday celebrants will be referenced in the next issue.

November: Anonymous – 11 Years, Paul D. – 15 Years, Tony S. – 15 Years, Michael H. – 17 Years, Daniel H. – 25 Years, & Susan C. – 30 Years

December: Anonymous – 12 Years, Dennis B. – 21 Years, Linda F. – 30 Years, Cheryl A. – 33 Years, John C. – 42 Years

Deaths (Things We Cannot Change): If you are aware of the passing of a Fellowship member, please call us at (818) 988-3001. Jim C. – 33 Years (SFV Convention Committee)

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. T

SAN FERNANDO VALLEY CENTRAL OFFICE
Minutes of Intergroup Representatives Meeting, December 14, 2015

OPENING: Dawn H.

- Dawn opened the meeting at 7:03 p.m. with The Serenity Prayer
- Tami read "The Twelve Traditions"
- Cheryl A. accepted a motion for approval of Minutes from the November IGR meeting with corrections.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Josh S.

- Group contributions are well ahead of last year, thank you: MTD (\$10) and YTD (\$5391)
- The contributions from Gratitude Month were \$400> of last year; predict to be well ahead by year's end.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S REPORT: Bob F.

Central Office will be closed for sales on Christmas and New Year's Day and a half day on the Eves
Recovery Times -Dawn introduced Pat K., editor of *Recovery Times*. *Pat is always looking for contributions from sober A.A.s with a story to tell about their sobriety. Deadline for submissions is always the 15th of the month prior to the next issue at: xnowisthetime@aol.com.*

MEETING RELATED BUSINESS: Brian H.

The one new Intergroup Rep was Niki M. from *Hole in the Sky*, Canoga Park
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 17: Paul: GSR Flyer, GS 2016 budget approved.

Founder's Message

“Our spiritual way of life is safe for future generations if, as a Society, we resist the temptation to receive money from the outside world. But this leaves us with a responsibility – one that every member ought to understand. We cannot skimp when the treasurer of our group passes the hat. Our groups, our areas, and AA as a whole will not function unless our services are sufficient and their bills are paid.”
AA Co-Founder, Bill W., November 1957
“Respecting Money”

“My drinking never took anything away from me; it prevented me from having anything.” Anon

“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

- San Fernando Valley Hospital & Institutions Committee: Financials are good. If groups need a can for H&I donations, please contact Nancy.
- San Fernando Valley 41st AA Convention: Brian reported (for Joel S.) that the 2016 San Fernando Valley A.A. Convention is coming up: January 29, 30 and 31, 2016. Note: Attendees must **Pre-register** for the Saturday Speaker Dinner and Sunday Spiritual Breakfast—tickets for these two events will **Not** be sold onsite this year. Golf Tournament is on Friday, January 29th, cost is \$85

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

- Attendance certificates will be awarded in January

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM AA GROUPS & SEVENTH TRADITION:

Peter, Radford Hall: There is a monthly Birthday Meeting at 5 pm the last Sunday of the month. Radford Hall will hold a Mini-conference “Keep Coming Back” on 3/18/16.

Griffin, Unit A: There will be a Joe and Charlie inspired 18-week Big Book Workshop starting Jan 16, 2016 at 4pm. Also, there will be a Spaghetti Dinner and Bingo Night 1/30/16, 7:30pm-10:30pm following the 6 pm meeting.

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 DECEMBER – 147 YEARS OF SOBRIETY

Pat K.: 12 years, Noelle: 12 years, Dennis B. 21 years,
Herb M: 33 years, Cheryl A.: 33 years Ken J: 36 years.

BOARD VACANCIES: Larry S. was elected 2nd Alternate, Director at Large

CLOSING: Dawn H. made a motion to adjourn which was recognized and seconded. Meeting adjourned with *The Lord's Prayer* at 7:22 p.m.

PLAN YOUR YEAR WITH THESE AA EVENTS:

41 ST SFV AA CONVENTION, WOODLAND HILLS	1/29- 1/31/16
IMPERIAL VALLEY ROUNDUP, BRAWLEY, CA	1/29 - 1/31/16
52 nd Intl Women's Conference, Norfolk, VA	2/11 - 2/14/16
PRAASA Annual Conference, Spokane, WA	3/4 - 3/6/16
44 th All CA Young People in AA Round-Up, Orange County, CA	4/21 - 4/24/16

Tri-State Round-Up, Laughlin, NV

5/19 - 5/22

**San Fernando Valley 41st AA Convention Takes Place, Once Again, at the Warner Center Marriott in Woodland Hills, CA JAN. 29 – 31, 2016.
Theme: “We Are Not A Glum Lot”**



My initial participation with the San Fernando Valley Convention began when I had about 3 ½ years sober. Throughout my early sobriety, friends that I had developed had asked if I was attending the convention each year as it was coming around. My response was typically the same each time, that I was not really “the convention type.” In reality, I later learned that I had not fully dealt with my ego, and that fear was keeping me from getting back into the stream of life.

Nonetheless, I did give in and attend the convention in 1995 after noticing that there weren’t many folks at meetings during the weekend of the convention, and those that were there were buzzing about getting out of there to get over to the hotel. When I arrived at my first convention I immediately felt like a 14 year old at prom. There were seemingly thousands of people and I didn’t know very many. I was glued to the wall watching everyone else have fun. Fortunately, I bumped into a few acquaintances who were working at the registration area on Saturday morning and they asked if I would help put the printed badges into the holders at the end of the registration line. I was hooked! It was like being the greeter at the biggest meeting I had ever attended!

In the years since I have not missed a single convention. In fact, I have found that it takes 20-30 minutes to get to the other side of the hotel...not because of the size of the facilities in which we’ve been located, but because we get to become acquainted with and friends with, so many people over the years that each traverse becomes another opportunity to interact with our fellows. What irony, for a guy who was simply scared & insecure, who was not a “convention person,” I was even elected the Chair of the convention in 2010.

My convention experience has truly been a big part of my personal recovery in terms of self-discovery. I have found that I really enjoy interacting with my fellows, folks that understand and speak the language of the heart and demonstrated through love and service. And through all of it, we have a lot of fun! “We Are Not A Glum Lot,” the theme of this year’s convention, really captures the spirit of the fellowship for me and I am ever grateful for the San Fernando Valley Convention and getting to be a part of it.

Josh S., Van Nuys

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The Warner Center Marriott is located at 21850 Oxnard Street in Woodland Hills, CA

Register online for A.A. marathon meetings, speaker meetings, Longtimers' meeting, golf tournament, dances, Saturday night banquet and show, Sunday spiritual breakfast and more!

www.sfvaaconvention.org or call: (818) 734-0383 for the Convention Infoline

ONE YEAR AFTER THE "BIG MOVE," CENTRAL OFFICE NEEDS YOUR HELP



"In mid-October 2014, after 49 years in the old office on Van Nuys Boulevard, the landlord informed everyone in our building that we had to be out by December 7, 2015," says Bob Fisher, executive secretary and office manager of San Fernando Valley Central Office of Alcoholics Anonymous. "We had been looking for another office location for two years but the places we had been seeing were not much better as far as safety and convenience and they were all at least \$1,000 more than we had been paying for rent, so

we couldn't really justify the cost."

But with the old building no longer viable, it became necessary to look for a new location, regardless of rising costs. Maintenance at the building and the ability to find parking had become problems at the Van Nuys location and volunteers had expressed concerns over their safety, as well.

"Shortly after getting the notice to move, a realtor presented us with the current location on Sherman Way. A few of our board members checked it out and loved it and the management there offered us the option of moving in during December, rent-free," says Bob. So at the end of November, 2014, volunteers packed up \$52,000 of literature and a caravan of over 30 volunteers and trucks moved Central Office into the new location in just 3 days. Central Office's new location officially opened for business on Monday, December 3rd, 2014."

Reflecting back on the first year at the current location, Bob F. says, "It's worked out very well. The parking is more than adequate, the safety factor is excellent, and we are on the route of two main bus stops going north-south and east-west on Sherman Way by the intersection of Woodley.

"We now have windows we can look out (the old office did not have any), we have two, private bathrooms and spacious office space on two levels, and our warehouse is part of our office suite, so it's easier for people to shop for literature."

Bob F. and Larry B. (Assistant Office Manager) have offices on the upper level of the suite. There are also two rooms set aside for volunteers to answer phones with another large room for board meetings. One of the nicest features of the new office is the balcony on the upper level which looks over the warehouse offering a bird's eye view of the floor below.

"The only downside of the move," says Bob, "is the increase in rent, which is about \$2,000 more per month, plus utilities. The good news is that this year, the Groups collectively donated about \$16,000 more than last year and with personal donations and those raised by Gratitude Month, it has helped operations to finish the year slightly in the black.

"I'd like to thank all of our A.A. members for supporting our move," says Bob. "I also want to acknowledge our staff of phone volunteers, which has grown since the move, and the many people who come by to visit, have a cup of coffee, and purchase literature for their meetings."

Central Office continues to need your Group's support. Please let your Group know that their donations, in part, support the running of Central Office of the San Fernando Valley, which provides 24-hour live phone service to A.A.s in need. Some of the other services offered by Central Office are:

- Bi-annual Meeting Directories & Monthly Recovery Times

- Monthly Intergroup Meetings to Share Groups' Events
- Sales of Literature (books, pamphlets, medallions, chips, etc.) "at cost" with no overhead
- Support for Meetings, Groups, & Conventions throughout the San Fernando Valley

Please continue to support your Central Office. We are here for you. Thank you!



A.A. Away From Home: This One A.A. Has Found Solace in Meetings on the Road

I have always been a creature of routine. When I drank, drinking was unquestionably a need, but it was also simply my routine. Every day on my way home from work I would stop and buy that night's allotment of booze. It was as normal as brushing my teeth, or setting a wake-up alarm.

In sobriety I've relied on routines as well. Stopping at meetings on the way home, instead of the liquor store, reading and praying each morning, meditating each afternoon. We can't live our lives as slaves to routine, however. In my own life, my work and hobbies require me to travel, and travel is the great disruptor of routine. The traveling I've done this last year has taught me a lot about the joys of sobriety, the challenge of staying sober, and how to do so even when your routine has disappeared right out the window.

Scene 1: A week of work in Texas with me 101 days sober and with no car. I navigated on foot through unknown streets in the dark to a meeting 2 miles from my hotel – the closest one I could find. On the surface, I shouldn't have felt at home there – the meeting looked like everything I am not (though not a men's meeting, it turned out to be me and 22 men at the local LGBT community center) but there was such kindness there, and warmth. At the end of the meeting, the leader gave me a hand written list of names and phone numbers. Call, he said, if you need anyone to talk to this week. It's hard to be far from home. Indeed it is, but that meeting, and those men made it far less so.

Scene 2: Another work trip with an evening boat tour in the local harbor for our work group, with me 9 months sober. I had been looking forward to this evening, as I love boats and the water, but the experience turned out to be far from what I had hoped. Our hosts provided case after case of free champagne for all on board, and my normally reserved co-workers took full (and loud, and obnoxious) advantage. The only passengers on the entire boat who were not drinking were me, and two pregnant women.

I was uncomfortable in all the ways you can be uncomfortable. Physically, as I stayed crammed in a corner trying to avoid the stumbling drunks. Mentally too. I was angry – why did everyone else need to be having fun enjoying my favorite drink in the world? Why were they so loud, and sloppy, and annoying? I was sad – why couldn't I just be a normal woman enjoying some free wine on a lovely boat? And I was embarrassed – my colleagues were sloppy and silly, and were hardly showing the best of what my workplace has to offer.

But one thing I have learned in the rooms of AA is how to walk (or sit, as the case may be) through discomfort. One day at a time, one minute at a time – this too shall pass. And so I stayed in my corner, drinking plain water, talking (in my head) to God about all the discomfort I was feeling. And eventually, that interminable boat ride ended. It was, to date, the worst time I've had around booze since I got sober, but it didn't last forever. I got through it and I didn't have to drink. I got to walk back to my hotel in the lovely twilight, and to go to bed sober and

healthy, and wake up refreshed, instead of stumbling home in a haze, passing out, and waking up groaning and hung over. That's my new routine, and it's a blessing. Amy H., Sunland, CA

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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED