

RECOVERY TIMES

Vol. 46, No. 5, May 2016

The Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office Newsletter

It All Makes Sense Now

On the morning of June 3, 2016, I had my first spiritual awakening as I crawled out of my shower for the umpteenth time, per usual, after a long night out. You'd think the thought would have crossed my mind growing up in an alcoholic home that I might, indeed, have the same problem with drugs and alcohol. But the answer is no, it never did, not until that early morning in June. Learning from my mistakes has never been part of my story.



As the answer came to me like a ton of bricks, I called the only person I knew who could tell me what to do, my father. The first month of my life my father was in a rehab facility after an ultimatum from my mother. In the 27 years of my life, my father has been in and out of the rooms and I have witnessed his battle behind closed doors. It wasn't until now, in my tenth month of sobriety, that I was able to comprehend some of the behaviors of my childhood.

Growing up I witnessed fights nearly every day over money, faithfulness and alcohol with constant threats of divorce. In my alcoholic home there was either no communication of feelings or way too much, resulting in blowouts. My parents' problems were out in the open as far back as I can remember - my father cheating on my mom, the addiction issues, you name it, it was fought over. The story was that my father was always in trouble and my mother was always angry for one reason or another. Day to day, I never knew which parent I would be getting: angry, stressed or happy. I learned to play to their emotions. I was in constant fear of upsetting my parents and if I did something wrong I thought they would get divorced because of it. But the day I walked into the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous was the day that I was reborn.

My relationship with my family has since completely changed. What truly blows my mind is that only in these last 10 months of being sober, the journey of mending our relationships has been more progressive than that of my entire life. We have set boundaries with one another and have been able to calmly address situations that affect each other and figure out solutions to them. Through this, we are slowly letting go of our expectations of one another and that, my friends, is baffling. If I can accomplish this much in 10 months, I can only imagine where I'll be two years from now if I continue on this path to self-discovery.

Now, that's not to say all wounds have been healed, but the more we stretch our boundaries for healing, the more I can see incredible room for growth. Through working the Steps, I have been able to see my parents in a whole new light. I came to realize I was putting my parents in the place of a Higher Power. In the developing of a Higher Power of my own understanding, I have been able to see my parents as human beings doing the best they can with what they have.

My relationship with my father has especially grown since that morning I called to identify as an alcoholic. I think to him, it humanized me as well. The unexplained behaviors of my years before now became familiar to him. That first night we connected through laughter and tears from similar stories of our drinking and using.

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SERVICE COMMITTEE SCHEDULE:

San Fernando Valley Central Office Board

Meeting: June 8, 2016, 6:30 p.m., Central Office, 16132 Sherman Way, Van Nuys, CA 91406.

San Fernando Valley Intergroup Meeting:

June 13, 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): May 16, 2016: 7 p.m. Orientation, 8 p.m. Bus. Meeting, St. Innocent Church, 5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana.

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

General Service Dist. 2: (1st Tues.): June 7, 2016: 6:30 p.m., 4011 Dunsmore, La Crescenta.

General Service District 7: (2nd Sat.): June 11, 2016, 9 a.m., Women's Club: 33201 Agua Dulce Canyon Rd, Agua Dulce, CA.

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

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

General Service District 17 (1st Mon.): June 6, 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 2017 Convention. The meeting is the 3rd Tuesday of the month, May 17, 2016, at St. Innocents, 5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana.

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. IGRs share 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. **Jack L. – 35 Years, Mike E. – 35 Years, Bob F. – 35 Years**

Deaths (Things We Cannot Change): We said goodbye to the following AA members: Bill S. – 27 Years (Former Chair, Central Office Board)

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.

SAN FERNANDO VALLEY CENTRAL OFFICE

Minutes of Intergroup Representatives Meeting

April 11, 2016

OPENING: Brian H.

- Brian opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. with The Serenity Prayer
- Michael F. read “The Twelve Traditions”
- Sandy R. accepted a motion for approval of Minutes from the March Intergroup Meeting.

TREASURER’S REPORT: Joel S.

MTD was <\$4,558> and YTD was <\$736>. Sales were up over last month, primarily due to H&I purchases, however group donations were down approximately \$1,000 compared to last month. These figures continue to account for the free month of rent we had last year, but not this year.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY’S REPORT: Bob F.

Central Office: New Directories will be coming out soon. The deadline for submissions or changes is May 6. We have some new volunteers, but could use coverage for daytime weekday shifts.
Recovery Times: Deadline for submissions is 15th of the month; send to Pat K. at xnowisthetime@aol.com.

MEETING RELATED BUSINESS: Cheryl A.

2 new Intergroup Representatives this month: Francis U., Lowell Companions, 6:30 p.m. Tuesdays in La Crescenta & Tracey Y., Chatsworth Women’s, 6:30 p.m. Mondays.

SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES

- General Service District 16, Ernie: District 16 wishes to thank Jeff, Area 93 Chairman, for sharing his experience, strength and hope and his General Service views at their meeting. Also, they continue to go over the information gathered from PRAASA.
- San Fernando Valley Hospital & Institutions Committee, Nancy: No Report; however Bob F. announced H&I’s 26th Annual Bike-N-4-Books, at Woodley Park, Saturday June 11, 2016
- San Fernando Valley 42nd AA Convention, Joel S: Will be held Jan 27, 28, and 29, 2017. Erin E. is this year’s Chair.
- Santa Clarita Valley AA Convention, Bernard: 2016 SCVAA Convention will be on October 21, 22, and 23 at the Valencia Hyatt.

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 new business.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM AA GROUPS & SEVENTH TRADITION:

- Ernie, The San Fernando Group said the 2016 Annual Springfest Alcahthon will take place from Friday, May 27th – Monday, May 30, at 13245 Gladstone Ave., Sylmar.
- Tom, Foothill Roundup: The 2016 Foothill Roundup takes place from July 29 – 31 at La Canada Prep on Gould Ave. in La Canada-Flintridge.
- Pam H., The Burbank Group: May, 21, 2016: Meeting, Lunch and Poker Tournament at Burbank Moose Lodge.
 - Michael E., Let It Hang Out Group on Wednesdays at 6:00 p.m. is moving from Radford Hall to the First Presbyterian Church at Colfax and Addison beginning Wednesday, April 20, 2016.
- Brian 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 APRIL – 93 YEARS OF SOBRIETY!

- Jo T., 3 years, Bernard B., 22 years; Diana, 33 years; and Bob F., 35 years

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

CLOSING: Brian H.: A motion to adjourn was recognized and seconded. Meeting adjourned at 7:25 pm with *The Lord's Prayer*. Prepared and submitted by: Sandy R., Recording Secretary

Central Office maintains a free call-in line 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, including holidays. Whenever anyone reaches out for help, we want the hand of AA to always be there. Call: **(818) 988-3001**.

CENTRAL OFFICE THANKS ALL THE VOLUNTEERS WHO ANSWER THE PHONES EACH DAY, WEEK & MONTH! WITHOUT YOU, ALCOHOLICS WHO NEED A FRIEND MIGHT NOT KNOW WHERE TO GO FOR A MEETING. TO BECOME A PHONE VOLUNTEER, PLEASE CONTACT CENTRAL OFFICE. ONE YEAR OF SOBRIETY IS RECOMMENDED.

Got a birthday or AA anniversary to celebrate? Why not celebrate by making a donation to Central Office for each year of your sobriety. Donations help fund the expenses for running our office 365 days a year and pay for the phones to answer calls from alcoholics seeking help. Next time you need a meeting, remember that your Central Office is the central source of information for meeting and other sober activities for AA in the San Fernando Valley. **Please consider making a donation of whatever you can afford.**



Heard at Meetings

"There's no cure for alcoholism but there is a treatment – the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous."

"A great turning point in our lives came when we sought for humility as something we really wanted rather than something we must have."

Twelve & Twelve, page 75

"My spiritual awakening has involved three major leaps: save me, help me, and use me." AA Grapevine, Essex Junction, VT

HOPE: "Heart Open, Please Enter"

FROM the FOUNDERS

"We have three little mottoes which are apropos. Here they are:

First Things First

Live and Let Live

Easy Does It."

BB, pg. 135

"As we journeyed from land to land, we had the same magnificent adventure in kinship over and over . . . [T]his was the communication of heart to heart in wonder, in joy, and in everlasting gratitude. Lois and I then knew that A.A. could circle the globe - and it has." The Language of the Heart, Bill W., 1960

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After 12 years of sobriety, my father went out with a bang. Since then, he has been sober for two years and is working his strongest program yet. Hearing his story made this disease all too real for me. This disease really does progress as if we had never stopped; that single night of relapse almost killed my father. When I go home to visit my family now, our arguments consist of who is working a better program, or the fact that "someone will need to do a 10th step." We still have a long road ahead of us, but it is paved with love and recovery.

Hailee L., Los Angeles



Plan Your Year With These AA Events:

Happy Campers: Lake Piru Campfire Meeting, Lake Piru, CA. – 3rd Saturday of the month @ 8 p.m. (March – October)

Tri-State Round-Up: Laughlin, NV, 5/19 - 5/22
www.tristate-roundup.com

San Fernando Group: 2016 Annual Springfest Alcañon will take place from Friday, May 27th – Monday, May 30, at 13245 Gladstone Ave., Sylmar.

Desert Pow Wow: Indian Wells, CA, 6/9 – 6/12 www.desertpowwow.com

Founder's Day: 6/10-6/12, Akron, Ohio www.akronaa.org

32nd annual High Desert Convention of AA, 6/10 – 6/12/16, The Courtyard Marriott, Hesperia, CA., <http://www.highdesertconvention.com>.

Foothill Round up: 7/29-31, La Canada Prep Academy, La Canada-Flintridge, CA, www.foothillroundup.org

Historic Moments in AA:

- May 4, 1946: Marty M. explains Alcoholics Anonymous and the National Committee for Education on Alcoholism on the "We the People" radio show.
- May 6, 1946: Long form of Twelve Traditions published in AA Grapevine for the first time.
- May 7, 1956: The 1st English AA Convention is held in Cheltenham, England.
- May 8, 1943: Akron, Ohio AA group has 8th anniversary with 500 present and sober.
- May 9, 1951: Al-Anon is founded by Lois W. and Anne B.
- May 11, 1935: From the Mayflower Hotel, Bill W. calls Walter Tunks who refers him to Henrietta Seiberling, who introduces him to Dr. Bob.
- May 14, 1948: Long Beach, CA. AA Central Office is opened.
- May 17, 1942: The Journal-Herald in Dayton, OH runs a huge story on AA with photos of members in Halloween masks to protect their anonymity.
- May 19, 2000: Dr. Paul O. dies who was the subject of "Doctor, Alcoholic, Addict" in the Big Book, 3rd edition.

FEELING YOUR FEELINGS!

The difficult part of early sobriety is all the emotions that pop up. It's like opening up a Pandora's Box. I drank and used in order to feel in control of my emotions and to suppress them. To all the world I looked like the happy go lucky girl. Toward the end of my drinking days, I was crying at night when I got home from the bar.



When I first got sober, I thought it was going to be a piece of cake. I wasn't physically addicted and didn't realize that the hard part was the psychological withdrawal from the buzz. I was suddenly feeling antsy and moody. If you asked me how I felt, I couldn't identify what was going on. My soul was on fire and I had nothing to douse out the flames. I was married at the time and we got sober together. I was over-reactive and defensive when he would say anything.



It was as if I had multiple personalities and at times reacted like the demon in 'The Exorcist.' Years later, I heard the leader of a meeting share that in her first seven years of sobriety, she felt like there was an axe murderer living inside of her. Many heads were nodding in agreement.

What do I do with all of these new and uncomfortable sensations? It's so important for all of us to know that feelings won't kill you! The more I just accepted I would feel uncomfortable in my own skin, the sooner the feelings would diminish. Those program clichés really helped. I heard over and over, "This too shall pass. Easy does it. One day at a time. Your mind is a bad neighborhood, you can't go in to it alone. You can't save your ass and your face at the same time. Don't drink no matter what."

After squashing feelings for so long, it took practice to allow them and quit fighting them. I began to identify them: sadness, happiness, and anger. I prefer the phrase 'being in a funk' rather than saying 'I'm depressed.' I learned by identifying my feelings, I could communicate in a responsible way. When I was angry before, I went into attack mode. Now when I'm angry, I can say, "I'm angry."

It's all a journey. It takes time and practice to change old ways and old habits to replace them with healthier ways of dealing with life events and stress. I think it's important for the newcomer to know that the feelings can be overwhelming and uncomfortable and it's ok to sit with them. The old timer needs to remember that some days are crummy but it doesn't mean you are working a bad program. Sobriety doesn't mean life will feel wonderful every day. I do suggest, if you are able to – go for a walk and focus on the beauty around you. Sometimes physical exercise helps. **Carrie S., Los Angeles**

The Eleventh Tradition

Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films

Ours is not a secret society
we carry the message
anywhere we can —



But we must ever be aware
that self-appointed
messiahs speaking
for A.A. through
public media can
do us great damage!



Love and Family



A picture of his grandson was his spiritual awakening

I sat in my van, hungover and shaking, staring at a picture of my beautiful 11-month-old grandson. I thought to myself, "If I keep going the way I am, I will never get to enjoy the love of that little boy who at that moment knew nothing of the drunken condition his grandfather was in."

I stepped out of my van sobbing in the bitter morass of self-pity when my friend showed up in the driveway on

her new motorcycle. She looked at me and knew I was struggling. We spoke of all the things that were bothering me and it all stemmed from alcohol.

It was at that moment that God intervened. I saw clearly the solution of action to get help and to stop the insanity of drinking myself to death. That was the future as far as I could see.

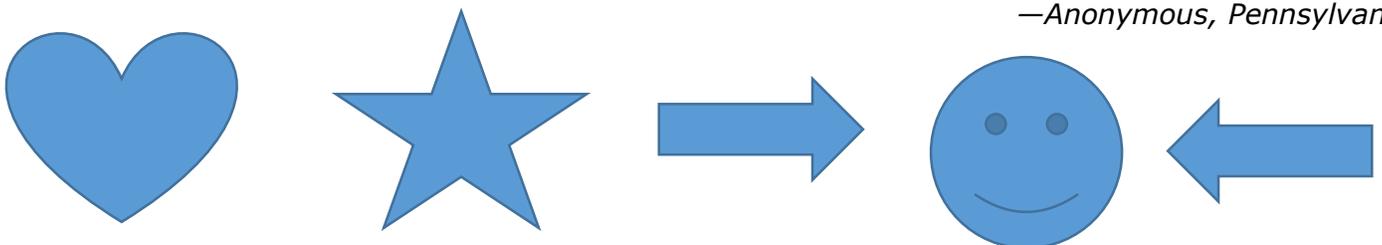
I was on a plane to Oklahoma to spend 30 days in rehab and for the first time in my life, I had found a God of my understanding. The love I found in the rooms of AA is beyond anything I have ever experienced.

They told me, "Let us love you until you can love yourself. Doing an inventory of my life was liberating and I became accountable and responsible for my actions. But more than that, I wanted to do it."

I didn't make excuses. I didn't try and duck out. I didn't forget on purpose. I wanted to know the true meanings of my wrongs. I left Oklahoma after 30 days with a desire to stop drinking and to keep my life simple. Planning things one day at a time.

God has shown me the true blessings of "love and service." AA has taught me to trust God, clean house, and serve others!"

—Anonymous, Pennsylvania



Central Office of SFV
16132 Sherman Way
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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED