

RECOVERY TIMES

Vol. 50, No. 9, Sept. 2016

The Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office Newsletter



A Mother and Her Son: After getting sober herself, she learnt that she was powerless over the alcoholism of others

It has been 20 years since I went to my first AA meeting, and I have not had to have a drink since. When I got sober, I was a single mother with four small children. I drank every day, neglected and abused my children, and felt trapped in my life. I went to my first meeting because I had a moment of clarity, standing on the side of the road, handcuffed one more time: It was the drinking. I was hopeless and filled with anger and despair, knowing there was no way out for me. By going to meetings, I opened up my heart to God. I was changing and staying sober. I remember a moment early in sobriety when I was sitting in a meeting. I had a vision of myself as a chocolate bar melting in the sun.

Later, my eldest son told me that the year I sobered up was the year he started using. He was 12 years old at the time, and I was 36. His journey started out in juvenile detention centers and soon moved to psychiatric hospitals, medical hospitals, jails and the streets. In the beginning of my sobriety, when I was shaking with anger over him doing things like stealing my car out of the driveway, my sponsor told me to go to at least one meeting every day, help another alcoholic, and work the steps with her. She told me that God would take care of my son. I believed her because I had no other hope. I was taught that if I drank, I would not be able to be present for him or any of my other children.

My home group surrounded me with their belief in God and encouraged me to trust in Him and live one day at a time. I took my children to meetings with me often as I had little money for childcare, and they were always welcome. I will be forever grateful to all of those members who were so patient with my children. I was taught I didn't have to go through anything alone ever again.

I worked the Steps with my sponsor, and learned that I was powerless over my son's using. In fact, every time I work the Steps, I'm reminded that self-reliance does not serve me well. The Steps relieve me of the bondage of self and remind me that I am not God. I always get relief from the fears that steal my joy, and I can once again begin to be of service to others and enjoy my life. The Steps allow me to show up for my children, even when my oldest son has been on the streets or in jail.

At three years sober, I went on a business trip to Colorado. While I was there, I went to a Friday night meeting and met Dave, the man who became my husband. A year later we joined our families. His two and my four made six children, and they ranged from five to 16 years old. All but my eldest son attended our wedding. He was in jail on our wedding day.

Shortly after we had moved to Colorado, the phone calls from jails and institutions began. I felt sick to my stomach each time I heard the collect call from a jail. I spent time in courtrooms, watching my son, with his wrists and ankles in chains. I had to ask God to help me breathe. (Continued, next page)

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES IN THE SAN FERNANDO VALLEY

San Fernando Valley Central Office Board Meeting: Oct. 5, 2016, 6:30 p.m., Central Office, 16132 Sherman Way, Van Nuys, CA 91406.

San Fernando Valley Intergroup Meeting: Oct. 10, 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): Sept. 19, 2016: 7 p.m. Orientation, 8 p.m. Bus. Meeting, St. Innocent Church, 5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana.

General Service Dist. 1: (1st Wed.): Oct. 5, 2016: 6:30 p.m., 7552 Remmet, Canoga Park.

General Service Dist. 2: (1st Tues.): Oct. 4, 2016: 6:30 p.m., 4011 Dunsmore, La Crescenta.

General Service District 7: (2nd Sat.): Oct 8, 2016, 9 a.m., Women's Club: 33201 Agua Dulce Canyon Rd, Agua Dulce, CA.

General Service District 11 (1st Mon.): Oct. 3, 2016: New GSRs – 6:00 p.m, general meeting 6:30 p.m., 315 W. Vine Street, Glendale.

General Service District 16 (1st Mon.): Oct. 3, 2016: 6:00 p.m., 15950 Chatsworth, Granada Hills.

General Service District 17 (1st Mon.): Oct. 3, 2016. Orientation for new GSRs, 6:30 p.m., Business Meeting: 7:00 p.m., 5000 Colfax, NoHo.

(A Mother and Her Son, continued, page one)

I have had to make decisions about bailing him out or not, getting a lawyer for him, or not. Sometimes I have bailed him out; sometimes not. Sometimes I have hired an attorney; sometimes not. I don't think there is a set answer, and I did what I needed to do in that day. During those difficult times, I did more to protect my sobriety. I went to more meetings, not less, called my sponsor more often, and prayed constantly.

I need to pay attention to my thinking. If I am not careful, I can paralyze myself with thoughts of the past and thoughts of the future. That way of thinking can land me in bed, or on my face on the floor. I can slip into morbid reflection when my son is in trouble, thinking "if only" or "what if." For me, it is often even worse when I think of the future, "What will happen when he is released from jail? Will he stay clean and sober this time?" There are a million questions that plague me at times like that. I am of no use to anyone when I am lost in the past or the future, and I'm at risk of picking up a drink.

The challenge for me has been to stay sober and happy when I didn't know where he was or when he was locked up. I have spent Christmas, Thanksgiving, and his birthday with him in jail, and it was sad for me. But I needed to enjoy the day with the rest of my family. I have had days when I could not get out of bed because I was so filled with fear and overwhelmed with life. On one of those days I rolled over and picked up the phone to call my sponsor. I told her I couldn't get up. I could not face life. She asked, "Can you roll out of bed and hit your knees?" I could. She told me to do the next right thing: Pray, take a shower, eat breakfast, go to an AA meeting, and spend time with our other children.

I have learned that it is after taking the proper actions that my feelings and thinking can change. The hopelessness and fear can be replaced with trust in the great spirit of the universe that got me sober and is keeping me sober one more day. Asking God to restore me to sanity and then acting as if He has, has changed my life. I was taught to practice "suing up and showing up" for life. On those difficult days, I ask myself, do I really believe God has changed me and removed my fear, and if so, how would I be right now, what would I do right now? Then I do that and act that way. It has not been easy, but sanity does return and I have not had to pick up a drink. (cont., next page)

A Mother and Her Son (continued)

A call came one day from a nurse at a hospital in San Diego. They had an unidentified young man unconscious in their trauma center. He had been there five days, after being hit in the head with a baseball bat and being found unconscious in an alley. There had been a drunken fight. Someone had contacted her with my name and phone number. Was he my son? She told me I needed to get there as soon as possible.

A sober friend in San Diego met me at the airport. We walked into a room that had a few patients in it. They took me to a specific bed, and I looked closely. It was my son. He was on a respirator, and the noise was horrifying. He also had a tube the size of a garden hose coming out of the top of his head. His wristband said "John Doe #3." My knees went weak. I had a vague thought in that moment that he might have brain damage for the rest of his life. But I also had the sense that at least it was not the call I had feared for so long: at least it was not the morgue calling. I knew in that moment that I needed a bigger God to help me get through this. I needed a bigger God to keep me sober. I am so grateful I had been sober a few years when this happened. I had practiced finding God in the middle of difficult times, and this was one of those times.

I am so grateful for the fellow AA members that God has placed in my path over the years. I have seen love in action when they have shown up for me. Through that time and through my son's struggles since, the people of AA have been there for me. When I got the call from the hospital, the first thing I did was call my sponsor. She let our sober friends know what was happening, and calls started.

There have been days when my fears about my son meant that the best I could do was sit in a meeting and cry. The young men in the rooms help me so much. I have looked at them and thought of my son. I have listened to their stories, and thought of my son. If they could get sober, so could he.

The Big Book says, "When all else fails, work with another alcoholic," and I have found it true. I have been blessed to sponsor wonderful women. I do not believe I could have stayed sober without them. On the days when fear and despair show up in my life, one of them will call me.

Before AA, I was like a car stuck in the mud. The harder I tried to get out, the more my tires spun, throwing dirt and mud on everyone around me. I harmed everyone I loved, and went deeper and deeper into the black hole that was my life. The more I tried, the worse it got. All I wanted when I went to my first meeting was to stop drinking. Instead, through the Twelve Steps, I have found directions for living.

Today my life is bigger and better than I ever could have imagined, and most days I am filled with joy and gratitude. I have a wonderful marriage of 16 years, still grounded in Alcoholics Anonymous. Our children are grown, and they all have full lives, with trouble and blessings of their own. Two years ago, my eldest son was in jail for 120 days. While there, he sobered up, and he is now an active member of AA. Every day during my morning prayers, I place all of our children in the hand of God—so that I can stay sane and sober. I know that I am powerless in their lives, and giving them to God lets me enjoy my life with my husband. —*Connie S., Colorado Springs, CO*

Reprinted with permission from AA Grapevine: The International Journal of Alcoholics Anonymous, www.aagrapevine.org.

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 Tues. of the month 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 6:30 p.m. for orientation with the general meeting to follow at 7 p.m. It takes place 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. **Thank you everyone for your support!** This month, we received donations from the following: **Brian H. – 16 Years, Randy H. – 19 Years, Anon – 20 Years, Lani S. – 21 Years and Thea J. – 39 Years.**

Deaths: We said goodbye to the following AA members: **Martin L. – 3 Years, Walter H. – 29 Years, Dan D. – 27 Years and Herb B. – 45 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. Thank you~

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, August 8, 2016

OPENING: Brian H. opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. with The Serenity Prayer. Bernard B. read The Twelve Traditions. Sandy R. accepted a motion for approval of the July Intergroup Minutes, with corrections.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Joel S. stated that the MTD was \$2,065 and YTD was <\$9,668>, compared with last year's YTD which was \$2,929. July's MTD was in the black thanks to a donation from the 2016 San Fernando Valley Convention. Sales in July were higher than last year, primarily due to H&I purchases; however, group donations are \$6,700 less than they were this time last year. Central Office's current expense for rent and utilities is 3x more than that of the old location.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S REPORT: Bob F.

Volunteering: Central Office can always use volunteers. AA groups can volunteer. People with less than one year sobriety can volunteer with their sponsor! **Take Your Sponsor to Breakfast:** Ticket prices this year are \$15 for 1 person, \$25 for 2. Since virtually all tickets are bought in pairs, this amounts to an increase of only \$2.50 per person, and the first increase in 5 years. Our rent was raised at the site, and expenses for food, etc., have also gone up.

Recovery Times: The deadline for submissions is 15th of the month; send to Pat K. at xnowisthetime@aol.com.

MEETING RELATED BUSINESS: Cheryl A. introduced one new Intergroup Representative: Rosemary S., Sunday AM Speaker Meeting at 9:00 a.m. in Woodland Hills; and Pacific Discussion Group at 7:45 p.m. in Woodland Hills.

SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES

- General Service District 16: Daniel for Ernie: Everything is going well.
- General Service District 1: Lee: Organizing **Unity Day** and they are accepting topic ideas for workshops.
- **San Fernando Valley 42nd AA Convention:** Joel S: Will be held Jan 27, 28, and 29, 2017. "Acceptance Was The Answer" is the theme, and the colors are green and purple. Planning meetings held the 3rd Tuesday of every month, 7:00 p.m., at 5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana. Also, **BINGO**, the Convention's only fundraising event, will be on Saturday, August 20th, at One Generation on Victory in Tarzana.
- **Santa Clarita Valley AA Convention:** Bernard: Will be held on October 21, 22, and 23 at the Valencia Hyatt. Registration forms are available or register online at scvaaconvention.org.

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 :

Tina, The Love and Care Women's Group: A closed participation meeting Saturdays at 12:30 p.m. on Saticoy in Reseda.
Liz, The San Fernando Group: 3rd Annual **12 Concepts Workshop**, Saturday, September 17, 2016, 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Elvin, Life's In Session - Saturday PM Speaker Meeting at 8:00 p.m. on Vanowen St. in Van Nuys.
Brian, Unit A: **Founder's Day** on Saturday, October 15, 2016, 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. on Burbank in North Hollywood.
All day meetings, pot luck and BBQ, fellowship and fun!

FROM THE FOUNDERS

"Happiness is a by-product - the extra dividend of giving without any demand for a return."

AA Co-Founder, Bill W.
January 1958, "The Next Frontier: Emotional Sobriety," *The Language Of the Heart*

Heard at Meetings:

"When life gets lifey, just keep on going." Anon

"The most important factor in eliminating resentments is to know you have them. You can't fix something if you don't know what's wrong."

La Verne, Calif.,
December 1966

"The reason we try to carry the message is so that we stay sober. If the person we are helping stays sober, that's an extra bonus."

Austin, TX, May 2003

"There have been dark days where a will infinitely greater than my own has been responsible for my sobriety."

Dayton, OH, April 1962

"If we can stop this frantic drive to prove that we are remarkable people, it is quite likely that we will settle down and really enjoy whatever life has to offer us."

New York, N.Y., August 1948

12 Step Sunset Yoga beginning October 1, 2016 at 7:30 p.m. Saturday evenings after the 6:00 p.m. meeting, at Unit A in North Hollywood.

Wayne, Ala-Nest **Old Timers Meeting**: Saturdays at 8:30 p.m. Needs support at its new location, Hole In The Sky on Sherman Way in Canoga Park.

Tammy and Andrew, Co-Chairs of **Take Your Sponsor to Breakfast**: Other than Gratitude Month, this is Central Office's only fundraiser. It will be a terrific event!

Windsor Club: **Sober Dance on the 3rd Saturday** of every month at the Windsor Club in Glendale. Dance follows the 8:00 p.m. AA meeting.

Fall Bingo Blitz, Saturday, October 22, 2016, at the Windsor Club in Glendale, starting at 6:00 p.m.

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 AUGUST – 64 YEARS OF SOBRIETY!

BRIAN H. – 16 YEARS and JIM C. - 48 YEARS

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

CLOSING:

- Brian H. made a motion to adjourn which was recognized and seconded.
- Meeting adjourned at 7:28 pm with *The Lord's Prayer*.

Prepared and submitted by: Sandy R., Recording Secretary

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.**

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 CALL. TO BECOME A PHONE VOLUNTEER, PLEASE CONTACT CENTRAL OFFICE. ONE YEAR OF SOBRIETY IS RECOMMENDED. PLEASE CALL: (818) 988-3001.



PLAN TO STAY SOBER WITH THESE AA EVENTS:

Kern River Valley Soberfest Campout: Sept. 16-18, 2016. Info: krvsoberfestcampout@gmail.com or 760-223-1559.

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

Area 93's 2nd Annual Historical A.A. Members Presentation: Come Meet Charles, Nell, Hank & Marty: 9/24/16, 10 a.m. – 2:30 p.m., Oxnard Performing Arts Center, 800 Hobson Way, Oxnard, CA, Tickets: \$12.00 includes lunch.

Take Your Sponsor to Breakfast: 10/15/16, 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.; Speaker Meeting follows at 10:30 a.m. Disabled American Veterans Hall, Woodland Hills, CA. This is a fundraiser for Central Office of the SFV. Tickets are required: \$15.00/\$25.00 for 2. See your Intergroup Rep (IGR) or call Central Office for tickets.

Recovery Word Find: Hidden in this crossword puzzle are words relating to A.A. and recovery. Look up, down, sideways and backwards to complete this puzzle. Good luck!

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

INFORMATION FOR A.A.s

Visit our website: Here you will find meeting schedules, back issues of Recovery Times, and lots of other helpful info: www.sfvaa.org.

Shop at Central Office: Did you know that you can buy books, literature, medallions and chips at the lowest price at San Fernando Valley Central Office? Please visit us at: **16132 Sherman Way, Van Nuys, CA.** (SW corner of Woodley & Sherman Way, west of the Mobil Station). Central Office's hours are: 9 a.m. – 6 p.m. M-F, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. Saturday & Sunday. (Literature closed last Fri. of every month for inventory and on major holidays). **To reach our 24-hour telephone hotline for information on anything related to Alcoholics Anonymous (or crisis calls) and speak with a live person: (818) 988-3001** Email us at: sfvco@la.twcbc.com

Central Office of SFV

16132 Sherman Way
Van Nuys, CA 91406

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED