

RECOVERY TIMES

Vol. 50, No. 12, Dec. 2016



And so, another year comes to a close...

Central Office of the San Fernando Valley of Alcoholics Anonymous is the hub of information for the A.A. groups in the Valley. We collect, bring together and distribute information that is shared to all of the groups through each group's



Inter Group Rep (IGR). Each month, we all get together at St. Innocent Church, 5657 Lindley Avenue in Tarzana, and spend a fulfilling half-hour meeting with one another to share each group's events as well as important information about any changes in meetings, concerns about running our Central Office, and any other matters that the Groups want to discuss. We welcome new IGRs – or A.A. visitors – to our meetings and hope you will choose to be of service in this very fulfilling commitment.

And Now, a Word from Our Office Manager...

Bob F. has been serving as Office Manager for Central Office of the San Fernando Valley since April 2001. During that time, he's presided over all many of the office functions including keeping the bills paid so the doors can remain open for all of the A.A.s, near and far. The Recovery Times thought it was about time we heard from Bob. F. to hear what he thinks were the most memorable experiences he's had as Office Manager of Central Office. Here's what Bob had to say:

"The transition in our office to "point of sale" software was a big one, as well as the jolting move to Sherman Way after 49 years at our old location and a year and a half of searching for a new one. At Central Office, we interface with so many AAs who come in to help answer the phones or buy their chips, medallions and literature and the very dedicated overnight volunteers who are amazing in their willingness to cover these late night/all night shifts.

"I've seen a lot of people who have come in new and who have had tremendous growth. But unfortunately, we've also seen the opposite, with people who got the program of AA and then lost sight of where it was taking them and went out. We lost some of those people and it's always sad to see that happen.

On the plus side, we've received phone calls from AAs in foreign countries and other parts of the United States and just helping people find meetings has been such a joy. It's also been a great accomplishment to have all of the committee members who started "Take Your Sponsor to Breakfast," our yearly fundraising event, and seeing all of the Valley's extracurricular activities blossoming. All of these things have been memorable and great accomplishments in my book.

I wish to thank all of the fellowship for contributing to our "Gratitude Month" donation. This will greatly help us in going forward! Wishing everyone a happy, healthy and sober holiday season and a very Happy New Year!

SAN FERNANDO VALLEY CENTRAL OFFICE: MINUTES FOR INTERGROUP MEETING:

November 14, 2016:

OPENING: Brian H.

- Brian opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. with The Serenity Prayer
- Lee read "The Twelve Traditions"
- Sandy R. accepted a motion for approval of the October Intergroup Minutes.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Joel S.

MTD is \$5,299 and YTD is <\$11,186>, as compared with last year's YTD which was <\$5,381>. The Sponsor Breakfast generated a \$3,455 profit and we had \$3,000 in personal contributions, which are tax deductible! Gratitude Month is here! Contributions can be made by check as well.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S REPORT: Bob F.

- Central Office
 - Gratitude Month is a 35+ year tradition. If contributions are like last year, Central Office could end the year either slightly in the black or \$1,000 - \$2,000 in the red.
 - Continuing to work on a few problems with the website.
 - Beginning in December, Central Office will begin printing the Recovery Times on site, saving the expense of outside printing costs!

Recovery Times, Pat K.: Stories of recovery are always welcome. Deadline for submissions is 15th of the month; send to Pat K. at xnowisthetime@aol.com.

MEETING RELATED BUSINESS: Cheryl A. 5 new Intergroup Representatives this month:

- Alicia, Sober Solutions Women's Stag, Saturdays at 10:00 am in Van Nuys;
- Tamara, Shadow Ranch Big Book Study, Mondays at 7:30 pm in Woodland Hills;
- Luke, A Gathering Of Men, daily at 7:00 am in Studio City;
- Diane, Hole in the Sky, Sundays at 4:30 p.m. in Canoga Park;
- Eric, Thursday Night Lights, Thursdays in Canoga Park.

SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES

- General Service District 16: Daniel: Elections are this month.
- General Service District 1: Norm: Area Assembly to be held in Simi Valley Nov 15-17.
- San Fernando Valley Hospital & Institutions Committee: Daniel: Everything is going well.
Bob F.: AA at the VA will be in December, but don't have specific date yet. Includes dinner. 7th tradition covers the expenses. Call Central Office for more info.
- San Fernando Valley 42nd AA Convention: Joel S: Will be held Jan 27, 28, and 29, 2017. "Acceptance Was the Answer" is the theme. Website, www.sfvaaconvention.org, is up and registration forms are available. Planning meetings held the 3rd Tuesday of every month, 7:00 p.m., at 5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana. Must be registered to attend all Grand Ballroom events. Tickets for the Luncheon, Banquet and Spiritual Breakfast must be obtained through pre-registration. Tickets will not be sold on site.
- Santa Clarita Valley AA Convention: Bernard: Had a great Convention last month!

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.
- Brian: Bob and Brian have just a few tickets available to the Sponsor Breakfast. Please turn in any sales proceeds and/or outstanding tickets.

NEW BUSINESS - No new business.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM AA GROUPS & SEVENTH TRADITION:

- Dexter, Wake-Up Group: Early morning meeting with a daily theme. Meets every morning at 6:45 am at the Reseda Meeting Hall, 17751 Sherman Way, #3, in Reseda.
- Ala-Nest Old Timers Meeting: Needs support at their new location: Hole in the Sky, 21044 Sherman Way, Canoga Park.
- Brian 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").

ACKNOWLEDGE BIRTHDAYS FOR THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER

36 YEARS OF SOBRIETY!

- Angela C., 1 year
- Marianna, 3 years
- Larry S., 32 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 7:30 pm with *The Lord's Prayer*.

Prepared and submitted by: Sandy R., Recording Secretary

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES IN THE SAN FERNANDO VALLEY



San Fernando Valley Central Office Board Meeting: Jan. 4, 2017, 6:30 p.m., Central Office, 16132 Sherman Way, Van Nuys, CA 91406.

San Fernando Valley Intergroup Meeting: Jan. 9, 2017: 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): Dec. 19, 2016, 7 p.m. Orientation, 8 p.m. Bus. Meeting, St. Innocent Church, 5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana.

General Service Dist. 1: (1st Wed.): Jan. 4, 2017: 6:30 p.m., 7552 Remmet, Canoga Park.

General Service Dist. 2: (1st Tues.): Jan. 3, 2017: 6:30 p.m., 4011 Dunsmore,

La Crescenta.

General Service District 7: (2nd Sat.): Jan. 14, 2017, 9 a.m., Women's Club: 33201 Agua Dulce Canyon Rd, Agua Dulce, CA.

General Service District 11 (1st Mon.): Jan. 2, 2017: New GSRs – 6:00 p.m., general meeting 6:30 p.m., 315 W. Vine Street, Glendale.

General Service District 16 (1st Mon.): Jan. 2, 2017: 6:00 p.m., 15950 Chatsworth, Granada Hills.

General Service District 17 (1st Mon.): Jan. 2, 2017. Orientation for new GSRs, 6:30 p.m., Business Meeting: 7:00 p.m., 5000 Colfax, NoHo.

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

FROM THE FOUNDERS

A NEW STATE OF CONSCIOUSNESS

"He has been granted a gift which amounts to a new state of consciousness and being." 12 & 12, p. 107

"Life's formidable array of pains and problems will require many different degrees of acceptance ... Sometimes, we have to find the right kind of acceptance for each day. Sometimes, we need to develop acceptance for what may come to pass tomorrow and, yet again, we shall have to accept a condition that may never change. Then, too, there frequently has to be a right and realistic acceptance of grievous flaws within ourselves and serious faults within those about us - defects that may not be fully remedied for years, if ever."

AA Co-Founder, Bill W., March 1962, "What Is Acceptance?"

"Some of us take a long time to 'come to' before we can 'come to believe' that there is any hope for us."

Nanaimo, British Columbia, Feb. 2003

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

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: Anonymous – 5 Years, Betty M. – 20 Years, and David H. – 26 Years.



Deaths: Joan McE - 53 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 600 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 VOLUNTEERS: CENTRAL OFFICE APPRECIATES ALL OF THE VOLUNTEERS WHO HANDLE PHONES EACH DAY. WITHOUT THEM, ALCOHOLICS WHO NEED INFORMATION MIGHT NOT KNOW WHERE TO GO. TO BECOME A PHONE VOLUNTEER, PLEASE CONTACT CENTRAL OFFICE: (818) 988-3001. **CENTRAL OFFICE WEBSITE:** 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 and speak with a live person call: (818) 988-3001. For more info, email us at: sfvco@la.twcbc.com**

What a Spiritual Awakening Means to Me

RECENTLY I have heard more and more speakers remark, "It is easier to get sober than to stay sober." In my opinion this need not be so. For more than seven years I have worked with a number of fellow alcoholics who had trouble with the program. Almost invariably they had forgotten, or never actually grasped, the principles in our program that aid spiritual growth and promote a happy sobriety.



Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote, "Every man is an open door through which the Infinite passes into the finite; through which the Universal becomes individual." Certainly, to realize any measure of this heritage, I must have some degree of spiritual consciousness.

Years of progressive alcoholism laid me on the doorstep of AA, a physical and spiritual wreck. Like all Alcoholics in my condition, I needed some kind of spiritual awakening to absorb the program.

What then is a spiritual awakening? There are many versions--perhaps because a spiritual awakening is a profoundly individual experience. Some report it as an illuminating flash. Others associate it with some deeply significant happening in their lives. Many experience it hardly aware of any immediate change. An ancient Stoic philosopher once said, "Great things are not created suddenly. . .let there be time. First, let it blossom, then bear fruit, men ripen." My own spiritual awakening developed concurrently with a gradual change in character, *after I began to work the AA program.*

Psychologically speaking, we are defined, in technical terms, as *reacting mechanisms*. Theoretically, we are supposed to respond to environmental influences according to a progressive formula: stimulation-integration-reaction. The pattern of my spiritual awakening closely followed this formula: AA fellowship and faithful striving with *all* the Steps became the stimulus for my spiritual development. Trying my best to exercise the first three Steps stimulated humility, hope, and faith. The fourth, fifth, and tenth Steps laid down a pattern of growth for honesty with myself. Working the sixth and seventh Steps awakened remnants of moral courage and reestablished sincerity in relating myself to a Higher Power (which I call God).

Following through with the eighth and ninth Steps validated my sincerity with those whom I had harmed, and paved the way for me to forgive myself. **(continued, next page)**

A little reflection will show that a sincere attempt to exercise these first ten Steps brings into play some of the finest virtues in the human character: humility, hope, faith, honesty, courage, and sincerity. There is an old saying in AA: "If you don't get AA, keep coming--and AA will get you."

In other words, some of these good character traits are bound to rub off. Whatever did rub off, integrated with a changing personality. I now felt eligible to try for higher spiritual rewards abiding in the eleventh Step: "Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out."

Where could this profound exercise lead me? To the ideal expressed by Emerson? If this sublime experience is indeed our heritage, what finer preparation could I make for it than by prayer and meditation to improve my conscious contact with God as I understood Him? How do I begin? It is written somewhere in the Talmud that "a man comes into the world with his fists closed, wanting everything." In the eleventh Step we approach God with open hands wanting nothing but the knowledge of His will and the power to carry that out.

Consistent striving with the eleventh Step has sharpened my awareness and my appreciation of all creation and its glorious presentation, as the manifestation of supreme genius. "Behold I have placed before you an open door and no man can close it." I revere the soft glow of twilight and the gleam of countless worlds hovering remote in the heavens, as the splendorous source of spiritual stimulation, the bloom of Infinite power. When the new day kindles in the silky tinted sky, I am conscious of its supreme endowments--significant to my growing spirit.

What then is my spiritual awakening? It is a growing sensitivity of my spirit to the Infinite and the Universal, nurtured by illuminating glimpses of spiritual beauty. It flowers from the cultivation of all of AA's Twelve Steps. Ever fresh in my heart is a song of thanksgiving for my expanding sobriety, as the opening door to timeless truth. [J. A. L., Jackson Heights, New York](#)

Happily Giving

Oh, what a bag of goodies we have to share once we get sober

Before I came into the rooms of AA, I was absolutely clueless on what the word God meant. That's why I drank to oblivion. I had no answers to this thing called life, so I figured I might as well drink away the pain of "not knowing."

I tried to find God in so many ways. I was raised Catholic. But growing into my teens, I would party with my friends on Friday and Saturday nights, then go to communion on Sunday, be forgiven and do it all again the next week. This didn't work for me.

I became a Christian and decided that Jesus was my savior and that I was born again. I studied the Bible with a beer in hand, then started questioning the treatment of the aboriginal people and their shamans. How could God send them all to hell just for not reading the Bible and for loving the earth? This didn't make sense to me. So I placed my Bible on the shelf.

I started studying Shamanism. I bought a medicine bag that I wore around my neck and decided I was going to "heal the world." What was really cool about being a shaman was that some used peyote in ceremony and if that was acceptable, surely alcohol was OK. I performed many ceremonies under the influence. Using crystals, I would dance naked around a map of the earth, imagining I was healing the world, only to wake up hungover and unable to remember taking my clothes off!

I then decided I'd be more practical. It was the year 1999 and I started preparing for Y2K and the end of the world. I packed buckets of food and stored gas. I waited for martial law but nothing happened. I was wrong. So I kept drinking. Having tried everything to find God, I finally ended up just turning to alcohol. I slept with cans of beer on my living room floor all through the night. When I couldn't stand the pain anymore, I walked into the rooms of AA.

It is here where I had my first real spiritual experience, when a woman gave her time to sit with me, listen to me and help me read and underline the Big Book. That experience of a human being giving time to this stinky drunk with DTs was how I found God. God loved me through her—my first sponsor.

Since then, I have found God in the rooms of AA. Some call God a "Group Of Drunks," and that is true to me. I see God in others.

Christmas season is here and I'm reminded that some people have a Santa Claus God. They ask him for things and expect God to fulfill their expectations. I see this differently. I see it as giving service in AA. Giving our presence, or making coffee, or sponsoring others, or serving in a group position—all these are gifts that money can't buy. Santa Claus is a giver. That's why he's so happy all the time.

In the program, instead of asking for what we want, we learn to give what is needed of us. We become a Santa Claus God—giving the gift of sobriety to those we can help. What a bag of goodies we have to share. What miracles we get to watch as our gifts are opened and used by newcomers who attend their first meeting.

When we forget ourselves and make other people more important, we disappear into a giving that becomes selfless. In giving, we receive happiness and a very merry holiday season.

-- Brenda M., Boise, Idaho, USA

Calendar of Events: Look for these upcoming events to keep in touch with the fellowship:

December 30 – Jan. 1, 2017: San Fernando Group's 49th Alcathon, Sylmar, CA

January 27 – 29, 2017: 42nd San Fernando Valley AA Convention, Woodland Hills, CA

Happy Holidays & Happy New Year, 2017 from Central Office of the S.F. Valley of AA!

Central Office of SFV

16132 Sherman Way

Van Nuys, CA 91406

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED