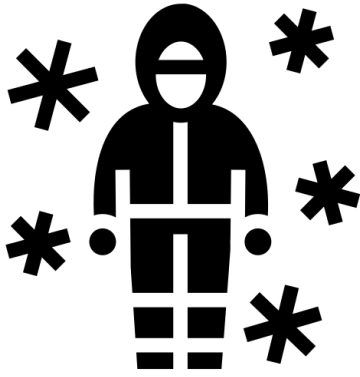


A LOT OF ESKIMOS



About 25 years ago, I realized I was going to have to stop drinking. If I didn't, I would be headed for my third divorce. I had already devised a suicide plan that I knew would work. I was going to drive down a very steep curvy road in heavy rain after lots of drinking. All I had to do was head the car over the cliff and it would be over. Then I thought how angry my friends and relatives would be if I met them on the other side. That is when I met my first Eskimo, Cathy. She asked me if alcohol had anything to do with my two divorces, then said without judgement: "Don't beat yourself up."

Cathy gave me an AA meeting directory and suggested that I find a meeting close to my house. She also suggested that I find a sponsor, "someone who has what you want." I didn't know if AA could help me stop drinking. I had fallen into a state of pitiful and incomprehensible demoralization. Even if I could stop drinking, what could AA do for my soul? According to my upbringing, I was already going straight to hell.

I asked Patty to be my sponsor because she was a professional woman. I asked her what I should do if I needed to talk to someone at two or three am? She said, "You can call me; that is when I did my best drinking."

In the beginning I only went to mixed meetings (men and women) because I felt intimidated by other women. She told me that it was women who would save my ass. I started taking chips for different lengths of sobriety. Patty asked me to get the Big Book and the Twelve & Twelve -- just like a teacher with a reading list. We started through the steps.

Steps one, two and three were relatively easy for me. The most humiliating was the fourth step. For the fifth step, I told her all the horrible things that I had done. She told me things about herself that I could hardly believe. She suggested that I go to a woman's meeting. I noticed that women share things that they would not share in a mixed meeting. We completed the steps together. It was a real loss when Patty moved away -- at the same time my best AA friend also moved away.

At this point, I had taken a cake for every year of sobriety for ten years. I thought I had recovered by now. I decided that I could now drink red wine. One night, I had been out to dinner with a friend and I had too much to drink and hit a parked car, then did a hit and run. I called a lawyer friend and he told me that if anyone matched the paint on both cars, I would go to jail for hit and run. I realized then that I had to go back to AA and give back my ten year chip.

I went to the Varney Street meeting and handed the secretary my ten year chip, telling him that I had gone back to drinking. He said, "Keep the chip as it will remind you that you know how to do this."

I realized then that there is no graduation from the disease of alcoholism. I started going to all the meetings in Burbank: mixed and women's meetings, day and night. I got a new sponsor who was very loving and maternal and I was with her three years. She helped me a lot with my marriage by sharing her own experiences. (Continued, page 5)

SAN FERNANDO VALLEY CENTRAL OFFICE
Minutes of Intergroup Representatives Meeting
February 13, 2017

OPENING: Cheryl A.

- Cheryl opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. with The Serenity Prayer. Donna read "The Twelve Traditions." Sandy R. accepted a motion for approval of the January Intergroup minutes.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Adrian I.

- Central Office received generous contributions last month! MTD / YTD is \$9,588, as compared with last year's YTD which was \$1,153. Thanks to all and keep up the good work!

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S REPORT: Bob F.

Central Office is pursuing the addition of credit card purchases. There were a few new volunteers last month, but we could always use more. Central Office is looking into making the office available for the 9:00 pm to midnight volunteer shift. Right now, that shift is covered at home.

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

MEETING RELATED BUSINESS: Larry S. - 3 new Intergroup Representatives this month:

- Peter M., "Comercio Q & A," Tuesdays at 7:30 pm in Woodland Hills;
- David A., "Comercio Book Study," Thursdays at 8:00 pm in Woodland Hills; and,
- Josh B., "Slums of Norway," Tuesdays at 6:00 pm in Van Nuys.

SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES:

- General Service District 16: Daniel: New officers have been elected.
- General Service District 17: David C.: A committee has been formed to plan workshops.
- San Fernando Valley Hospital & Institutions Committee: Daniel: Purchased literature, so prudent reserve is back down. Looking for money again!
- San Fernando Valley 42nd AA Convention: Joel S: On behalf of Convention Chair Erin E., many thanks to everyone who participated in a wonderful convention.
- Santa Clarita Valley AA Convention: Bernard B.: 2017 Convention will be held September 8 - 10. Registration forms will be available in a few months. Visit our website 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 & SEVENTH TRADITION:

Joel S., The Week That Was: New location: Congregational Church of Chatsworth, 20440 Lassen Street, Chatsworth.

Michael, SFVYPAA: Capture The Flag, March 11, at Chatsworth Park North. Games start at 12 noon, followed by a meeting at sunset.

Bob F.: AA Desert Pow Wow, June 8 – 11, at Renaissance Indian Wells Resort & Spa.

Cheryl A.: Groups should bring at least 350 flyers for upcoming events. 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 FEBRUARY – 67 YEARS OF SOBRIETY!

David C., 3 years, Dexter S., 6 years, Lynn J., 9 years, Rick A., 21 years, and Jim R., 28 years.

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

CLOSING: Cheryl A.: A motion to adjourn was recognized and seconded. Meeting adjourned at 7:18 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: April 5, 2017, 6:30 p.m., Central Office, 16132 Sherman Way, Van Nuys, CA 91406.

San Fernando Valley Intergroup Meeting: April 10, 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): March 20, 2017, 7 p.m. Orientation, 8 p.m. Bus. Meeting, St. Innocent Church, 5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana.

General Service Dist. 1: (1st Wed.): April 5, 2017: 6:30 p.m., 7552 Remmet, Canoga Park.

General Service Dist. 2: (1st Tues.): April 4, 2017: 6:30 p.m., 4011 Dunsmore, La Crescenta.

General Service District 7: (second Saturday) April 8, 2017, 9 a.m., Women's Club: 33201 Agua Dulce Canyon Rd, Agua Dulce, CA.

General Service District 11 (1st Mon.): April 3, 2017: New GSRs – 6:00 p.m., general meeting 6:30 p.m., 315 W. Vine Street, Glendale.

General Service District 16 (1st Mon.): April 3, 2017: 6:00 p.m., 15950 Chatsworth, Granada Hills.

General Service District 17 (1st Mon.): April 3, 2017. Orientation for new GSRs, 6:30 p.m., Business Meeting: 7:00 p.m., 5000 Colfax, NoHo.

How to Get to Central Office of the 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.**



FROM THE FOUNDERS

*"All AA progress can be reckoned in terms of just two words: humility and responsibility. Our whole spiritual development can be accurately measured by our degree of adherence to these magnificent standards."
Bill W., co-founder of AA*

"We recovered alcoholics are not so much brothers in virtue as we are brothers in our defects, and in our common strivings to overcome them." As Bill Sees It, page 167.

"Burn the idea into the consciousness of every man that he can get well regardless of anyone. The only condition is that he trust in God and clean house." BB, pg. 98

"Why all this insistence that every AA must hit bottom first? The answer is that few people will sincerely try to practice the AA program unless they have hit bottom. For practicing AAs remaining 11 Steps means the adoption of attitudes and actions that almost no alcoholic who is still drinking can dream of taking." Twelve & Twelve, Pg. 24

Heard Around A.A.

"If you don't change, it's quite possible that you will be on a street corner begging for change."

Our Code: "Love & tolerance is our code."

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 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: Hyheir H. – 42 Years.



Deaths: Jimmy G. (Jimmy the Greek): 25 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~

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

A lot of Eskimos, (front page)

Eventually, I got a new sponsor because a member of her family had a serious illness and she was not able to spend time with me. I decided to ask a woman who stood out at all the meetings I went to as she definitely had something that I wanted. My new sponsor asked me to do the twelve steps over again.

Now we came to another fourth step. Once again, the fourth step was excruciating. My character defects had run wild while I was drinking. Now there were forms for the fourth step: resentments, fear and misconduct. For the fifth step, I had a hard time sharing these painful memories with my sponsor. The alternative was surely divorce, losing my grandchildren, the physical disease of alcoholism and jail. I also went to the Joe and Charlie workshop with my sponsor and nine other women. We went through the Big Book, chapter by chapter, and then discussed it. It seemed as if I was reading it for the first time.

Now I stay close to my sponsor. I do whatever she suggests and I go to a lot of meetings. I feel more spiritually fit and happy with myself. Recently, I took two cakes for my fourteen years of sobriety. I follow the model: "Keep coming back; it works if you work it." Thank you God and all the people in the program. **Jane B., Burbank**



CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

March 24 – 26, 2017: 41st Rhode Island Convention: Newport, R.I. www.rhodeisland-aa.org

April 14 – 16, 2017: 32nd Orange County AA Convention, Doubletree Hilton, Orange, CA www.oaac.org.

April 13 – 16, 2017: 40th San Diego Spring Roundup, Town and Country Hotel, San Diego, CA www.sandiegospringroundup.com

May 5 – May 7, 2017: 29th Big Island Bash, Kailua Kona, Hawaii www.BigIslandBash.com

May 18 – 21, 2017: 33rd Tri-State Roundup, Riverside Hotel & Casino, Laughlin, NV

June 1- 4, 2017: Maui Fest XIII Intl. Convention, Maui, Hawaii: <http://www.mauifest.org>

June 8 – 11, 2017: Desert Pow Wow, Indian Wells, CA <http://desertpowwow.com/>

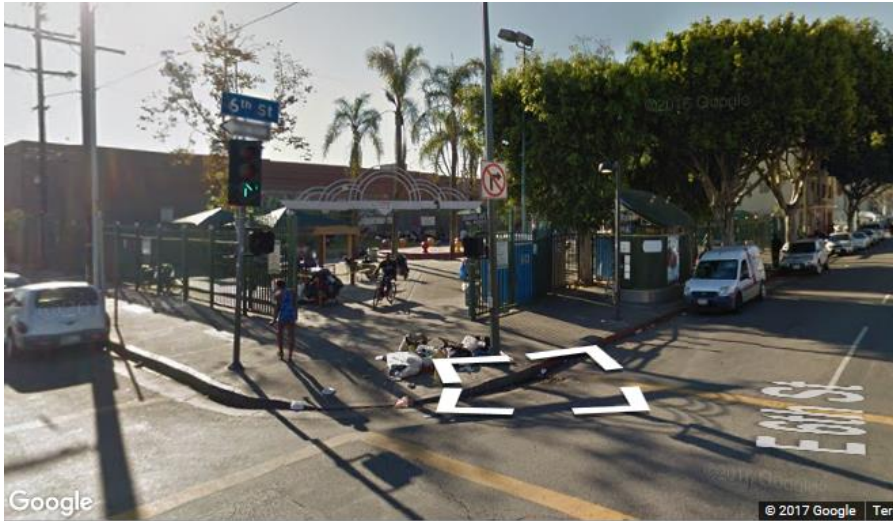
June 9 – 11, 2017: 17th Intl. English-Croatian Convention: <http://www.aahrvatska.hr>

Need someone to talk to? 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.

A Bit of AA History: Skid Row Drifters

The last remaining co-founder of five Skid Row Drifters, Louie L., says the Skid Row Drifters held their first meeting at 577 So. San Pedro Street in Los Angeles on June 26, 1973. The founders were: Don P. (deceased), Ruth S. (deceased), Richard L. (deceased), Louie L. and another member whose name is not remembered other than being the member who built the podium for the Group. Don P. spoke frequently at other meetings and was sponsored by Chuck C.

The early members were Sylvia S. from the El Serrano Group, Larry L. from the Pacoima Group and Mack. Mack was said to have been responsible for keeping the Skid Row Drifters afloat in its infancy. In the beginning, the Skid Row Drifters was a participation Group, but as time passed, it evolved into



a meeting with panels from various other groups in Los Angeles. Louie L. and Sylvia S. recall that the meeting hall had a bare lightbulb hanging from the ceiling, theater chairs and old couches to sit on.

Today, the Skid Row Drifters panel meetings are held on the corner of Gladys Ave. and E. 6th Street in Los Angeles, just down the street from where they first started in 1973.

Submitted by Victor O.

Sober Language

This AA wonders if profanity in meetings does more harm than good to the program

The Saturday night speaker had slipped steadily down from teenage gangs into drinking, drugs, jail, deserted children, court, robbery, then prison where he entered rehab, began attending AA, gained release on probation and started rebuilding his life. It was a powerful story of alcoholism and early recovery, all of it well-seasoned with curse words.

A well-known, long-time sober woman raised her hand immediately for discussion. She asked us to be mindful of people in the room who might be offended by bad language. And she reminded us that AA works by the power of attraction.

Then another guy with a dozen years of sobriety spoke, and he deliberately used as many offensive words as coherently possible. Maybe he was trying to make a point about freedom of speech. But it left a bad taste in my mouth, and I'm no saint when it comes to language. Speakers at men's meetings sometimes do this too, and I get this telltale gnawing in my gut that indicates some self-survey is in order.

I've always been a zealot in defense of free speech. During my frenzied drinking and drugging days in the 60's, 70's and 80's I adopted common cuss words from the musicians and construction crews I worked with. If someone called me on my language, I'd say, "Hey, I'm Anglo-Saxon. This is my cultural heritage."



So this isn't a judgmental rant against cussing at meetings. I've done my share. But I've come to believe that some inventory around how we express ourselves at meetings might boost our effectiveness with newcomers. I will not suggest that groups try to regulate language. I say "try" because it's already been tried, never worked, and never will. Not with people like me.

I'm as much of a defiant anarchist as any drunk, and have never favored rules, laws or constraints to regulate behavior or speech. Tradition Two reminds us we can no more control another drunk's speech than we can their conduct. That part is up to a power greater than myself. But I want to raise some questions that have surfaced as I've stayed sober longer, and profanity has grown pervasive in movies, music and general conversation.

The most obvious is this: Does using crude language harmonize with having turned my life and will over to a Higher Power? Has the God of my understanding ever communicated recovery, wisdom, justice, love or hope this way to me? And if not, then whose will is being voiced when I use these words?

When others spout a stream of profanity, is my general impression that they sound happy, joyous and free? Or do I hear a deeper, abiding undercurrent of defiance, resentment, shame and fear, even in their humor? And is that what I want to pass on when I share my experience, strength and hope?

Psychologists claim 70% of communication is nonverbal. Tone of voice, body language and facial expression convey much more than words. So when I use sexually charged expressions for emphasis, what am I really communicating? That I've come to know the word serenity and intuitively know how to handle situations that used to baffle me? Or that I'm fronting some attitude and stuck in self-will?

I've heard others argue that the exercise of free expression (including cursing) remains one of AA's points of attraction for people whose social skills were honed in locker rooms, barrooms, street corners and mosh pits. So do we abandon the laughter that's based in base language? Do we become pucker-lipped censors policing each other for crossing some undefined line of decency?

Everyone can agree that, by not using profanity, we aren't likely to offend newcomers into leaving AA. We can also agree that, by using profanity, there will be some (perhaps a small number of) newcomers and other AA members who will definitely be offended, and some who will not be.

Any lively speaker or discussion meeting offers proof enough that the heartiest group laughter comes more from truthful self-survey than from any obscene turn of phrase. The power of inclusion and identification is amplified by language everyone can get on board with. To me that means the group conscience -- the will of a loving God -- is magnified when everyone in the room identifies and laughs together. —*Ernest S., York, Maine*

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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.

Central office website: find meeting schedules, back issues of recovery times, and lots of other helpful info: www.sfvaa.org. Buy your AA literature, chips and medallions at Central Office.

Central Office of SFV
16132 Sherman Way

Van Nuys, CA 91406

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED