

RECOVERY TIMES

Vol. 58, No. 12, Dec. 2017

The Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office Newsletter

A Little Sober Holiday Story:

'Twas the night before Christmas, we were all
in the club,
Enjoying a meeting, instead of a pub.

The ashtrays were clean, and the coffee was
made,
The Big Books were out and then we all
prayed.

When out in the lot, there arose such a clatter,
We all jumped up to see what was the matter.

The Chair with his Big Book, and I with my
smokes,
Headed outside to find these two blokes.

They came inside and sat at a table,
And said that they'd chair, as soon as they're
able.

To start with, they said, "It's more than not
drinking,
It's doing your best to have God fix your
thinking."

"First Things First!" and the slogans we used,
Help keep the newcomer from getting
confused.

Step 1 is a start, they said we should know,
But after Step 2, we'll be all aglow.

We make a decision when we got to Step 3,
Step 4 was a bit tough, we all could agree.
Step 5 is the one where we let it all out.
And after Step 6 and 7, we're left with no
doubt.



When we got to Step 8, we made our full list,
And then with Step 9, we have to persist.
After Step 9, more promises ring true,
we didn't just make that up, right out of the
blue.

After that, it's on with the rest,
the things we must do, to be our best.

They put on their coats and got ready to leave,
a very good end, for this Christmas Eve.

As to their names, we only could guess,
Must have been Bill W. and Dr. Bob S.

The two men hopped into a '35 Ford,
And as they pulled out, one of them roared:

"We leave this message, for our sisters and
brothers:
Trust God, clean house, and be of service to
others.

And for all of you people, I just want to say:



Have a nice holiday, and don't drink today!"

Author Unknown

San Fernando Valley Central Office
Minutes of Intergroup Representatives Meeting, November 13, 2017

OPENING: Cheryl A.

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

TREASURER'S REPORT: Adrian I.

- Central Office is in the red: MTD is \$2,374 and YTD is <\$7,285>, as compared with last year's YTD which was <\$11,186>. Sales are up overall, primarily due to H&I, but general sales continue to decline. Central Office is solvent and has a six-month prudent reserve. Financials are available.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S REPORT: Bob F.

- Central Office
 - The website is running great.
 - Volunteer status is pretty good. Volunteers are needed to cover 1pm to 5pm phone shifts.
 - New meeting directories are available at the same price, 95-cents.
- *Recovery Times*:
 - Reminder: 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.

- 2 new Intergroup Representative this month:
 - Victoria Y., "Sunrise Group," Saturdays at 8:15 am in Burbank; and
 - Adrian I., new alternate for "Chatsworth Speaker Meeting," Fridays at 7:30 pm in Chatsworth.

SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES:

- General Service District 11: Andrew for Ernie: No report, but everything is fine.
- General Service District 16: Daniel: Everything is going great. Still looking for workshop topics.
- General Service District 1: Peter: Area 93 Assembly was held last week.
- San Fernando Valley Hospital & Institutions Committee: Daniel: Join us the third Monday of the month at St. Innocents Church in Tarzana.
- San Fernando Valley 43rd AA Convention: Bernard: Will be held Jan. 26 – 28, 2018, at the Warner Center Marriott. Theme is "I Could Have Missed It All." Planning Meetings are held on the 3rd Tuesday of the month. Registration flyers are available and online registration is open at sfvaaconvention.org. Pre-registration is now \$25, \$30 at the door. See Scott M. for Marathon Meeting assignments.

OLD BUSINESS

While literature Sales are CLOSED on holidays and the last Friday of each month, Central Office remains open on weekends and phones are always 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:

San Fernando Valley Young People in AA: Ugly Sweater Party, Saturday, December 16 at the Windsor Club in Glendale. Meeting at 8pm, dance to follow.

Radford Hall: Spend New Year's Eve at Radford Hall, December 31. 6pm Italian Dinner (\$10), 8pm open meeting with a surprise speaker, and Clean and Sober New Year's Eve Dance at 10pm (\$10). All proceeds go to keep the doors open at Radford Hall. Tickets go on sale November 15!

REMINDERS: Groups should bring at least 350 flyers for upcoming events to IGR meetings.

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 – 33 YEARS OF SOBRIETY!

Larry S., 33 years on 11/1.

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

CLOSING: Cheryl A.: A motion to adjourn was recognized and seconded. Meeting adjourned at 7:12 pm with *The Lord's Prayer*. Prepared and submitted by: Sandy R., Recording Secretary

Central Office is located at 16132 Sherman Way, Van Nuys.

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: **(818) 988-3001**. For more info, visit: www.sfvaa.org or email: sfvco@la.twcbc.com.

We are located in an office building on the southwest corner of Woodley & Sherman Way, west of the Mobil Station) and remain 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.

Please buy your meeting supplies from Central Office of the Valley. In doing so, you are supporting our office and also getting your materials at our cost. (It's always more expensive to buy them from a retail store). Central Office is a legitimate non-profit. Personal donations cannot exceed \$3,000 per year and must be from members of AA, not from outsiders.

To receive a copy of Recovery Times in the mail, please send us your name, address and payment with \$7.00 to cover cost & delivery. Please tell us whether you are ordering a new subscription, are renewing, or if you are enclosing an additional contribution. If moving, please give us your former address. Recovery Times is also available online where you can find the current issue or your favorite back issues. Download a copy for free at: www.sfvaa.org.

Central Office Thanks You for Your Group and Individual Contributions During Gratitude Month! With the donations you send in, we are able to pay for our rent, literature, and cover our phones 24/7 for any alcoholic who needs someone to talk to. We continue to answer the phone on weekends and holidays, as well as all night long – the loneliest time for an alcoholic.

If you think you might drink, get yourself to a meeting. You can view all of the meetings online at: www.sfvaa.org.

Or if you need somebody to talk to, call Central Office at: 818 988-3001.

FROM THE FOUNDERS

"Suffering is no longer a menace to be evaded at any cost. When it does come, no matter how grievously, we realize that it too has its purpose. It is our great teacher because it reveals our defects and so pushes us forward into the paths of progress. The pain of drinking did just this for us. And so can any other pain."

**AA Co-Founder, Bill W.,
November 1958**

"I can no longer use the illness of alcoholism as an excuse for anything. There is a catch, however. If I fail to use my recovery in service to others, I will become sick again."

**Winnipeg, Manitoba,
Canada**

"I'm learning to be a mother, a friend, a grandmother, and a sister. My friends are a close-knit support group, and they're as near as the telephone."

Arlington, Texas

"It's hard to keep an open mind with an open mouth."

Indianapolis, Ind.

"Whether I conceive of God as a set of immutable cosmic laws or as an old man with a white robe and matching beard is totally and gloriously irrelevant. All that matters are my values and attitudes and how I act upon them."

Culver City, Calif

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AA SERVICE COMMITTEES:



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 nights at 8 pm.

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. 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 have you represent your group in this important function.

Celebrating an A.A. Anniversary? Please consider making a \$1.00 donation to Central Office for each year of your sobriety during your birthday month. **This month, we celebrate the AA anniversaries of Paul R – 10 Years, David H. – 27 Years and Myhier – 42 Years.**

Deaths: We remember: No one has reported any to us of someone in our fellowship that has passed.

Has your meeting changed? Please provide meeting updates to: **SFVAA Central Office**, 16132 Sherman Way, Van Nuys, CA 91406. We're open Monday – Friday: 9 a.m. – 6 p.m. and weekends: 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. (Literature closed last Fri. of every month for Inventory and on major holidays).

Spirituality



ATHEISTIC, arrogant, egotistical and intolerant as I was, and further, armed with a few years certain knowledge of the fact that I am an alcoholic, made my surrender, after a practical --drunken --raging --drunken --cunning --drunken --methodical --drunken --hopeless battle with alcohol, all the more totally abject.

Totally and abjectly surrendering to the fact that I was powerless over alcohol and that the persistent and stubborn belief that I--I--I did have, had brought my life to a state of unmanageable chaos, I came to believe, thru the testimony of those happy and contented people who told me of "the way," that there existed a power that could relieve me of this senseless urge to destruction. The fact that, to me, this power was ethereal in that I could neither feel, taste, hear, smell nor see it, meant nothing, in the light of the mass of concrete and irrefutable evidence, but further proof of inadequacy in *me*. Therefore, humbly, if regretfully, accepting the truth of this inadequacy, I decided to find, by conscientious adherence to the directives of those who were living proof of the benevolent potency of this power, a means of knowing His nebular quality, I would follow His dictates with the hope of eventual understanding of and communion with Him.

Impasse! To this point, humbly accepting facts, I had come with dawning hope and eagerness. Now after a keyed-up, fervent and conscientious execution of the directives, I was, in all honesty, not a bit nearer to a conception of this power's will for me. Desperate queries brought only calm admonishment to "take it easy" and "it will come."

Very well, a calm and thoughtful recapitulation of the directives was in order. Point by point I checked them until I came to one that I had missed its full significance. "*Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps. . .*" If I was to continue my reasoning on the premise that these folks were right, and the proof was still as evident as ever that they were, then the key was in these Twelve Steps.

Reason--I was told by some that reasoning could be of no use in the search. This called for an analysis of the righteousness of this power. First, last, and eternally, this power would be just. Having endowed man, above all living things, with the power to reason, any debate as to its efficacy would be pointless. Justice--it became self-evident that any human being born into this world with the power to reason, regardless of mental range and capacity, would have equal and inherent faculties for the recognition of the will and desires of this power. Therefore this faculty had to be of a simplicity that would be part of everyday life regardless of locality, race or color. I realized that my unconscious assumption that I was looking for something alien to my life could have caused me to look too high and too far away.

A new start was made on the directives, this one to be exhaustively thorough. "A searching and fearless moral inventory." Exhaustively thorough--the thought struck me, "I have been wrong in so many things maybe I don't know right from wrong." Surprise! I found that the instinctive supposition that we are taught what is right and wrong is erroneous. We are taught, if we are lucky, the advantages of doing right, or the disadvantages of doing wrong. A component part of every human being is an inherent and abiding sense of right and wrong. This sense was the root and cause of law which in its intricate ramifications today is no more than a means to force all to do unto others as you would like them to do unto you. To those that triumphantly cry "the Ten

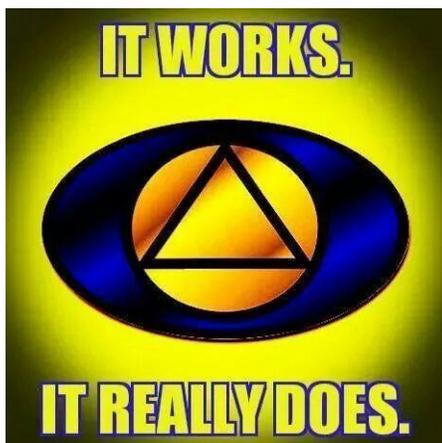
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Spirituality, continued

Commandments"--Justice--countless humans neither read nor write and thru no fault of their own, live and die with no slightest knowledge of the Bible. Further--strict adherence to this one rule makes nine of the commandments superfluous and non-essential.

What pulled the trigger on a deed and branded it right or wrong? An analysis of the deeds on the wrong side of the ledger in our inventory revealed that only the flouting of this basic law caused that feeling called *hurt conscience*. Simple and logical--if a harm to a fellow man causes a disagreeable reaction, it certainly implies negation, so inversely a good to a fellow man causes an agreeable reaction hence positive. Here was a law of cause and effect common to all. Finally I had a definite "yes" and "no." Now to bring this conscience out of depths from where it had been shoved every time that it had raised its head. This is, to me, the sounding board of the power. I realized that all consultations with my conscience would be an open book to His omniscient eye--that the cunning contrivances of my mind would gain only what they merited--that the sincerity and honesty with which I interpreted His will and carried it out would be the measure of the benefits that I would receive.

Many months had elapsed in arriving at these simple conclusions. One day I caught myself feeling pity for a man whom I had, in the past, despised with virulent hatred despite all efforts to the contrary. Gradually, with quiet and thankful wonder I realized that I had been experiencing a spiritual awakening for many months, in fact from the time that I had called for help that dark and dismal night.

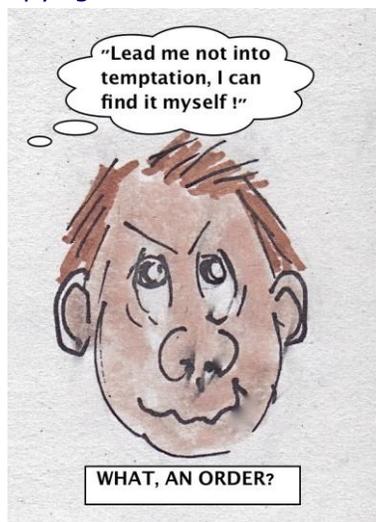


It was then that I realized fully that the Twelve Steps are not steps to take progressively in order to arrive at a conclusion, but a code for living--the constitution of a way of life.

Three years have passed. Three years of growth--growth in the capacity for growth. The calm certainty that if I live today by these precepts I need have no fear for tomorrow. Peace--Freedom from fear--Freedom from want--Contentment. *Gosh! Ain't Life Wonderful!!!*

O. B. Alva, Oklahoma

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Want to share your story of sobriety? Please write your story in a Word document and email to Editor Pat K. at: xnowisthetime@aol.com. Stories should focus on your recovery from alcohol. Recovery Times appreciates hearing from sober A.A's. Don't worry if you don't write well. I'm happy to edit it for you and use it in a forthcoming issue of this publication. Please include your contact information, should I need to reach you. Thank you!

Illustration credit: Leslie Z.

A Warm Welcome

In 1983, I arrived on the doorstep of a local clubhouse where I was told AA meetings were held. I was 22 years old, fresh out of prison, and had been disowned by my own family.



No one wanted me around. My fellow prisoners didn't like me. Alcoholics and addicts on the street didn't like me. Rehab counselors were sick and tired of me. I was at my wit's end. A man standing by the door of the clubhouse welcomed me like I was a long-lost friend. I was perplexed. What did he want from me? I was later to find out that all he wanted was for me to experience what he felt when he was new and alone and right out of prison—welcomed.

My sober odyssey took root on that very day, and today—31 years later—my life is full of excitement. When I celebrate my sobriety month this year, I'll be sharing my experience, strength and hope at that very same meeting that gave me this new way of life. I can't wait to share with the new guys and girls there the hope that is available for them too.

I was in the front row of the club last night when the chairwoman banged the gavel for the meeting to begin. I fist-bumped all the young guys, doing my best to let them know I was glad to see them. Today, I love life.

That's my job today, to give back freely what was given to me. I don't ever want to become an AA "thief." I'm so grateful that there was a man standing there by the door when I arrived. Now it's my turn to be that man.

-- Robbie W., Wildwood Crest, New Jersey, USA Copyright © 2015 Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. All Rights Reserved.



5 WAYS TO STAY SOBER THROUGH THIS HOLIDAY SEASON:

- 1. Go to a meeting every day. We have over 1,000 in the San Fernando Valley.**
- 2. Be of service to another alcoholic or to a meeting that you attend.**
- 3. Pull out your copy of the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous and read it from cover to cover.**
- 4. Write a Gratitude List every day. List 10 things for which you are grateful.**
- 5. Work on your Steps with a sponsor. Put the things on paper that are in your head.**

Central Office of SFV

**16132 Sherman Way
Van Nuys, CA 91406**

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED