

RECOVERY TIMES Vol. 65, No. 7, July 2018

The Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office Newsletter

SOBER IN THE 70s

She left her old life of drinking behind when she was in her mid-70s

In my middle 70s, I was aware of losing control of my drinking. I thought others didn't realize the extent of my drinking. When attending a party or a gathering of any kind, or if I were driving, I'd abstain from alcohol.

I couldn't stand the idea of a newspaper headline, "70-year-old Grandma Gets DUI." It never occurred to me that I might kill or maim someone. So, I contented myself with punch or water or soda. But as soon as I got home, I'd lay into the booze.

I loved the taste of gin, vodka, bourbon, or just about anything. I hid my bottle and drank secretly. Was anyone fooled?

When I came to realize that even one day of not drinking was impossible, I went on praying and asking God to take away this burden and make me whole again. There were a couple of times when I asked my mate and my daughters if they thought I should go to AA.

They each said no and suggested diversionary activities instead. Of course, I took this as a sign that my drinking wasn't so bad after all. Even if their reason for saying that I didn't need AA was due to embarrassment, I took it as a permit to keep on drinking. One day, one of my daughters suspected I was sneaking alcohol and confronted me. I promised to quit on my birthday two weeks away.

The next night, both my daughters sat me down and gently said what I needed to hear. The following day, they took me to my first AA meeting.

Working the Steps and attending meetings, I discovered a new way of living. I am eternally grateful for being in the program and finding the fellowship. It has strengthened my spiritual life and given my life new meaning and pleasantness. I'll never go back to the old one. ***Dorothy M., Shasta Lake, Calif.*** Copyright © 2018 Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

Central Office maintains a 24 hour phone line for alcoholics in need, hosted by volunteers. Call: 818 988-3001 anytime to speak to a "live" person on the phones.



San Fernando Valley Central Office

Minutes of Intergroup Representatives Meeting

June 11, 2018

OPENING: Larry S.

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

TREASURER'S REPORT: Adrian I.

- MTD is <\$7,064> and YTD is \$1,798, as compared with last year's YTD which was \$62. Group contributions were down, and there were increased expenses due, in part, to a five-week salary month, air conditioning repairs and software upgrades.
- Financials and Group Contributions are available. Thanks, Cheryl, for all your hard work!

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S REPORT: Bob F.

Central Office: We have lost three people who were all of great service to Central Office and AA: Ziggy G., David H., and Herb K. They will be missed.

New volunteers are needed for all five time slots. One year of sobriety is required. Please contact Central Office. Life's in Session is closing down the end of June.

New directories should be out mid-July. Deadline for submissions or changes is July 6.

Recovery Times: Reminder: Stories of recovery are welcome. Send to Pat K. at xnowisthetime@aol.com.

MEETING RELATED BUSINESS: Josh S.

- 3 new Intergroup Representative this month:
 - Wesley I., "Calabasas Group," Tuesdays at 7pm in Calabasas;
 - Denise T., "Northridge Women's Book Study," Mondays at 7pm; and,
 - Jennifer C., "Reseda Big Book Study," Fridays at 7:30 pm in Reseda.

SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES:

- General Service District 11: Ernie: Attended Area 93 Assembly on May 20.
- General Service District 16: Daniel: Area Inventory is available at area93.org.
- San Fernando Valley Hospital & Institutions Committee: Nick C.: Join us on the 3rd Monday of the month at Saint Innocent's Church in Tarzana. New member orientation at 7pm, business meeting starts at 8pm. Always need volunteers for jail panels.
- San Fernando Valley 44th Annual AA Convention: Bernard: The convention will be held February 1-3, 2019 at the Warner Center Marriott. The theme this year is, "Just Stay, It's the Easier, Softer Way," and colors are baby blue and chocolate brown. Join us for Planning Committee meetings on the third Tuesday of the month, at 7pm, at St. Innocent's Church in Tarzana.
- Santa Clarita Valley 15th Annual AA Convention: Bernard B.: September 14, 15th and 16th, 2018 at the Valencia Hyatt. The theme is "Miraculous Demonstrations." Online registration is open, and printable forms are available, at www.scvaaconvention.org. Also, please check the website for upcoming events.

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: The Intergroup Board has unanimously selected a credit card vendor for sales at Central Office. We expect everything to be up and running by August 1st, possibly sooner.

UPCOMING: ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM AA GROUPS & SEVENTH TRADITION:

- Unit A: Bingo, Saturday, July 28th, 6pm – 10:30 pm. Join us for a special meeting at 6pm with speaker Bob F., followed by Bingo at 8pm.
- Marianna, YPSFVAA:
 - 47th ACYPAA Round-Up will be held in April 4-7, 2019 at the LAX Hilton. Pre-Registration forms available or register online at www.acypaa.org/register. Pre-registration is \$15 for one / \$25 for two, but no one will be turned away!
 - Eddie, The Week That Was seeks a new location in the Granada Hills area.

Larry reminded IGRs to 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 JUNE – 106 YEARS OF SOBRIETY!

- Kelsey, 1 year on 6/12;
- Eric, 2 years on 6/23;
- Sandy R., 8 years on 6/2;
- Josh S., 27 years on 6/1;
- Loretta N., 30 years on 6/10; and,
- Diane, 38 years on 6/3.

ALSO, HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, 83 YEARS OLD ON 6/10!!!

VACANCIES ON BOARD: NONE

CLOSING:

- A motion to adjourn was recognized and seconded.
- Meeting adjourned at 7:26 pm with *The Lord's Prayer*.

Prepared and submitted by Sandy R., Recording Secretary



Info from Central Office of the San Fernando Valley

AA Central Office of the San Fernando Valley is located at 16132 Sherman Way, Van Nuys and maintains 24/7 Phone Service for AAs. 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. (It's always more expensive to buy them from a retail store). **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). Central Office is a legitimate non-profit. Personal donations cannot exceed \$5,000 per year and must be from members of AA, not from outsiders.

Our website, www.sfvaa.org, provides meeting info, upcoming events and service meeting info. You can also download a copy of Recovery Times (and previous issues) for free. To receive a printed copy of Recovery Times, mailed to your address, please send us your name, address and payment of \$7.00 to cover a year's worth of mailings. Also let us know if this is for a new or renewing subscription and if you have changed your address.

FROM THE FOUNDERS

"The unique ability of each AA to identify himself with, and bring recovery to, the newcomer in no way depends upon his learning, eloquence, or on any special individual skills. The only thing that matters is that he is an alcoholic who has found a key to sobriety."

AA Co-Founder, Bill W., September 1952

"On a daily basis I choose not to drink - or to fear, hate, be angry, or indulge in any other defect that's raising its ugly head. They're all there waiting, and when given a chance they charge into the center of my life and try to take over. But when I work Step Seven I find that my life is filled with good, and people actually like to be around me - something they never did in my drinking days."
Kathmandu, Nepal

"Life hasn't been all smooth sailing, but because of AA, I no longer have to live in fear. I sleep at night ... I have a purpose in life."
Mankato, Minn.

"The more willing I become to admit it when I am wrong, the less often am I in the position of having to make such an admission."
Anonymous

"Feed your faith and starve your doubt."
Indianapolis, Ind.

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Calendar of Upcoming Events:

The Foothill Roundup, August 3 – 5, 2018, Flintridge Prep School, 4543 Crown Avenue, La Canada: foothillroundup.org.

AA's 44th Maad Dog Daze, August 3 – 5, 2018, Doubletree Hotel, Cathedral City, CA, <https://www.maaddogdaze.org>

15th Annual Mountain AA Conference, August 17-19, 2018, Big Bear Performing Arts Center, 39707 Big Bear Blvd., Big Bear, CA. www.mountainaaconference.com.

34th South Bay Roundup, August 31 – Sept. 3, 2018, Torrance Marriott, Torrance. www.southbayroundup.org.

40th Annual Ventura County AA Convention, Sept. 7 – 9, 2018, Westlake Hyatt Resort, 880 S. Westlake Blvd., Westlake Village, CA. www.vcaac.org.

15th Santa Clarita Valley Annual AA Convention, Sept. 14 - 16th, 2018, Valencia Hyatt, Valencia, CA.

AA SERVICE COMMITTEES General Service Area 93:

District 1: Meets 1st Wednesday of the month at 7552 Remmet Street, Canoga Park, CA at 6 p.m. orientation; 6:30 for general meeting.

District 11: Meets the 1st Monday of the month at 123 W. Windsor Road, Glendale, CA at 6:30 orientation; 7 p.m. general meeting.

District 16: Meets the 1st Monday of the month at 16132 Sherman Way, Van Nuys, CA. (Central Office) at 6 p.m. for both orientation and meeting.

District 17: Meets the 1st Monday of the month at 5000 Colfax Ave., North Hollywood at 6 p.m. orientation; 6:30 p.m. general meeting.

For more info, refer to your District Committee Member (DCM).

Public Information 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. Call Central Office if you want to serve on this committee: **(818) 988-3001**

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). Meets 3rd Monday of the month at 5657 Lindley Ave. Tarzana (St. Innocent) at 7 p.m. or orientation and 8 p.m. for the general business meeting.

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 at St. Innocent Church, 5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana. (6:30 p.m. for orientation; 7 p.m. for business meeting). Intergroup reps provide an important service to the group. IGRs share information on upcoming AA events in the Valley.

Support Central Office by sending a rep to the monthly Intergroup meeting. We would love to have you represent your group in this important function.

Has your meeting changed? Please provide meeting updates to: **SFVAA Central Office, 16132 Sherman Way, Van Nuys, CA 91406.**



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: Jeri M. – 11 Years, Josh – 27 Years, Roger P. – 29 Years, Ann – 31 Years and the Saturday Morning Woodland Hills Women’s Meeting – 109 Years.**

Deaths: We remember: **M.J. – 14 Years and Lana T. – 31 Years**

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 or email: sfvco@la.twcbc.com.



A Few Great Musicians Who Have Passed Due to Substance Abuse

- Richard Manuel, The Band, age 42, Mar 04, 1986 of suicide after long-term alcohol abuse.
- Rick Danko, The Band, age 56, Dec. 10, 1999, heart failure due to long-term alcohol abuse.
- Paul Butterfield, International Blues Hall of Fame & Roll & Roll Hall of Fame harmonica player, age 44, 1987, drug overdose.
- Chris Cornell, Soundgarden & Audioslave vocalist, age 52, May 2017 of suicide from substance abuse.
- Chester Bennington, Linkin Park & Stone Temple Pilots vocalist, age 41, July 20, 2017, suicide due to substance abuse.
- Billie Holiday, jazz singer, age 44, July 1959, heart failure from cirrhosis of liver.
- Bon Scott, AC/DC singer, age 33, February 1980, choked on vomit after a night of heavy drinking.

End run

His prison was filled with alcohol and drugs, but luckily he began to do laps with a guy named Skyler



When I walked into the bank and handed the teller a note demanding money, all I cared about was making it to the bar a few blocks away. Later, as my photo appeared on the noon news report broadcasting on the television above the shot glasses, I hoped nobody would recognize me. The next day, I drank myself right up to the sheriff's office and turned myself in, thinking they would go easy on me.

Sitting in the small jail cell, waiting to be sentenced, I didn't see any alcohol or drugs, but the stories I heard there of life in federal prison helped me envision my next five years as a comfortable buzz.

My first impression of the penitentiary in Texas was that the place was completely unruly and the people there were insane. The place was filled with drugs and alcohol and violence. It looked like a big, dangerous party with everyone drinking and getting high. Looking back, I know that it was my Higher Power that stepped in and sent a guy named Skyler to meet me on my first day in the yard. Out of the 1,200 men on the compound, few were looking for sobriety and none were as dedicated to AA and helping others as Skyler.

I had spent 20 years as a drunk, destroying myself and every relationship that mattered. As Skyler and I talked during a lap around the track in the prison yard one day, I knew that I wanted what he had. I had taken up space at AA meetings on the street to get my probation papers signed for courts, but I never gave AA a real chance. I had never worked the Steps and I had huge issues with the existence of a Higher Power.

In prison, Skyler became my sponsor and got me working the Steps and going to meetings three times a week. It was a small meeting of about eight people but they were all devoted to helping me and each other. After almost a year, I finally finished my Fourth Step and it was the most amazing feeling I ever had. All that baggage that I carried around for years no longer held me down. My excuses to drink were gone. I finally felt free.

When Skyler completed his time and went home, I took over the AA meetings and started helping other men work the Steps. I wrote GSO about AA Correspondence and began writing to a member named Bill H. He got me a subscription to Grapevine and I started a Sunday morning Grapevine meeting in our prison. It's a huge success now; we have about 15 guys some days.

I began spending my time working on my Ninth Step. I wrote letters of amends to try and heal the relationships I had damaged in my family.

Christmas just went by and I can honestly say it's the best holiday season I've had in years. I now have over two years of sobriety and I feel really good about myself. It says in the Big Book that, "We have found much of heaven and we have been rocketed into a fourth dimension of existence of which we have not even dreamed." I have taken a small ride on that rocket since I've been working the program here in this prison and I am so looking forward to sobriety on the outside.

Opened my eyes



I was first approached to bring an AA meeting into a county jail by a friend at my home group—even though at the time I was only attending one or two meetings a year, whether I needed them or not. I had all sorts of reasons to refuse. I was just a few credits short of a master's degree, and I'd been selected as a Senior Chief in the Navy.

As maintenance engineer supervisor at a county jail, I responded to afterhours emergencies. I saw inmates going to AA meetings, and from my exalted position, I knew there were only three reasons they would do that: 1) to get out of their cell; 2) to make points with the guards; or 3) to wrangle a "get out of jail free" card. I saw no reason to spend my valuable time on people of "their" background, even though I had definitely spent several nights in jails myself.

My AA friend wasn't buying my rationale for saying no. Consider, he said, that if one person gets the gift of sobriety as a result of you bringing a meeting to them, you might save a life. I thought what he said was profound. This guy was indeed an AA philosopher. It opened my eyes to service and to the Big Book for the first time. I can't help thinking of the Herbert Spencer quote about "contempt prior to investigation" in Appendix II in the Big Book. That was me in a nutshell.

Today I'm thoroughly entrenched in area corrections service, taking monthly meetings into a federal prison, a state prison and a county jail. This for an alcoholic who thought he was just too hip, slick and cool to share his experience, strength and hope with guys in a jail. I read Herbert Spencer's quote at every meeting I bring behind those walls. When I enter and leave a facility through the sally port, one thought goes through my mind: There but for the grace of God go I.

I've now been doing corrections work for over 11 years. One of the biggest highlights for me was getting to attend the first AA National Corrections Conference a couple of years ago in St. Louis. Four Canadian provinces and the territory of Puerto Rico were represented there, along with 35 of the 50 states. It inspired me to hear the stories of moderators and panelists who had been previously incarcerated, as well as a few members who were still on parole and had received special permission to attend.

There's not a shadow of doubt in my mind that were the laws different when I drank, I would, or should, still be wearing orange. Corrections work has opened a new way of life for me.

-- Mel F., Prescott Valley, AZ Copyright © 2018 Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

More Alcohol-Related Deaths

- Hank William, country legend, age 29, January 1953, chronic alcohol abuse.
- John Bonham, Who drummer, age 32, Sept. 1980, choked on vomit.
- Keith Whitley, country musician, age 34, May 1989, alcohol poisoning.
- Lester Young, jazz musician, age 49, March 1959, alcohol abuse.
- Bix Beiderbecke, jazz composer/musician, age 28, Aug. 1931, chronic alcoholism.

Central Office of SFV

16132 Sherman Way

Van Nuys, CA 91406

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED