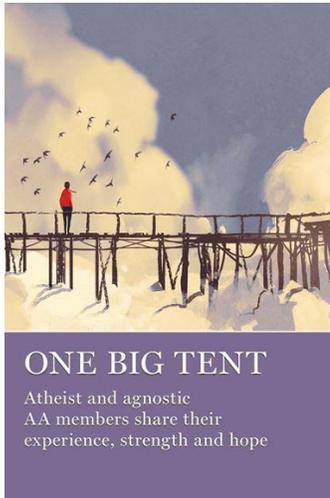


The Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office Newsletter

## ***New AA Literature for Agnostics and Atheists in:***

### ***“One Big Tent”***



Atheists, agnostics, nonbelievers and secular alcoholics have been members of the AA Fellowship since its earliest days, making significant contributions to the development of the program, helping to swing the doors of AA ever-wider. But finding their path has not always been easy. *One Big Tent* is a collection of stories, originally published in Grapevine, which represent the shared experience of secular AA members who have struggled with alcoholism, yet ultimately found a common solution in AA. These members share how they found their place in AA, work the program, do service and sponsor others. In his recent review of “One Big Tent,” AA member Thomas B. makes the following observations.

At the April 2018 General Service Conference, the AA Grapevine announced it would soon publish a book of stories by atheist and agnostic members. In *One Big Tent*, atheist and agnostic A.A. members share their experience, strength and hope some 42 years after it was first proposed. The general introduction to the book states that each of the stories were written by ‘atheists, agnostics, freethinkers or non-believers who have struggled with alcoholism, yet ultimately found a common solution in AA.’

Following the general introduction, the book consists of five chapters with stories related to the following themes, which is also the name of each of the five chapters:

- 1. Staying Sober – No Matter What**
- 2. Supporting Each Other**
- 3. One Among Many**
- 4. Group Life**
- 5. One Big Tent**

The first chapter, “Staying Sober – No Matter What” has nine stories. It includes a story from Jim B., the first acknowledged atheist/agnostic in A.A., who is credited with inserting the phrase, “as we understand him” after “God” in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Steps. As the specific introduction notes, “each A.A. is free to find his or her own way of staying sober.’

Chapter Two, “Supporting Each Other,” also has nine stories which relate how non-religious AA members care for and support each other.

The third chapter, “One Among Many,” consists of eight stories which demonstrate, essentially, that AA is a “We program.”

Chapter Four, “Group Life,” has seven stories, which examine the idea and experience that participation in AA service work is a key component for many AA members who are non-believers

(continued on page 5)

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## SAN FERNANDO VALLEY CENTRAL OFFICE

### Minutes of Intergroup Representatives Meeting

September 10, 2018

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#### MEETING CANCELLED:

The September Intergroup Representatives was cancelled just before its scheduled time due to Church improvements preventing access to the meeting room. Instead, some members of the Intergroup Board assembled in the parking lot next door and distributed handouts consisting of Recovery Times, the previous month's Minutes and financial information, as well as upcoming activity fliers.

**FINANCIALS** reflected a MTD of <\$7,721> and YTD of <\$7,776>, as compared with last year's YTD of <\$4,403>.

#### EVENT FLIERS:

- District 16:
  - "Home Sweet Home 'Home Group' Workshop," Sunday, Oct. 7, 2018, 1:30-5:30pm at San Fernando Group Hall, 220 Brand Ave., San Fernando (above the barber shop).
- H&I:
  - 37<sup>th</sup> Annual H&I Birthday Dinner & Fundraiser: Tues. Oct. 23, 2018, 6-10pm at St. Innocents in Tarzana.
- SFV Central Office:
  - Take Your Sponsor to Breakfast, fundraiser for Central Office: Oct. 27, 2018 at the Disabled American Veterans Hall in Woodland Hills. Breakfast at 8am, followed by a speaker meeting.

Prepared and submitted by: Sandy R., Recording Secretary

#### **Info from Central Office of the San Fernando Valley**



**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.**

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.

## FROM THE FOUNDERS

"Concerning any given service, we pose but one question: 'Is this service really needed?' If it is, then maintain it we must, or fail in our mission to those who seek AA."

**AA Co-Founder, Bill W.,**  
July 1955, "What Is the Third Legacy?"

"Forgiveness seems to depend more on the love of the one who does the forgiving than on the lovability of the one being forgiven."

West Henrietta, New York

"AA is spiritual, is the eye of the hurricane, is my refuge and my comfort."

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma,

"I learned that if I had the capacity to be honest, I would get better."

Cornwall, Ontario

"If all I have is a dollar in my pocket and I'm at a meeting, logic tells me to save it for myself for later. If I give it to AA, and have faith in the process, it will come back to me in ways I can't even imagine."

Sacramento, California,

"We were all a cesspool of sick people. They weren't 'doing' things to me – it wasn't personal. When you aren't the center of the universe, a lot of good things happen."

Anonymous

When you take the alcohol out of the alcoholic, what are you left with? "IC!"

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Our website, [www.sfvaa.org](http://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.

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### **AA SERVICE COMMITTEES General Service Area 93:**

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

**District 16:** Meets the 1<sup>st</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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. To volunteer call Central Office: **(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 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month at 5657 Lindley Ave. Tarzana (St. Innocent) at 7 p.m. for orientation and 8 p.m. for the general business meeting.

**San Fernando Valley Young People in AA:** 1<sup>st</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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: Kay – 33 Years, Frank K – 34 Years, Marne – 37 Years, and Wendie W – 39 Years. Thank you all for supporting Central Office!**



**Deaths: Don T. – 50 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](mailto:sfvco@la.twcbc.com).**

## **CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS:**

**65<sup>th</sup> Annual Blue Bonnets Gathering**, Oct. 5 – 7, 2018, Dumfries, Scotland, <http://www.bluebonnets.org.uk/>

**4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> Step Fall Weekend**, Oct. 12 – 14, 2018, Green Bay, WI. [www.greenbayaa.org](http://www.greenbayaa.org)

**31<sup>st</sup> Inland Empire Convention**, Nov. 9 – 11, 2018, The Doubletree, San Bernardino, CA. [www.ieaac.org](http://www.ieaac.org)

**57<sup>th</sup> Hawaii Convention**, Nov. 1 – 4, 2018, Honolulu, HI. [www.annualhawaiiconvention.com](http://www.annualhawaiiconvention.com)

**Serenity in Yosemite**, Nov. 17 – 19, 2018, Half Dome Village, Yosemite National Park, [serenityyosemite.com](http://serenityyosemite.com)

**Oregon State Young People of AA (OSYPAA)**, Nov. 30 – Dec. 2, 2018, Portland, OR, [www.osypaa6.com](http://www.osypaa6.com)

**Sobriety Under the Stars**, Jan. 18 – 20, 2019, Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco, Mexico, [www.aapvconvention.com](http://www.aapvconvention.com)



**55<sup>th</sup> Intl. Women's Convention**, February 7 – 10, 2019, Bonaventure Hotel, Figueroa Street, Los Angeles, CA

The Intl. Women's Convention organizers are looking for volunteers to help with this event. Call Annie for more information: (818) 281-1767.



## One Big Tent, Continued, page 1

whether at the group level or higher up at the District or Area.

The concluding Chapter Five, "One Big Tent," delineates the title of the book with ten stories that describe how, due to the overarching principle of AA Unity, every AA member, potentially, can find a comfortable place within the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous (regardless of how or what they believe).

In his story, "Practice but don't Preach," Eddie B. from Ahwahnee, CA perhaps most succinctly states the essence of what One Big Tent means for each member of AA:

"This is a spiritual, not a religious program. Let's keep it that way. I won't force my beliefs on you if you don't force yours on me. Say what you want, and so will I, with the help of my Higher Power who I choose not to call 'God,' and together, we can stay sober one day at a time."

In the story, "We Share Common Ground," the Rev. Ward Ewing, Trustee Emeritus of AA, relates the essence of the 2014 talk he presented in Santa Monica at the first International Conference of secular AA members. In it, he reiterates that the culture of AA, grounded in tolerance and inclusivity, is compatible to believers and non-believers alike, who by sharing their recovery stories, are enabled together to stay sober each day at a time.

One Big Tent will be available soon at AA Central Office of the San Fernando Valley at a cost of \$11.50 + tax. Support your Central Office by purchasing your books here, if possible.

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### **Annual Central Office Fundraiser: Take Your Sponsor to Breakfast**

Take Your Sponsor to Breakfast is one of two annual fundraisers to keep the doors of Central Office open. Central Office is fully staffed by telephone volunteers, five shifts a day, seven days a week, and 24 hours a day to take calls from A.A.s in need. We are always looking for volunteers to answer phones. Please volunteer today!

Take Your Sponsor to Breakfast takes place on:

**Saturday, October 27<sup>th</sup>** for a full course breakfast, from **8 a.m. – 10 a.m.**, followed by a Speaker Meeting at 10:30 a.m. Location: **Disabled American Veterans Hall, 6543 Corbin Avenue, Woodland Hills, CA 91367**. Raffle: 50/25/25 and Tickets: **\$15 per person or 2/\$25**. Get your tickets either from your **Intergroup Rep** or call Central Office at for tickets: **(818) 988-3001**. We always sell out so get your tickets early!!!

# SMOOTHLY & GRACEFULLY



My job as a retail sales merchandiser can get lonely. I visit several stores during my workday to check product displays, expiration dates, shelf presentation, pricing accuracy, compliance with UPC codes and other projects as needed. I interact with store personnel and customers. We exchange the usual superficial pleasantries. Sometimes I float in and out of these stores like a ghost and see no one I know. Sometimes I feel invisible and unnoticed. But I get the job done, no matter the circumstances.

I have come to realize that the quality of my visits to these stores, as everything else in my life, is not determined by the circumstances or the people awaiting me, but by what I decide to bring with me.

One day, I had mostly completed my routine tasks with little human interaction (one of those "ghost" days), and I suppose I was feeling a little hungry and thirsty for some kind of shared experience. I've learned in sobriety that I have to give away what I want. So I asked my Higher Power to let me see an opportunity.

Shortly, I noticed a produce clerk pushing in front of him a large, fully loaded stainless steel baker's rack while simultaneously pulling another large, fully loaded rack behind him. He was almost dwarfed between the two racks. Yet he was effortlessly, smoothly and gracefully winding his way through the crowded produce section toward the back of the store.

As he glided toward me, I couldn't help but comment, "That is amazing how you are pushing and pulling both of those racks at the same time and making it look so easy."

He looked almost shocked as he beamed at me with the biggest smile and shining eyes and said, "Well, I have to get the job done."

So I responded, "Yes, but you're not only getting it done, you're doing it with style and grace. That takes a lot of practice." He gave his head a little nod and said, "It sure does."

The man proceeded toward the back room with his racks. I just kept watching, sort of enchanted, and called out, "Practice, practice, practice."

He gently pushed the double doors open with the first laden rack. As he was pulling the second rack through, just as the doors were closing, I heard him call out the unmistakable and bold confirmation "... in all our affairs!" Now it was my turn to smile with shining eyes.

When I reach out, at work or anywhere, giving what I want or need, the most amazing things happen. And these things always exceed whatever I would have even imagined I wanted.

Learning to share my experiences with others is one of the biggest gifts I get from practicing the Steps of AA. Letting others know that they matter; that what they do matters.

And giving it away is what makes it matter. -- Caryl B., San Diego, California. Copyright © 2018 by Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. All rights reserved.

# AA NEWS: AA NEWS

## World Service Meeting, October 7-11



Delegates representing AA from around the world will gather for the Fellowship's 25th World Service Meeting (WSM) at the Southern Sun Elangeni & Maharani Hotel in Durban, South Africa, October 7-11, 2018.

Hosted by the General Service Board of AA of the U.S. and Canada, the event will bring together over 60 delegates from more than 40 different countries or linguistic zones around the world. Our two trustees-at-large, Scott H. and Newton P., serve as WSM delegates representing the U.S. and Canada. The International assignment at the General Service Office in New York City is coordinating the event.

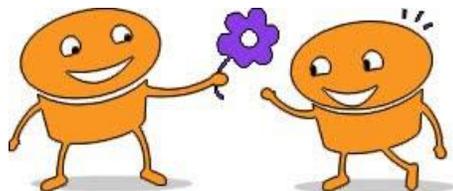
Since its inauguration in 1969, the WSM has provided a continuing international forum for shared experience and ideas on carrying the AA message of recovery from alcoholism. The event alternates biennially between New York and other locations around the globe, and has convened in such diverse cities as Cartagena, Colombia; Auckland, New Zealand; Oviedo, Spain; Malahide, Ireland; Mexico City, Mexico; and Warsaw, Poland.

Described as a living and growing exchange of experience responding to the needs of AA worldwide, the theme of the 2018 WSM will be "Our Twelve Traditions: AA's Future in the Modern World." Over the past four decades, the WSM has succeeded in bringing together far-flung AA service centers and reflects a final vision of AA's cofounder Bill W., who believed there could be "one world of AA" to assure that help would always be available for sick alcoholics wherever they might be or whatever language they might speak. It was Bill W.'s belief that AA membership on other continents would someday exceed that of the U.S. and Canada, and the growth of the WSM is proof that the Fellowship will continue to thrive and grow wherever the need for recovery exists.

Today, AA has a presence in over 180 countries, with an estimated total of 118,300 groups and more than 2 million members worldwide. The book ***Alcoholics Anonymous*** has been translated into 71 languages. Visit the AA Around the World page on [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org) to read the Final Report of the 24th World Service Meeting that took place in October 2016.

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### Do you have a story to share about your sobriety?



The Recovery Times is always looking for new authors who want to share their stories of sobriety with others within our AA community. The San Fernando Valley Central Office of Alcoholics Anonymous would like to read your story. You should email your story to editor, Pat K. at: [Xnowisthetime@aol.com](mailto:Xnowisthetime@aol.com).

Due to space limitations and to also give as many people as possible a chance to be heard, we limit our publication to one submission per person. Submissions should be no longer than 650 words.

**Central Office of SFV  
16132 Sherman Way  
Van Nuys, CA 91406**

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED