

# RECOVERY TIMES

Vol. 44, No. 3, March 2020



The Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office Newsletter

## Singleness of Purpose

Every now and then the subject of "singleness of purpose" shows up at an A.A. meeting – usually when someone shares about an "outside event (a non-AA event). So here then is an explanation about the meaning of "Singleness of Purpose" and how it protects the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. The following is from Box 459, published bimonthly by the General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous, February/March 2002, and written by George E. Valiant, M. D., Class A (nonalcoholic) trustee A.A. General Service Board.

"Singleness of Purpose" is essential to the effective treatment of alcoholism. The reason for such exaggerated focus is to overcome denial. The denial associated with alcoholism is cunning, baffling, and powerful, affecting the patient, helper, and the community. Unless alcoholism is kept relentlessly in the foreground, other issues will usurp everybody's attention. Mental health workers, however, have great difficulty with **A.A.'s Fifth Tradition: "Each group has but one primary purpose-to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers."**

Since mental health workers often admire the success and geographic availability of Alcoholics Anonymous, they understandably wish to broaden its membership to include other substance abusers. They also note that pure alcohol abuse is becoming less frequent, and polydrug abuse more common.

In addition, mental health workers sometimes view singleness of purpose as outmoded and exclusionary. They worry that the Tradition is a holdover from the early days of A.A. and that the young, the poor and the minority with a criminal record will be barred. Besides, when there is no professional drug treatment center or Narcotics Anonymous (NA) group easily available, mental health workers find it hard to understand why A.A., with its tradition of Twelfth Step work, won't step in and fill the breach.

As both a mental health worker and a researcher, it seems to me that there are two arguments that trump these concerns. First, the **Third Tradition of A.A., "The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking,"** renders A.A. non-exclusionary. Each year A.A. welcomes many thousands of minorities, many thousands of poor, many thousands of alcoholics with coexistent drug problems and tens of thousands of convicts into its membership. Nobody with a desire to stop drinking is excluded.

The second argument, that "Singleness of Purpose" is necessary to overcome denial, is even more compelling. Given a choice, nobody wants to talk about alcoholism. In contrast, drug addiction commands newspaper headlines, research funding and the attention of clinical audiences. After two years of work at the Lexington, Kentucky Federal Narcotics Treatment Center, I, a mere assistant professor, was invited around the world to lecture on heroin addiction. In the late 1990s, as a full professor and after 25 years of research on alcoholism and its enormous morbidity, I was finally asked to give a medical grand rounds on alcohol in my home city. My assigned topic, "Why alcohol is good for your health." In short, the greatest single obstacle to the proper treatment of alcoholism is denial.

I first began my psychiatric career at a deeply dedicated community health center. The community had voted alcohol abuse as their biggest problem. After its first ten years of operation the center was still confirming itself to addressing the community's most pressing second, third, and fourth problems. No resources at all were devoted to alcohol treatment.

I moved to another community mental health center that had listened to its citizens and had opened an alcohol treatment center. In being asked to fill the position of co-director of the clinic I was the last staff psychiatrist

– Continued, page 5 –

**A.A. Central Office** of the San Fernando Valley is a legitimate non-profit. Personal donations cannot exceed \$5,000 per year and must be from members of AA, not from outsiders.

**AA 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. After hours we still answer phones for those in need, so don't be afraid to refer people to our phone lines.



**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 to volunteer. (818) 988-3001, or ask your group to volunteer for a shift every month.

**Central Office is located at 16132 Sherman Way, Van Nuys** on the SW corner of Woodley & Sherman Way, west of the Mobil Station. Our large warehouse has chips, medallions and all the A.A. approved literature and pamphlets your group needs.



**Please buy your meeting supplies from AA Central Office of the Valley.** By 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).

**Visit our website: [www.sfvaa.org](http://www.sfvaa.org)** for meeting information and copies of Recovery Times.

**Update us with your meeting information via email: [sfvco@la.twcbc.com](mailto:sfvco@la.twcbc.com),** or stop by and pick up your medallions and literature at our Valley office: SFVCO, 16132 Sherman Way, Van Nuys, CA 91406.

---

**SAN FERNANDO VALLEY CENTRAL OFFICE**  
**Minutes of Intergroup Representatives Meeting**

**February 10, 2020**

**OPENING: Lyn W.**

- Lyn opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. with The Serenity Prayer.
- Scott M. read "The Twelve Traditions."
- Tina K. (for Sandy R.) accepted a motion for approval of the January 2020 Intergroup Minutes.

**TREASURER'S REPORT: Tina K.**

- MTD (and YTD) are \$8,420 as compared with last year's YTD which was \$7,906.
- Financial Statements are available.

**CENTRAL OFFICE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S REPORT: Bob F.**

Everything is running smoothly. Phone volunteer list is great, but we can always use more!

Recovery Times (Pat K.): We have subscriptions for the RT for only \$15.00. Makes a great gift for a sponsor or sponsee. Send your stories of recovery to Pat K. at email: [xnowisthetime@aol.com](mailto:xnowisthetime@aol.com).

**MEETING RELATED BUSINESS: Rick A.**

There were 5 new Intergroup Representatives this month: Bernardo A., "Burbank Group," Bill H., Tarzana Big Book; April F., "Winners Attitude Adjustment" daily at 7am; David C., "Barefoot Speaker," Fridays at 8pm in Burbank; and,

## FROM THE FOUNDERS

"Faith is never a necessity for AA membership ... sobriety can be achieved with an easily acceptable minimum of it ... our concepts of a higher power and God as we understand him afford everyone a nearly unlimited choice of spiritual belief and action."

### AA Co-Founder, Bill W.

"I'm the proud possessor of everything money can't buy." **Anonymous**

"I'm more comfortable and safe building my life around A.A. than building AA around my life." **Anon**

### Fully Relying on God (FROG)

'Frogs are a good token for people in recovery. Like us, they start out as one thing and evolve into another, They can't live in polluted conditions. And they hop forward, never backward."  
**Robert S., Northridge, CA**

"There have been many times when I've felt inadequate to meet life's demands, but AA and the Twelve Steps have always helped me find a way."  
**La Mesa, Calif**

"Believing that I was powerless ultimately reduced the size of my world -- down to me in the moment."  
**Gainesville, FL**

Copyright © 2018 by  
Alcoholics Anonymous World  
Services, Inc.

Robyn G., "Serenity Seekers," Tuesdays at 7pm in Burbank.

## SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES:

- General Service District 11: Ernie: There was a good turnout for the Twelve Traditions Workshop
- San Fernando Valley Hospital & Institutions Committee: Marianna:
  - 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Bike-N-For-Books Literature Fundraiser, Sat. June 13, 2020 at Woodley Park. Registration flyers are available.
  - H&I meets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month at Saint Innocent Church in Tarzana. New member orientation at 7pm, business meeting starts at 8pm. Volunteers for panels are always needed! For more information, visit [www.sfvhi.org](http://www.sfvhi.org).
- San Fernando Valley 45<sup>th</sup> Annual AA Convention: Bernard B.: Convention was a success!

## 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** - New Meeting Directories should be available by the end of the month.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM AA GROUPS & SEVENTH TRADITION:

- Windsor Group: 220 Brand Blvd., Glendale: BINGO on Sat., March 21 from 4-7pm, followed by our 8pm Saturday Evening Meeting. Join us for food, fun, fellowship and fundraising!
- 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Foothill Roundup: Save the Date: August 2, 2020! For more information, visit [www.FoothillRoundup.org](http://www.FoothillRoundup.org).

## ACKNOWLEDGE BIRTHDAYS FOR THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY: 36 YEARS OF SOBRIETY: TOM O. – 5 YEARS & JIM R. – 31 YEARS

**VACANCIES ON BOARD:** An election was held to fill the vacancy on the Board. Carla R. is our new Intergroup Board Member. Congratulations, Carla!

## CLOSING:

- A motion to adjourn was recognized and seconded.
- Meeting adjourned at 7:25 pm with *The Lord's Prayer*.

Respectfully Submitted by Tina K. for Sandy R., Recording Secretary

**Keep Coming Back!**

## AA SERVICE COMMITTEES CALENDAR: GS 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.



Continued, from Page One: **Singleness of Purpose**

hired by the mental health center. Significantly, I had had no experience with alcoholism, but no one else wanted the job.

Put differently, the experimentally documented success of A.A. in the treatment of alcoholism is in part because A.A. groups are the only place in the world where the focus is on alcoholism and nothing but alcoholism. There is simply no other way to overcome the denial.

Reprinted to Box 459 from About A.A., Fall/Winter 2002.



### **Upcoming Conventions:**

- **20/20 Vision, San Diego Spring Roundup 2020**, April 9-12, 2020, [www.SanDiegoSpringRoundup.com](http://www.SanDiegoSpringRoundup.com)
- **Tri-State Convention**, May 14 – 17, 2020 Laughlin, NV (Don Laughlin's Riverside Casino), <https://www.tristate-roundup.com>
- **Sunshine of the Spirit High Desert Convention**, June 5 – 7, 2020, Holiday Inn, Victorville, CA, [sunshineofthespirit-highdesertconvention.com](http://sunshineofthespirit-highdesertconvention.com)
- **AA Desert Pow Wow**, June 11, 14, 2020, Indian Wells, CA, <http://desertpowwow.com/>
- **85<sup>th</sup> AA Founders Day**, June 12-14, 2020 Akron, OH, <https://foundersday.org/>
  - **International A.A. Convention**, July 2 – 5, 2020 Detroit, MI, [https://www.aa.org/pages/en\\_US/international-convention-2020](https://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/international-convention-2020)
- **28<sup>th</sup> Foothill Roundup**, July 31- August 2, 2020, La Canada-Flintridge, CA, [www.foothillroundup.org](http://www.foothillroundup.org)

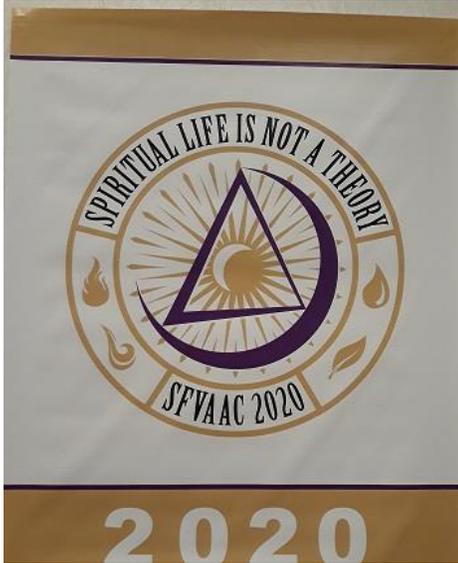
### **NINE JOKES FROM AKRON INTERGROUP:**

1. Directions to A.A.: Go straight to hell and make a U-turn.
2. AA is the only place where you can walk into a room full of strangers and reminisce.
3. AA Group will be judged by the worst behavior of its members.
4. In AA there are no losers... just winners.
5. An alcoholic is someone who wants to be held while isolating, someone who refuses to give up a life of failure without a fight, someone who finds something that works and then stops doing it. Someone who can be in the gutter and still look down on people, someone who keeps doing the same thing over and over, expecting different results.
6. Three of the most dangerous words for an alcoholic: "I've been thinking,"
7. Ten out of ten people die, so don't take life too seriously.
8. Three things can happen to an alcoholic who doesn't stop drinking: they get screwed up, locked up, or covered up.
9. Want to hear God laugh? Tell Him your plan.



**Did you know that you can hear an audio version of the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous? Just go to [aa.org](http://aa.org) and explore the selection of audios and videos there! Listen in your car, listen while you work out, listen before you go to sleep...**

## OUR ANNUAL SAN FERNANDO VALLEY AA CONVENTION:



The 45<sup>th</sup> Annual Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Convention was held January 31 – February 2, 2020 at the Warner Center Marriott in Woodland Hills, CA. **Thank you to all the volunteers who make this happen every year!**

Attendance was 1,961, which included a diverse group of A.A.'s, Al-Anons and Ala-Teens. This year's event included a meditation workshop and a birthday/anniversary party. The Welcome Ceremony, which was produced by Doug R., was called "**The Akron Chronicles**" and focused on bringing to life the history of Alcoholics Anonymous in an entertaining production of song, dance and dialogue.

As always, the AA Archives put on a tremendous display of antiquities from AA's history. In addition, there was a continuous showing of the highly-acclaimed documentary "Bill W." with footage taken by him, his friends, and others of the early years of the founding of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Since alcoholics come in all sizes and ages, there was an A.A. Young People's Meeting and social events for young AA's, as well as an A.A. Longtimers' Meeting. This year, the speakers (each with over 30 years of sobriety) came from the Pacoima Group to share their stories. Represented on the podium were: Bobby S. (32 years) who chaired the meeting and co-chair Art V. (30 years). Speakers included: Fran S. (42 years), Kathleen M. (45 years), Larry L (47 years), Louie L. (48 years) and Jim C. (51 years). Frank D. (37 years) read the Statement of Anonymity and Sande B. (36) read A Vision for You.

On Friday evening, D. J. Butterfinger spun the tunes for the sobriety dance while Saturday night's entertainment (after the banquet) featured sober comics Laura H. and Mark B. who are accomplished in their careers and performances. The comedians were wonderful – as we all could use a laugh – but what followed was a high voltage show of the All Pro Sober Band featuring Wag, JJ B., Chris J. and David H. with a choir of local AA's who serenaded us. The "Hole in the Sky Singers" featured solo performances by several well – known actors including: Jack M., Danny N., Kay H., Lea T., Devon M., Jeff K., and Katey S. And what a show it was!

For those who had the energy to stay up longer, there was a dance following the Saturday Night Show with DJ L.A. Sunday, the convention came to a close with the A.A. Spiritual Meeting.

If you've never attended the SFVAA Convention, register for it next year so you can enjoy all of the festivities. There's also a Spanish Archives, an Al-Anon Archive, and marathon meetings all day and all night, each of the days of the convention. By registering for the convention, you are helping to support the next year's convention, an honored tradition, here in the San Fernando Valley. --- Editor

**Got a story to share?**  
Stories on your sobriety.  
[xnowisthetime@aol.com](mailto:xnowisthetime@aol.com).  
Deadline is always the



Recovery Times is always looking for contributions of  
**Please send to Editor: Pat K:**  
Stories of recovery should be no more than 600 words.  
15<sup>th</sup> of the month for the next month's issue.



## Testing Your Alcohol IQ Think you know all about alcohol, drinking and alcoholism?

Bet you get at least five wrong in this most revealing quiz from "Operation Threshold" created in the '70s by the U.S. Jaycees alcoholic education program. No tricks, just plain facts. Try it. Surprise your friends and associates as well. Answers at the end.

1. Alcohol is a drug. True False
2. Alcohol is a food. True False
3. In the body, alcohol is digested just as a food. True False
4. In the body, alcohol is burned up just as a food is. True False
5. Because it is a stimulant, alcohol tends to pep a person up. True False
6. Everyone's body reacts the same way to the same amount of alcohol. True False
7. Alcoholic beverages can be fattening. True False
8. Alcohol in any quantity will damage organs in the human body. True False
9. A person can die of alcohol poisoning. True False
10. All alcoholic beverages are equally strong. True False
11. Liquor taken straight will affect you faster than liquor mixed with water or soda in a highball. True False
12. You'll get drunker on a vodka, gin or rum than on the same amount of whiskey. True False
13. Switching drinks will make you drunker than staying with one kind of alcoholic beverage. True False
14. You can sober up quicker by drinking black coffee and dousing your head with cold water. True False
15. It's risky to drive a car right after having a drink. True False
16. Drunkenness and alcoholism are the same thing. True False
17. Anyone who drinks at all is likely to become an alcoholic. True False
18. Alcoholics can be helped. True False
19. There are certain symptoms to warn people that their drinking may be leading to alcoholism. True False
20. Alcohol is the sole cause of alcoholism. True False

**Answers:** 1. True 2. True 3. False 4. True 5. False 6. False 7. True  
8. False 9. True 10. False 11. True 12. False 13. False 14. False 15. True  
16. False 17. False 18. True 19. True 20. False

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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED