

RECOVERY TIMES

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The Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office Newsletter

Using the Traditions in Our Divided Political Climate



When confronted with opinions about politics, face masks, and other issues in the news, how do we keep these issues from tearing apart our fellowship? Many A.A.s are now asking that question.

Tradition Ten in the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions states: "Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy."

Many A.A.s are now finding it difficult to navigate the increasingly controversial issues that threaten to tear us apart. Are we free to express our personal opinions and if we do, will it threaten our relationships with those in our fellowship who disagree with our views?

To determine how to proceed, a very wise sponsor directly a sponsee to open the Twelve x Twelve and read Tradition Ten, starting on page 176:

"Never since it began has Alcoholics Anonymous been divided by a major controversial issue. Nor has our Fellowship ever publicly taken sides on any question in an embattled world. This, however, has been no earned virtue. It could almost be said that we were born with it, for as one oldtimer recently declared, 'Practically never have I heard a heated religious, political or reform argument among A.A. members. So long as we don't argue these matters privately, it's a cinch we never shall publicly.'

"As by some deep instinct, we A.A.'s have known from the very beginning that we must never, no matter what the provocation, publicly take sides in any fight, even a worthy one."

Back when this book was written in April 1953, there were serious political issues going on, perhaps like we are experiencing today. The writers stated, "We live in the imminent possibility of a fresh holocaust to determine how men shall be governed, and how the products of nature and the toil shall be divided among them. That is the spiritual climate in which A.A. was born and by God's grace, has nevertheless flourished."

Tradition Ten states then explains how individual opinions should be handled, on page 177:

"Nor does it mean that the members of Alcoholics Anonymous, now restored as citizens of the world, are going to back away from their individual responsibilities to act as they see the right upon issues of our time. But when it comes to A.A. as a whole, that's quite a different matter. In this respect, we do not enter into public controversy because we know that our Society will perish if it does. We conceive the survival and spread of Alcoholics Anonymous to be something of far greater importance than the weight we could collectively throw back of any other cause. Since recovery from alcoholism is life itself to us, it is imperative that we preserve in full strength our means of survival."

Tradition Ten then points out that we may still squabble at business meetings, among other things:

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San Fernando Valley Central Office
Minutes of Intergroup Representatives Meeting

This month's Intergroup Meeting was conducted on Zoom due to the Coronavirus pandemic. Thank you Carla R. for hosting!

OPENING: Lyn W.

- Lyn opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. with The Serenity Prayer.
- Rick A. read "The Twelve Traditions."
- There were no Minutes from June, as the Intergroup Meeting had been cancelled.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Tina K.

- MTD is \$4,888 and YTD is (\$2,582), as compared to last year's YTD, which was \$ 2,831.
- Bob F.: Literature sales continue to drop - \$11,500 less than last year at this time. Group contributions are down, but individual contributions are up from last year.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S REPORT: Bob F.

- Central Office:
 - Everything is running smoothly, under the circumstances.
 - Central Office has a comprehensive list of Zoom meetings. Call all for information.
 - Financials and Recovery Times are available at Central Office. Please call ahead. We will even bring them out to your car. Masks are required at Central Office.
- Pat K., *Recovery Times*:
 - The Recovery Times is available on the Central Office website: sfvaa.org.
 - Snail-mail subscriptions to the Recovery Times are available. See sfvaa.org subscription form.
 - Reminder: Stories of recovery are welcome; approximately 500-600 words. Deadline for submissions is 15th of the month; send to Pat K. at xnowisthetime@aol.com.

MEETING RELATED BUSINESS: Rick A.

There were 2 new Intergroup Representatives this month: Yolanda, "Serene Divas," Daily at 6pm on Zoom; Erika S., "Hatteras Women's Meeting", Fridays at 10:30am.

SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES:

- General Service District 11: Ernie: Still conducting Area Assemblies and DCMs on Zoom. The last topic was Back to In Person Meetings. Also discussed whether Zoom could be used for Hospitals and Institutions.
- General Service District 1: Norm for Cece: Area 93 will be hosting the 2021 PRAASA in March. Whether it will take place in person is still up in the air.
- San Fernando Valley Hospital & Institutions Committee: Marianna: H&I meets on the 3rd Monday of the month. New member orientation at 7pm, business meeting starts at 8pm. Volunteers for panels are always needed! Meeting again this month by Zoom. For more information visit www.sfvhi.org.
- San Fernando Valley 46th Annual AA Convention: Bernard B.: The 46th Annual SFVAA Convention has been postponed until 2022. For 2021, we are discussing having something virtual. More to come!
- Santa Clarita Valley 16th Annual AA Convention: Bernard B.: The 2020 Convention has been cancelled. Visit scvaaconvention.org for more information.

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. Continue to send meeting changes IN WRITING to Central Office.

NEW BUSINESS - NONE.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM AA GROUPS & SEVENTH TRADITION:

Jim C, The Pacoima Group: 65th Anniversary Alcañon/Zoom-athon will take place virtually on Friday, Aug. 14 – Saturday, Aug. 15. Meeting ID: 840 1396 2213. Password: gratitude. Flyers available at Central Office.

REMINDERS: Lyn W.: Reminder that: 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 MONTHS OF APRIL - JULY: 170 YEARS OF SOBRIETY!

- Ernie C., 5 years on 3/29;
- Faith, 9 years on 3/6;
- Sandy R., 10 years on 6/2/;
- Karen M., 13 years on 4/16;
- Robyn G., 15 years on 7/5;
- Bernard B.; 26 years on 4/29;
- Tina K., 29 years on 5/13;
- Diana, 37 years on 4/29/83; and
- Bob F., 39 years on 4/30.

VACANCIES ON BOARD – NONE.

CLOSING: A motion to adjourn was recognized and seconded. Meeting adjourned at 7:45 pm with *The Lord's Prayer*.

Prepared and submitted by: *Sandy R., Recording Secretary*

To find an online meeting in the San Fernando Valley, call Central Office at: **(818) 988-3001** or go to: **sfvaa.org**. You can also look up meeting schedules on Group websites or Facebook pages, or go to this online directory: www.LAAAonlinemeetings.org and **<http://aa-intergroup.org>**.

The 7th Tradition States That We Are Self Supporting

Consider setting up a mailbox or Venmo (or other app) system to collect the 7th Tradition. Your group will still need to purchase supplies and you may still be obligated to pay rent. If you are able to make a contribution to the different entities that comprise Alcoholics Anonymous, please do so.

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. **SFV 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.

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.



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).



Update us with your meeting information via email:

sfvco@la.twcbc.com, or stop by and pick up your medallions and literature at SFVCO, 16132 Sherman Way, Van Nuys, CA 91406.

Visit our website: www.sfvaa.org for meeting information and copies of Recovery Times.

AA SERVICE COMMITTEES CALENDAR: GS Area 93

FROM THE FOUNDERS

"If we examine every disturbance we have, great or small, we will find at the root of it some unhealthy dependency and its consequent unhealthy demand. Let us, with God's help, continually surrender these hobbling liabilities."

AA Co-Founder, Bill W.,
January 1958

"Because each of us, at any moment, is the sum total of every choice he or she has ever made, it is not sheer fantasy to expect each day to be the very best day we have yet lived."

"Savoring Our Sobriety,"
North Hollywood, CA

"The experience of reality does not have to be postponed."

"AA's Steps Lead to Spiritual Awakening,"
Hankins, NY

"I'm usually about eighty percent of the problem – well, maybe sixty percent, but the major part, you can bet on that. If I can leave out the largest percent (me), there is hardly any problem at all!"

"Growth," **Houston, TX**

"AA may or may not get me to heaven, but it surely got me out of hell."

Nairobi, Kenya

"Had I not been blessed with wise and loving advisers, I might have cracked up long ago."

AA Co-Founder, Bill W.,
August 1961, "This Matter of Honesty", Best of Bill

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All or some of the following meetings are temporarily on hold during the pandemic. Please consult the leadership of your district for further information.

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 orientation then 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.

OTHER AA COMMITTEES:

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. Meets 3rd 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: 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). On Hold for now.

Celebrating an A.A. Anniversary ☆~♥☆☆~♥☆☆~♥☆☆~♥
(^•^) [H] [A] [P] [P] [Y] [B] [I] [R] [T] [H] [D] [A] [Y]!! ☆~♥ Consider making a \$1.00 donation to Central Office for each year of your sobriety during your birthday month. Lani S. – 25 Years, Karen M. – 30 Years & Linda S. – 35 Years.

Bequests/Contributions: The maximum dollar amount of individual bequests by A.A.s is reviewed every two years at the General Service Conference. In 2019, at the 69th General Service Conference, the maximum amount of an individual bequest by members to A.A. was raised from \$5,000 to \$10,000. This is a one-time contribution and is not in perpetuity.



We remember (A. A. Deaths): None that we know of.

RESENT SOMEBODY, FROM HAZELTON'S 12 STEP PRAYER BOOK



The moment you start to resent a person, you become their slave. They control your dreams, absorb your digestion, rob you of your peace of mind and good will, and take away the pleasure of your work.

They ruin your spirituality and nullify your prayers. You cannot take a vacation without them going along! They destroy your freedom of mind and hound you wherever you go. There is no way to escape the person you resent. They are with you when you are awake. They invade your privacy when you sleep. They are close beside you when you eat, when you drive your car, and when you are on the job. You can never have efficiency or happiness. They influence even the tone of your voice. They require you to take medicine for indigestion, headaches and loss of energy. They even steal your last moment of consciousness before you go to sleep. So if you want to be a slave, harbor a resentment.

TO OPEN OR NOT TO OPEN: THAT IS THE QUESTION

General Service Area 5, which covers Los Angeles through Glendale and Pasadena and part of the Foothill District held a Town Hall meeting on Thursday, July 30, 2020 from 7 p.m. – 9 p.m. The purpose was to decide what factors needed to be considered when it comes to opening A.A. meeting in Greater Los Angeles. The meeting was held virtually on Zoom and the discussion centered around the laws related to group gatherings, the risk factors of Covid-19, how to deal with them, and the autonomy of groups in making this decision. The key takeaways were, if meetings are going to open, live, they should emphasize:

- **Masking – Everyone Wears a Mask**
- **Practice Social Distancing, and**
- **Hold Meetings in the Outdoors if Possible**

Larry B. of SFV AA Central Office attended this meeting identifying the highlights as: we have to consider the laws related to our area, we have to consider the risks of the disease, and we have to consider that each group has the ability to make its own decision as to whether or not to reopen. Two nurses, both A.A. members, talked about Covid-19, pointing out that when surgeons are operating, they cough or sneeze into their mask so they don't infect the patient. She cautioned against turning your head sideways as bacteria can escape through the side of the mask and that would be dangerous to others. This is good to remember when you go out wearing your mask. The meeting ended with the Responsibility Statement.

Using the Traditions in Our Divided Political Climate, continued



“Maybe this sounds as though the alcoholics in A.A. had suddenly gone peaceable and become on great, big happy family. Of course this isn’t so at all. Human beings that we are, we squabble. Before we leveled off a bit, A.A. looked more like one prodigious squabble than anything else, at least on the surface. A corporate director who had just voted a company expenditure of a hundred thousand dollars would appear at an AA business

meeting and blow his top over an outlay of twenty-five dollars’ worth of postage stamps. ... “our puny rows never did A.A. a particle of harm. They were just part and parcel of learning to work and live together.”

Then there’s the example of what NOT to do, on page 178: “The Washingtonian Society, a movement which started in Baltimore a century ago, almost discovered the answer to alcoholism. At first, the society was composed entirely of alcoholics trying to help one another. The early members foresaw that they should dedicate themselves to this sole aim. In many respects, the Washingtonians were akin to A.A. of today. Their membership passed the hundred thousand mark. Had they been left to themselves, and had they stuck to their one goal, they might have found the rest of the answer. But this didn’t happen. Instead, the Washingtonians permitted politicians and reformers, both alcoholic and nonalcoholic, to use the society for their own purposes. Abolition of slavery, for example, was a stormy political issue then. Soon, Washingtonian speakers violently and publicly took sides on this question. Maybe the society could have survived the abolition controversy but it didn’t have a chance from the moment it determined to reform America’s drinking habits. When the Washingtonians became temperance crusaders, within a very few years they had completely lost their effectiveness in helping alcoholics.

“The lesson to be learned from the Washingtonians was not overlooked by Alcoholics Anonymous. As we surveyed the wreck of that movement, early A.A. members resolved to keep our Society out of public controversy. Thus was laid the cornerstone for Tradition Ten: ‘Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues, hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy’.”

The other Tradition that relates to preserving our fellowship is Tradition One: **“Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.”** As it states on page 129 in the Twelve x Twelve: “The unity of Alcoholics Anonymous is the most cherished quality our Society has. Our lives, the lives of all to come, depend squarely upon it. We stay whole or A.A. dies.



“Without unity, the heart of A.A. would cease to beat; our world arteries would no longer carry the life-giving grace of God. His gift to us would be spent aimlessly. Back again in their caves, alcoholics would reproach us and say, “What a great thing A.A. might have been!”

“Does this mean,” some will anxiously ask, “that in A.A. the individual doesn’t count for much? Is he to be dominated by his group and swallowed up in it?” We may certainly answer this question with a loud, “No!” We believe there isn’t a fellowship on Earth which lavishes more devoted care upon its individual members; surely there is none which more jealously guards the individual’s right to think, talk, and act as he wishes. No A.A. can compel another to do anything: nobody can be punished or expelled. Our Twelve Steps to recovery are suggestions; the Twelve Traditions which guarantee A.A.’s unity contain not a single “Don’t.” They repeatedly say, “We ought...” but never, “You must!”

What holds us together, the A.A. sponsor points out, is that we must place our common welfare first. On page 130 it says, “The A.A. member has to conform to the principles of recovery. His life actually depends upon obedience to spiritual principles. If he deviates too far, the penalty is sure and swift; he sickens and dies.”

And this: “No personal sacrifice is too great for the preservation of the fellowship. He learns that the clamors of desires and ambitions within him must be silenced whatever these could damage the group. It becomes plain that the group must survive or the individual will not.

Finally, “In the world about us, we saw personalities destroying whole peoples. The struggle for wealth, power, and prestige was tearing humanity apart as never before. If strong people were stalemated in the search for peace and harmony, what was to become of our erratic band of alcoholics? As we had once struggled and prayed for individual recovery, just so earnestly did we commence to quest for the principles through which A.A. itself might survive. On anvils of experience, the structure of our Society was hammered out.

“By faith and by works we have been able to build upon the lessons of an incredible experience. They live today in the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous, which – God willing – shall sustain us in unity for so long as He may need us.”

Let us all remember these profound words, written by our A.A. predecessors, so that we can keep our fellowship strong amid whatever challenges we have to face in the world. Editor Pat K.

Central Office of SFV

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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED