

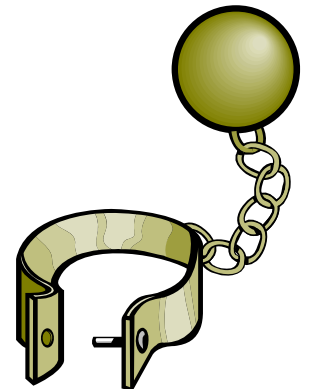
RECOVERY TIMES

Vol. 37, No. 1, January 2013

The Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office Newsletter

CARRYING THE MESSAGE TO JAILS AND INSTITUTIONS

Jan M. got involved a couple of years ago taking A.A. meetings to women in jails. A friend of hers, Janine R., was already carrying the message to women in prison and from her example, she decided to get involved. The process, however, was a little involved, Jan remembers.



“First you have to attend the H & I orientation and then you have to submit an application to the institution you want to visit and wait for it to be approved. If you’re in L.A. County, then you go through an orientation where you learn the “do’s and don’ts” of behavior such as, “Don’t hold hands with the prisoners at the end of the meeting, don’t bring in anything from the outside, and if you know someone’s kid is in there, then you should excuse yourself from that panel so it isn’t construed as preferential treatment. You aren’t allowed to wear gang colors or the same colors as the guards clothing. In some prisons, that means blue or green pants. Basically, we are guests of the institution and have to respect their rules.”

On Jan’s first panel a lockdown took place while she was sharing. Jan recalls that it was kind of frightening and kind of exciting.

“I was there with the panel leader and there were about 90 male prisoners in the room. Halfway through our panel, the facility went into lockdown locking us in. That’s what became scary because you don’t know how they are going to behave – there were only a few guards. In the orientation, you learn that [the authorities] are not going to negotiate for your release. I thought I was ‘toast’ on my first panel out! I later learned that the A.A. guys would have protected us against the other prisoners if anything had happened.”

Since she was in the middle of her share when the lockdown was announced, she just kept on talking. Then the other person shared like nothing was happening. When they were done, they had to wait for the yards to clear before they could leave the facility. When she got to the other side of the locked gates, Jan realized how thankful she was to be on the other side.

Despite that experience, Jan decided to go to a woman’s jail facility after that, noting that the hand of A.A. always needs to be there to carry the message of strength and hope. The women’s jail was the Central Regional Detention Facility (CRDF) in Lynwood.



“That panel was a different experience; it didn’t feel as threatening. After that, I got my own panel on Monday nights because it was gratifying -- and it still is. I make an effort to keep it interesting because so many of the inmates have already heard my story. Sometimes I want to feel sorry for myself because I always go alone but one I have to remember that, while somebody might get something out of my share, it’s about me staying sober first.” **(Continued on page 4)**

CALENDAR OF A.A. EVENTS

38th Annual San Fernando Valley A.A. Convention (with Al-Anon & Alateen
February 1 – 3, 2013, Warner Center Marriott, Woodland Hills, CA



SERVICE COMMITTEES SCHEDULE:

- **SFV Central Office Board Mtg: Wed. February 6, 2013,** 6:30 p.m., Valley Central Office
- **SFV Intergroup: Mon., February 11, 2013,** New IGRs: 6:30 p.m./Bus. mtg: 7 p.m., St. Innocent Church., 5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana
- **Gen Service, District 1: (1st Wed.) February 6, 2013,** 6:30 p.m. Business Meeting, 7552 Remmet, Canoga Park
- **Gen. Service, District 2: (1st Tues.) February 5, 2013,** 6:30 p.m. Business Meeting, 4011 Dunsmore, La Crescenta
- **Gen. Service District 7: (2nd Sat.) February 9, 2013,** 9 a.m. Business Meeting, Women's Club:33201 Agua Dulce Canyon Road, Agua Dulce, CA
- **Gen Service, District 11: (1st Mon.) February 4, 2013,** 6 p.m. New GSR 6:30 p.m. /Bus. Mtg., 315 W. Vine Street, Glendale,
- **Gen Service, District 16: (1st Mon.) February 4, 2013,** 6:15 p.m. meeting, 15950 Chatsworth, Granada Hills.
- **Gen. Svc., District 17 : (1st Mon.) February 4, 2013,** 6 p.m. New GSRs/6:30 p.m. Bus. Mtg, 5000 Colfax, Noho.
- **SFV H & I: (3rd Monday) January 21, 2013:** 7 p.m. Orientation/ 8 p.m. Bus. Meeting, 5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES IN THE SAN FERNANDO VALLEY:

Central Office needs telephone volunteers for all shifts (esp. midnight – 9 a.m.). If you have a year or more of continuous sobriety, you can sign up at the office or online: www.sfvaa.org/involve.html or call Central Office: 818 988-3001.

Public Information Committee: Provides information to the general public about what A.A. does & doesn't do. Need volunteers, especially young people and Spanish-speaking AAs, for health fairs and to speak at schools & businesses.

Valley Hospitals and Institutions Committee: Carry the message of A.A. into hospitals, prisons and treatment facilities to those who are unable to get out to meetings. See information above.

San Fernando Valley Convention Committee: Volunteers are welcome to participate in the planning of the 2013 SFV AA Convention to be held in Woodland Hills at the Warner Center Marriott. The Committee meets the 3rd Tuesday of every month at 7 p.m. at St. Innocent Church, 5657 Lindley

San Fernando Valley Young People in AA: Committee Meeting is held the 1st Sunday of each month at Unit A., 10641 Burbank Blvd., NoHo.

San Fernando Valley Intergroup: The SFV Central Office coordinates a monthly meeting for all Intergroup reps on the 2nd Monday of each month at St. Innocent Church, 5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana. If your meeting/group does not currently have an Intergroup Rep, please consider appointing someone to represent your meeting. Intergroup reps provide an important service to the group by sharing information on upcoming AA events in the Valley. **To serve as an Intergroup Rep, call Central Office: 818 988-3001.**

CENTRAL OFFICE: LIVE 24/7

PHONE SERVICE: Central Office of the SF Valley is open for calls any hour of the day or night. Visit us at:

www.sfvaa.org for meeting info, upcoming events, service meeting info, and links to other cool AA websites or call to speak with a sober AA member: (818) 988-3001.

HAS YOUR MEETING CHANGED? If your meeting info changes (location,

time, meeting name or type of meeting), let Central Office know. Please provide meeting updates in writing by mail or delivered in person during office hours.

HAVING A BIRTHDAY? By making a \$1.00 donation for every year of your sobriety, you can support Central Office in reaching out to alcoholics all over the county. Please send your donation in during the month of your birthday so we can acknowledge you in the correct

issue of Recovery Times. This month's sober birthday celebrants are:

DEATHS: THINGS WE CANNOT

CHANGE: If you are aware of the passing of a member of our Fellowship, please call us at (818) 988-3001 or email an obituary to: sfvaanews@sbcglobal.net

Quotes from A.A.'s Founders

"Happiness is a by-product - the extra dividend of giving without any demand for a return."

AA Co-Founder, **Bill W.**,
January 1958. "The Next Frontier: Emotional Sobriety."

"By 1937, some of us realized that AA needed a standard literature. There would have to be a book ... Well, we did quarrel violently over the preparation and distribution of that book. In fact, it took five years for the clamor to die down. Should any AAs dream that the old-timers who put the book together went about in serene meditation and white robes, then they had best forget it." AA Co-Founder, **Bill W.**, November 1951, "Services Make AA Tick" *The Language of the Heart*

"We've resolved never to allow either money or the management of our necessary affairs to obscure our spiritual aims." AA Co-Founder, **Bill W.**, November 1950, "AA Is Not Big Business,"

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Intergroup Rep Board Meeting Notes: December 10, 2012

Chairperson Cheryl A. opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. with *The Serenity Prayer*. Katie read "*The Twelve Traditions*". Dawn H., Recording Secretary, accepted a motion for approval of Minutes from November's Intergroup Meeting; the minutes were approved with minor corrections.

Treasurer Brian H. said Central Office is in the red <-\$5,313.29> YTD. Group donations are down significantly from 2011, and all groups were reminded to be timely in their contributions. Brian also reminded the IGRs to have their treasurers submit Gratitude Month donations as soon as possible to help Central Office end the year in the black.

Central Office: Everything is going well at Central Office. We have currently reached 40% of our anticipated fundraising goal from Gratitude Month. New directories are to be printed. Our volunteer staff is currently running well, but Central Office can always use new volunteers, especially with holidays coming up. Interested parties should contact Larry at Central Office.

Website: Everything is running smoothly with the www.sfvaa.org website.
Recovery Times Everything is excellent/super with the newsletter.

Co chair Andre W. welcomed five new IGRs. Lana – representing both the Women's Rap Session on Remmet in Canoga Park, and the Sober Solutions meeting on Sherman Way. Jerry – representing the Life's in Session meeting at Sherman Way and Louise. Laurie – representing the Try God meeting on Wednesdays at Colfax/Addison. Lisa – representing the Sobriety on the Rocks meeting. Samantha – representing The Gong Show meeting at Mason/Lassen. IGRs were reminded to encourage recruitment of IGRs from meetings that are not currently represented. There are currently 300+ groups in the San Fernando Valley, with only 50-60 meetings represented monthly at IGR. Orientation for new IGRs begins at 6:30 p.m. prior to monthly IGR Meeting.

Groups: Di V.: The Big Island Bash Raffle is one of the SFV Convention's main fundraisers. The Big Island Bash takes place in April on the Big Island of Hawaii. The winner of the raffle ticket gets free airfare to Hawaii and registration for the convention. Di is looking for volunteers to sell packets of tickets before the San Fernando Valley A.A. Convention in February. For more info, contact Central Office.

San Fernando Valley AA Convention: The 38th Annual SFVAA Convention's theme is "Freedom thru Recovery" taking place Feb. 1 – 3, 2013 at the Marriott in Woodland Hills. Groups are invited to request/host a marathon meeting. Golfers should register for the convention's golfing event.

IGR Rep Birthdays

Lucy – 1 year on 12/12
Jerry W – 2 years on 12/7
Norm – 4 years on 12/4
Katie – 6 years on 12/14
Donna – 8 years on 12/1
Bill – 8 years on 12/21
Daniel – 9 years on 12/3
Dennis B – 18 years on 12/12
Di V – 19 years on 12/16
Bill S – 24 years on 12/11
Cheryl A – 30 years on 12/7



Motion to Adjourn: 7:15 p.m. with the Lord's Prayer.

(Continued from page 1). One of the guys that I did panels with at Wayside always went alone and he was an



excellent example of the program. The format at the H & I jails and institution panels usually involves shares from one or more person on the panel. Panels range in size between about 15 and 70 inmates, depending on the facility. Right now, there is a shortage of people to do jail panels so the message isn't being carried to all the facilities where A.A.'s are incarcerated.

Says Jan, "We need people with clearance to take panels to the jails and institutions. Currently there are jails and institutions that would like to have A.A. panels come in but there aren't any people to do that. We're the second largest metropolitan area in the country but we don't have enough people to do A.A. panels."

Dusty B. got involved with H & I when he had four months of sobriety and has been taking panels to jails and prisons for 21 years.

"The first A.A. panel I did was with my sponsor at the Salvation Army in Van Nuys. The first locked facility was the Sylmar Juvenile Hall. My first jail panel was at Wayside medium south and my first prison panel was at Lancaster State Prison when it opened and SFV H & I did the first Monday night panel.

"When Lancaster State Prison moved the panels to Saturdays was when I had the most moving experience. We were going in through the Visitors Center where the families were waiting to visit their loved ones when I realized, that could have been my family sitting there waiting to visit me. Seeing those families waiting brought up a lot of feelings. That was my most moving experience. I am very grateful that my family didn't have to endure that."

Dusty says his first panel at Lancaster State Prison was a little nerve-racking dealing with the unknown.

"What was I walking into? The uncertainty was at its peak when the electronic gate closed behind me. Then, when I sat down with the fellahs, it was just an A.A. meeting. It was really fun and interesting meeting the guys who are incarcerated. The way we look at it is, we don't go in to talk to inmates; we go in to talk with alcoholics who have been incarcerated."

"Now I do a panel at California Correctional Institution in Tehachapi on the first Wednesday of the month. Because of the people I've met in H & I, I've been invited to the California Men's Colony in San Luis Obispo, Folsom prison and San Quentin. These guys have taught me a lot about the 9th Step. They have come to understand the devastation they have caused so many other people and take responsibility for their actions. Some of these guys know they are never getting out and yet, they are freer than some people on the outside of the prison walls."

If you would like to carry the message to the men and women in jails and institutions, you can attend the monthly meeting of H & I of the San Fernando Valley meeting on the 3rd Monday of every month. Orientation is at 7 p.m. for new members and 8 p.m. for the business meeting at St. Innocent Church, 5657 Lindley Ave. in Tarzana. For more info, go to: www.sfvhi.org. If you are in the east Valley, you can also attend Foothills H & I's meeting the 4th Wednesday of every month at 6:30 p.m. at 2700 Montrose Ave. in Montrose, CA. (in the back room). For more info, go to: www.foothillsHandl.org.

MORE H & I STORIES FROM OUR LOCAL H & I PANEL MEMBERS:

"I had been in and out of L.A. County jail since 1982 then five, different state prisons from 1986 to 2001, not knowing there was a way out," says Lance, who currently chairs H & I of the San Fernando Valley. "But for the grace of God, I met a guy on the bus going to jail one more time and he explained to me how there was a way out from returning back again and again.

"He said there was this program called A.A. and that if I was willing to give it a try, I would find a new way of life. After I did my time, I went to my first meeting on July 25, 2001 and that's where I found the message of hope and recovery. I saw the H & I can at A.A. meetings but I wasn't sure how it worked. Later, I got the commitment of passing that can around at my meeting. When I went to turn the money in, I went to the H & I meeting, and then I went on my first panel. Since I was still on probation and parole, I did local panels at Tarzana Treatment Center, at P.I.P., at Northridge Hospital and many other centers.

"When I got off probation and parole, I filled out an application to get clearance to go on a panel to L.A. County Jail, but I was denied so I waited a year and applied again then got approved!

"I have been doing L.A. Jail panels now for five years. Eight months ago, I got cleared for Tehachapi State Prison and now I go there every month. It's where I did my first prison term in 1986. It was a good feeling to bring a message of hope and recovery to the guys and let them know there is a way out through the 12 Step process. I look forward to going every month and am trying to get cleared to go to other prisons.

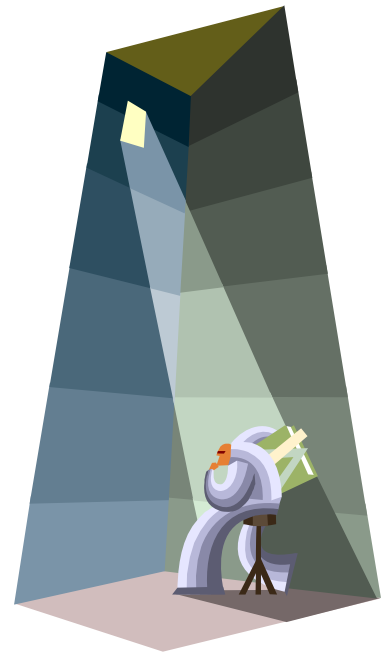
"When any one anywhere reaches out for help, we want the hand of recovery to be there -- even if it's in prison or jail. I'm so grateful I found A.A. and H & I." **Lance R, Canyon Country, CA**

Janine's Story: Why did you get involved with H & I? "It was my tenth birthday and I was getting a little complacent. Someone suggested I get into H & I because people who participate in H & I have a reputation for staying sober. I had spent a short time in jail and seen panels come into the jail (I was in for 17 days for failing to take care of a drunk driving charge), and it had made an impact on me. Even though I didn't initially stay sober when I got out, it did plant that seed."

What was it like when you first went into the jails? "I really did get scared when I went to the men's jail at Twin Towers – it was very overcrowded and the men seemed so angry. I didn't know how to tell my story in a way that would help them relate. But you know, you get a lot of trial runs doing this – you get a lot of experience sharing."

Did you find a difference between taking a panel to jails as opposed to prison? "I haven't been to women's prison but from what I could see, those who are in for a longer time have a pecking order and a hierarchy. They are very close-lipped about everything. You see people in pretty dire straits and sometimes the inmates cry and usually nod in identification so you know you're getting through. While you are there, it seems like 'There but for the grace of God go I.' then, when the doors shut and we're on the outside, it feels good."

What would you say to someone considering H & I work? "Just try it. If you want to carry the message to jails, you can go on a panel without having to be a leader. H & I also goes to hospitals, rehabs, and psychiatric wards. I always recommend anyone who wants to get more involved and ensure their future sobriety to just try it. It's very rewarding!" **Janine R., Los Angeles, CA**



When you've been lost, lonely, forgotten, rejected, it's the most important thing in the world to have somebody shake your hand." *Santa Fe, N.M., May 1972*

"How AA Works," *Best of Grapevine, Volume 1*, Copyright c. 1944-2012. AA Grapevine, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Reprints by Permission Only

Poem by Debbie M., Sobriety Date: May 9, 1994

On this day, I thee wed.
My sobriety that this R.E.A.C.H. Program has fed.

In its richness, I have been taught,
In my drug abuse I was lost.

No longer does my life resolve around the drink and a bag of dope.
I now live my life knowing there is hope.

Now seeing things with a clear mind, enjoying God's love,
It's about time learning from my past.

Living, loving and laughing in all today's,
I promise myself to be the best me that I can be.

I love me, now sober and free!!!!



Upcoming A.A. Conventions, Worldwide

Jan. 18-20, 2013: **11th "Sobriety Under the Sun"** (English Speaking) Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco, Mexico

Jan. 17-20, 2013: **46th Tar Heel Mid-Winter Conference**, Raleigh, NC

Jan. 25-27, 2013: **59th Coastal Bend Jamboree**, Corpus Christi, TX

Jan. 25-27, 2013: **WICYPAA XX (Wisconsin Conference of Young People in AA)**, Oconomowoc, WI

Feb. 1-3, 2013: **31st Philippine National Convention**, Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines

Feb. 8-10, 2013: **8th International Near the Waves Convention**, Kovalam, Kerala, South India

Feb. 14-17, 2013: **49th International Women's Conference**, Reno, NV



"Thank God for all the wonderful people, professional and otherwise, who have helped me or tried to. Even when the help has not succeeded, it has kept me going, kept me trying." *New Canaan, Conn., April 1976* From: *"Just Keep On Going," Best of Grapevine, Volume 1*

"I am grateful for this minute. My eternity may be in it."
Arlington, Va., March 1947
From: *"Remembering a Girl - Defeated Except Once"*
Best of Grapevine, Volume 2

"Do I want to be bitter, hostile, and judgmental? Do I want to live inside that sort of person? Wouldn't I rather forgive, make allowances, understand? Is self-pity, feelings abused, so precious that I will not trade it for self-liking?" *Key West, Florida, 1973, Best of Grapevine, Volume 1.* Copyright c. 1944-2012. AA Grapevine, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Reprints by Permission Only.

Illustration by Leslie Z.



Please Support Your Central Office. We really could use more support by sending a Representative from your group to the IGR meetings. We meet the 2nd Monday of every month at St. Innocent Church at 5657 Lindley in Tarzana. Please Come! We would love to see you!

Newsletter Subscriptions: If you would like a copy of **Recovery Times** mailed to you, please complete this form with your address and a \$7.00 check (donation to cover cost & delivery) to: **SFV Central Office, 7417-E. Van Nuys Blvd., Van Nuys, CA 91405**

Name: _____

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City: _____ State: _____

Zip: _____



(Please circle): **New** **Renewal** **Additional Contribution**

Moving? Please give us your former address:

The 12 Steps through Word Search. Each month, Recovery Times features the Tradition of the Month. In January we are featuring Tradition One: **"Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity."** Can you find all the words? Look closely and read across as well as up and down.

B	W	E	C	D	E	P	E	N	D	S	G	A	Y	T
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