

RECOVERY TIMES

Vol. 37, No. 3, March 2013

The Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office Newsletter

The Burbank Group Celebrates Its 66th

Anniversary Back in April of 1947, the Alcoholics Anonymous Central Committee published an article about the then, newly-formed Burbank Group. The article by Clyde D. stated, "Friday night, February 7, marked the beginning of a new A.A. group for Southern California in Burbank. Like hundreds of groups before, and thousands more to come, it was but another indication of the ever-increasing power of the A.A. program."



The first meeting of the Burbank Group was held at The Olive Avenue Recreation Center, 1111 W. Olive Ave. with 76 loyal members of A.A. attending. The newest had six days sober and the oldest, over seven years. Over those, 17 registered to make the new Burbank Group their home group. The newsletter states, "Thus was born a new spirit of 17-76, one which will be long remembered and cherished by the Burbank members."

86-year old Martin C., who now has 60 years of sobriety, remembers when the Burbank Group held their meetings at the stables on Riverside Drive. The meetings were held once a week with 15 to 30 men and one woman attending. Martin was 25 when he got sober and recalls that Burbank was always a very enthusiastic group with a lot of newcomers. "The Burbank Group was founded on a resentment after Clyde D. was not allowed to lead a meeting in North Hollywood. Martin remembers Clyde as a very energetic guy. "He was always doing something all the time, he was into everything."

Newly-sober at age 25, Martin began going on 12-Step calls when the Sheriff's Department gave A.A.s permission to take meetings to prisoners serving time at camps up in the mountains where they were building roads. "Three or four of us would drive up to the camps from Lancaster to Pacific Palisades to share our A.A. stories," says Martin. He credits A.A. member Jack P. as the person who started him on his work with prisoners, something he continued to do for about ten years. By being of service, Martin says many A.A.s were able to formulate their A.A. stories, and as a result of their meetings, some of the men they spoke to did come to Burbank's meetings when they got released.

When the attendance at their one meeting began to grow, the Group moved to 1717 W. Magnolia in 1954. In addition to their weekly Friday night meeting, which attracted about 100 people, a Sunday morning meeting was started. The next move occurred in 1968 to the well-known 243 Angeleno Ave. address where the Group stayed for many years. Then in 2003, the Burbank Group made its present home at 3217 Winona Ave. in Burbank by the airport.

During his 60 years of sobriety, Martin says the Burbank Group hasn't changed much except that more people now identify as alcoholic/addict. He recalls, "You didn't hear too much about addiction, early on. I think they were more sincere back then and trying harder [to stay sober] because we weren't sure it was going to work."

(Cont. on page 5)

CALENDAR OF A.A. EVENTS

28th Annual Orange County Convention, March 29-31, 2013, Hilton Costa Mesa

32nd Annual So. CA H & I Conference April 12-14, 2012, Doubletree Hotel, Anaheim, CA

25th IWV AA Roundup, April 26 – 28, 2013, Desert Empire Fairgrounds, Ridgecrest, CA, www.orgsites.com/ca/iwvroundup

29th Annual Tri-State Round up, May 16-19, 2013, Riverside Resort Hotel & Casino, Laughlin, NV

A.A. Desert Pow Wow, June 6-9, 2013, Renaissance Esmeralda Resort, Indian Wells, CA

Stepping Stones Alcahthon, June 2013. TBA. Santa Clarita, CA

29th Annual South Bay Roundup, July 4-7, 2013, Torrance, CA

21st Foothill Roundup, July (TBA), La Canada, CA

35th Annual Ventura County A.A. Convention, August 23-25, 2013, Westlake Village, CA



SERVICE COMMITTEES SCHEDULE:

- **SFV Central Office Board Mtg: Wed. April 10, 2013**, 6:30 p.m., Valley Central Office
- **SFV Intergroup: Mon., April 14,, 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.) April 3,, 2013**, 6:30 p.m. Business Meeting, 7552 Remmet, Canoga Park
- **Gen. Service, District 2: (1st Tues.) April 2, 5, 2013**, 6:30 p.m. Business Meeting, 4011 Dunsmore, La Crescenta
- **Gen. Service District 7: (2nd Sat.) April 13, 2013**, 9 a.m. Business Meeting, Women's Club:33201 Agua Dulce Canyon Road, Agua Dulce, CA
- **Gen Service, District 11: (1st Mon.) April 1, 2013**, 6 p.m. New GSR 6:30 p.m. /Bus. Mtg., 315 W. Vine Street, Glendale,
- **Gen Service, District 16: (1st Mon.) April 1, 2013**, 6:15 p.m. meeting, 15950 Chatsworth, Granada Hills.
- **Gen. Svc., District 17 :(1st Mon.) April 1, 2013**, 6 p.m. New GSRs/6:30 p.m. Bus. Mtg, 5000 Colfax, Noho.
- **SFV H & I: (3rd Monday) March 18, 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 2014 Convention. The committee meets on the 3rd Tuesday of every month starting in April.

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.

Call to speak with a sober AA member anytime: (818) 988-3001

Quotes from A.A.'s Founder and others

"Everyone must agree that we AAs are unbelievably fortunate people; fortunate that we have suffered so much; fortunate that we can know, understand and love each other so supremely well ... Indeed most of us are well aware that these are rare gifts which have their true origin in our kinship born of a common suffering and a common deliverance by the Grace of God."

AA Co-Founder, Bill W., Oct 1959

"We have, in AA, no coercive human authority. Because each AA, of necessity, has a sensitive and responsive conscience, and because alcohol will discipline him severely if he backslides, we are finding we have little need for manmade rules or regulations."

AA Co-Founder, Bill W., Jan. 1948

"If I simply let go of a character defect - release it - my Higher Power will replace it with a character asset. As I release anger, I find that I am friendlier. As I release hate, I become more loving. As I release fear, I become more secure." *Kathmandu, July 1995*

"AA does not teach us how to handle our drinking; it teaches us how to handle our sobriety." *Conn., March 1975*

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"It's not subservience to God, it's a partnership."

"God always answers prayers: Yes, no or... wait."

"Alcohol – the equal opportunity destroyer"

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: BOB G.

ONE LAST GOODBYE:

Bob G., a longtime member of the San Fernando Group with 28 years of sobriety passed away on Feb. 8, 2013. Bob was an integral part of the Group and a keeper of the Traditions. He was known for his calm presence, his love for telling stories, and his ability to interact with people from all backgrounds, making them feel comfortable. A memorial was held by the S.F. Group on March 2nd to celebrate and honor him.

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



**Illustration
by Leslie Z.**

Famous Quotations:

"Drunkness is simply voluntary insanity." Seneca, C. 63

"Drunkness is the ruin of reason. It is premature old age. It is temporary death." St. Basil, C. 375

“Drunkenness both aggravates the crime and makes it more clearly a crime.” Edwin Cooke, 1628

Intergroup Rep Board Meeting Notes: February 18, 2013

Chairperson Andre W. opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. with *The Serenity Prayer*. Michele read *The Twelve Traditions*. **Recording Secretary Dawn H.** accepted a motion for approval of the January IGR minutes. The minutes were approved as submitted.



Treasurer Brian H. reported Central Office is in the black \$6,734.55 MTD & YTD. To help Central Office upgrade its point of purchase system to accept credit cards and to upgrade old computer systems, Central Office will be asking Groups to pass the basket a second time in March. The goal is to raise \$3,500 for new computer hardware/software. A full Treasurer's Report is available in the *Recovery Times*.

Executive Secretary's Report: Bob F. reported everything is going well at Central Office but there is an ongoing issue with parking as the management company has leased out several parking spaces, normally used by Central Office patrons. We are in the process of determining if this situation can be rectified, or whether it is time to consider relocation. Our volunteer staff is currently running well, but due to flu season (which can result in last minute absences), Central Office can always use new volunteers. Interested parties should contact Larry at Central Office.

Website: Everything is running smoothly with the www.sfvaa.org.

Recovery Times: Everything is extremely fabulous with the newsletter. (Copies can be downloaded from our website for free).

IGR Orientation – Bill S.: Five new IGRs were welcomed this month. IGRs were reminded to encourage recruitment of new 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.

Service Reps: General Service District 11: John M.

Area 93 is seeking 93 men this term who may be willing to be AA correspondents with people in corrections facilities. Those interested can call Central Office and leave a message for John M.

There is a new venue for the Area Assembly at Granada Hills High School. Applications are available for people willing to serve on the “Bridging the Gap” committee to act as liaisons for those coming out of prison. Again, leave a message for John if interested.

General Service District 17: Michele encouraged IGRs to make sure their meetings were registered with the General Services Office in NYC so they don't miss out on important event information.

San Fernando Valley H & I Committee: Daniel: Contributions were down for January. H&I asks everyone to be generous.

San Fernando Valley AA Convention: Joel reported the 38th Annual SFVAAC was a tremendous success and thanked everyone for their participation. The convention planning committee is on hiatus until April, at which time all are welcome to get involved with the planning of the 2014 convention.

Santa Clarita Valley AA Convention: Bernard reported the 10th Annual Santa Clarita Valley Convention is coming up in October. This year's theme is “A Spiritual Experience” and all are invited to participate and support our sister convention. A Chili Cook-Off Fundraiser will be held March 9th at the Newhall Church of the Nazarene in Newhall.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM AA GROUPS & SEVENTH TRADITION:

- *Mike from* The Sunset Group has relocated to Beverly Glen/Dickens, and meets Thursday from 7-8.
- *Di V* thanked everyone who sold tickets for The Big Island Bash Raffle in support of our convention.

IGR BIRTHDAYS FOR THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY– (47 YEARS OF SOBRIETY!)

- Gity – 1 year on 2/4
- Carissa – 1 year on 2/10
- Lisa – 4 years on 2/14
- Amy – 5 years on 2/15
- Rick – 17 years on 2/26

A motion to adjourn was recognized and seconded followed by *The Lord's Prayer* at 7:23 p.m.

The Burbank Group Celebrates its 66th Anniversary (on Feb. 7, 2013)

While Martin moved up to Washington in 2006 he says, "My heart is still in Burbank. I spent most of my life there. Burbank is a really good group on the Steps and Traditions – they stick to the Program."

Another Longtimer who still attends meetings on a regular basis is 87-year old Jean C. who has 43 years of sobriety and was 43 when she got sober at the Wednesday noon meeting at 1717 W. Magnolia. "I felt so comfortable there," says Jean, "I practically lived there. I laughed and I cried at that Group. What attracted me right from the start was that the Burbank Group always seemed to have a lot of fun."

"According to legend," says Jean, "Clyde D., the founder of the Burbank Group, started the reading of the Traditions at the beginning of meetings. It wasn't widely done at that time because the Traditions were only adopted in 1956, so it wasn't like they were read right from the start." After that, it caught on at other Groups and meetings and is now widely read as part of most meeting formats.



As far as changes she's seen in A.A. over time, Jean says, by necessity there have been a lot of changes in the way we do things. "For instance, in the early years, night meetings started at 8:30 p.m. to keep all the new drunks as busy as possible. Also, there weren't quite as many meetings. We had the Wednesday noon meeting, which a lot of the Oldtimers attended - it was a large meeting. Then they started a Young People's meeting but it was intimidating to me, so I didn't go to it. I was pretty much intimidated by everything at that time."

In A.A., Jean says she met the 'love of her life' - Jim B., who she later married (Jim passed away in 2007). "He knew a lot of people because he made a point to introduce himself to everybody. He wrote up a little history of the Burbank Group which he turned in to the GSO archives.

When the group moved to its present address in 2003, it was nothing more than a shell of a building with no facilities. Due to the efforts of several of the men in the Program, the space was made into what it is now with two bathrooms, a kitchen, a large meeting room and another room for events."

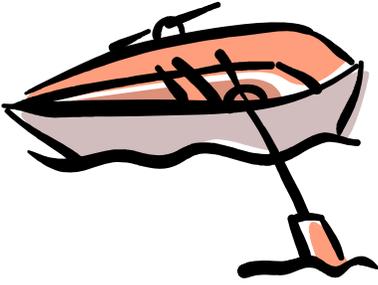
As far as what she likes about the Burbank Group, Jean says, "They stick to the Traditions and our meetings always start on time, which is a good disciplinary thing for our strengths. It's a very friendly group. I think we always notice the newcomers and make sure they get attention. Thursday night's meeting, in fact, is directed to the Newcomer. It was the biggest meeting when I arrived and it still is the biggest."

After 43 years, Jean still attends meetings at the Burbank Group and is still working the Steps.

In addition to Jean and Martin, two-time **SOB** (Secretary of Burbank) **Tom P.** remembers several of the, now deceased members, who were instrumental to the Burbank Group. They include: Jim B., Conrad & Nancy B., Bob G., Gay H., Jeannie S. Don S., Gus W. and Becky K. Current **SOB Dan D.** adds, "The Burbank Group still has that essence of longtime sobriety. It's as if all the long timers who came before us are still present in spirit; you can feel the love in the room. I believe that's what A.A. is all about."

The Burbank Group holds 27 meetings a week. Meetings during the week are held in the evenings; there are midnight meetings both Friday and Saturday nights, and Sunday there are five meetings throughout the day and evening. Each November, the Burbank Group hosts its Thank-a-thon with marathon meetings hosted by different A.A. groups. The Burbank Group is also known for its fun dances throughout the year to which all A.A.s are welcome to attend. **Editor**

Was it a Message From God? Why Our Sponsors Tell Us Not to Date in the First Year



When I was newly-sober, I came into the rooms of A.A. looking for that A.A. partner to 'fix me. After all, I had given up alcohol and was on the mend. Wouldn't God be in my corner now? So I prayed for a person meeting a specific physical description to come into my life – and God delivered. At least, I thought it was God. "He" met the physical part -- and he was sober– so as far as I was concerned, it must have been God answering my prayers.

In response to that prayer, I got busy. No, I don't mean by working any Steps; I mean I got busy working on 'Him.' I told him I was interested in staying sober and needed HIS help with that. Although he probably knew better with one year of sobriety, he didn't have a sponsor so he jumped right into my net.

On the day that we were supposed to have our first date – going to an A.A. meeting – I jumped into the shower to get ready. But apparently, he showed up early to pick me up and I missed him. (That was God's first message to me).

When I called him back, I accidentally hung up on him – not once, but twice. (That was God's second message to me), but I continued to persevere and I did reach him and convince him to come back to pick me up.

At last, he showed up but when he went to start the car, it wouldn't start. (That was God's third message). Rather than cancel the date, he kept trying until the engine caught. It was just a minor carburetor problem, he said, and I believed him.

One thing that was on my mind though was the dream I had had the night before in which someone kept saying to me. "Don't go on that date. He'll only hold you back in your sobriety." I kept thinking about that dream all day but by the time HE arrived, I didn't want to focus on 'negativity' anymore. (That was God's fourth message). Three months later, when everything fell apart, I realized that this person was holding me back in my sobriety. But it's wasn't just him, it was my focus on having a new relationship when I didn't even know who I was that was the problem. It was very painful to have a relationship breakup at just three months sober and to not be able to drink over it. Thank God I had the program and sober ladies in my life to help me through it!

That was the turning point for me when I plunged head-first into the program of A.A. As hard as it was to change old habits, I chose to stay away from newcomer men as well as well-meaning other men in the program who were expressing interest in this newcomer. It wasn't until years later that I put two and two together and realized that there was no way I could have had a healthy relationship with anyone at that point because I was so unhealthy. Not only that, but by putting myself in a relationship with another person, I was holding myself back from the growth that could take place. Only by being alone and by being willing to stay 'emotionally raw' for awhile, was it possible for me to allow those changes to take place and to finally grow up and mature into an adult.

By using alcohol to mask my feelings all those years, I had unintentionally held myself back from the discovery process of what felt good and what felt bad. Now I realize that sometimes those bad feelings are the best teachers because we never want to repeat those lessons again!

Anyway, I lived through that early break-up and I stayed sober with the help of my Higher Power. And now, looking back on it, it is clear to me that God was trying to get through to me the entire time by trying to prevent me from doing more harm to myself. We say in this program, "My picker is broken." We hear in A.A. the story of the drowning man who chooses to stay in the lifeboat that is sinking and won't accept a life preserver, a ladder or a helping hand to save him from drowning. When he finally reaches the pearly gates, he asks God why he didn't save him. And God says, "I sent you a life preserver, a ladder and a person to rescue you, but you chose to stay in the sinking boat. In my case, it was four different ways that God tried to reach me to save me from hurting my chances of staying sober. I wouldn't have learned that if I hadn't stayed here, listened to the Old-timers and worked the Steps of A.A. **Pat K.**



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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(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 March we are featuring Tradition Three **"The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking."** Can you find all the words? Look closely and read across as well as up and down.

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