

# RECOVERY TIMES

Vol. 38, No. 9, September 2013

## The Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office Monthly Newsletter



### **Service Geek: Don't be afraid. You can love General Service too.**

"Don't be ashamed of your geekitude, embrace it! Be it!" I am that strange breed of AA animal called a General Service Geek. I actually can pinpoint the exact moment when my geekiness was birthed. I had been sober for a year and a half and thought I knew everything there was to know about AA, the Twelve Steps, and Twelve Traditions, yada yada yada. Then I got a sponsor who started to talk about the Twelve Concepts and warranties and charters and all those strange acronyms I had never come across before. I was intrigued that there was a huge part of AA that I had somehow been completely ignorant about.

In hindsight there were telltale signs that I destined for general service. One was that I actually enjoyed business meetings. The first home

group I belonged to had a simply phenomenal business meeting. I came to my first one with a written list (!) of things I thought the group should change about the way they ran their meeting. Instead of dismissing me as a confused and arrogant newbie, they listened to each and every one of my concerns and discussed them thoroughly (before voting them all down!). I was most impressed by how the group actually did place principles before personalities. I got to see how the traditions really can and do work in a group. One of the most remarkable things I experienced was when I was arguing heatedly with a member of the group about some matter of earth-shattering importance (like how much coffee we should make) and he all of a sudden heard something that clicked and immediately changed his mind and his vote. I was floored. I would *never* do that. I would be in an argument, knowing I was wrong, and yet still keep pleading my case. To really listen to other viewpoints and honestly assess them alongside my own was a skill I learned in AA business meetings.

I went to my first assembly and was so impressed by the business meetings there. Hundreds of people—sober drunks mind you!—were sharing in an orderly and well-informed manner. The coolest thing happened there also: The assembly voted on a particular motion, listened to the minority opinion, had a re-vote, and then it went the other way! The greatest thing to me was how the reason for everything they did came down to the primary purpose of staying sober and helping other alcoholics achieve sobriety.

My home group had a GSR, and I was thrilled when the agenda topics came out and as a group we discussed them. I felt both privileged to be asked for my opinion on the topics in the context of my group and also felt a tremendous responsibility to participate to help keep this wonderful fellowship afloat for future voyagers.

So if you actually enjoy reading the Service Manual instead of dreading it, can't get enough of sharing sessions, workshops, Unity Days, district and area meetings, archives and assemblies, you too may be a General Service Geek. Now, don't get it twisted. You don't have to be a pocket-protector wearin'—Devo listenin'—Buddy Holly look-alike to be a General Service Geek. You just have to have figured out that General Service rocks! Don't be ashamed of your geekitude, embrace it! *Be it!* Join the club, we're having T-shirts made!

*Tony W., Fairfield, Calif. Copyright c. 1944-2012. AA Grapevine, Inc.*

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## CALENDAR OF A.A. EVENTS

**Happy Campers 2013:** Saturday, Sept. 21, 2013 at 8 p.m. Lake Piru, Campsite #130 and Saturday, October 19, 2013. Day rate: \$12 per vehicle.

**The 4<sup>th</sup> Annual "Take Your Sponsor to Breakfast" Breakfast,** September 28<sup>th</sup>, DAV, 6543 Corbin Ave., Woodland Hills. (Benefitting Central Office).

**Valley Club Alcathon:** Friday Sept. 27 - Sun. Sept. 29, 2013, The Valley Club, 8728 Corbin Ave., Northridge.

**The Hole in the Sky Alcathon:** Sept. 27 - 29th, 21044 Sherman Way, Canoga Park, entrance at rear.

**15<sup>th</sup> Annual Bike Run & Campout, Sept. 27th - 29th, 2013**

Trask Scout Reservation, San Gabriel Mountains, Monrovia (Inner Circle Sober MC), email: bikertolive@yahoo.com

**10<sup>th</sup> Annual Santa Clarita Valley AA Convention:** October 18 – 20, 2013, Valencia Hyatt & Santa Clarita Conference Center.

**29<sup>th</sup> Annual Santa Barbara AA Convention:** October 25 - 27, 2013

**Halloween Costume Ball & Dance:** San Fernando Group, Oct. 26, 2013,



13245 Gladstone Ave., Sylmar

## SERVICE COMMITTEES SCHEDULE:

- **SFV Central Office Board Mtg: Oct.9, 2013,** 6:30 p.m., Valley Central Office
- **SFV Intergroup: Mon., Oct. 14, 2013,** New IGRs: 6:30/7 p.m., St. Innocent Church., 5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana
- **Gen Svc, Dist. 1 (1<sup>st</sup> Wed.) Oct.2, 2013,** 6:30 p.m., 7552 Remmet, Canoga Park
- **Gen. Service, District 2: (1<sup>st</sup> Tues.) Oct. 1, 2013,** 6:30 p.m., 4011 Dunsmore, La Crescenta
- **Gen. Svc Dist. 7: (2<sup>nd</sup> Sat.) Oct. 12, 2013,** 9 a.m., Women's Club:33201 Agua Dulce Cyn Rd, Agua Dulce, CA
- **Gen Service, District 11: (1<sup>st</sup> Mon.) Oct. 7, 2013,** 6 p.m. New GSR 6:30 p.m., 315 W. Vine Street, Glendale,
- **Gen Service, District 16: (1<sup>st</sup> Mon.) Oct. 7, 2013,** 6:15 p.m. meeting, 15950 Chatsworth, Granada Hills.
- **Gen. Svc., District 17 :( 1st Mon.) Oct. 7, 2013,** 6 p.m. New GSRs/6:30 p.m. Bus. Mtg, 5000 Colfax, Noho.
- **SFV H & I: (3<sup>rd</sup> Monday) Sept. 16, 2013:** 7 p.m. Orientation/8 p.m. Bus. Meeting, 5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana
- **SFV AA Convention Planning Committee:** Tues., Sept. 17, 2013, 7 p.m. St. Innocent, Tarzana (see above)

## 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](http://www.sfvaa.org/involve.html) or call Central Office: 818 988-3001.

**Public Info. Committee** provides info to the public about what A.A. does & doesn't do. Need volunteers, especially young people and Spanish-speaking AAs, for health fairs & to speak at schools & businesses.

**SF 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 (SFV H & I).

**San Fernando Valley Convention Committee:** Volunteers are welcome to participate in the planning of the 2014 Convention. The committee meets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of every month starting in April.

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



**San Fernando Valley Intergroup:** Your Central Office holds a monthly meeting for all Intergroup reps on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of each month at St. Innocent Church, 5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana. 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.** A.A. Central Office maintains LIVE 24/7 PHONE SERVICE for A.A.s. Visit: [www.sfvaa.org](http://www.sfvaa.org)

to find meeting info, upcoming events, service meeting info, or download a copy of Recovery Times.

**Want to be of service?** Why not answer phone calls and help others? **HAS YOUR MEETING CHANGED?** Please

provide meeting updates in writing to: **The Valley Central Office, 7417 Van Nuys Blvd., Van Ste. E. , Van Nuys, CA.**

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## Quotes from Our Founders

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**"We are privileged to communicate with each other to a degree and in a manner not very often surpassed among our nonalcoholic friends in the world around us."**

*AA Co-Founder, Bill W., Oct. 1959  
AA Communication Can Cross All Boundaries"*

"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, N. Y., Sept 1997*

**"Our Traditions are set down on paper. But they were written first in our hearts. For each of us knows, instinctively I think, that AA is not ours to do with as we please. We are but caretakers to preserve the spiritual quality of our Fellowship; keep it whole for those who will come after us and have need of what has so generously been given to us."**

*AA Co-Founder, Bill W.,  
November 1950  
"AA Is Not Big Business"*

"If you want this vehicle to get you from here to there, you've got to get into it."

"Over the years, it was necessary to drink, but I just haven't done it."

"I pray for the willingness to listen carefully to everyone I encounter, for some may have the words I need to hear."

### **Intergroup Board Meeting, August 12, 2013:**

Chairperson Andre W. opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. with *The Serenity Prayer*. Dave read "*The Twelve Traditions*".

Dawn H., Recording Secretary, accepted a motion for approval of Minutes from July's Intergroup Meeting. The minutes were approved as submitted.

**TREASURER'S REPORT: Brian H.** Central Office is in the red <\$2,813.64> MTD and in the black \$776.81 YTD. Brian thanked the groups for their ongoing support. A full Treasurer's Report is available in the *Recovery Times*.

**EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S REPORT: Bob F.** Everything is running smoothly at Central Office. Relocation possibilities are continuing to be explored; however, negotiations are continuing to possibly allow us to stay in our current location. Our volunteer staff is currently running well, but Central Office can always use new volunteers. Interested parties should contact Larry at Central Office.

- The new directories should be here by the end of the month.
- Everything is running smoothly with the [www.sfvaa.org](http://www.sfvaa.org) website.
- *Recovery Times* Everything is extraordinary with the newsletter.

**MEETING RELATED BUSINESS: Introduction of New Intergroup Representatives – Bill S.** welcomed SEVEN new IGRs this month:

- J.P. –Saturday morning NoHo Gratitude Group.
- Alana –Friday night Barefoot Group.
- Ed –Toluca Lake Sunday Night Speaker Meeting
- Laurie –Thursday Women's Stag at Dunsmore.
- Sean –Learning to Live Big Book Study in Canoga Park
- Dustin –SFVYPA Magnifying Mind Step Study.
- Andy –San Fernando Group.

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 IGR meeting.

**SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES Bernard B. from Santa Clarita Valley AA Convention** reminded everyone that the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Santa Clarita Valley Convention is October 18-20.

**San Fernando Valley AA Convention:** Joel S. announced the 39<sup>th</sup> Annual San Fernando Valley Convention will take place January 31-February 2, 2014. This year's theme is "**The Music of AA**", and the colors are lavender and grey. The Convention Planning Committee meets next Tuesday, August 20, at 7:00 p.m. at St. Innocent, and all are welcome to attend. All convention participants who wish to attend the Friday Night Opening Ceremony and the Saturday afternoon Longtimers Meeting MUST be registered.

**OLD BUSINESS:** Literature Sales are CLOSED the last Friday of each month. Central Office doors remain open; phones are still answered.

**NEW BUSINESS** None

(CONTINUED, NEXT PAGE)

## ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM AA GROUPS & SEVENTH TRADITION:

- Peter: The Radford Group is hosting longtimers meeting (25+ years of sobriety) on Thursday nights.
- Bob F.: The annual Take Your Sponsor to Breakfast Breakfast will take place Saturday, September 28<sup>th</sup> at the Disabled American Veterans Hall. Tickets are available exclusively through Intergroup, and we are limited to 250.
- Sarena: The Serenity Seekers are relocating from Cahuenga/Whipple to Spirit Works Church, Pass Ave in Burbank.
- Michele: On September 21<sup>st</sup>, there will be a Unity Day Service Conference, with representatives from General Service, Intergroup, H&I, and district representatives giving presentation on how the various service entities interact with each other. Volunteer are needed and all are welcome to attend.
- Aimee: The SFV H&I Committee will be holding its 31<sup>st</sup> annual birthday breakfast in October.

## IGR BIRTHDAYS FOR THE MONTH OF JUNE-JULY – (58 YEARS OF SOBRIETY!)

- Myra – 1 year on 8/4
- Dave – 5 years on 8/13
- Cammie – 6 years on 7/2
- Joel S. – 7 years on 7/30
- Dan – 12 years on 8/19
- Brian H. – 13 years on 8/17
- Kim – 14 years on 8/5

**VACANCIES ON BOARD:** There are currently two vacancies on the Board for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Alternates. Neva S., was accepted the nomination for 1<sup>st</sup> Alternate, and Lyn W. accepted the nomination for 2<sup>nd</sup> Alternate. There were no opposing votes to these nominations.

**CLOSING:** Motion to adjourn was recognized and seconded. Meeting adjourned with *The Lord's Prayer* at 7:26 p.m.

Prepared and submitted by: *Dawn H., Recording Secretary*

**CELEBRATING AN A.A. ANNIVERSARY?** 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. For April we thank the following for their contributions: Jerry L. - 8 Years, Dan N. - 12 Years, Coleen B. - 13 Years, Brian H. -13 Years, Randy H. - 16 Years & Karrie W. - 20 Years



**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: sfvaa.org.

**Please Support Your Central Office** by sending a representative from your group to the Intergroup monthly meetings. We meet the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 our **Recovery Times** mailed to you, please mail us your name and address along with a \$7.00 check to cover cost & delivery to:

**San Fernando Valley Central Office, 7417-E. Van Nuys Blvd., Van Nuys, CA 91405.**

Tell us whether it is for a new subscription, a renewal, or if you are enclosing an additional contribution. Please also give us your former address if you are moving.

*Your Central Office thanks you!*

## I JUST CAME TO GET MY COURT CARD SIGNED

When I came into A.A., I went there to get my court card signed to get the heat off me. I went there to get solid information that I was not like you. After a long time, I started hearing the music of A.A. and the focus of what I wanted to get changed. I wanted to get what you had. I wanted to be included in your groups of sober women. I knew I needed a pack of sober sisters in order to really stay sober. I knew the women of A.A. were too smart for me to manipulate them into liking me so I asked a person in A.A. how to get sober sisters.

He told me I should get a commitment if I wanted to be taken seriously. That I should think of it like building a ship - join the ship's crew. I recognized that it must be painful to form friendships with newcomers that once again choose to drink and never come back. A commitment at a meeting would show that I was here to stay and that I would like to have and be a sober sister.

When I was about 2 years sober, I went to a powerful women's meeting. I wanted what they had and wanted to be in that sisterhood. I went every week. I watched groups of women greeting and hugging each other before the meeting and I wanted to get to know them and for them to accept me.

I perceived that I just could not *break in*. I would go home a little discouraged, my sensitive alcoholic feelings hurt. I consulted a friend of mine who was an old-timer with 37 years on how to get in. He told me to pursue it like I did alcohol. So I kept showing up.

When it was time for service commitments to be available, I eagerly raised my hand before they got the word "literature" out and I took the literature commitment. On my first day, I nervously stood up said the big book of A.A. was located "over there" and a woman gracefully wanded her hand across the books. I thanked "Vanna" for her talent. I referred to the book as the *star of our show*, that *you would think that this book would be \$1000, but it was only \$8 and 164 pages to change your life*. I explored the contents of the literature table and found a little ditty that I felt was apropos to the women's meeting: The 20 questions for women. I read question number 8. The room erupted in laughter and nods of identification. I read a different question each week and when my commitment ended, the next woman continued the new tradition.

I don't know what came over me one Wednesday evening when the leader of another meeting I attend announced he had 3 commitments available. He said the sound commitment was available. He told me that I probably wouldn't be able to handle the sound. He was probably right, as I had no experience with sound equipment or recording devices but I was willing. I followed the sound person around week after week, messing up the cords, plugging them into wrong holes, forgetting to press the ON switch and forgetting the mike. He rolled his eyes but I kept showing up. Three months later he handed over the commitment to me with confidence. I now fill in for another sound person at another meeting so he can to away to sober conventions and he fills in for me as well. We exchange speaker CDs and my library is growing.

Only in A.A. could announcing the literature table contents open up a world of love and friendships. I have real sober sisters today. I am humbled to have been elected to co-secretary that women's meeting. I go to meetings and people will approach me and say, "Hey, aren't you the sound person on Wednesday's?" And when I see a newcomer, I ask them to help me run cords and set up the speakers. Maybe it will whet their appetite for a commitment.

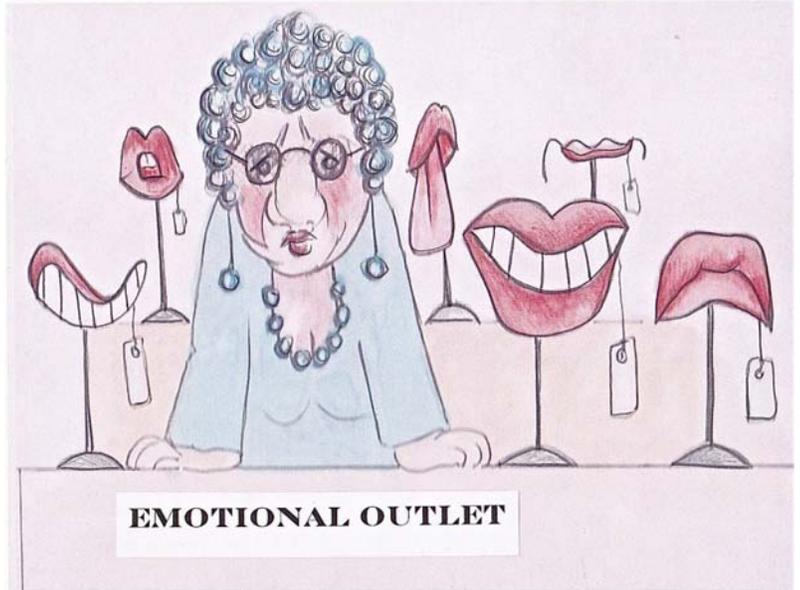
And to think, I only came to get my court card signed. By Julie L., Burbank, CA



ILLUSTRATION BY LESLIE Z.

## Living an Alcohol & Drug-Free Life

Back in the '50s when I was born, the short-term and long-term impacts of smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol and using recreational drugs was not known. In fact, drinking, smoking and taking a little pill for every ill was believed to be 'good for your health.' Advertising campaigns were pushing the handsome, carefree Marlboro Man, while Dean Martin and other actors portrayed a happy life with a drink in their hand. It seemed that there was nothing that was bad for you.



Unfortunately, all three of the actors who posed as the Marlboro Man died of lung cancer as a result of promoting this product and as I got older, I started noticing an increase of deaths around me from drug and alcohol use. Funny, I don't remember anyone who bought drinks for me, when I was under-age, ever telling me that I might end up in jail, in a mental lock-down ward, or wanting to kill myself at the age of 46 from the long-term damage caused by alcohol.

I was one of the fortunate ones who was able to stay sober after I got sober. The first year was exhilarating for me as I started to experience laughter, warmth, love and acceptance. It was also a very tough year as my character defects ran me head-first into many walls, requiring amends to be made in all directions. Fortunately, people were able to forgive me for my angry outbursts and defensive posture. I was an insecure and angry 'newbie' at times and I didn't like it!

Looking back on where I've been, I see how the choices I made during my teenage years were influenced by the growing pains I was going through in life. As the name suggests, growing 'pains' are painful and that's the way it is supposed to be. The greatest growth and inspiration comes from the depths of pain when I am willing to open my soul to others and take a hard look at myself. Pain is a part of rebirth.

I no longer take pills or drinks to stop the pain. I experience it and I try to learn from it. Sometimes it takes the form of sleepless nights, mild anxiety, depression or forced isolation. But eventually, I come out of it if I am willing to use the tools of A.A. and go to meetings to saturate myself in the spiritual message that I hear there.

I will never be totally free of sadness or pain because I live in an imperfect world but I can accept that now. I don't have to be perfect either nor do I expect that from everyone around me.

As I see the young kids going back to school now – kids who were the same age as me when I was exposed to alcohol and drugs - I wonder what kind of a message they are getting and what choices they may be inclined to make for themselves.

I hope that the hand of A.A. is there for them to give them a 'reality check' instead of them following role models with bad behavior or being pressured into taking that first drink that may lead to the next one and the next. I hope that someone with A.A. experience is there for those who need it, to carry them through their pain so that they don't have to experience a life of misery, deprivation, and emptiness before they find what we have, right here, right now, for free!

*Editor Pat K.*

**The 12 Steps through Word Search.** Each month, Recovery Times features the Tradition of the Month. In September we are featuring Tradition Nine: **“AA as such, ought never be organized but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.”**

J K B N H O K U T C O L E D A  
D I R E C T L Y H L U G V S A  
K J I V M O S N O H G F B U T  
O S H E H A O H S W H R O C G  
I E N R M J Y Y E E T J C H K  
O R G A N I Z E D N Y Y R R D  
J V B O A R D S S E C W E T C  
M I U F R E X A H W B U A J U  
M C O M M I T T E E S I T E A  
R E S P O N S I B L E W E L O

## **BRIDGING THE GAP**

Pairing the alcoholic leaving rehabilitation, treatment or jail with an AA temporary contact in their home community, nationwide, to acquaint them with AA.

### ***How can you help?***

1. SPREAD THE WORD! Announce this program in your meetings and panels.
2. Make sure your literature table is stocked with BTG applications and pamphlets.
3. Become a temporary contact.

For more information, please contact the SFV Central Office at (818) 988-3001.

*Got a story, poem or artwork that is A.A.- related that you want to share? Stories should be 250-500 words. Please email to Editor of Recovery Times at: [xnowisthetime@aol.com](mailto:xnowisthetime@aol.com) or mail/deliver to Central Office. Submission does not 'guarantee' publication.*

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**Van Nuys, CA 91405**

**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**