

# RECOVERY TIMES

Vol. 46, No. 2, Feb. 2016

## The Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office Newsletter

### OUR VALENTINES MONTH ISSUE: RELATIONSHIPS IN RECOVERY

#### Relationships in Sobriety: Kelly's Story

I remember the collective grumbling as our women's group counselor warned us about the perils of post-rehab relationships. One year of celibacy seemed like a lifetime for most but I thought it unlikely I'd find anyone that would want me so it wasn't a worry. However, 34 days into recovery and fresh out of rehab, my friends were finally successful in introducing me to Bill. They had been trying to bring us together for months and it had (seemingly) nothing to do with his nearly 15 years of sobriety. However, when I learned of this, I was encouraged because I had no sober friends.



Bill was clear upfront that he was not interested in having a girlfriend but enjoyed our phone conversations once a week and occasional get-togethers. He was a great listener offering solid advice on the early trials of sobriety. At 52, I was ready to stop drinking: the compulsion had vanished but I had a hard time living life without the comfortable numbing effects of alcohol. I hadn't had sober sex in nearly 20 years and I was emotionally retarded. With my infantile view of the world, I was unable to see the needs of another person so my relationships were all about me and what I could get, whether it was financial security, attention, adoration or sex. I used to say Bill was stingy with these things that I thought I wanted but I found that what I wanted and needed most was his support and advice.

My sponsor was supportive of this new relationship as long as problems or a break up would not lead me to relapse. I didn't think I would relapse but I did become what I called "butt hurt" over little things like Bill calling me on my s\_\_\_\_. At first I would be in denial but after considering the situation, I'd be upset that I was actually acting in such a way. For example, I thought I was an honest person once sober. I wouldn't tell a bold-face lie but I would make excuses rather than own up to my behavior. Or, I would leave out important details and thereby lie by omission. Learning to be brutally honest has made our relationship so much better; it's liberating to be accepted for who I am and actually earning the trust from a loved one is a great feeling.

I was fortunate that Bill encouraged me to go to meetings on my own or with friends, to find hobbies, and to get comfortable with being alone. While I was hurt that he wouldn't be there to "fill my void" (as he called my free sober time), I began to understand that I needed to get comfortable by myself, learn to love myself and only then could I give freely to another. It took nearly a year of a committed, yet casual relationship, for trust and feelings to build on both sides. I was usually so quick to fall in love (or lust) but the long build-up, which I attribute to sobriety, made the relationship even stronger and better. I was starting to grow up and step into things with eyes wide open. (Continued, page 5)

## **SERVICE COMMITTEE SCHEDULE:**

**San Fernando Valley Central Office Board Meeting:** March 9, 2016, 6:30 p.m., Central Office, 16132 Sherman Way, Van Nuys, CA 91406.

**San Fernando Valley Intergroup Meeting:** March 14, 2016: Orientation for new IGRs: 6:30 p.m., General Meeting: 7 p.m., St. Innocent Church., 5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana.

**San Fernando Valley H & I** (3rd Monday): Feb. 15, 2016: 7 p.m. Orientation, 8 p.m. Bus. Meeting, St. Innocent Church, 5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana.

**General Service Dist. 1:** (1<sup>st</sup> Wed.): March 2, 2016: 6:30 p.m., 7552 Remmet, Canoga Park.

**General Service Dist. 2:** (1<sup>st</sup> Tues.): March 1, 2016: 6:30 p.m., 4011 Dunsmore, La Crescenta.

**General Service District 7:** (2<sup>nd</sup> Sat.): March 12, 2016, 9 a.m., Women's Club: 33201 Agua Dulce Canyon Rd, Agua Dulce, CA.

**General Service District 11** (1<sup>st</sup> Mon.): March 7, 2016: 6 p.m. New GSRs - 6:30 p.m., 315 W. Vine Street, Glendale.

**General Service District 16** (1<sup>st</sup> Mon.): March 7, 2016: 6:00 p.m., 15950 Chatsworth, Granada Hills.

**General Service District 17** (1<sup>st</sup> Mon.): March 7, 2016: 6 p.m. Orientation for new GSRs, 6:30 p.m., Business Meeting: 7:00 p.m., 5000 Colfax, NoHo.

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## **SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES IN THE SAN FERNANDO VALLEY**

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**A.A. Central Office maintains 24/7 Phone Service** for AAs. Go to: [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?** 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 **Central Office: (818) 988-3001**.

**Central Office is located at 16132 Sherman Way, Van Nuys, CA.** (SW corner of Woodley & Sherman Way, west of the Mobil Station) and remains open every day for book sales (including weekends) except for holidays and the last Friday of the month for inventory. Our large warehouse has all of the A.A. approved literature and pamphlets that your group needs plus medallions and chips.

Central Office is a legitimate non-profit. Personal donations cannot exceed \$3,000 per year and must be from members of Alcoholics Anonymous, not from outsiders. **For more info, call: (818) 988-3001 or check out our website: [www.sfvaa.org](http://www.sfvaa.org).**

**Public Info. 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.

**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. See meeting info above. (SFV H & I).

**San Fernando Valley Convention Committee:** Volunteers are welcome to participate in the planning of the 2016 Convention.

**San Fernando Valley Young People in AA:** 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month @ 1 p.m. at Unit A., 10641 Burbank Blvd., North Hollywood. (Regular weekly meeting: Monday night at 8 p.m.).

**San Fernando Valley Intergroup:** 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: (818) 988-3001.**

**Please Support Your Central Office** by sending a rep to the monthly Intergroup meetings the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of every month at St. Innocent Church, 5657 Lindley, Tarzana. We would love to see you!

**Celebrating an A.A. Anniversary?** Please consider making a \$1.00 donation for each year of your sobriety during your birthday month and we will list your name and birthday year in the next issue. Frances K. – 30 Years, Jana B. – 29 Years, & Friday A.M. Dumetz Women's Mtg. – 110 Years/6 Ladies

**Deaths (Things We Cannot Change):** If you are aware of the passing of a Fellowship member, please call us at (818) 988-3001. Doug B. – 53 Years, Don N. – 40+, & Jim C. – 30+

**Has your meeting changed?** Please provide meeting updates in writing to: **The Valley Central Office**, 16132 Sherman Way, Van Nuys, CA 91406. If you would like a copy of **Recovery Times**, please send us your name, address and payment with \$7.00 to cover cost & delivery. Also include information on whether you want a new subscription, are renewing, or if you are enclosing an additional contribution. If moving, please give us your former address.

**THE RECOVERY TIMES** would like to hear your story. Please keep it to 500 words and focus on sobriety. Please include your sobriety date and an email or phone number then email Pat at: [xnowisthetime@aol.com](mailto:xnowisthetime@aol.com).

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**SAN FERNANDO VALLEY CENTRAL OFFICE**  
**Minutes of Intergroup Representatives Meeting, January 11, 2016**

**OPENING: Brian H.**

- Brian opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. with The Serenity Prayer
- Peter G. read "The Twelve Traditions"
- Sandy R. accepted a motion for approval of Minutes from the December Intergroup meeting with corrections.

**TREASURER'S REPORT: Joel S.**

- MTD \$12,021 and YTD was \$6,630.
- Gratitude month was very successful!

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

- Central Office - Everything is running smoothly at Central Office.
- *Recovery Times* -Reminder deadline for submissions is 15<sup>th</sup> of the month; send to Pat's e-mail [xnowisthetime@aol.com](mailto:xnowisthetime@aol.com).
- Central Office is in the black primarily due to the generosity of group donations. Literature sales are down approximately \$18,000 over last year, partly due to online availability of AA literature.

**MEETING RELATED BUSINESS: Cheryl A.**

Nine new Intergroup reps were introduced: Jo P., Shakers, Daily. Glendale; Dexter S., Wake Up Group, Daily in Reseda; Joe K., Reseda Wake Up Group, Daily in Reseda; Ted G., Learn To Live, Wednesdays in Woodland Hills; Pam H., Burbank Group, Daily in Burbank; Michael J., West Valley Participation, Mondays in Northridge; Brian L., Staggs of Sobriety, Mondays in Canoga Park; Laura R., Shadow Ranch, Mondays in Woodland Hills; Erin B., Women's Problem Discussion, Wednesdays in Studio City.

IGRs were reminded to encourage recruitment from meetings that are not represented. There are currently more than 780 meetings in the San Fernando Valley, but only 50 - 60 represented monthly at IGR. Orientation for new IGRs begins at 6:30 p.m. prior to the meeting.

## Founder's Message

The Next Frontier:  
Emotional Sobriety,  
Jan. 1958

"I think that many oldsters who have put our AA "booze cure" to severe but successful tests still find they often lack emotional sobriety. Perhaps they will be the spearhead for the next major development in AA – the development of much more real maturity and balance (which is to say humility) in our relations with ourselves, with our fellows, and with God."

**Bill W.** co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous

"The newcomer reminds us that it isn't working; the birthday people remind us that it is." Anonymous

Another name for untreated alcoholism: so-dry-ity." Anon

"By being of service and building trust here, we also build relationships at home, at work and in our community." Anon

HOPE: "Hold on, pain ends." Anon

## SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES

- General Service District 1: John: Studying the traditions and looking into sponsoring workshops.
- General Service District 17: Paul: Meeting in North Hollywood, the 1<sup>st</sup> Monday of the month at 6:30 p.m. Establishing policy to purchase all literature from Central Office.
- San Fernando Valley Hospital & Institutions Committee: Nancy: Financials look good. Please thank all the meetings. They're always looking for people to speak on panels. H&I meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month at Saint Innocent's in Tarzana.

## 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** - Dawn H. presented attendance certificates.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM AA GROUPS & SEVENTH TRADITION:

- Peter, Radford Hall: The monthly Birthday Meeting is held at 5 pm the last Sunday of the month. Radford's Mini-conference "Keep Coming Back" will be held March 18 - 20, 2016.
- Brian H. reminded everyone to bring 350 flyers for upcoming events so each meeting can get at least 5 copies. Flyers must be for "AA-related events" (defined as "an event that includes an AA Meeting as part of the event").

## JANUARY BIRTHDAYS – 59 YEARS OF SOBRIETY!

Joe K., 1 year; Ernie C., 2 years; Tami E., 5 years,  
Michael B., 9 years; Kate F., 9 years; and Herb M., 33 years.

## VACANCIES ON BOARD - None.

**CLOSING:** Brian H. made a motion to adjourn. It was recognized and seconded. Meeting adjourned at 7:31 pm with *The Lord's Prayer* led by Dawn H. Prepared and submitted by: Sandy R., Recording Secretary

## PLAN YOUR YEAR WITH THESE AA EVENTS:

44<sup>th</sup> All CA Young People in AA Round-Up, Orange County, CA  
4/21 - 4/24/16

Tri-State Round-Up: Laughlin, NV                      5/19 - 5/22  
[www.tristate-roundup.com](http://www.tristate-roundup.com)

Desert Pow Wow: Indian Wells, CA                      6/9 – 6/12  
[www.desertpowwow.com](http://www.desertpowwow.com)

Founder's Day: 6/10-6/12, Akron, Ohio [www.akronaa.org](http://www.akronaa.org)

(Continued, page 1) The first year of sobriety was really difficult for me, not so much the “not drinking” part but dealing with all of the raw emotions, setting boundaries, and dealing with the wreckage of my past. It was wonderful to have Bill by my side offering support and advice from a sober perspective. He never stepped into a sponsor role, but there’s something about having a loved one by my side who understands an alcoholic’s behavior and won’t judge, like when my license was suspended for an outstanding failure to appear and my car got towed for having expired tags. These happened in my first year and rather than judge and scold me, Bill praised me for (finally) taking care of business, saying he was proud I could finally take responsibility -- and better late than never!

Nearly 18 months into sobriety, Bill moved in and we are planning a sober future. Two people united is better than one! **Kelly R., Tujunga, CA**

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**Rehab Romance:** She was young, sober and in love—with everyone

All my life, one way or another, there was a guy involved. Whether he was a boyfriend, not a boyfriend, a friend, a hostage—there was a guy. I never had a relationship that lasted more than four months and I could never figure out why. The thought that I could be the problem (not the guy) never crossed my mind. I would become mentally and emotionally attached to men. Without them I was depressed, unhappy and suicidal. I thought I needed them to be happy.

So it was not a surprise that when I came to AA, I needed a boyfriend right away. Before coming into AA, I was at a 28-day inpatient rehab. It was there that I met my new “future husband.” He was my type. I was 19 years old at the time, and he was 20. Perfect—someone relatively close to my age would be good for me (my previous men were always older, that’s why things never worked out). Prior to going into rehab, I had decided that I would move to Pittsburgh after I completed the 28-day program. My mom’s half-sister lived in Pittsburgh and had invited me to live with her. Well, wouldn’t you know, my rehab romance was from Pittsburgh too. That had to be a sign he was “the one.” To make what could be a very long story short, I’ll just say that we ended up talking off and on for a few months and eventually just stopped. I should add that after the first time we stopped talking, I drank.

When I heard about the suggestion, “No dating in the first year,” I thought, to hell with that! Didn’t people know I needed a boy to be happy? Geez. I was a few months sober and had no idea what I wanted. I was also trying to do so many things at once; in reality, I would not have had time for a boyfriend anyway. However, I still continued to talk to guys and think that everyone I met was “the one.” I justified it by telling myself I was just “keeping my options open.” But I would forget about everything else when a boy was involved. “What you put before your recovery will be the first thing you lose.” I remember hearing that and thinking, Wow! Oh, really? But it’s the truth, at least in my experience. I had to stop looking for someone all the time. I had to learn that trying to form a relationship on self-will just doesn’t work out. (Continued)

I recently turned 21, and I've been sober since December 19, 2011. Having a little over a year now, I can see why waiting is suggested to newcomers. I came to realize that when I was first getting sober I still had an insane mindset, so my decisions were insane. I don't think I'll ever be completely cured of craziness. However, through working the Steps, I've learned that a date is not a hostage. One date is no longer marriage. A breakup is no longer the end of the world. I have to be happy with myself before I can be happy with anybody else. I know, I know, that's so clichéd, but it's the truth. The program is a process and requires work. I have to put work into my recovery before I can work on forming a successful relationship with another human being.

Life is not always easy. I find, though, that when I'm doing what I need to do and what is best for me, I'm happy. Happiness is all I ever wanted, and I got it. I've learned that everything happens for a reason, and whatever is meant to be will be. I have been on a few dates recently and they were fun. I currently do not have a boyfriend, and yet I'm happy—which to me is a miracle. —*Kaitlyn W., Pittsburgh, Pa.*



**DANCING WITH MOM:** Acting as though she loved the mother she couldn't stand changed both lives forever.

When I was 9 years old, I watched my father get electrocuted and die in a horrible thunderstorm. Daddy was my whole world, the very best part of life. He adored me and I adored him. His was the only unconditional love I knew. Anywhere I could go with him I went—on odd jobs, to the doctor and to the local bars. I believed he loved me more than anyone.

I was devastated by his death. It wasn't just that he died, but after his death my mom decided she wasn't interested in being a mother anymore. She started going to dances, she started dating and was almost never home. She had a lot of boyfriends and every one of them was more important to her than me. There was a lot of neglect but the emotional neglect was the most painful. What I remember the most was just that feeling that I didn't matter anymore. Whatever wonder life had held, it was now gone.

My dad's death did not cause my alcoholism, but I do believe it sped up the start-date on my drinking. I had my first drunk at age 10. It didn't take long for me to figure out that alcohol could fill that huge hole inside me, fill those empty places that were once filled with love. What I remember most about that first drunk was that it just hurt less. It didn't hurt when I breathed and my heart didn't ache as much. I started using alcohol and drugs on a daily basis at age 12. I felt so alone and missed being loved and the alcohol helped me not to care, not to feel or need.

Over the years, two things became very clear: I didn't like life and I didn't like me. I suffered from depression from the time I was a teenager, which led to six suicide attempts and lots of therapy, psych wards and medications. I was told that my problems were a direct result of my mom's neglect, and I was happy to believe that.

This is where my resentment of my mom began, and over time it grew and grew. I hated her and wished she would die. I was really full of hurt and pain but it came out as anger. I didn't even try to be nice to her. I blamed her for everything and couldn't stand to be around her.

Nine years ago, after another failed suicide attempt and another trip to the psych ward, it was suggested that maybe my problems were caused by my drinking, that maybe alcohol was the problem. I went to an out-patient program and they suggested I start attending AA meetings. (Continued)

At my first meeting, I met the woman who became my sponsor for the year that I remained sober. During that year, even though I wasn't on the Ninth Step, my sponsor suggested that I start being nice to my mom and that I should act like I loved her even if I did not. I thought she was crazy. I filled my sponsor in on every detail of the years of abuse and neglect. Much to my dismay, her suggestion was still the same. She also told me I should pray for her. I knew my sponsor was nuts then.

I resented the suggestion and my sponsor. Why should I give my mom the love she had never given me? Why should I be the one to change? Why should I be the one to do all the work? But I did what she told me to do. It was difficult. At first I did it imperfectly and inconsistently, but I took the best actions I could at that time. And a funny thing happened. Over time, little by little, I found that it actually felt good to be nice to my mom. That suggestion gave me permission to stop being mean and abusive to her and to begin to treat her with love and respect.

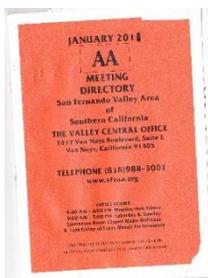
I did not stay sober at that time, but I continued to take those actions toward my mom and I developed a close and loving relationship with her. I believe God brought me to AA at that time just for that purpose, so my mom and I could rebuild our relationship before it was too late. It took another six years for me to come back to AA. I had finally gotten back to that jumping-off place. I knew exactly what to do and where to go. I came back to AA on my own and have been sober ever since.

During the first two years of my sobriety there were many changes going on in my mom's life. Because of AA and sponsorship I was able to help her through them. We moved her from her family home to an assisted-living facility. At first, I visited her every day to help with her transition. I made her a wall collage with every photo from her home. She was closer to my house now, so I was able to spend more time with her. I took her to shows and concerts, we went on walks, we went out to eat, we went to church and I even danced with her. I felt more genuine love for her in my heart than I could have ever imagined was possible.

At the very end, her mind wasn't always there. She refused to do things with me because she had dates with imaginary boyfriends, including my dad. It was hard to feel the old feelings come up again, but my sponsor had suggested that I read the Eleventh Step prayer before each visit. I certainly wasn't perfect at it but I did seek to love, understand and give comfort to her. I had to remember it wasn't about me.

I was with my mom when she passed in 2012, and I had the honor of giving her eulogy. My sponsor walked me through all of it with dignity and grace. My sister told me that I was responsible for all of my mom's greatest joys in her last years. I am so grateful to God, to AA and to sponsorship because without it I know that king-sized resentment would have never gone away. I had no regrets when she passed because I knew she loved me - that she always had. Most importantly, my mom knew I loved her, not because I told her but because I showed her by taking actions I learned in AA. —*Judy E., Orland Park, Ill.*

## MEETING DIRECTORIES SAVE LIVES!



There's something very special about attending a meeting when you're out of town. When I'm in New York, it's almost a pilgrimage to go to Perry Street. When I was in New Orleans I walked into a meeting that wasn't the meeting I thought it was going to be, but I saw the 12 Steps on the wall along with the Traditions and I knew it was a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous and that's all that mattered: I was in the right place.

I always seem to feel the magic and the heartbeat of Alcoholics Anonymous no matter where I am, but there's something very special about attending a meeting "someplace else."

Quite a few times I've been asked to lead a meeting merely because I was from out of town.

I seem to hear better, see more when I'm in a meeting away from home. Aside from the fact that it's important to stay connected while you are away from home, I'm always fascinated to see how other meetings are run, their format and the people. It's another new adventure within sobriety. By the way, I'm on my way to Perry Street now. Annd exhale..... **Sharon S., Los Angeles**

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