

RECOVERY TIMES

Vol. 61, No. 3, March 2018

The Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office Newsletter



SOBER IN HER 70's

She left her old life of drinking behind when in her mid-70s

In my middle 70s, I was aware of losing control of my drinking. I thought others didn't realize the extent of my drinking. When attending a party or a gathering of any kind, or if I were driving, I'd abstain from alcohol.

I couldn't stand the idea of a newspaper headline, "70-year-old Grandma Gets DUI." It never occurred to me that I might kill or maim someone. So, I contented myself with punch or water or soda. But as soon as I got home, I'd lay into the booze.

I loved the taste of gin, vodka, bourbon, or just about anything. I hid my bottle and drank secretly. Was anyone fooled?

When I came to realize that even one day of not drinking was impossible, I went on praying and asking God to take away this burden and make me whole again. There were a couple of times when I asked my mate and my daughters if they thought I should go to AA.

They each said no and suggested diversionary activities instead. Of course, I took this as a sign that my drinking wasn't so bad after all. Even if their reason for saying that I didn't need AA was due to embarrassment, I took it as a permit to keep on drinking. One day, one of my daughters suspected I was sneaking alcohol and confronted me. I promised to quit on my birthday two weeks away.

The next night, both my daughters sat me down and gently said what I needed to hear. The following day, they took me to my first AA meeting.

Working the Steps and attending meetings, I discovered a new way of living. I am eternally grateful for being in the program and finding the fellowship. It has strengthened my spiritual life and given my life new meaning and pleasantness. I'll never go back to the old one. —*Dorothy M., Shasta Lake, Calif.* Copyright © 2018 Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

If you think you might drink, get yourself to an AA meeting. You can view all of the meetings in the San Fernando Valley online at: www.sfvaa.org. If you need someone to talk to, call Central Office's 24-hour hotline at: (818) 988-3001.



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: (818) 988-3001 or email: sfvco@la.twcbc.com.

SAN FERNANDO VALLEY CENTRAL OFFICE
Minutes of Intergroup Representatives Meeting
February 12, 2018

OPENING: Larry S.

- Josh opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. with The Serenity Prayer.
- Rick A. read "The Twelve Traditions"
- Sandy R. accepted a motion for approval of the February Intergroup Minutes.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Adrian I.

Central Office is in the black! MTD/YTD is \$2,706, as compared with last year's MTD/YTD which was \$9,588. The difference is due, in part, to January having been a 5-week salary month. In addition, sales were \$2,100 less than this month last year and contributions were \$4,300 less. Financials are available.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S REPORT: Bob F.

- Central Office
 - The website is running great.
 - Daytime volunteer shifts are becoming available this month, as we have lost some people. New volunteers are always needed.
- *Recovery Times:*
 - Reminder: Stories of recovery are welcome. Deadline for submissions is 15th of the month; send to Pat K. at xnowisthetime@aol.com.

MEETING RELATED BUSINESS: Josh S.

- 11 new Intergroup Representatives this month:
 - Cece, District 1 GSO liaison;
 - Nick C., H & I liaison;
 - Rick, "A Textbook for Living Book Study," Saturdays at 7pm in Chatsworth;
 - Jeremy, "Beginners Candlelight Discussion," Sundays at 7:30 pm in Woodland Hills;
 - Victor F., "Frank Kelly Memorial Men's Stag," Tuesdays at 8pm in Canoga Park;
 - Marie Z., "Love and Care Women's Group," Saturdays at 12:30 pm in Reseda;
 - Josh S., "A New Freedom," Tuesdays at 7pm in Chatsworth;
 - Diana O., "Just the Black Print," Thursdays at 7:30 pm in Sherman Oaks;
 - BJ L., "HITS Women's Stag," Tuesdays in Canoga Park;
 - Patti M., "As Bill Sees It," Sundays at 7pm in North Hollywood; and,
 - Raini C., "Women's Problem Discussion," Wednesdays at 7:30 pm in Studio City.

SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES:

- General Service District 11: Ernie: Workshop scheduled for March 11, 2018, from 2-4:30 pm, at the Windsor Club. The topic is "Putting the Commitment in Commitments." The workshop is free, and coffee and snacks will be provided.
- San Fernando Valley Hospital & Institutions Committee: Nick C.: The 37th Annual H&I Conference, with Al-Anon Participation, April 6, 7 and 8, 2018, at the Four Points Sheraton Ventura Harbor Resort. The theme is "Our Experience Can Benefit Others." Registration forms are available.
- San Fernando Valley 43rd Annual AA Convention: Bernard: Last month's Convention was a huge success! Join us for the first planning meeting of the 44th Annual AA Convention on April 17, 2018, 7pm, at St. Innocent's Church in Tarzana.
- Santa Clarita Valley 15th Annual AA Convention: Bernard B.: September 14, 15th and 16th, 2018 at the Valencia Hyatt. The theme is "Miraculous Demonstrations." Women's Gala fundraiser on February 24, 2018, 11:30 am, at the First Presbyterian Church in Newhall.

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 - No new business.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM AA GROUPS & SEVENTH TRADITION:

- Ernie, The Burbank Group:
 - Acoustic Jam Session, March 10, 2018 at 8pm. Suggested donation \$10. An evening of informal musical entertainment by fellow members of the Burbank Group. Stay for the 10pm Candlelight meeting!
- Brian, Unit A:
 - Saint Patty's Day Food, Fun, Fellowship and Dancing on March 17, 2018. Speaker meeting at 6pm, followed by a corned beef and cabbage dinner and dance. Suggested donation \$10.
- The Gong Show:
 - Leader Participation Meeting, Thursdays at 7pm, 7930 Mason Ave., Winnetka.
- Josh S., A New Freedom:
 - This new meeting needs support. Tuesdays from 7-8pm, located at 20151 Nordhoff St., Winnetka.
- AA Desert Pow Wow:
 - June 7, 8 and 9, 2018 in Indian Wells, California. Registration forms are available or register online at www.desertpowwow.com.

REMINDERS:

Larry S.: Reminder that groups should bring at least 350 flyers for upcoming events so that each meeting can have 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").

ACKNOWLEDGE BIRTHDAYS FOR THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY – 55 YEARS OF SOBRIETY!

- David, 4 years
- Rick A., 22 years
- Jim, 29 years

VACANCIES ON BOARD - There are no vacancies on the Board.

CLOSING: A motion to adjourn was recognized and seconded. Meeting adjourned at 7:19 pm with *The Lord's Prayer*. Prepared and submitted by: Sandy R., Recording Secretary

Info from Central Office of the San Fernando Valley

AA Central Office of the San Fernando Valley is located at 16132 Sherman Way, Van Nuys and maintains 24/7 Phone Service for AAs. We are located in an office building on the southwest corner of Woodley & Sherman Way, west of the Mobil Station and remain 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.



Please buy your meeting supplies from Central Office of the Valley. In doing so, you are supporting our office and also getting your materials at our cost. (It's always more expensive to buy them from a retail store). Central Office is a legitimate non-profit. Personal donations cannot exceed \$3,000 per year and must be from members of AA, not from outsiders.

Our website, www.sfvaa.org, provides meeting info, upcoming events and service meeting info. You can also download a copy of Recovery Times (and previous issues) for free. To receive a printed copy of Recovery Times, mailed to your address, please send us your name, address and payment of \$7.00 to cover a year's worth of mailings. Also let us know if this is for a new or renewing subscription and if you have changed your address.

FROM THE FOUNDERS

"The unique ability of each AA to identify himself with, and bring recovery to, the newcomer in no way depends upon his learning, eloquence, or on any special individual skills. The only thing that matters is that he is an alcoholic who has found a key to sobriety."

AA Co-Founder, Bill W.,
September 1952
"Tradition Five"

"In AA we have no VIPs, nor have we need of any. Our organization needs no title-holders nor grandiose buildings. ... Experience has taught us that simplicity is basic in preservation of our personal sobriety and helping those in need."

AA Co-Founder, Dr. Bob, September 1948
"The Fundamentals in Retrospect"

"Let us remember that great legion who still suffer from alcoholism and who are still without hope. Let us, at any cost or sacrifice, so improve our communication with all these that they may find what we have found - a new life of freedom under God."

AA Co-Founder, Bill W.,
February 1961

"The Shape of Things to Come"

AA SERVICE COMMITTEES:



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 Young People in AA: 1st Sunday of the month @ 1 p.m. at Unit A., 10641 Burbank Blvd., North Hollywood. Regular weekly meeting Monday nights at 8 pm.

San Fernando Valley Intergroup: Central Office holds a monthly meeting for all Intergroup reps on the 2nd Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m. for orientation with the general meeting to follow at 7 p.m. It takes place at St. Innocent Church, 5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana. Intergroup reps provide an important service to the group. IGRs share information on upcoming AA events in the Valley.

To serve as an Intergroup Rep, call: (818) 988-3001. Support Your Central Office by sending a rep to the monthly Intergroup meetings the 2nd Monday of every month at St. Innocent Church, 5657 Lindley, Tarzana. We would love to have you represent your group in this important function.

Celebrating an A.A. Anniversary? Please consider making a \$1.00 donation to Central Office for each year of your sobriety during your birthday month. **This month, we celebrate the AA anniversaries of: Greg I. – 17 Years, Cindy S. – 22 Years and the Reseda Big Book Study: 13 members, 169 Years.**

Deaths: We remember **Phoebe N. – 41 Years**

Has your meeting changed? Please provide meeting updates to: **SFVAA Central Office, 16132 Sherman Way, Van Nuys, CA 91406.** We're open Monday – Friday: 9 a.m. – 6 p.m. and weekends: 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. (Literature closed last Fri. of every month for Inventory and on major holidays).

A Warm Welcome

In 1983, I arrived on the doorstep of a local clubhouse where I was told AA meetings were held. I was 22 years old, fresh out of prison, and had been disowned by my own family. No one wanted me around. My fellow prisoners didn't like me. Alcoholics and addicts on the street didn't like me. Rehab counselors were sick and tired of me. I was at my wit's end.



A man standing by the door of the clubhouse welcomed me like I was a long-lost friend. I was perplexed. What did he want from me?

I was later to find out that all he wanted was for me to experience what he felt when he was new and alone and right out of prison—welcomed.

My sober odyssey took root on that very day, and today—31 years later—my life is full of excitement. When I celebrate my sobriety month this year, I'll be sharing my experience, strength and hope at that very same meeting that gave me this new way of life. I can't wait to share with the new guys and girls there the hope that is available for them too.

I was in the front row of the club last night when the chairwoman banged the gavel for the meeting to begin. I fist-bumped all the young guys, doing my best to let them know I was glad to see them. Today, I love life.

That's my job today, to give back freely what was given to me. I don't ever want to become an AA "thief." I'm so grateful that there was a man standing there by the door when I arrived. Now it's my turn to be that man. -- Robbie W., Wildwood Crest, New Jersey, USA Copyright © 2017 Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

Murphy's Laws of Sobriety



1. The more cautiously you walk with a cup of coffee in an A.A. meeting the greater your chances of somebody bumping into you and spilling it.
2. Whatever you don't want to deal with is always the topic of every A.A. meeting you go to.
3. The more you resent your sponsor the happier she is to see you.
4. The harder you work on a character defect the more glaring it becomes.

5. Whenever a speaker says he is not going to give a long drunk-a-log, a long drunk-a-log ensues.
6. The less you work the principles the greater the personalities.
7. The more you want to speak the less you will be asked. The less you want to speak the more you will be asked.
8. When you finish working all the steps and start to feel really good, a catastrophe always happens so that you have to start working them all over again.
9. The speaker will always focus on the one person in the room who isn't listening.
10. Wherever you put the cream and sugar in an A.A. meeting it's always in the wrong place.
11. When your fear of financial security is finally removed, so is your job.
12. Whenever you keep hearing the same speaker at every meeting you go to and you go out of town to a new meeting, he will be the main speaker.
13. Anything done in your home group more than once which is totally illogical will probably become a tradition.
14. When you feel your worst and go to a meeting, somebody always comes up and tells you how good you look.



Robin F., Burbank

Life Support

When it got tough, she reached out to the rooms and found love and care. It was a Mother's Day to remember

A couple of years ago, I moved back to western Massachusetts. The move was not by choice. My mother was not doing well. I had just taken an apartment and wanted to move slowly while selling my house. So far I just had a bed, a couch, a table and some chairs. A few days after the move, I got a call at work saying my mother was taken to the hospital. The next eight weeks were very difficult. I was at the nursing home every night. AA meetings were difficult to make, but some nights I at least made it to half a meeting.

Mom was finally moved to a facility that was better able to handle her end-stage dementia, and I was able to be at the nursing home often and make my meetings. Meetings were important. I've been sober a long time but the rooms are my sanctuary from life on life's terms.

After living in the Berkshires for as long as I had, the people I got sober with were now few and far between. Meeting new people is hard for me, but I got to know some really great members here and built my support system back up.

The move continued and my apartment became a home. I rejoined the old home group I had when I lived here almost 20 years earlier. I also started going to a meeting close to where I live.

Mom was slowly getting worse. Watching her go bit by bit was so hard. Then Mother's Day rolled around and it was by far the worst one I have ever had. As I walked into my AA meeting that Sunday, I prayed no one would ask me to speak. I just needed to be there and listen. The very last man to share seemed to talk out of my heart. He said he didn't want to speak and had had the worst day of his life because his mother was dying. He shared his experience, strength and hope, but I think it took more strength just to stand up there.

I knew I had to thank him after the meeting. I told him he wasn't alone on that crappy day and that my Mother's Day was awful too. His name was Mike. He asked me what was going on and I said my mom was in hospice. I told him that having a large family makes it difficult to get everyone on the same page. Then he looked at me and told me that his family had just made the decision to remove his mom from life support. I started to cry. I couldn't believe my Higher Power put this person in my path. I was so emotional I left without getting his phone number.

I wanted him to know that I was thinking of him and praying for his family. I knew that at some point that week he would lose his mom. I got his address from a mutual friend who knew him well. I was again hit with God working in my life when I found out we live in the same neighborhood. I sent a card and received a text from him on Saturday letting me know she had passed and when her service would be. I told him I would be there.

In the following weeks, we talked at meetings. There is no easy way to get through a parent's death. He'd had to make a difficult decision. And we were doing the same, piece by piece, with my mom. He shared how the pain and grief would just grab hold of him at times, and I would tell him how my mom didn't recognize me or would just sleep through my visits.

Then, not long after, my mom died. I sat with family until they came for her body. I made funeral arrangements in the afternoon and was at my AA meeting that night, just as I had been the day my father passed. That Thursday was the wake. My sponsor came, my friends from work came and Mike came with his girlfriend. He was the most important person for me to see because I knew he understood my pain. We were both so close to it. I believe we were put in each other's paths for a reason, even if it was just to share our pain. Our friendship lightened my load; it reminded me I am never alone.

In the beginning, I was told: No matter what happens, don't drink and go to meetings. I was also told: This too shall pass. I know it's true; it has never failed me. As long as I show up, God gives me what I need to make it through. Death comes in many forms, not just the passing of a loved one. It can be the end of a relationship, a major life change, loss of the ability to function due to illness or accident. The grieving process is just that, a process. I have been through it many times, for all of the reasons above and, after each, life did change. I grew from it and I stayed sober and I didn't do it alone. I will always be grateful to Mike for sharing his pain with me. I don't think it made it any easier for either of us, but we both stayed sober and we drew strength from it. -- Carol B., So. Hadley, MA Copyright © 2017 Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

Calendar of Upcoming Events:

37th So. CA H & I Conference: April 6-8, 2018, Ventura, CA www.socalhandi.org

Big Island Bash: May 4 – 6, 2018, Kailua-Kona, HI em: bigislandbash@gmail.com

24th Intl. Convention in Greece: May 17 – 20, 2018, em: parthenongr.ana@gmail.com

41st Summerfest: Eugene, Oregon: June 29 – July 1, 2018, www.aa-summerfest.org

Central Office of SFV

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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED