

RECOVERY TIMES

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The Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office Newsletter

50 Years of Love & Service

Jim C. (J.C.) of Pacoima Celebrates 50 Years of Love & Service

On August 4, 1968, I went to my first Alcoholics Anonymous on a Friday night in Pacoima. It was a speaker meeting and the speaker was Chuck O. I remember he had on a nice necktie and suit and said he had been sober for three years. He told a story about how he had his family back, he didn't get fired and he hadn't gone to jail in three years – no tickets or nothing. Three guys gave me their numbers and asked if I wanted to go to another meeting with them the next day. I told them I couldn't because I had to cut my grass.

But the next day, I couldn't forget that meeting and I decided to go with them. They took me to a meeting in Burbank that took place in the back of a bar. They had coffee and jelly donuts and they gave me the 20 questions. I answered 19 of them positively and I realized that I was an alcoholic and I raised my hand and identified. Right there, I made up my mind that whatever it took, I was going to do it. I took to the program right away and I took the Steps.

But now, I need to tell you about how I became an alcoholic.

I was born in Alabama and my mother and grandmother, who raised me, were very religious. My dad died when I was three years old. When I was 8 or 9, my mother married again. My step father was an alcoholic and went he started, he never could stop. He was a hard worker but was drinking his money up.

When I was 16, I came home one night and he was drunk. My mother had just come out of the hospital because she had been very ill. I tried to talk to him and tell him to stop drinking but he said I was too big for my britches. Then he jumped at me and my mother jumped between us and got hurt. I ran out of the house to go to my grandmother's but then I decided to go back. I knew where my father's guns were kept and I got one and shot this man, killing him.

I went to jail for a few days before I was bailed out then the grand jury ruled that I had acted in self-defense. Even so, I had to carry this burden. Back then, when you walked down the street as a young person, you were expected to greet your neighbors who would be sitting out on their porches. People felt sorry for me and what I had to do and my friends in school accepted me, but I had that inside of me. When I would pass by people and greet them, they would get real quiet and I imagined that they were saying bad things about me after I left. And when I tried to talk to girls, fathers didn't want me to talk to their daughters. The Army was my ticket out of my hometown to get away from all this.

In 1949, I had been in the Army Reserves during high school and when I graduated, I joined the Army. Although I had been drinking during high school, when I went to Korea, I became a full-fledged alcoholic. After I came home in 1953, I enrolled at Alabama A & M College. I went there for two years and my drinking escalated. I dropped out before they could kick me out and did a geographic to Chicago Heights, Illinois. My plan was to work, save some money and go back to college. But the first night I got there, I was in jail for being drunk – so nothing had changed. **Continued, page 5 -**



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

OPENING: Larry S.

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

TREASURER'S REPORT: Adrian I.

- MTD is \$2,239 and YTD is <\$1,658>, as compared with last year's YTD which was <\$7,285>. Last month's Take Your Sponsor to Breakfast netted \$2,700 and we received a contribution from the Desert Pow Wow!
- Financial Statements and Group Contributions are available.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S REPORT: Bob F.

- Central Office:
 - Central Office is running smoothly.
 - Really need new volunteers for all five time slots! One year of sobriety is required. Please contact Central Office.
 - November is Gratitude Month!

Recovery Times: Send Pat K. stories of recovery by the 15th of the month at xnowisthetime@aol.com.

MEETING RELATED BUSINESS: Josh S - There were no new Intergroup Representative this month.

SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES:

- General Service District 11: Ernie: All official business for the rest of the year has been completed.
- San Fernando Valley Hospital & Institutions Committee: Bernard B. for Nick C.: Join us on the 3rd Monday of the month at Saint Innocent's Church in Tarzana. New member orientation at 7pm, business meeting starts at 8pm. For more information, visit www.sfvhi.org.
- San Fernando Valley 44th Annual AA Convention: Bernard B.: Registration flyers are available or register online at www.sfvaaconvention.org. The convention will be held February 1-3, 2019 at the Warner Center Marriott. The theme this year is, "Just Stay, It's the Easier, Softer Way," and colors are baby blue and chocolate brown. Marathon slot request forms are available.

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:

- Marianna and David, YPSFVAA: Dr. Bob's Nightmare Before Christmas: Saturday, Dec. 15, at 2295 E. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena. Meeting from 8-9pm, followed by Jitters Dance & Bobdacious Battle of the Bands at 9:30pm. \$15 suggested donation.
- 47th ACYPAA Round-Up will be held April 4 - 7, 2019 at the LAX Hilton. Pre-Registration forms available or register online at www.acypaa.org/register. Pre-registration is \$15 for one / \$25 for two, but no newcomer will be turned away! It took a decade to get this conference to our area!

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").

FROM THE FOUNDERS

"Though my sobriety had come easy, the growing up business hadn't. Both emotional and spiritual growth have always been mighty difficult for me."

AA Co-Founder, Bill W., September 1957, "The Clergy," The Language of the Heart

"In the years that lie just ahead Alcoholics Anonymous faces a supreme test - the great ordeal of its own prosperity and success. I think it will prove the greatest trial of all. Can we but weather that, the waves of time and circumstance may beat upon us in vain."

AA Co-Founder, Bill W., June 1946, "Policy on Gift Funds."

"At my very first AA meeting ... I heard words of love, understanding and compassion ... I believe the hand of God reached down at that meeting and healed me. For from that day thirty-eight years ago to this, I have not had a desire to drink or escape from reality again." **Royal Palm Beach, FL**

"I sometimes forget to feel gratitude for my sobriety ... This is why I must continue to work with others, to go to meetings, to be of some service to the world around me -- not because these are 'good' things, but rather so that I can once again be stimulated into feelings of gratitude for this life I have found." **Los Angeles,**

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ACKNOWLEDGE BIRTHDAYS FOR NOVEMBER: 42 YEARS OF SOBRIETY! Tim - 1 year, Adam - 2 years, Marianna - 5 years, and Larry S. - 34 years.

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

CLOSING: A motion to adjourn was recognized and seconded. Meeting adjourned at 7:16 pm with *The Lord's Prayer*. Prepared and submitted by: Sandy R., Recording Secretary

INFO FROM A.A. CENTRAL OFFICE OF THE SAN FERNANDO VALLEY

AA Central Office maintains a 24 hour phone line for alcoholics in need, hosted by volunteers. Call: 818 988-3001 anytime to speak to a "live" person on the phones.

We are located at 16132 Sherman Way, Van Nuys and maintain 24/7 free phone service for AAs in need. Our office is in office building on the SW corner of Woodley & Sherman Way, west of the Mobil Station. We are 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, coins, medallions and pamphlets that your group needs.

Please buy your meeting supplies from AA Central Office of the Valley.

By doing so, you are supporting our office. (It's always more expensive to buy them from a retail store). **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).** Central Office is a legitimate non-profit. Personal donations cannot exceed \$5,000 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, send us your name and address with payment of \$7.00 to cover a year's worth of mailings. Also let us know if this is for a new subscription or if you have simply changed your address.

AA SERVICE COMMITTEES Calendar:

GENERAL SERVICE AREA 93:

District 1: Meets 1st Wednesday of the month at 7552 Remmet Street, Canoga Park, CA at 6 p.m. orientation; 6:30 for general meeting.

District 11: Meets the 1st Monday of the month at 123 W. Windsor Road, Glendale, CA at 6:30 orientation; 7 p.m. general meeting.

District 16: Meets the 1st Monday of the month at 16132 Sherman Way, Van Nuys, CA. (Central Office) at 6 p.m. for both orientation and meeting.

District 17: Meets the 1st Monday of the month at 5000 Colfax Ave., North Hollywood at 6 p.m. orientation; 6:30 p.m. general meeting.

For more info, refer to your District Committee Member (DCM).

OTHER AA COMMITTEES:

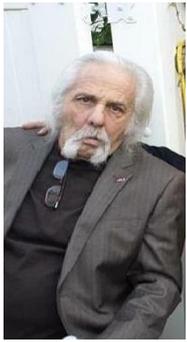
Public Information Committee provides info to the public about what A.A. does & doesn't do. We need volunteers, especially young people and Spanish-speaking AAs, for health fairs & to speak at schools & businesses. To volunteer call Central Office: **(818) 988-3001**.

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). Meets 3rd Monday of the month at 5657 Lindley Ave. Tarzana (St. Innocent) at 7 p.m. for orientation/ 8 p.m. for the general business meeting.

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 at St. Innocent Church, 5657 Lindley Ave., Tarzana. (6:30 p.m. for orientation; 7 p.m. for business meeting). Intergroup reps provide an important service to the group. IGRs share information on upcoming AA events in the Valley. Support Central Office by sending a rep to the monthly Intergroup meeting. We would love to have you represent your group in this important function.

Has your meeting changed? Please provide meeting updates to: **SFVAA Central Office, 16132 Sherman Way, Van Nuys, CA 91406.**



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: Diane D. – 15 years, Pat K. – 15 years, Betty Lou – 22 years, Anonymous – 28 years.**

Deaths: We remember Jack M. – 36 Years, Sylvia S. – 36 Years, Carl W. – 29 years, Rick Brian C. – 6 years and Kellie M. – Central Office volunteer.

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.

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS:

- **San Fernando Valley AA Convention:** Feb, 1 – 3, 2019; Warner Center Marriott, Woodland Hills, CA. www.sfvaaconvention.org
 - **55th Intl. Women's Convention,** February 7 – 10, 2019, Bonaventure Hotel, Figueroa Street, Los Angeles, CA. Want to be of service? The Intl. Women's Convention organizers are looking for volunteers to help with this event. Call Annie for more information: (818) 281-1767.
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DO YOU HAVE A STORY TO SHARE ABOUT YOUR SOBRIETY? The Recovery Times is looking for new authors to write about their experiences in sobriety. Due to space limitations, please limit your submission to one story or article, per person, and limit your submission to 650 words. Email your story to editor Pat K. at: xnowisthetime@aol.com.

Cover Story: J. C. - 50 Years of Love and Service, continued.:



After that, I had a moment of clarity and decided I would not drink anymore. I wrote to and got accepted at Tuskegee Institute, now Tuskegee University, and my first semester, I didn't drink. I was in a fraternity and very popular. But that summer, I tried to drink again and I got expelled from that college three months before graduation. They gave me a chance to repair it but I did the same thing again. They decided to let me graduate anyway with a Bachelors in Science degree. After graduating, I was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the U.S. Army in 1959 where I spent the next two years.

It turns out, the Army didn't like my drinking either and they released me in 1961. That's when I came to California because I sure wasn't going to go back to Alabama. At that time, Pacoima was the only place in the San Fernando Valley where a black person could buy a house. So I packed up three rooms of furniture, my wife and my baby and I got as far away from Alabama as I could to start a new life - but I brought my alcohol with me.

It took five more years of going to the Foothill jail before I came to my first AA meeting. At that time, I had a leadership position in my church but when my drinking started, I was disgraced. During my last drunk, I shot off guns in my house. My wife was afraid of me and she went into hiding and took my daughter with her. I found out when I got a letter from her lawyer, demanding that I go to Alcoholics Anonymous if I wanted to speak with her.

My first sponsor in A.A. was Bob B. He sponsored me for about two years. He was a very lovable man but he didn't have the skills to sponsor me. I could tell him something and he believed it.

During that time, I had heard Kenny D. quite a bit. He was from Alabama – they called him a “redneck.” I understood and respected him as he talked the program very well. Ken D. was very harsh. At first, I didn't like him and he didn't like me, but he went on to be a wonderful sponsor and I loved the man. He sponsored me for more than 20 years until he passed.

Over the last 50 years, I've seen AA change. Now people do whatever they want. You don't have the rigid old-timers anymore who didn't mind hurting your feelings to save your life. We listened to those old-timers in those days. Now we have so many other things. The main thing back then was alcohol that people came to AA for.

When I first came to AA, it was very hard at first because men welcomed me and shook my hand and white women hugged me. In Alabama, white men didn't shake hands with a black man and if you hugged a white woman, you could get hanged. When people started rushing me and putting their arms around me, it was hard for me to accept it. I had to get used to that kind of treatment. Over time, I was accepted in Pacoima by the old-timers: John B., Doris, Oscar, Jackson, and then the Loy brothers, and they became brothers of mine. In Pacoima today, I'm a part of, and I'm respected because I give out respect.

My 50 years of sobriety has given me the life that I always wanted to live. My mother was very proud of me, my family accepted me back, I got a lot of friends and I got to be the man I wanted to be. It's the easier softer way for me today. The program has always been my #1 priority.

I'm really blessed by God that I got 50 years. I remind God every day every morning that I'm alive and I'm sober.

Jim C., Pacoima



DURING THE HOLIDAYS, FIND A MEETING WHEREVER YOU TRAVEL



I was on a one week vacation to the Berkshires in Western Massachusetts in early November this year so before I left home, I wrote down the days, times and locations of all the AA meetings I might want to visit in a close range of where I was staying. I had not been to this part of the state since I was a teen and I looked forward to seeing it through sober eyes as an adult.

I was staying in Lenox, so I chose meetings in that town as well as Lee, Stockbridge, Great Barrington, and a few other towns. I felt confident that I was well prepared for anything that might come up between the time I left and the time I arrived, by having the knowledge of AA meetings I

could attend.

Well, on Sunday night, I planned to visit an evening meeting on Monday but that night, I had trouble sleeping. I've found that, in sobriety, and maybe it's age-related too, if I have caffeine or sugar too late in the day it keeps me up at night. That was the case that night as I tossed and turned all night. By 5:45 a.m., I was tired of trying to sleep so I decided to get dressed and check out the 6:45 a.m. meeting in Lee, MA called "Don't Have a Clue' group.

I pulled out my GPS on my phone and found my way to a church parking lot – a very old Anglican church that looked like it dated back to the 1800's. The sun had just come up and filled the sky with a beautiful pink cloud of sunlight and I marveled at how nice it was to see the sun rise on this crisp cold morning in the New England fall.

As I entered the church, I could smell the coffee brewing. Two or three people were already there hovering around the coffee pot and they greeted me warmly. I told them I was from California and we chatted for a bit while I helped myself to a strong cup of coffee. Others arrived over the next 20 minutes or so and the room filled up so that every chair was taken.

This meeting was a Twelve Step meeting where the leader shared his experience and then everyone in the room had a chance to share on it. This particular day, it was on the 4th Step. I was fortunate enough to be able to share and felt 'a part of' from having done so. There were many interesting stories, mostly light and some very amusing. It felt like home and I was glad I had not slept and thus, discovered this meeting.

After the meeting, a woman about my age came over to me and introduced herself. She was a newcomer who had not done her 4th Step yet and thanked me for sharing that my 4th Step helped me begin to feel serenity in my life as I found my part in most of my resentments. It was a life-changing experience for me and she said that she had been afraid to do this step until she heard my share. I felt, once again, God working in my life by getting me to this meeting.

For the rest of that week, I attended that morning meeting and every day, it got a little easier to get up early and get my butt in a chair. In fact, I began to look forward to going to that meeting as I began to make friends with others and learn who they were and what their lives were like. I also began to care about them. That was a real turning point for this alcoholic. When Friday came and it was my last day there, I asked a few people for their phone numbers and promised to visit again the next time I was in the area.

As I reflect back on this experience, I feel so much gratitude for being a part of this fellowship. No matter where I go, I can always find the hand of A.A. and it makes a great difference in my attitude every time that happens. At this time of year, it's especially important to remember that it's about gratitude and how we can help others – not about what we 'get.' I'm glad to have reached this point in life and forever grateful to the program and the people of Alcoholics Anonymous for my life.

Pat K., Sunland, CA

CELEBRATING THE HOLIDAYS SOBER



It is with a great warmth of heart that I embrace this opportunity to share my current experience of going through a Holiday Season sober and happy. The truth is, I cannot even remember how many years it has been since I made it through this time of year without a drink. Nearly a year ago, after a drinking career that spanned over two-and-half decades, something changed and I began to pursue a course of action that has, since, transformed my life. This is my first Holiday Season with an AWAKENED SPIRIT! I have literally spent this entire century making the same 'New Years' resolution' - to stop drinking and repair the damage around me. Perhaps

in 2019, my resolution will be to take several Alcoholics through the Big Book!

"Jolly" was a word that wasn't likely going to ever become a reality for me, but now that my first sponsee, who drank like me for 40 years, is now almost done with his amends and is helping a new guy... I think jolly defines me most of the time!

I hear that "when the student is ready the teacher will emerge." My alcoholic life had to grind me down until my perception of myself was that I had nothing left to live for. Only a drunk like me knows the depth of my suffering - and THAT'S where the story of my recovery begins. It began in the heart of a man who drank like me, did the 12 steps of AA, had a Spiritual Experience and carried the message of Alcoholics Anonymous to this hopeless alcoholic. Wow, that's what it is; that's what it took. His effective and understanding message was the divinely inspired wisdom in the Big Book that saved my life because I finally, after all these years, took the necessary steps to an awakened spirit.

From my glory days in high school as a three sport All-American athlete to graduating from a prestigious college, the holidays used to take on an air of family nostalgia, love and excitement. Slowly, it all deteriorated and I now remember back to when my family would keep a keep a close eye on me and monitor my drinking. Once they had had enough of my misery, I was no longer invited.

I see now how I brought a lot of emotional baggage to family functions. It never even occurred to me that I was robbing those who loved me of their own emotional security. Including those who I robbed of emotional security on my Step 9 Amends continues to deepen my Spiritual Awakening and there's more power over my thought life.

I thank God in this moment for relieving me of the mental obsession. If there's anyone of you who hasn't experienced the type of awakening that I am experiencing as a result of the 12 steps of AA, hopefully, you can find the same type of love, person to person that works for me.

Aaron K., Lee, Ma.



**Central Office of SFV
16132 Sherman Way
Van Nuys, CA 91406**

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED