

RECOVERY TIMES

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The Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office Newsletter

Why I Love Attending A.A. Conventions



The speakers are phenomenal and the chance to enjoy a meal with a bunch of your friends is a celebration of sobriety you just can't miss. I have been attending these conventions for 19 years and each year it gets better and better. I never used to have friends. Now I have friends that I can hang out with and just have a good time. It gives me a chance to reconnect with old friends and to spend time with the new friends in my life. It's a lot of

fun...we are definitely not a glum lot. We laugh and joke but are deadly serious when it comes to another's survival in sobriety.

I get to see those that helped me along the way and show my gratitude for their help. Throughout the year we trudge the road of Happy Destiny. The conventions are an opportunity to just kick up our heels and have a little fun. There was a time when I could barely tolerate an hour with any group of people. Now I can hang out for 3 days in the company of like-minded individuals and relish the gift that God has given us. *The gift is in the people.* I look forward to and love attending the conventions! **Anonymous**

This February there are two major AA conventions being held locally:

The 44th annual SAN FERNANDO VALLEY AA CONVENTION is February 1 – 3, 2019 at Warner Center Marriott, 21850 Oxnard Street, Woodland Hills, CA. Go to: www.sfvaaconvention.org to register or just show up and register at the door. Typical attendance is around 1,800 people, including AAs, Al Anons and Ala-Teens. Meetings are held around the clock and there are many fun events where you can meet others and socialize. The opening ceremony is Friday at 6:30 p.m., there are dances both Friday and Saturday nights, and of course, there's the Saturday evening banquet and entertainment show that follows. (If you want to stay the night at the Marriott, make sure you ask for the discounted group rate: Code "ANNANNA.")

This year, Los Angeles is also the site for the **55TH AA INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S CONVENTION** from February 7 – 10, 2019 at the Bonaventure Hotel, 404 S. Figueroa Street, Los Angeles, CA. This is the first time Los Angeles has hosted this extraordinary event which focuses on women in sobriety. The IWC is a closed AA event for registered women only. The event starts on Thursday and goes through to Sunday. For more information, visit: <http://internationalwomensconference.org>.



Coming Up: **47th ACYPAA (Young People in AA) Round-Up** will be held April 4-7, 2019 at the LAX Hilton. Pre-register online for \$15 or \$25/two at www.acypaa.org/register. No newcomer will be turned away! It took a decade to get this conference to our area!

32nd Intl. Men's Conference: April 26 – 28, 2019, LAX Airport Marriott, Los Angeles, CA www.iaamc2019.org!

SAN FERNANDO VALLEY CENTRAL OFFICE
Minutes of Intergroup Representatives Meeting
December 10, 2018

OPENING: Larry S.

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

TREASURER'S REPORT: Adrian I.

MTD is <\$408> and YTD is <\$2,066>, as compared with last year's YTD which was <\$8,239>. Contributions from Gratitude Month are still coming in. Financial Statements and Group Contributions are available.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S REPORT: Bob F.

Central Office is running smoothly. We need new volunteers for all five time slots! One year of sobriety is required. Please contact Central Office. Phones need to be answered 24/7 – even on weekends and holidays.

Recovery Times: *Deadline* for stories on recovery is 15th of the month; please send to Pat K. at xnowisthetime@aol.com.

MEETING RELATED BUSINESS: Josh S - There was 1 new Intergroup Representative this month: Carla R., "Winners Attitude Adjustment," daily at 7am, in North Hollywood (Colfax and Addison).

SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES:

- General Service District 11: Ernie: Meet the 1st Monday of the month in Glendale.
- 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.: 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." Marathon meeting time slots are still available. There will be no ticket sales on site – tickets are available through pre-registration only.

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:

47th ACYPAA Round-Up will be held in 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").

ACKNOWLEDGE BIRTHDAYS FOR DECEMBER: 70 YEARS OF SOBRIETY: Norm, 10 years, Dennis B., 24 years and Cheryl A. – 36 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 A.A. CENTRAL OFFICE OF THE SF VALLEY

FROM THE FOUNDERS

"Great modesty and humility are needed by every AA for his own permanent recovery. If these virtues are such vital needs to the individual, so must they be to AA as a whole." **AA Co-Founder, Bill W., March 1946,**

"Once the miracle of sobriety has been received ... Providence expects all of us to work and to grow -- to do our part in maintaining our blessings in full force. A perpetual miracle -- with no effort or responsibility on our part -- simply isn't in the cards. We all understand that the price of both personal and group survival is willingness and sacrifice, vigilance and work."
"AA Co-Founder, Bill W., April 1958"

"My desire to drink became a desire not to."
Saskatchewan, Canada

"Serenity is not the absence of conflict, but the ability to cope with it."
Tacoma, Washington

"Coincidences are merely a manner in which God protects his anonymity."
New York, New York

"Success and failure share a common denominator ... both are temporary."
Escondido, California

"With the clock ticking like it is, I do not have time for anger, resentment, or self-pity. Time is far too precious." Durham, NC

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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 an 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.

January						
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

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).

PRAASA (Pacific Region AA Service Assembly), March 1 – 3, 2019, Irvine, CA www.PRAASA.org



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: Marie Z. – 10 years and Learning to Live Men's Stag: 20 men / 286 years of sobriety!**

Deaths: We remember: Bob S. - 31 Years and George H. – Member in Good Standing.

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.

Upcoming AA Conventions/Conferences:

39th Northern CA Woman to Woman Conference: April 5 – 7, 2019, Sacramento, CA
www.NCWomantoWoman.org

Southern CA H & I Conference: April 5 – 7, 2019, Ventura, CA www.socalhandi.org

San Diego Spring Roundup: April 18 – 21, 2019, San Diego, CA
www.sandiegospringroundup.com

32nd Intl. Men's Conference: April 26 – 28, 2019, LAX Airport Marriott, Los Angeles, CA
www.iaamc2019.org

31st Big Island Bash: May 3 – 5, 2019, Kailui Kona, HI <https://www.bigislandbash.com>
84th Akron Ohio Founders' Day: June 7 – 9, 2019, Akron, Ohio <https://foundersday.org>

GETTIN' BUSY

A newcomer leaps back into life and becomes a much more interesting guy



For a while there, I thought August 14, 2011 would go down as the worst day of my life. The previous day, I launched my morning with a spiked coffee and then alternated the rest of the day between white wine and beer. I wasn't trying to get drunk. My goal was only to feed a steady, daylong buzz. Despite my goal, 15 hours later I got lost after stumbling out of a friend's house three blocks from my own doorstep.

I woke the next morning hungover and humiliated, but finally ready to acknowledge I'd lost the ability to control my drinking. I cringed at the thought of having to say aloud, "Hi, I'm Tom and I'm an alcoholic." But I knew it was time to openly admit I had a problem. That day in August would be the day I decided I'd had enough. I had hit my bottom. Or so I thought. A worse day awaited me.

On Day 7, my first sober Saturday, I woke up and realized glumly I had nothing to do and nothing to occupy my time. While never a barfly, I'd spent most of the past year moldering on the couch with a drink in my right hand and the remote control in my left. Drinking wasn't an option anymore, but I had nothing else to fill the long hours before me. As I applied the shaving cream that awful morning, staring back at me in the mirror was an absolute bore. Worse even than being a drunk was having to admit alcohol had made me an empty shell of a human being.

Desperate for something to divert me from the liquor cabinet, I threw myself into cleaning the house. By late morning I had washed and folded four loads of laundry and had the place shining. My poor wife, trying to relax on her day off, was ready to pull her hair out. "Could you please sit still?" she asked, exasperated.

I admitted, pathetically, that I could not. Two choices lay before me: Find something to busy myself with or start drinking again. By the skin of my teeth, I stayed sober that day, but I knew things couldn't go on like this.

I reluctantly began attending AA meetings and racked my brain for hobbies that had once interested me. This was more difficult than you might expect. My alcoholic brain moved slowly then. Gradually however, I recalled that I once enjoyed cooking. There had always been music playing in my house and I used to like to read.

As I labored through those early days sober, I dusted off my cookbooks, dug out old records and hit the library. I was nothing more than a dry drunk but at least there were good smells and sounds coming from my kitchen. I could bury myself in a novel rather than a bottle. Over time, I noticed I'd become a more interesting guest at parties. I could carry on conversations again. No longer did drink make me disappear into the wallpaper.

After five weeks, the proverbial light came on and I saw there was an easier, softer way. By the grace of God and AA, I'm now sober more than five years. But if I hadn't drummed up a few diversions in my early recovery, I wouldn't have made it a month. In early recovery, idle time is a killer.

Years later, while chairing a meeting at my home group, it occurred to me that hobbies and outside interests might be a good topic for discussion. I thumbed through the Big Book and other AA literature looking for an entry on recovering our former pastimes as we weaned ourselves off alcohol. I found nothing.

"If you don't mind," I told the group, "I'd like to offer a topic without a companion reading. How did you spend your time in early recovery? What hobbies did you take up to replace drinking?"

It was a topic that hit a nerve. Drinking, we saw, took up a lot of time and energy, always at the expense of other things. We counted down the hours and minutes until we could pick up again. We nervously gauged our stashes and fretted over having enough to get us through a weekend. Alcohol so dominated our lives that there wasn't room for other interests. AA has restored my old interests and opened me to new ones as I've worked the Steps.

At 15 months of sobriety, my wife and I visited Santa Fe, New Mexico and stopped at the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum. To my surprise, her paintings awakened something in me. I realized I had developed a need inside for art and beauty. Even more surprising, going to the museum had been **my** idea. On a previous trip when I was still drinking, my wife went alone to a museum while I languished over beers.

A few months after our New Mexico trip, my pastor announced a pilgrimage to Rome. My wife urged me to go, but I was reluctant. My drunken, couch-potato days weren't far behind me and I was still a stick-in-the-mud. At length though, I gave in to the idea and returned from Italy a changed man. I broke down crying at mass in St. Peter's Basilica. The magnificent architecture took my breath away. I listened to my first opera, ***The Marriage of Figaro***, and was blown away.

From our hotel rooftop overlooking Rome, our music director led sing-alongs on his guitar. I joined in and was invited to sing with the church choir. I came home wishing I'd mastered a European language. So I hired a tutor to help revive the Spanish language skills I'd studied in high school. My next trip is to Mexico, followed by Spain.

Today, as I put on the shaving cream, I still don't recognize the man staring back at me. Who is this singing world traveler who speaks Spanish and whose dashboard speakers belt out Puccini? Whoever he is, I like him better than the drunken bore who once dug a groove in my sofa.

-- Tom C., La Salle, Illinois



LUCK OF THE IRISH

If you're very far from home and desperate enough, finding a meeting in Ireland can be quite remarkable

Life was good. With 18 months in AA, I was doing what I was supposed to do. Making meetings, being active, doing service and feeling grateful. I was sober and I felt I was ready to make a trip back to Ireland and visit my family. I never told them I was in AA

because I still had some shame about being an alcoholic. But I went back and all went well. I felt

I didn't need a meeting, and I managed. Nobody had to know anything other than I had just stopped drinking.

That trip went so well, I decided to return about a year and a half later. On this second sober trip, one morning I went down to the local store for a newspaper. As I came out, I saw an old schoolteacher of mine crossing the street heading my way and I emotionally went to pieces. He used to love to physically punish me with his swishing cane, as it came down on my 12-year-old fingers. He would also put his hands on my face. One hand held my face steady and the other hand slapped me repeatedly. He was brutal and I feared him more than anyone I ever came across.

My emotions scared me that day. I had rushes of anger and rage. I wanted revenge. I was ready to strike out. For some reason, I turned away and returned to the house and stayed in my room all day, confused, not knowing what to do or who to ask for help. I had no AA contacts or information and only a prepaid cell phone. I felt truly alone.

A while back at a New York AA meeting, someone had shared that he'd gone to a meeting in this part of Ireland. He said it was in this town, up on a hill. I'd forgotten about that meeting on the hill until right then. I knew of one hill in town, so I decided to go there. By the time I got there, it was a cold, wet, dark winter night. The hill was badly lit. Nobody was around, not a soul was anywhere to ask. I waited, hoping I might see people going into a house or down to a basement or something. Nobody. I went down the steps to several basements. I knocked. No answer.

It was getting late so I tried one more basement. It had a black wrought iron gate in front of the door. I rang the bell and the door swung open and a lovely young lady in her slip smiled and said hello. I asked her if there was a meeting there. She said, "What kind of a meeting?"

"An AA meeting," I answered. "What is that?" she asked. I said it was a meeting for people who had a drinking problem. She said she had never heard of such a thing. I thanked her for her time and left.

I went back down the hill to the main street. Colored lights, bars, restaurants, clubs, discos—all places where I used to drink. I began to feel powerless and forsaken as I stood at the bottom of the hill in a daze. Then all of a sudden, I heard people arguing in the house behind me. Their voices got louder. Just then, their front door swung open and a middle-aged couple emerged. The woman (she might have been a landlady) was shouting at the guy. She said she was sick of his carrying on and he had to stop drinking.

"I can't," he yelled. "Why don't you go to AA?" she asked. "I don't know where it is," he replied.

Without saying another word, she grabbed him by the collar of his long black coat and dragged him up the hill and vanished down into a basement. I walked up slowly in their direction and the lady came back up out of the basement, still angry and unaware of my presence. So I went down the steps and halfway down the drunk guy was coming back up.

I hope he makes it some day. But I made **my** meeting and I'm still sober. Life is good.

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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED