

# RECOVERY TIMES Vol. 71, No. 6, June 2019

The Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office Newsletter

## Welcome to the tattoo convention



### **How an amends for a little white lie led to a surprising encounter with Arizona AA history**

Last year, during our state's Young People's convention, an elegant woman in one of the elevators made positive comments about my tattoos and we engaged in discussion. Eventually, she saw my YPAA (Young People in AA) badge and asked what kind of convention was being held at the hotel.

Always mindful of breaking the anonymity of everyone wearing a badge, I thought about saying "spiritually like-minded people." Then I remembered the inside joke that some of us YPAAs call ourselves: a tattoo convention. So, that's what I told her. We were a tattoo convention.

I felt pretty satisfied with my answer until the next morning when this woman and I were seated at adjacent tables in the restaurant for breakfast, both waiting for the rest of our parties. She politely engaged me in conversation. She asked me to consult with her on some ideas for a tattoo she wanted to have done. While I could have offered opinions, I am not a tattoo artist and was forced to admit my lie. By then, some of my friends showed up and encouraged me to tell her the truth.

So, we told her that we generally don't admit to being AA members in public places because of the multiple reasons for personal anonymity, such as staying humble, not looking for recognition for something we should be doing anyway, and not influencing another's perception of AA based on the activities of any one member or any group of members.

I acknowledged that while I thought my intentions were noble, I hadn't been honest or honorable and I had treated her with disrespect. I said I regretted my actions, not because I got caught, but because I was wrong. She accepted my amends, agreed not to judge the rest of AA based on my misconduct, and said she'd keep the true meaning of the badges from her friends also staying in the hotel.

Then she shared something with me. She knew nothing of AA, what it was about or what we do, but she knew of its existence because her grandfather was a sober member of AA in the 1940s. He moved to that city from the East Coast and her grandparents wrote letters to AA in New York so they could locate AA meetings in Arizona.

Later that day, our area archivist made a small presentation in a side room where she showed us letters from the first AA members in our state. These were people who started AA in Arizona when they moved to Phoenix from the East Coast and asked the AA foundation in New York to help them find people in Arizona to get sober.

That's how I learned I had been speaking to the granddaughter of the woman who wrote the letters that brought AA to my city and sobered up the people who created the Fellowship that saved my life. And thanks to that woman, I also learned a valuable lesson about integrity.

-- Terra V., Tempe, Arizona

**SAN FERNANDO VALLEY CENTRAL OFFICE**  
**Minutes of Intergroup Representatives Meeting**  
**May 13, 2019**

**OPENING: Josh 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 April Intergroup minutes.

**TREASURER'S REPORT: Brian H. for Tina K.**

MTD is <\$658> and YTD is \$7,270, as compared with last year's YTD which was \$8,462. Personal contributions were down last month. Financial Statements are available.

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

Central Office has new printed directories. Central Office is running smoothly. We are now selling sobriety birthday cards, which have been very popular! May is going to be a difficult month financially as it is starting off badly. *Recovery Times*: Reminder: Stories of recovery are always welcome. Please send them to Editor Pat K. at [xnowisthetime@aol.com](mailto:xnowisthetime@aol.com).

**MEETING RELATED BUSINESS: Lyn W.**

There was 1 new Intergroup Representative this month, Chelsea M., "Sunlight of the Spirit," Saturdays at 8am, in Studio City.

**SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES:**

- **General Service District 11:** Ernie: 2019 Individual/Group Opinion Poll is available. It can be completed online or printed and mailed. Results will be presented at the General Service Conference in New York. Go to [www.are93.org](http://www.are93.org) for more information.
- **San Fernando Valley Hospital & Institutions Committee:** Marianna: 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Bike N 4 Books on June 8<sup>th</sup>, at Woodley Park in Van Nuys. Save the date! H&I meets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month at Saint Innocent's Church in Tarzana. New member orientation at 7pm, business meeting starts at 8pm. Volunteers are needed for jail panels. For more information, visit [www.sfvhi.org](http://www.sfvhi.org).
- **San Fernando Valley 45<sup>th</sup> Annual AA Convention:** Bernard B.: Planning meeting is held the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month at 7pm, at St. Innocent Church in Tarzana. The 2020 Convention will be held January 31 – February 2, 2020.
- **Santa Clarita Valley 16<sup>th</sup> Annual AA Convention:** Bernard B.: Convention will be September 27-29, 2019. This year's theme is "It Will Be Fun!"

**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: NONE**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM AA GROUPS & SEVENTH TRADITION:**

The Burbank Group: Back to the 40's Meetings will take you through each of the 12 Steps over a 5 week period; every Saturday at 4pm, June 1 – June 29, 2019, 3217 Winona Ave., Burbank.

**REMINDERS:** Josh S.: Reminder to 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” (an event that includes an AA meeting).

**ACKNOWLEDGE BIRTHDAYS FOR THE MONTH OF MAY: 99 YEARS OF SOBRIETY!**

- Scott M., 16 years
- Lisa K., 17 years
- Tina K., 28 years
- Bob F., 38 years

**VACANCIES ON BOARD:** NONE

**CLOSING:**

A motion to adjourn was recognized and seconded. Meeting adjourned at 7:20 pm with *The Lord’s Prayer*. Prepared and submitted by: Sandy R, Recording Secretary

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**INFO FROM A.A. CENTRAL OFFICE OF THE SF 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 an office building on the SW corner of Woodley & Sherman Way, west of the Mobil Station. Our large warehouse has chips, medallions and all the A.A. approved literature and pamphlets 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](http://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.

**Has your meeting changed?** Please provide meeting updates to: **SFVCO, 16132 Sherman Way, Van Nuys, CA 91406.** Call: **(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](mailto:sfvco@la.twcbc.com).

## Upcoming Events:

**Happy Campers:** AA meeting and fellowship, Lake Piru. 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each month from March - October. Meeting at 8 p.m. or come early for fellowship. \$5 per car at the gate. Meeting held at Day Use area.

**2019 Foothill Roundup,** August 2 - 4, 2019, Flintridge Prep, La Canada, CA:  
[www.foothillroundup.org](http://www.foothillroundup.org)

**16<sup>th</sup> Annual Mountain AA Conference:** August 15 - 18, 2019, Big Bear Performing Arts Center, Big Bear, CA [www.mountainaaconference.com](http://www.mountainaaconference.com)

**Southwest Convention of Young People,** August 15 - 18, 2019, [www.swacypaa.org](http://www.swacypaa.org)

**44<sup>th</sup> Great Outdoor Beaver Meeting,** August 29 - September 1, 2019, Beaver, Utah:  
[www.thegreatoutdoorbeavermeeting.com](http://www.thegreatoutdoorbeavermeeting.com)



## 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**

"If all I have is a dollar in my pocket and I'm at a meeting, logic tells me to save it for myself for later. If I give it to AA, and have faith in the process, it will come back to me in ways I can't even imagine."

Sacramento, CA

"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, New York

"I learned that if I had the capacity to be honest, I would get better."

Cornwall, Ontario

"My Higher Power works incognito, defying definition and requiring faith."

State College, PA

"AA is spiritual: In the eye of the hurricane, it is my refuge and my comfort."

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

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**16<sup>th</sup> Santa Clarita Valley Annual AA Convention**, September 27 - 29, 2019. Information forthcoming.

**68<sup>th</sup> So CA AA Convention**, Sept. 27 – 29, 2019: Rancho Mirage, CA (Palm Springs), [www.aasocal.com](http://www.aasocal.com)

### **AA SERVICE COMMITTEES CALENDAR: GS Area 93**

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

**District 16:** Meets the 1<sup>st</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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. Meets 3<sup>rd</sup> 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:** 1<sup>st</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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. 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:** Dale J. - 26 Years and Steve M. - 37 Years.



**Deaths:** None that we know of.

# Workaholic

## **This sober businesswoman's career really took off, but her program ran out of steam**

I lost myself when drinking and drugging. I didn't lose my job, my car or my home. I thought these possessions meant I was successful. In fact, I was the top salesperson nationally for my company the year I got sober.



Besides being an alcoholic, I was also a workaholic. I came from a family that appeared to be upper middle-class but who couldn't always afford to heat the house. My grandiose alcoholic parents lived well beyond their means, and life was always a financial struggle.

But I found ways to work around that. No problem. When my parents couldn't buy me clothes, I cut up my mother's maternity clothes and made my own. There were six kids in our family and that meant there were a lot of big, tentlike dresses to use. It was hard to get a job as a teenager in the New York suburbs in the '70s but I always worked and made money. As a rule, I made more money than my peers.

In high school, I drank my way through two proms, graduation parties, formal events, concerts and birthdays. But I worked hard and got very good grades.

In college, my drinking behavior continued until I met the man who was the ticket out of my family house. Things there were a mess. There had been a terrible house fire, my parents separated, my siblings were in trouble. It was trauma galore and I needed out.



On my first date with the man I would marry, I drank an entire bottle of wine myself. Later, with him driving and me throwing up out the car window, I knew I could not do this anymore. I needed this guy. So I drank very little through college. This got me an education that I value highly. I also worked full time at night while I went to school full time during the day. And you guessed it, I made a better than average living.

As I graduated and entered my profession, I resumed drinking with a vengeance. That marriage didn't last long. Newly single, I drank more. While my interior life was a lonely black hole, my life on paper looked good. Money was flowing in, and I put all my effort into my career. There were awful ups and downs along the way, but I took those to mean I was in the process of getting to the top of something. Plus, I decided that the problems I encountered were always caused by "them." Later, Steps Four through Nine showed me it was all me.

Finally, I found AA and got sober at 31. My career had turned into a dead end, but it was still going on. I wore my career like a badge of honor in my sobriety. Then along came a sober marriage, a baby, a big house in the suburbs and higher-level management positions that made getting to AA meetings difficult. I was five years sober at this time and thought I had sobriety down pat. I had done a lot of service, knew the Traditions well and had read the Concepts. Of course, I could have gotten an "A" in working the Steps. My career grew and prospered while my sobriety stagnated.

I went regularly to meetings until my 10th anniversary, sporadically until my 15th anniversary, and after that I didn't go to another AA meeting until my 19th anniversary. During that time, neither my husband nor I drank. But our lives were completely unmanageable. I was homicidal and suicidal. My connection to my Higher Power was still there, but that was all.



Meanwhile, I got fired from my high-profile job, started my own business, and worked seven days a week and every night to create what I thought was success and to make money. I now know that I was driven by fear.

At 19 years sober, I was desperate for serenity and went back to AA. The thing that was most lacking was other sober alcoholics. I need the bright eyes, nodding heads and sharing that comes from a meeting. Yes, I was sober, but I was also dry all those years without consistent AA.

That was 10 years ago. I loved my reentry into sobriety, the service work, sponsors, sponsees, home group, fellowship, Step work—all of it.

But the opportunity for growth was just beginning. Now I had my own thriving business that needed my constant attention. I still didn't know any better. I thought that to make it in this world I had to work that way or I couldn't get the material things that I wanted. The fear that was driving me was so real I couldn't imagine any other way of life. I craved the recognition and praise that comes from owning a successful business. At no time was I ever a worker among workers. Again, my home life and serenity suffered.

In 2009, the economy tanked. I lost my business and had to declare bankruptcy. This forced me to bottom out in my addiction to work. It was awful. During the worst of it, I had the commitment to chair the beginners' meeting in my home group. I made it there every Monday night for six months. Sometimes I could hardly hold my head up in the meeting. My sponsor, Pat, told me that she never heard me get the joy I wanted from that business and that I would eventually see the act of chairing that meeting as the best learning opportunity.

So I believed her. Pat is usually right about sponsor things. I got deeper into my Steps, especially the Third Step. I did another Fourth Step, this time on my career. I found patterns of behavior that I brought to every place I went. I found peace in the Fifth Step and pounded on Steps Six and Seven, looking for change. Eventually I found the real release in Step Eight when I had the added bonus of forgiving everyone in my family of origin. I also forgave myself.

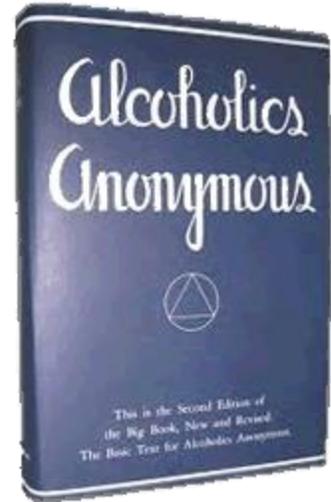
There were rough years. My daughter was in and out of jails and institutions due to her addictions. Financially, we were very badly damaged. My health suffered in new and awful ways. But my relationship with my High Power got deeper and more intense through it all. As my life became more painful, I burrowed deeper into my sobriety. Losing that business gave me time to do more service work. Two years of chairing the public information committee and two years of chairing the accessibilities committee was just what I needed.

Morning and night, I added a real, daily Step Ten and Step Eleven, following the instructions in the Big Book. Knowing that I had these issues relating to work and career, I added a daily prayer from Chapter Twelve in our "Twelve and Twelve": "True ambition is the deep desire to live usefully and walk humbly under the grace of God." I also added one of the Third Step Promises from the Big Book: "We had a new employer. Being all powerful he provided what we needed, if we kept close to him and performed his work well."

With these anchors in my daily conscious contact with my Higher Power, I began to recover from alcoholism on a deeper level than ever before. I really had to put these prayers to work a bit later.

During my non-AA workaholic years, my relationship with my also-dry husband was in bad shape. We found that both of us going back to meetings was just the spark we needed, and we got better and better together.

When my career bottom hit in 2009, I was 23 years sober. I had to admit complete defeat. I had to surrender my old ideas about work. I was absolutely licked. This is when the real growth in my sobriety arrived.



Soon, to my surprise, I was recruited to a job in a related industry. I never presented myself as a big shot. I never said, "When I was the boss, I used to ..." I actually became a worker among workers for the first time. When I would tell my sponsor that I was underemployed she would tell me to say, "Thank you, God, for the humility." I would ask myself, "What am I supposed to be learning here?" The Promises began to come true.

Today, to my surprise, this company values me. I don't love the job so much, but so what? I was one of the top salespeople last year and won a high-end trip to the Caribbean with my husband. I did that after letting go and not working all night and all weekend. I just did what I was supposed to do. I didn't overdo it. Being humble in this job had some surprise benefits. Colleagues come to me for advice and support. I am asked to help train new employees. I earned the respect that I always craved.

Now let's fast-forward to 2015. I am almost 29 years sober and I have seen a lot of sides to my sobriety. Some things worked themselves out beyond my wildest dreams. My daughter is in a successful career and living on her own. My health issues straightened out with no long-term effects. We are planning to retire down South in a few months and escape the snow.



On paper, none of this was possible in 2009. My life today defies logic if you look at where I was just a few years ago. My home group and my support group were there for me every inch of the painful way. I am grateful every day for them.

I have a new, small business planned in my retirement. I can feel the roar of the workaholic addict occasionally behind me, wanting to pull me into those old behaviors. I am not going down that rabbit hole. The Steps and Traditions will keep me sober, manageable, spiritual and right-sized. I am not in charge. My Higher Power is. What a relief.

My Higher Power gave me talents and abilities. It is my responsibility to use them as a sober woman of dignity and grace. One day at a time, I hope this is the way my life will continue. For the first time in my life, sobriety is my priority. Everything else is based on that.

**Central Office of SFV  
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