

RECOVERY TIMES Vol. 43, No. 9, Sept. 2019

The Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office Newsletter



Central Office Restarts Mailing Recovery Times to AAs A great gift to celebrate sobriety!

In September 2019, Central Office of the San Fernando Valley will restart its annual home mailing for Recovery Times with twelve issues a year, mailed discreetly to AAs, for a \$15.00 annual fee. This service will allow for AAs who have moved out of state, are home bound or traveling and who can't easily get to meetings to maintain their connection with our Central Office and all of the groups within it, here in the S.F. Valley.

The Recovery Times, now in its 43rd year of service, has been keeping AAs informed of news, events, and meeting information shared at the Intergroup level since its inception. We see this mailing service as a way to help those who might not be able to easily access a computer and download the free version, found on our website at: www.sfvaa.org.

To purchase our annual edition of Recovery Times and have it mailed to you or someone else, please include the following information and send it to: **SFV Central Office, 16132 Sherman Way, Van Nuys, CA 91406**

Name of Recipient: _____

Address: _____, City, State, Zip

Is this a gift or for yourself? _____

Your phone number: _____ **Your email:** _____ (This is to ensure your information is accurate so we can send out your RT right away)!

Payment can be made via check or money order as well as in cash at the office during regular hours.

WE HOPE OUR MAILING SERVICE BRINGS COMFORT AND HAPPINESS TO ANOTHER MEMBER OF OUR FELLOWSHIP! _____

Take Your Sponsor to Breakfast, SFV Central Office's annual fundraiser, will be on Oct. 12, 2019 at the Disabled American Veterans Hall in Woodland Hills. Breakfast from 8-10am, followed by a speaker meeting. Tickets are \$15 for one person or 2 for \$25. This event always sells out so get your tickets while you can at Central Office.

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.



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. **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 to volunteer. **(818) 988-3001**, or ask your group to volunteer for a certain shift every month.

We are located at **16132 Sherman Way, Van Nuys** 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).

SAN FERNANDO VALLEY CENTRAL OFFICE
Minutes of Intergroup Representatives Meeting
August 12, 2019

OPENING: Josh S.

- Josh opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. with The Serenity Prayer.
- Lynn W. read "The Twelve Traditions."
- Approval of the July Intergroup Minutes was deferred to September.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Tina K.

- MTD is \$387 and YTD is \$3,218, as compared with last year's YTD which was (\$920).
- Financial Statements are available.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S REPORT: Josh S. for Bob F.

Central Office is running smoothly. After some discussion, the Board voted to exercise Central Office's lease option and remain at our present location for another five years. Volunteer status is doing well, but we can always use more!

Pat K., *Recovery Times*: Stories of recovery are welcome. Looking for stories about relationships in sobriety. Deadline for submissions is 15th of the month; send to Pat K. at xnowisthetime@aol.com.

MEETING RELATED BUSINESS: Lyn W.

Only one new Intergroup Representative this month: Cheryl Ann K., "Sobriety First," Monday, 6:30pm in Chatsworth.

SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES:

- General Service District 11: Ernie: Area 93 General Service Presentation; Sept. 17, 2019, 7-9pm, at 123 W. Windsor Rd., Glendale. Delegate Jeff G.'s report from the 2019 General Service Conference;
- General Service District 1: Matt M. for Cece: District 1 picnic on 10/12/19 at Balboa Park – More to come!
- San Fernando Valley Hospital & Institutions Committee: Josh S. for Marianna: 38th Annual Birthday Dinner & Fundraiser. Tues. Oct. 22, 2019, 6-10pm, at St. Innocent Church in Tarzana. Tickets \$12. Speaker, comedian, 50/50 Raffle and more!
H&I meets on the 3rd Monday of the month at Saint Innocent Church in Tarzana. New member orientation at 7pm, business meeting starts at 8pm. Volunteers are needed for jail panels. Visit www.sfvhi.org.
- San Fernando Valley 45th Annual AA Convention: Josh for Bernard B.: Bingo Fundraiser. Saturday, Sept. 14, 2019, 7-10pm, at One Generation in Reseda. \$20 Donation includes 2 Bingo Packs.
Convention will be Jan. 31 – Feb. 2, 2020. Theme is "Spiritual Life is Not a Theory." Planning meetings are held the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 7pm, at St. Innocent Church in Tarzana.
- Santa Clarita Valley 16th Annual AA Convention: Josh for Bernard B.: Convention will be September 27-29, 2019 at the Valencia Hyatt. This year's theme is "It Will Be Fun!" Visit www.scvaaconvention.org.

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

Take Your Sponsor to Breakfast, SFV Central Office's annual fundraiser, will be on Oct. 12, 2019 at the Disabled American Veterans Hall in Woodland Hills. Breakfast from 8-10am, followed by a speaker meeting. Tickets are \$15 for one person or 2 for \$25.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM AA GROUPS & SEVENTH TRADITION: (CONTINUED, NEXT PAGE)

- Ernie, Burbank Group: **Long-Timers' Appreciation Day**, Sept. 7, 2019, 3-6pm, 3217 Winona Ave., Burbank. **Burbank Group's 4th Annual Chili and Cornbread Cook-Off**, Sept. 21, 3-5pm. Please stick around for the Burbank Group's Saturday Night Lineup of meetings, starting at 6pm.
- Molly, SOS: **Quarterly 4th Step Workshop**: Sept. 15, 2019, 9am, 6006 Laurel Canyon Blvd, North Hollywood. Free donuts, bagels and coffee at 8am. Bring your Big Book!
- **68th Annual Southern California AA Convention**: September 27-29, 2019 at the Westin Mission Hills Resort & Spa in Rancho Mirage. Registration forms available. Go to www.aasocal.com for more information.

REMINDERS: Josh 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 AUGUST: 51 YEARS OF SOBRIETY!

- Jim C., 51 years on 8/4.

VACANCIES ON BOARD: There is one vacancy on the Board. The election of a new board member will be held at September's Intergroup meeting.

CLOSING: Motion to adjourn was recognized. Meeting adjourned at 7:20 pm with *The Lord's Prayer*.

Prepared and submitted by: Sandy R., Recording Secretary

Upcoming Events:

Quarterly 4th Step Workshop: Sept. 15, 2019, 9am, 6006 Laurel Canyon Blvd, North Hollywood. Free donuts, bagels and coffee at 8am. Bring your Big Book!

Happy Campers: AA meeting and fellowship, Lake Piru, 3rd 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.

San Fernando Valley 45th Annual AA Convention Bingo Fundraiser, Saturday, Sept. 14, 2019, 7-10pm, at One Generation in Reseda. \$20 Donation includes 2 Bingo Packs.

16th Santa Clarita Valley Annual AA Convention, September 27 - 29, 2019, Valencia Hyatt. This year's theme is "It Will Be Fun!" Visit www.scvaaconvention.org

68th So CA AA Convention, Sept. 27 – 29, 2019: Rancho Mirage, CA (Palm Springs), www.aasocal.com.

Take Your Sponsor to Breakfast: Saturday, October 12, 2019, Disabled Veterans Hall, 6543 Corbin Ave., Woodland Hills, CA 91367 (Tickets at \$15 per person/\$25 for two).

Comedy Night, San Fernando Valley Hospital & Institutions Committee, October 22, 2019, 6-10pm, at St. Innocent Church in Tarzana. Tickets \$12. Speaker, comedian, 50/50 Raffle and more!

Visit our website for meeting information and previous copies of Recovery Times: www.sfvaa.org.

Update us with your meeting information via email: sfvco@la.twcbc.com, or stop by and pick up your medallions and literature at our Valley office: **SFVCO, 16132 Sherman Way, Van Nuys, CA 91406. After hours we still answer phones for those in need, so don't be afraid to refer people to our phone lines.**

FROM THE FOUNDERS

"Every older AA shudders when he remembers the names of persons he once condemned; people he confidently predicted would never sober up; persons he was sure ought to be thrown out of AA for the good of the movement. Now that some of these very persons have been sober for years, and may be numbered among his best friends, the old-timer thinks to himself, 'What if everybody had judged these people as I once did? What if AA had slammed the door in their faces? Where would they be now?'"

AA Co-Founder, Bill W., August 1946, "Who Is a Member of Alcoholics Anonymous?" The Language of the Heart

"I know that my errors of yesterday still have their effect; that my shortcomings of today may likewise affect our future. So it is, with each and all of us."

AA Co-Founder, Bill W., July 1965, "Responsibility Is Our Theme," The Language of the Heart

"Let us AAs no longer be takers from society. Instead, let us be givers."

AA Co-Founder, Bill W., June 1946, "Policy on Gift Funds", The Language of the Heart

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AA SERVICE COMMITTEES CALENDAR: GS 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. 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. 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: Randy – 22 years



Deaths: None that we know of.

Got a story to share? Recovery Times is always looking for contributions of stories on your sobriety. Please send to editor Pat K: xnowisthetime@aol.com any stories of 300 – 600 words. Deadline is always the 15th of the month for the next month's issue.

How to Survive Cocktail Hour at 30,000 Feet

Facing a stressful trip to see the family on a plane without drinking booze? One guy has some tips



I loved to drink on planes. Well, I loved to drink anywhere, anytime actually, but planes were my favorite. In that suspended piece of time I could drink like I wanted—alone and with my fantasies.

I got sober in 1981, so there were no phones or computers onboard to bring in the world's pesky, depressing reality. I'd order my first drink, and depending on how flush I was at the time, it could be three little bottles of scotch. I could then have lots of wine with my meal and more scotch after. Often I'd just order lots of ice, which was free, to pour my own bottle of scotch or vodka that I brought in my carry-on. Yes, one could bring a bottle on the plane with them in those days! I'd drink and stare out the window thinking about all the great things I was going to do with my life. When I was sufficiently lubricated, I'd become very friendly and tell the passenger next to me amazing, fabricated stories about my fabulous or

tragic—depending on my mood—life.

But then I got sober. One day, I confessed to a friend that I was thinking of going to that "program" that hadn't worked for my mother. I truly expected him to say, "Now hold on there! You're a smart guy. You've been in therapy for 20 years. AA sounds a bit extreme, don't you think?" Instead he nodded and said he knew someone in AA and he would have him call me. Oh dear. Three days later I was at my first meeting, and my life changed.

What I found was that when I drank, my fantasies and rationalizations and excuses could no longer keep up with my frightening Jekyll and Hyde personality splits. I also could no longer blame myself or excuse my behavior because of my parents or because of the lover I had drunken, frightening fistfights with, or because I was gay, or because I was raised in New York City. The stark reality could no longer be avoided: I was a violent, out-of-control drunk who wanted to stop drinking and couldn't.

I was living in San Francisco at the time and I started going to a lot of meetings. My physical recovery alone was amazing. I would start each day saying, "I can't believe I'm not hung over! I actually feel rested." At meetings, I was hearing things like, "Ninety meetings in 90 days!" "No major changes in the first year." "Stick close to home if you can." Absolutely! Happy to do it.

But around day 30, my beloved grandmother in Minnesota called to tell me that there was going to be a memorial dedication to my grandfather, who died in 1971. A wildlife preserve, an island, was to be dedicated later that summer to him to commemorate all his efforts toward conservation around the Great Lakes area, and being the only grandson, I must be there.

"Oh, can I get back to you about that?" I said to her nervously. As I hung up the phone, the image of a three-hour flight loomed in my mind. Flying without drinking? That was followed by the image of being greeted at the airport by my drunk mother and drunk sister, who usually had some other substance in her pocket. That sent me into a panic. I can't do it, I thought. But I must, mustn't I? I should call people. Yes, call people. That's what they tell me in the rooms.

I didn't have a sponsor yet. That idea was still too confusing for me. But I had made a few friends in my AA meetings, so I called them. Steve, my first buddy who sat in front of me at my very first meeting, was first on my list. "Oh my God, Steve. Oh my God, what am I going to do?" I spewed. "I have to fly out to Minnesota. It's three hours on a plane—not drinking! How can I do it? And even if I

don't drink, my drunken family will be there. They'll get me drunk! But they'll all be angry with me if I don't go. My grandmother will be so hurt. I haven't told her I'm in AA. What am I going to do?"

"You don't have to go," Steve said. There was a sudden moment of silence. "What?" I said. "You don't have to go," he repeated. "Your sobriety is more important, isn't it?" I thought for a minute. "Um, gosh, yes!" I replied. "We have choices now," he said. "You can choose not to go." "But what do I tell my Grandmother?" I asked. "Tell her the truth," he said. "They've been telling us to be willing to go to any lengths to stay sober, right? So just tell her."

So I did. And she couldn't have been happier. My grandmother wasn't a drinker. She hated it. She was married to a big drinker for 56 years. So she was thrilled that I didn't drink anymore. "No, honey, you stay there and do what you have to do," she told me over the phone. "Come next year, and we'll go out to the island together." So that next summer, when I had a year sober, I did fly out to her, but I first asked people in the program how to fly without drinking. And here are some of the pointers they gave me:

- 1) Know what you're going to drink in advance.** That way, when you're asked by the flight attendant, you can say right away and firmly, "Yes, thank you, I'll have a soda."
- 2) Bring something good to read.** Grapevines are perfect for traveling. They fit easily in your bag and you can bring several if you're on a long trip. The pocket version of the Big Book is easy to carry as well, and it's inconspicuous.
- 3) Consider an aisle seat.** That works best for me, especially if I get seated next to drinkers and I need to step away in case the fumes from their drinks become bothersome.
- 4) Bring headphones with AA speaker tapes.**
- 5) Join online meetings** on your computer, though be careful if you want to stay anonymous. It might be tricky on a crowded plane.
- 6) Drink lots of water and bring munchies,** like nuts and gummie bears and protein bars, in case of hunger. H.A.L.T is just as important at 30,000 feet as it is on the ground.
- 7) And the final one I learned the hard way: Take morning flights!** When I was flying back to California from my grandmother's the next summer, I had booked a late afternoon flight in order to stay as long as I could with her, but as our plane flew into the sunset, I found myself inside a 3½ hour cocktail hour! That was the roughest part of my trip. Now 33 years later, that doesn't bother me much anymore, but I still always try for morning flights.

Over the years, until my grandmother died in 1996, I flew to see her many times. I've also flown to Europe, Canada and Hawaii. I still love that feeling of suspension from the world below, but now I do it sober. I'm grateful that I can fly anywhere in the world—and happily not drink. —*Anonymous*
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My Lucky Day in Vegas: Desperate to stay sober on a business trip, a newcomer takes action and wins big

In my drinking days, going to Las Vegas was an open invitation to drink to excess. I truly believed that "What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas." But five months into sobriety, I had to go on a business trip there. Conventions normally involve quite a bit of drinking, and I knew this one went overboard. I was absolutely terrified. First, I was going to a place in which I had never spent a sober moment. Second, I didn't know if I could handle a convention with all the free-flowing booze.

During my first few months of sobriety, I was struggling with Steps Two and Three. I came into AA as an agnostic. However, I was willing to use the people in the program as my Higher Power. Prayer was still a difficult concept for me. My sponsor knew how I felt about it and the reservations that I had. One suggestion that he made was to "act as if."

The night before I left for the convention, I got on my knees and said, "God—if there is a God—please help me stay sober in Vegas. I promise I'll go to the AA office upon arrival and get a list of meetings, and I will even get on a plane and come home if my sobriety is threatened."

My colleagues and I arrived and checked into the hotel, and I immediately went to find the AA office. When I got to the building, the door to the office was closed. Since it was near noon, I assumed they were closed for lunch, so I didn't try to enter. I went to get some fast food, then I returned. The door was still closed, but this time I tried the door and it opened. There was a man sitting behind a desk talking on the phone. I looked around until he finished his conversation.

He said his name was Curly (though there was not a hair on his head) and asked what he could help me with. I told him I was relatively new and needed to get a list of meetings. He gave me one and asked what I was doing that afternoon. I told him I was probably going to go back to the hotel to relax a bit and then go to a meeting. He said, "We need you to go on a Twelfth Step call."

I repeated that I was new and didn't think I could do it. He said the man he was on the phone with when I entered the room needed a ride to a detox. He said, "You walked in right when he called, and I think you're supposed to do this." I very reluctantly agreed to do it. He gave me a room number and directions to a motel in North Las Vegas and to the detox from there. He made me promise to come back to the office when I left the detox.

I drove to the motel. I found the man's room on the second floor and knocked on the door. A voice told me to come in. There I saw John, lying on the bed with a bottle of booze. I told him I was there to take him to a detox. John wasn't so sure he wanted to go.

I pulled up a chair and started talking with him. He told me he tried to eat and pointed to a bag of oranges, the only food in the room. I told him some of my story of getting sober. I don't remember what else we talked about, but I was there for over an hour. I knew that if we kept talking, John might start to trust me. Finally, John realized I wasn't going to leave until he agreed to go, so he very reluctantly agreed to come with me.

I drove him to the detox. As he was checking in, a nurse asked if I wanted to know something about John. This was 1984. Sending a newcomer on a Twelfth Step call alone, and a nurse asking if I wanted to know more about a patient, would never happen today.

The nurse said John had been sober for a couple of months, then got into a relationship and relapsed. She looked at his card and said, "Let's see. He got sober last December 16th." I nearly fell off my chair: that was the day I got sober!

When I left the detox, I drove back to the AA office and sat down with Curly for a cup of coffee. He said, "The reason I wanted you to come back was that you're an alcoholic and sooner or later, you were going to hear a voice in your head congratulating you for doing something you never thought you could do, and it would tell you that you deserved a drink."

I looked at him and told him that was all I could think about on the way from the detox. After witnessing John's misery and seeing what the detox was like, I couldn't believe that my reaction would be to have a drink to celebrate. But I'm an alcoholic and, indeed, that was my reaction.

I went to several meetings in Vegas that week. I was so exhilarated that I'm sure many people thought I was high on something. I was: I had found my Higher Power. I'm forever grateful. It had taken my not entering the AA office on my first attempt, and a nurse sharing with me a patient's personal information, for God to put me in the right place to have this wonderful experience.

—Alan B., Minneapolis, Minn., Reprinted with permission, Grapevine, 2018

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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED