

# RECOVERY TIMES

Vol. 43, No. 12, Dec. 2019

The Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office Newsletter

## The Finest Gift of All: (Written by Bill W. in Dec. 1955)



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**EACH** of us in AA has received the gift of sobriety. All of us have found a new usefulness and most of us have found great happiness. This adds up to the gift of life itself--a new life of wondrous possibility.

What then are we going to do with this great gift of life?

Because our experience has taught us, we are quite sure that we know. We shall try to share with every fellow sufferer all that has been so freely given us. We shall try to carry AA's message to those who need and want it,

wherever in the world they may be. We shall daily re-dedicate ourselves to the God-given truth that "It is by self-forgetting that one finds; it is by giving that one receives."

For us of AA, this is the Spirit of Christmas. This is the finest gift of all. Lois joins me in our warmest greetings. May the New Year of 1956 be the greatest time of giving and of receiving that we in AA have ever known. -- Bill W. Copyright © The AA Grapevine, Inc. December, 1955. Reprinted with permission

### The Twelve Rewards

**We can all have Hope, instead of desperation;**

**Faith, instead of despair;**

**Courage, instead of fear;**

**Peace of Mind, instead of confusion;**

**Self-respect, instead of self-contempt;**

**Self-confidence, instead of helplessness;**

**The respect of others, instead of their pity and contempt;**

**A clean conscience, instead of a sense of guilt;**

**Real friendships, instead of loneliness;**

**A clean pattern of life, instead of a purposeless existence;**

**The love and understanding of our families, instead of their doubts and fears;**

**and the freedom of a happy life, instead of the bondage of an alcoholic obsession.**

**All this and more through AA, are we grateful enough?**

**Gratitude will continue the miracle of your sobriety, I found that out.**

**by Ann C. of Niles, Ohio - sober April 1, 1948**

**A.A. Central Office** of the San Fernando Valley 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. After hours we still answer phones for those in need, so don't be afraid to refer people to our phone lines.



**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 shift every month.

**Central Office is 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).

**Visit our website: [www.sfvaa.org](http://www.sfvaa.org)** for meeting information and copies of Recovery Times.

**Update us with your meeting information via email: [sfvco@la.twcbc.com](mailto: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.

**SAN FERNANDO VALLEY CENTRAL OFFICE**  
**Minutes of Intergroup Representatives Meeting**  
**November 11, 2019**

**OPENING: Josh S.**

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

**TREASURER'S REPORT: Tina K.**

- MTD is (\$530) and YTD is \$996, as compared with last year's YTD which was (\$2,658). Please continue to be generous.
- Financial Statements are available.

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

- Central Office:
  - Everything is running smoothly.
  - Phone volunteer list is good, but we can always use more!
- Pat K., *Recovery Times*:
  - Snail-mail subscriptions to the Recovery Times are available. The cost is \$15/yr. for 12 issues.
  - Reminder: Stories of recovery are welcome; approximately 500-600 words. Deadline for submissions is 15<sup>th</sup> of the month; send to Pat K. at [xnowisthetime@aol.com](mailto:xnowisthetime@aol.com).

## **MEETING RELATED BUSINESS: Lyn W.**

- There were 3 new Intergroup Representatives this month:
  - Rachel S., “Coexist,” Thursdays at 6pm in Reseda;
  - Jennifer W., “Saturday Morning Women’s Meeting,” Saturdays at 9:30am in Burbank; and
  - Faith S., “Sunrise Saturday Morning,” Saturdays at 8:15am in Burbank.

## **SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES:**

- **General Service District 11:** Ernie: Area Assembly this Sunday, Nov. 17 at the Simi Valley Senior Center.
- **General Service District 16:** Andy: Reiterated this Sunday’s Area Assembly information.
- **General Service District 1:** Cece: Also commented on the upcoming Area Assembly.
- **San Fernando Valley Hospital & Institutions Committee:** Marianna: H&I meets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> 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. For more information, visit [www.sfvhi.org](http://www.sfvhi.org).
- **San Fernando Valley 45<sup>th</sup> Annual AA Convention:** Bernard B.: Marathon Meeting request forms and Pre-Registration flyers are available. Also, the convention website at [sfvaaconvention.org](http://sfvaaconvention.org) is up and running! You need to be registered to attend events in the Grand Ballroom. Convention will be Jan. 31 – Feb. 2, 2020. Theme is “Spiritual Life is Not a Theory.” Planning meetings are held the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month at 7pm, at St. Innocent Church in Tarzana.
- **Santa Clarita Valley 16<sup>th</sup> Annual AA Convention:** Bernard B.: Had a great convention!

## **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.
- Reminder to those who may have come in late to please sign in on only ONE of the two sign-in sheets.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

November is GRATITUDE MONTH! Please support Central Office!

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

- All dated now.

**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 NOVEMBER: 43 YEARS OF SOBRIETY!**

- Adam, 2 Years, Marianna, 6 Years and Larry S., 35 Years.

## **VACANCIES ON BOARD - NONE**

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

**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](mailto:xnowisthetime@aol.com). Stories of recovery should be no more than 600 words. Deadline is always the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month for the next month’s issue.

## 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**

"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, California

"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, Florida

"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."** Copyright © 2018 by Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc.

## A 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 orientation then 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, sharing info on upcoming AA events in the Valley. Support Central Office by sending a rep from your group to the monthly Intergroup meeting.

**Celebrating an A.A. Anniversary?** Consider making a \$1.00 donation to Central Office for each year of your sobriety during your birthday month.

**Bequests/Contributions:** The maximum dollar amount of individual bequests by A.A.s is reviewed every two years at the General Service Conference. In 2019, at the 69th General Service Conference, the maximum amount of an individual bequest by members to A.A. was raised from \$5,000 to \$10,000." This is a one-time contribution and is not in perpetuity.

**This month, we celebrate the AA anniversaries of: Anonymous – 9 Yrs., Paul R. – 12 Years, Anonymous – 29 Years & Loralee – 36 Years.**

**We also remember (A. A. Deaths):** None that we know of.

## Workaholic: Sometimes we trade one addiction for another

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, tent-like 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.

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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.

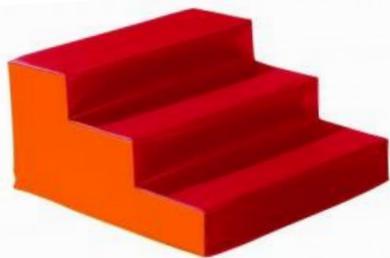
Now let's fast-forward to 2015. I am almost 29 years sober and I have seen a lot of sides to my sobriety. Some things worked themselves out beyond my wildest dreams. My daughter is in a successful career and living on her own. My health issues straightened out with no long-term effects. We are planning 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. Anonymous, Ferna Lina Beach, Florida

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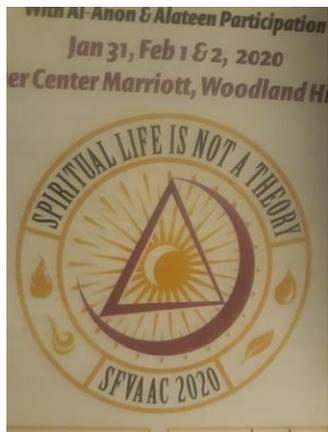
**First Three Steps: Every program begins with these three simple steps:**

**Step One: "We admitted we were powerless over alcohol – that our lives had become unmanageable."**

**Step Two: "Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity."**

**Step Three: "Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him."**

**Support Your Local A.A. San Fernando Valley Convention:**



**Jan. 31, Feb. 1 & Feb. 2, 2020: 45<sup>th</sup> San Fernando Valley AA Convention**, Warner Center Marriott, 21850 Oxnard Street, Woodland Hills, CA.

Registration \$30 at the door. Marathon meetings are free.

Come for the marathon meetings (A.A., Al-Anon and Alateen), Speaker Meetings, Longtimers' Meetings, Golf Tournament, Friday Night Dance, Saturday Night Banquet & Show, Saturday Night Dance, and Sunday Spiritual Meeting.

**This year's theme: Spiritual Life is Not a Theory: SFVAAC 2020**  
**Register online: [www.sfvaaconvention.org](http://www.sfvaaconvention.org)**

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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED