

RECOVERY TIMES Vol. 46, No. 12, Dec. 2020

The Alcoholics Anonymous San Fernando Valley Central Office Newsletter

SFVAA UNCONVENTIONAL: NOT OUR PLAN

THE 2021 San Fernando Valley AA Convention is now the very first ever San Fernando Valley AA UNCONVENTIONAL - With Al-Anon Participation

*A Globally Available Online Event
Hosted from the San Fernando Valley in Los Angeles, California
January 29, 30 & 31st 2021*



**SFVAA UNCONVENTIONAL 2021
NOT OUR PLAN**

Our annual San Fernando Valley AA Convention has been pandemically - reconfigured into the very first, ever, San Fernando Valley **AA UNCONVENTIONAL**, globally - available and **ZOOMING** into your life with an exciting line up of AA and Al-Anon events! The beloved event will land into your computers and telephones **January 29, 30, and 31st 2021**, and while it will include some new bells and whistles, it will still have all the good-time fellowship and united feelings of all our previous conventions.

You simply have to allow yourself to once again throw away your old ideas, go back to the beginning of your recovery when you discovered your open-mind, and let go of what you think the convention should be in order to start thinking UNCONVENTIONALLY.

This year's theme is **NOT OUR PLAN**, and it reflects the idea that we are not in charge and do not always get to have it our own way. It is real life on life's terms, it's acceptance, it's Thy Will Be Done. It is doing the best we can with what we have been given. It is connecting to our higher power asking, "How can we be helpful to our fellows no matter what the circumstances?" It is doing the things that we wouldn't think possible if we hadn't surrendered or been willing to change. **NOT OUR PLAN** is all things possible and **NOT OUR PLAN** is a celebration of being in recovery.

The convention events this year are an open invitation to the entire world to see just how active and how much fun AA recovery is in the San Fernando Valley. Even in a world health crisis, here, Alcoholics Anonymous remains alive and well keeping thousands of us AAs sober. While the pandemic can weigh heavy, we are certainly not a glum lot. And our good-time online convention restructure will prove to the rest of the world that we can match calamity with serenity because we have this program of recovery.

Beginning on Friday, January 29 at 4pm with the Early Bird Speaker meeting, we jump into a schedule that offers something for every one of us. We have fifty AA Marathon Meetings and 27 Al-Anon Marathons to keep you busy all weekend. There is still an annual AA Skit and a Friday Night AA Speaker Meeting. We will host a late-night Zoom Dance Party, so get dressed up and move to the groove of our talented DJ right in your very own living room. Listen to a fantastic Al-Anon Speaker on Saturday afternoon. We will see a Saturday Night AA Speaker Meeting, and a new segment called "Saturday Night Interview with an Alcoholic," where you will witness a very funny and candid one - on - one interview with an interesting Alkie. Following the interview, we have a late-night Comedy Hour ready to take you from chuckle to belly-laugh. And to put a cherry on our Sunday morning, we have our extremely popular Spiritual Speaker Meeting.

In addition, we have some new meetings we think you'll really like. Check out the One Year Sober Meeting on Sunday where you will hear what it's like to turn one year old and have an entire year in recovery.

Continued, next page-

The Unconventional, cont.

On Saturday, get nostalgic and relive conventions past when Themes of Past Conventions invites former chairpersons to share on the topic of the convention they once chaired. Join the Long Timers Meeting and watch as we sprinkle in a few Newcomers. Anything can happen since it's not our plan!

And this year REGISTRATION IS FREE! Check out our website and, you read it right, register for FREE: go to www.sfvaaconvention.org to receive all the zoom codes that will direct you to our convention. On the website you can read our welcome messages, see the event schedule, find out who the speakers are going to be, purchase UnConventional convention swag and make a contribution if you wish to be self-supporting, AND MORE... that's www.sfvaaconvention.org for all the convention details.

We hope to see you at the very first ever San Fernando Valley AA UnConventional January 29 30 31st 2021. And remember to THINK UNCONVENTIONALLY!

In Love and Service, Todd G., 2021 SFVAA UNCONVENTIONAL CHAIRPERSON

AA AA

SAN FERNANDO VALLEY CENTRAL OFFICE Minutes of Intergroup Representatives Meeting

November 9, 2020

OPENING: Lyn W.

- Lyn opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. with The Serenity Prayer.
- Denise T. read "The Twelve Traditions."
- Sandy R. accepted a motion for approval of the October 2020 Intergroup Minutes.



BILL W. and Dr. BOB

TREASURER'S REPORT: Tina K.

- MTD is \$5,939 and YTD is \$7,480, as compared to last year's YTD, which was \$996. Literature sales are only slightly over half of what they were last year at this time, but personal and group contributions are up.
- Financials and Recovery Times are available at Central Office. Please call ahead. We will even bring them out to your car.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S REPORT: David F.

Central Office:

David thanked Bob F. for his continuing assistance during the transition. Central Office continues to follow LA County Covid-19 guidelines by temperature taking and requiring masks of all visitors. We are also limiting the number of people in a room at one time (downstairs, no more than three, and upstairs, no more than five) and signs are posted to that effect. A new webmaster has been engaged and work has begun.

A new phone system has been ordered and should be installed within the next couple of weeks. Central Office has received over \$800 in contributions so far from our Can't Take Your Sponsor to Breakfast fundraising event. Additional funds are expected from the t-shirt sales.

On October 30, we conducted a full and complete inventory, and all materials were aligned with expected stock on-hand. All phone shifts are currently being covered, but we're always looking for new volunteers, especially to fill

in on short notice. Also seeking bi-lingual Spanish speaking volunteers to work with our Spanish speaking community and for a special project we're working on. If you're interested, please contact Central Office. Please submit all meeting changes and Zoom information to Central Office at sfvco@outlook.com. Please include your contact information in case we need additional information. Reminder that Central Office is open for literature sales M-F from 9am-6pm, and weekends from 9am-5pm, except the last Friday of the month when we are closed for inventory, and on holidays.

Recovery Times (David F. for Pat K.): The Recovery Times is available on the Central Office website: sfvaa.org. Snail-mail subscriptions to the Recovery Times are available. See sfvaa.org subscription form. Reminder: Stories of recovery are welcome; approximately 500-650 words. Deadline for submissions is 15th of the month. Send to Pat K. at xnowisthetime@aol.com.

MEETING RELATED BUSINESS: Rick A. - There were no new Intergroup Representatives this month.

SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES:

- General Service District 11: Ernie: A new DCM was elected at the last business meeting.
- General Service District 1: Norm (for Cece): Area 93 will be hosting the 2021 PRAASA on March 5-7. It will be conducted online.
- San Fernando Valley Hospital & Institutions Committee: Marianna: H&I will be placing an order for literature from Central Office. Board elections for an 18-month term will be held at December's Zoom meeting.
- San Fernando Valley 46th Annual AA Convention: Denise T. (for Bernard B): The 2021 "Unconventional," will be held entirely online January 29-31, 2021. The theme is "Not My Plan." Website at sfvaaconvention.org is up and running! Registration is free, but contributions are welcome, and commemoratives are available for purchase.

OLD BUSINESS

Literature Sales are CLOSED on holidays & the last Friday of each month, but OPEN on weekends. Central Office doors remain open; phones are still answered. Continue to send meeting changes IN WRITING to Central Office.

NEW BUSINESS - REMEMBER GRATITUDE MONTH.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM AA GROUPS & SEVENTH TRADITION: Burbank Group Thankathon.

REMINDERS: Lyn W.: 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 MONTHS OF NOVEMBER: 137 YEARS OF SOBRIETY!

- Marianna A., 7 years on 11/21;
- Rosanne L., 25 years on 11/5;
- Simmie, 34 years on 11/21;
- Marta, 35 years on 11/5; and
- Larry S., 36 years on 11/1.

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

CLOSING:

- A motion to adjourn was recognized and seconded.
- Meeting adjourned at 7:32 pm with *The Lord's Prayer*.

Prepared and submitted by: *Sandy R., Recording Secretary*





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.

SFV 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.

To find an online meeting in the San Fernando Valley, call Central Office at: **(818) 988-3001** or go to: **sfvaa.org**. You can also look up meeting schedules on Group websites or Facebook pages, or go to this online directory: www.LAAOnlineMeetings.org and **<http://aa-intergroup.org>**.

The 7th Tradition States That We Are Self Supporting

Consider setting up a mailbox or Venmo (or other app) system to collect the 7th Tradition. Your group will still need to purchase supplies and you may still be obligated to pay rent. If you are able to make a contribution to the different entities that comprise Alcoholics Anonymous, please do so.



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.

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).



Update us with your meeting information via email: sfvco@outlook.com, or stop by and pick up your medallions and literature at SFVCO, 16132 Sherman Way, Van Nuys, CA 91406. **Visit our website: www.sfvaa.org** for meeting information and copies of Recovery Times.

Do you have a story about sobriety to share? Please send it to Editor Pat K. at xnowisthetime@aol.com. All submissions will be reviewed and if it meets our guidelines, we will contact you and let you know when your story will run.

Consider making a \$1.00 donation to Central Office for each year of your sobriety during your birthday month. **This month we thank Elizabeth C. – 15 Years and Anonymous for 38 years of sobriety.**

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.



We remember: No deaths that we are aware of.

FROM THE FOUNDERS

"Yes, we AAs were once a burden on everybody. We were "takers." Now that we are sober, and by the grace of God have become responsible citizens of the world, why shouldn't we now about-face and become 'thankful givers'! Yes, it is high time we did!"

AA Co-Founder, Bill W., June 1948, "Tradition Seven", The Language of the Heart

"These Steps have given me everything that drugs & alcohol promised me."
Shawna, Los Angeles

"It has been the actions of others that has given me unending support throughout my sobriety. It also shows how I am to respond to those whom I can help. I am responsible to see that the hand of AA is available to anyone."
Moreno Valley, Calif.,

"Open-mindedness seems to me a core spiritual principle of the program ... Without it I cannot change." S.F., CA.

"I pray that I will stay humble and not forget that I am just a drunk, sober today through the grace of God and the program of AA."
Aurora, Ill.

"In AA's Eleventh Step I find that I build today the road I travel tomorrow."

Binghamton, N.Y.

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AA SERVICE COMMITTEES CALENDAR: GS Area 93

All or some of the following meetings are temporarily on hold during the pandemic. Please consult the leadership of your district for further information.

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 orientation then 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.

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): On hold for now. 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 and 8 p.m. for the general business meeting.

San Fernando Valley Young People in AA: On hold for now. 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 A.A. Intergroup: This meeting is being held the 2nd Monday on ZOOM now and the meeting information is as follows: Meeting ID#: **839 8462 1757** Password: **811190**

(**6:30 pm** Orientation for new IGR's - **7:00 pm** Business Meeting). If your Group/Meeting currently doesn't have an Intergroup Rep. (IGR), please consider electing someone to be of service. It is a very rewarding service position and will help your group be informed about current AA events throughout the Valley.

**Keep Coming Back – It Works if
you Work It!**

A wind of spirit

A Wyoming man's relapse on Thanksgiving day leads him back to the Steps and a spiritual journey

When I got out of the hospital after being dried out and educated a bit about alcoholism, I knew that if I didn't do something about my drinking, I was going to lose everything I had—wife, children, business, money, home. So I went to AA. I'd had a taste of AA in the hospital, and though I had some reservations, in general I liked it.

I was welcomed sincerely and genuinely at my first meeting out of the hospital; in fact, the chairman got up out of his chair and walked halfway to the door to greet me. "Bob," he said, "we're glad you're here," and I knew I was in the right place.



I have heard hundreds of people say the same thing since. We had two meetings a week at that time, a Tuesday open meeting and a Friday closed one. I became a regular attender of the Friday meeting and occasionally went to the one on Tuesday. I was adopted almost at once by a big Irish nurse who became my sponsor and still is. How she ever put up with my intellectual pretensions and general arrogance I'll never know, but she did (and still does!). It was a small group, but representative, as all AA groups are, of the general run of mankind. There was a college professor, a successful businessman, a real estate salesman, a former lady of the night, a truck driver, a housewife or two, and then me—the resident intellectual.

My life got better from the first day in AA. My wife and I became lovers and friends once again; my kids began to warm up to me and enjoyed doing things with me like cribbage, Monopoly, picnics, and walks. My small business prospered, my bills got paid, I had many friends in and out of AA and I was a respected member of the business community. As my friends told me, "You are a much-blessed and much-loved man," and I was—all simply because I had stopped drinking.

And I continued to go to AA. I liked it and realized that my association with Alcoholics Anonymous was the reason things were going so well. I did have a few doubts and reservations about some of the things I heard at meetings. There was much talk about God, for instance. In fact, I sometimes thought that all I heard was God this, God that, God the other thing. But all those people sat right in front of me with smiles on their faces, most of them with jobs, fairly decent clothes, most with families, leading generally useful, constructive lives. They claimed it was because God was doing for them what they could not do for themselves, and that the Twelve Steps on the wall showed them the God of their understanding. They said that Step One was the cornerstone of sobriety and until they had taken both parts of that Step with no reservations, all their other efforts were in vain.

After listening to their stories, it was quite obvious that they were indeed powerless over alcohol and that their lives were unmanageable. In fact, the way some of those people talked, I wondered how they had ever gotten straightened out. I could see where they needed the whole program. But I could not for the life of me (and that's what it almost cost me) see that *my* life was unmanageable. It was anything but. I had a loving wife, well-behaved, talented children, a successful business. My life unmanageable?

Furthermore, I was not mad at anybody, I wasn't afraid of anything, I was not feeling sorry for myself, and if I had any resentments, they weren't bothering me. I just didn't have all those character defects that everybody else talked about. To the best of my knowledge, I didn't need all those Steps. Booze was a problem, obviously, and always had been, but not much else was wrong that I could see.

So life went on happily, merrily for a whole year. Thanksgiving rolled around and many friends gathered together at our house for dinner. My wife suggested that we serve drinks, so I mixed and served them.

I also had one. I remember being a bit fearful after swallowing it, and I recalled hearing at the meetings that I would be hooked again if I ever took another drink. But nothing happened. The sky did not fall in. Aha! thought I, perhaps I am not an alcoholic after all? But I didn't have any more that day, didn't want another one, in fact. And for a whole month I continued to go to AA and didn't feel the necessity for a drink.

Christmas came; we had guests; we had drinks again; and I had—two. Well, I do not remember how long it was, less than a month I think—and I was back on the booze full time, but with a very big difference. During that year of abstinence my capacity for alcohol had dropped from a fifth a day to half of a half-pint a day. Four ounces of alcohol was all it took to keep me sodden. It scared me a little at first to think that my tolerance for booze had dropped so dramatically, especially since I wasn't even drinking, and I remembered and continued to hear at meetings that alcoholism was a progressive disease. But I kept right on drinking my little bit.

For some reason known only to God, I kept going to meetings. So crafty and sneaky was I that not even my sponsor knew I was drinking, nor did anyone in my family. For two and a half years this went on, and in the late spring of 1969 the inevitable end came into view. My eyesight grew dim and blurred, I was short of breath, I shook all day and all night, what energy I had was rapidly melting away. It took every ounce of willpower I had to get out of bed and get to the shop. I knew I was dying, and I knew what was doing it. But the obsession for alcohol was more powerful than ever before. I had to have it or die, and I was dying because I had to have it. The terror mounted. I thought about Antabuse, but obviously I had to stop before I could take the stuff. I had a crazy thought about going back to AA, but I was already going! I was dying and there was no way out.

Very shortly, on a morning in late July as I got out of bed with the sweats, the shakes, the terror and the obsession, I realized that if I took another drink, I was going to die—not in a week or a day or two, not on the way to the hospital, but right then. And I thought, in an instant it seemed, of the one great thing that everybody at the meetings had talked about: God. All the talk about God this, God that, God the other thing, and all the things God had done for those people seemed to flash through my mind, and I cried out, "God, please relieve me of the terrible obsession to drink."

And it was gone in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye. I did not have to drink anymore. I felt clean inside and out for the first time in my life, as if a wind of spirit had blown through me; and I knew that all was well, right now and forever, both here and hereafter, and it didn't really matter whether I lived or died. I just didn't have to drink again—by the grace of God.

Many things have happened to me since that day. I could fill up quite a few pages telling you about them. But I soon realized that I could not stay sober forever on that one great experience, so I began the spiritual journey through the Steps. I have taken them several times since. I am just a garden variety drunk who has found a way to live happily and constructively without alcohol, to participate in the common lot of humankind, being thankful for all things.

-- Anonymous, Wyoming

Central Office of SFV

**16132 Sherman Way
Van Nuys, CA 91406**

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