

# Recovery Times

February 2021, Volume 47, No. 2

(818) 988-3001/www.sfvaa.org sfvco@outlook.com



## Intl. AA Women's Convention Set for Feb. 18-20, 2021

To make 2021's Conference safe and open to all, the Conference will be virtual. The Language of the Heart will be spoken at the First Virtual International Women's Conference ever held. The women of Charlotte, North Carolina are excited to host this Virtual Conference for our sober sisters in every part of the world.

In the true spirit of the IWC, there will be inspiring guest speakers, dynamic workshops and panels, and lots of fun activities, too. This will be a memorable experience unlike any other, where you will make new friends and renew old friendships.

IWC is a CLOSED AA women's conference for registrants only. Registration is free but required. Contributions are welcome. For more info, go to:

<https://internationalwomensconference.org>

And sign up for this conference if you are a sober woman.

## When Truth Stares at You

In the spring of 1985, I did a geographic from New York City to San Francisco, only to find that I had followed myself all the way across the country.

I moved into a railroad apartment on Kearny Street which climbs a steep hill in North Beach. I crashed there with two friends from my hometown, Dick and Todd, who were nocturnal cabbies, junkies and losers who through they were "living the life."

Above us lived a nice family, Asia and Brent, and their three young children: Moonlight, Lake and Dawn.

Everybody in the small building was friendly. We had dinners together, quoted Bob Dylan, drank beer and cheap wine.

North Beach was a circus of stoners, drunks, waitresses, bartenders, strippers, painters, punk rockers, revolutionaries, and a Beat poet who traded verses for shots at the local saloons. When the sun went down and the fog blew in, the party was on. Every day was like the day before.

(Continued, page 3)

**AA Central Office of the San Fernando Valley maintains a phone line that is answered by A.A. volunteers 24/7.**

**(818) 988-3001**

**Someone is always available to help an alcoholic in need.**

## Do you have a story to share?

Stories of sobriety are always appreciated. Please email your submission to Editor Pat K.: [xnowisthetime@aol.com](mailto:xnowisthetime@aol.com).

Please keep the length of your submission to 650 words and focus on the theme of sobriety.

## Visit our website:

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

**SAN FERNANDO VALLEY CENTRAL OFFICE**  
**Minutes of Intergroup Representatives Meeting**  
**January 11, 2021**

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**OPENING – Chairperson, Rick A.**

- Rick called the meeting to order with *The Serenity Prayer*.
- Diana N. read *The Twelve Traditions*.
- Diane D. accepted a motion to approve the December 2020 Intergroup Minutes.

**II TREASURER’S REPORT – Tina K.**

- MTD is (\$7,229.09), and YTD is (\$19,731.53) as compared to last YTD which was (\$1,892.64). Literature sales continue to decline, 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.

**III EXECUTIVE SECRETARY’S REPORT – David F.**

- Our Literature Sales are down (-70%) over last year (-\$50,925.17), for the entire year.
- However, our contributions have been very encouraging and appreciated – they are up 39% to \$46,471.64. Ended the month of December in the RED by (\$ 7,229.09).
- LA County Guidelines for COVID-19 continuing to be adhered to and temperature-taking all visitors & masks wearing at all times required.
- Continuing to add additional information to our website, so please send flyers or information on upcoming events. [www.sfvaa.org](http://www.sfvaa.org)
- PayPal and Venmo accounts are functioning well and we have received several contributions online for Gratitude Month, Group and Personal, 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition.
- We still have a few *Can’t Take Your Sponsor to Breakfast T-shirts for Sale* at Central Office – priced dropped to (\$20.00). Total contributions for CTYSTB \$759.58 (not including additional T-shirt sales).
- All phone shifts are being covered and we are *always* seeking new volunteers to assist with urgent/last-minute replacements. Thank you so much.
- REMINDER: Central Office is OPEN for Literature sales during regular business hours (M-F 9 to 6 & Weekends 9 to 5); except last Friday of month and major holidays!
- Submit AA ZOOM Meeting changes to Central Office at [sfvco@outlook.com](mailto:sfvco@outlook.com)
- We will be posting Intergroup Minutes and Financials on our website starting the end in January.
- Register for 2021 SFV AA Convention: Theme “Not Our Plan”. Registration is FREE! Registration is required to get the Zoom codes and passwords. <https://www.sfvaaconvention.org/>
- \* **CURBSIDE PICK-UP IS AVAILABLE AT CENTRAL OFFICE!**  
PLEASE CALL AHEAD TO (818)988-3001. We Will Assemble The Order And Deliver it Curbside.
- *Recovery Times* is available on our website, including past issues back to 2003. Stories of recovery are welcome. Interested members may submit articles of up to 650 words Send to Pat K. at [xnowisthetime@aol.com](mailto:xnowisthetime@aol.com)

**IV MEETING RELATED BUSINESS – Sandy R.**

- There were 5 new Intergroup Representatives this month:
  - Brian U. LTL Men’s Stag Wednesday at 1pm
  - Tina S. Tuesday Night Group at St. Bernardine’s at 8pm
  - Marianna B. Online Recovery Big Book Study on Sunday at 8pm
  - Matt M. General Service DCM for District 1
  - Steve K. General Service DCM for District 11

**V SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES**

- General Service Districts 11: Steve K. reported that the new officers have been transitioned in. A District 11 VENMO account has been established.
- General Service District 1: Matt M. reported that new officers have been elected; he’s the newly elected District 1 DCM, and Carla Y. is the new Area 93 delegate.
- General Service District 17: Simmie reported they have a new roster of officers.
- San Fernando Valley AA Convention: Josh said it’s January 29-31, registration is free and required to receive the login information.

## VI OLD BUSINESS

Literature Sales are CLOSED on holidays and the last Friday of each month; Central Office doors remain open, and phones are still answered. Please continue to send meeting changes IN WRITING to Central Office.

## VII NEW BUSINESS

Announcement of new Board Officers: Chair: Rick A., Co-Chair: Sandy R., Recording Secretary: Diane D., Treasurer: Tina K., Director at Large: Lee A., Director at Large: Ernie C., Director at Large: Bernard B. 1<sup>st</sup> Alternate: Carla R. & 2<sup>nd</sup> Alternate: Norm

## VIII ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM AA GROUPS & 7<sup>TH</sup> TRADITION

- Matt M. talked about the upcoming PRAASA, go to [praasa.org](http://praasa.org) to register.
- Carla R. asked that flyers for events be emailed to her, for inclusion in the IGR packet and addition to the [sfvaa.org](http://sfvaa.org) website.
- REMINDER: Flyers must be for AA Related Events (defined as event that includes an AA meeting).

## IX ACKNOWLEDGE BIRTHDAYS FOR THE MONTH OF JANUARY

Tina S. - 1 year, Ernie C. - 7 years, Denise T.- 7 years, Molly L. - 29 years & Jon R. 34 years

## X VACANCIES ON BOARD

- Norm was elected to the fill the Board vacancy. Congratulations, Norm!

## XI CLOSING

- A motion to adjourn was recognized and seconded.
- The meeting adjourned at 7:42pm with *The Lord's Prayer*
- The next Intergroup Meeting will be on Monday, February 8, 2021.

Prepared and submitted by Diane D., Recording Secretary

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## (cont. page 1) **When Truth Stares at You**

It was the look that changed his life, from someone whose words he'll never forget

We drank until closing time, tweaked until dawn, told strangers we loved them and stumbled home, when we had rent money for a home. After a while, I did not have the rent money anymore. One night, Todd was yelling at me about being a deadbeat, screaming in the courtyard behind the apartment building. I had nothing to say. Lake, then aged 10, was a vibrant, observant child. I saw her watching from her window. I liked Lake. We sometimes talked about politics and important world affairs and stuff.

Passing by her window, I explained, "Todd sure has a problem." Lake looked me right in the eyes. "No, Peter," she said, "you have a problem."



When the truth stares at you, you can blink and look away or you can absorb. I got sober three years later, long after leaving Kearny Street, the cabbies and Lake and her family of normal people who paid the rent on time.

Over the next 30 years, as life turned into mostly good days, I sometimes thought about the bad old days in North Beach. I kept a glimpse of Lake in my mind's eye. Her words had lodged in my mind in that subliminal, miraculous way that awakening works in alcoholics. Ever so slowly, those tiny starbursts of self-realization add up until something shifts in the brain and the world lights up. A few years ago, I heard that Dick

died from an overdose. Todd moved to the desert after new car services made his cab medallion into pumpkin mush. (continued)

I had no wish to reconnect, even though we had been childhood friends. I can still hear him yelling at me in that courtyard. But Lake. What became of Lake? Was she a singer or maybe an artist, a mother? Maybe she became a therapist. I had no idea. (continued, next page)

Yesterday, I was driving home from spending the day in San Francisco. On a whim, I stopped for an AA meeting in the Marina. I hadn't been in the Dry Dock for decades, but I knew it was still there, its coffee is legendary.

I decided not to like the slow-talking leader of the meeting. Maybe I would leave this stupid meeting, I told myself, dragging with me my lovely disgruntlement. Too late. The meeting started, and I was asked, "Who are you?" I responded, "Peter, alcoholic, visiting from Petaluma." People gave me a welcoming applause, so I stayed.

Then a dark-haired, slight, whimsically smiling woman in her early 40s said her name. "Lake," she said. I tried not to look like an old guy staring at a pretty woman in a meeting. Could it be her? I never met anyone else in my whole life named Lake.

Soon it was my turn to share. "I got sober years ago here in the city," I said, looking over toward her. "I moved here from New York, into a railroad apartment on Kearny Street. With two junkie cabdrivers." The woman turned to me then, staring. I finished my spiel of gratitude for the life that AA gave me. Then it was her turn to speak.

"My name is Lake," she said. "I am an alcoholic." She paused. "I was raised on Kearny Street." She then looked over at me shyly. "I do not mean to cross talk."

She said she was trying to get out of an abusive relationship. It was not easy. She did a geographic to New York after her family's apartment burned down. Years later she came back, beat. She no longer bartended. She and Moonlight own a childcare center. She was sober now three and a half years. She said she's glad to be sober.



Soon after, we all stood and closed a circle. I held her hand.

We said, "God, grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change, courage to change the things we can, and wisdom to know the difference."

And then I got to tell Lake how much she means to me. **BY: PETER B. | PETALUMA, CALIF**



SFV AA Central Office Chairperson Lyn W. ceremoniously ends her term by passing the gavel over to incoming chairman Rick A.

Thank you for your service, Lyn!

If you would like to be of service to Central Office answering the phone, please call David F., Office Manager, SFV Central Office at (818) 988-3001.

**Keep Coming Back  
It Works if you Work it.**



**FROM THE FOUNDERS**

*"We now fully realize that 100 percent personal anonymity before the public is just as vital to the life of AA as 100 percent sobriety is to the life of each and every member."*

**AA Co-Founder, Bill W.,** January 1955, *"Why Alcoholics Anonymous Is Anonymous", The Language of the Heart*

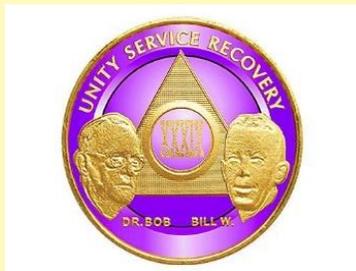
*"Not picking up a drink creates infinite possibilities for me ... Who knows? This could be the greatest day of my life."* **New York, N.Y.**

*"I don't believe I drank to get drunk, but always to seek in the next drink that peace for which a sick soul seems to thirst."* **L. A., CA.**

*"The Steps will speak to my condition wherever I am in sobriety."* **Riverside, Ill.**

*"All I had to do was ask myself a simple question: 'Am I or am I not powerless over alcohol?' I didn't have to compare myself or my experience with anyone, just answer a simple question."* **Miami, FLA**

*"Every day, hopeless, helpless alcoholics walk into AA meetings, grab onto hope, and begin a renewal of their spirit."* **Cleveland, OH**



**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).

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.LAAAonlinemeetings.org](http://www.LAAAonlinemeetings.org) and <http://aa-intergroup.org>.



**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.

**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.

Has there been a change to your meeting? Please email Central Office: [sfvco@outlook.com](mailto:sfvco@outlook.com).

Meeting changes must be made in writing please.

## The 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition States That We Are Self Supporting.

Consider setting up a mailbox or Venmo (or other app) system to collect the 7<sup>th</sup> 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.

## AA Service Committees

GS Area 93: Please consult the leadership of your district for information on how to access your Zoom meeting:

**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.

### San Fernando Valley A.A. Intergroup:

This meeting is being held the 2nd Monday on ZOOM now and the meeting information is as follows: (6:30 pm Orientation for new IGR's - 7:00 pm Business Meeting).  
Zoom Meeting ID#: 839 8462  
1757 Password: 811190.

**Acknowledge your AA anniversary with a donation to Central Office:** Consider making a \$1.00 donation to Central Office for each year of your sobriety during your birthday month.

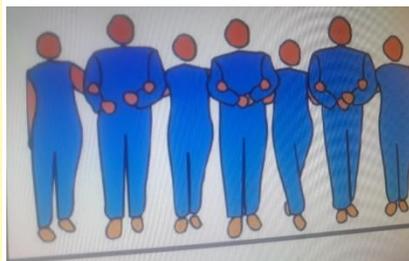
**Bequests/Contributions:** The maximum dollar amount of individual bequests by A.A.s is reviewed every two years at the General Service Conference. In 2019, at the 69th General Service Conference, the maximum amount of an individual bequest by members to A.A. was raised from \$5,000 to \$10,000. This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

## 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):** H & I is carrying the message of A.A. recovery via Zoom (virtually) into hospitals, prisons and treatment facilities to those who are unable to get to meetings.

**San Fernando Valley Young People in AA: On hold for now.** 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.



This month, we celebrate the following anniversaries:  
**Charles L. – 12 Years & Brian M. – 43 Years.**

We would like to remember A.A. members who have passed on:  
**Jess A. – 35 years.**

Recovery Times would like to know what you are grateful for. Please tell us in 100 words or less:

1. What you are grateful for?
2. What your sobriety means to you?
3. How you practice gratitude?

Submissions received by February 15<sup>th</sup> will be chosen for publication in the March issue. We look forward to hearing from you!

Sobriety coins and chips are not AA. Giving a chip or coin is becoming too big a tradition in AA meetings here in the Northeast and perhaps the rest of the country. I believe it is doing more harm than good. AA is a "one day at a time" program and always has been. I would venture to say that if you polled AA members and asked the question, "Are sobriety chips and coins part of the AA program?" most would say, "yes."

Most groups or individuals use the Fourth Tradition as a rationale for allowing them to dispense coins/chips. I say this practice does affect AA individuals and AA as a whole in a negative way.

There are some wonderful benefits and by-products of having continuous sobriety and connecting one sober day to the next. We learn to stay sober, we get our lives back and most importantly, we grow spiritually. We get this by having a daily reprieve from alcohol granted by our higher power and by "working a program" as outlined in the Big Book and the 12 and 12.

I have watched the chip/coin system send a very different message: one of pride and ego run amok, as well as bigshotism. There is nearly a class system based upon time sober now. This is a system whereby people who are struggling to get and stay sober are belittled. This is clear from how relapsers are viewed.

When I see folks receive coins/chips there is this unspoken

did." Have we forgotten that "left to our own devices," we'd be drunk? Where is the role of the Higher Power or the program in this?

Allowing chips and coins to continue in groups will only continue to send mixed messages to its members and I believe will create more harm than good to members.

I have many years of continuous sobriety and March 15th will forever remain an important day in my life. It is important because it is the first day the AA program started working in my life. It saved my life.

—John P., Warrington, Pa



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"The alcoholic slip is not a symptom of a psychotic condition. There's nothing screwy about it at all. The patient simply didn't follow directions."

William Duncan Silkworth, MD, January 1947, "Slips and Human Nature", Best of Grapevine, Volume 1



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### HEARD AT A MEETING:

*"I pray to turn it over rather than burn it down."*

**Anonymous**

*"You have to move your feet for your brain and your heart to follow."* **Anonymous**

*"When you've been lost, lonely, forgotten, rejected, it's the most important thing in the world to have somebody shake your hand."* **Anon**

*"Neither God nor AA can help us if we are not open to help."* **Anon**

*"Gratitude is like a spiritual reset button."* **Anonymous**

Say what you mean, mean what you say, but don't say it mean."

**Anonymous**

If you have news of an upcoming convention or a death, please send it to us so we can put it in the Recovery Times. We appreciate hearing about A.A. sponsored events in our area. Email: Recovery Times:

[xnowisthetime@aol.com](mailto:xnowisthetime@aol.com)

*Central Office of the SFV*

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ADDRESS SERVICE  
REQUESTED

