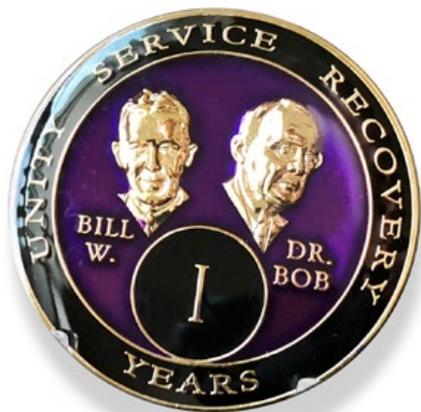


RECOVERY TIMES

MAY 2021, VOLUME 47, NO. 5 • (818) 988-3001 • SFVAA.ORG • SFVCO@OUTLOOK.COM

ONE DAY AT A TIME

— so simple in theory. I remember when I took my first-year medallion and was presented with it by a longtime member of my local AA group. Back then, I thought about how many things in my life I was going to change — tomorrow or the next day. I still hadn't gotten a grasp on the "today" thing.



Change comes slowly as the scales drop from our eyes after we hear another A.A. member share something that makes total sense.

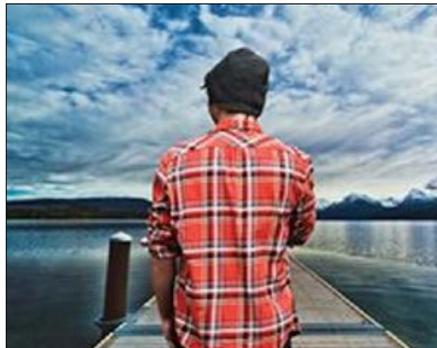
It's sometimes through someone else's experience that we understand our own responsibility to change our thoughts and behavior.

By doing that, we get a different outcome. How amazing is that? I'm grateful for my sobriety today and knowing all I need to do is change.

— Los Angeles, CA. **RT**

Big, Beautiful & Wild

**With grizzly bears
and bighorn sheep for neighbors,
how was he ever going to stay sober?**



I was more than three years sober and starting to experience the joy of living in ways I never had before. I was grateful for this new life afforded me by sobriety but I hated my job. I was waiting tables in one of New York City's busiest restaurants and I knew something had to change.

But what I didn't realize at the time was that being in that job served a purpose; it pushed me to seek employment that was more fulfilling. My sponsor suggested trying "something fun." Work could be fun? I hadn't heard that one.

I was still getting to know myself (and I still am, one day at a time). During many a tedious shift, I'd reminisce

about a trip I'd taken to the Grand Canyon two years earlier. Not only had I experienced the presence of God there, I found that I really enjoyed exerting myself in the outdoors and I was blown away at the beauty of God's creation—and how much of it I'd never seen while drinking. The trip had been exhilarating and unforgettable, so I thought about a job working in a wilderness area.

**After digging around online,
I found an advertisement
recruiting tour guides in Glacier
National Park in Montana.**

If I were accepted, I would join a grand tradition and become one of the "Gear Jammers," a group of driving narrow Going-to-the-Sun Road through mountain passes in a restored 1937 White Motor bus full of people.

The job sounded challenging and interesting so I applied. Soon I had a phone interview, and I got the job.

(continued, page 5)



SAN FERNANDO VALLEY CENTRAL OFFICE
Minutes of Intergroup Representatives Meeting
APRIL 12, 2021 – 7:00 P.M.

Intergroup is currently being conducted by Zoom due to the Coronavirus pandemic.
Thanks to Carla R. for hosting!

I OPENING – Chairperson, Rick A.

- Rick called the meeting to order with Lee M. leading *The Serenity Prayer*.
- *The Twelve Traditions* were read.
- Rick A. accepted a motion to approve the March 2021 Intergroup Minutes with a correction.

II TREASURER’S REPORT – Tina K.

Central Office’s MTD is **\$6,579.22**, and YTD is **\$4,912.87** as compared to 2020’s YTD, which was **\$7,896.64**.

III EXECUTIVE SECRETARY’S REPORT – David F.

- In March, our Literature Sales were slightly up over last year 12.9% (\$1,041.09) for the same period. Also, our contributions have increased and are very much appreciated – they are up 165%= **\$15,028.38**. We ended the month of March in the **RED** by **\$6,579.22** but YTD (through 3/31/21) we are only **\$4,912.8**.
- The board Financial Review was conducted on April 6th, 2021 – Current account balances were confirmed and the Chairman and Treasurer were satisfied with the P&L Statement review.
- We continue to add additional information to our website: www.sfvaa.org, so please send flyers or information on upcoming events to: sfvco@outlook.com.
- The PayPal and Venmo accounts are functioning well - Contributions for Group, Gratitude, Birthday and Personal gifts can be made online and the credit card processing system is up and running now at Central Office.
- All phone shifts are being covered but we are *always* seeking new volunteers to assist with urgent/last-minute replacements.
- REMINDER: Central Office is OPEN for literature sales during regular business hours: M – F, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. & weekends 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (except the last Friday of month and on major holidays). We currently offer **curbside deliveries for literature but please call ahead: 818 988-3001**.
- Submit AA ZOOM Meeting changes to Central Office: sfvco@outlook.com.
- C.O. Manager attended a General Service District meeting last week & will continue to foster and further Intergroup participation & information sharing.
- David noted that the GSC Opinion Poll has been added to the website for groups/members to utilize in preparation for the upcoming General Service Conference.
- SPRING SALE – Central Office is having a spring sale on Speaker CDs, Cassettes, DVDs and foreign language literature including BIG BOOKS! Stop in or call/email and ask us how you can get a Big Book in Dutch or another language. These materials will be great to have in your Home Group Library.

RECOVERY TIMES – Pat K. Recovery Times has a **NEW LOOK!** You can always find current and back issues of RT [on our website](#). Interested members may submit articles of 650 words maximum in Word with cutoff date for submissions by the 15th of the month. Send to Editor Pat K. at xnowisthetime@aol.com

IV MEETING RELATED BUSINESS – Sandy R.

- There were 3 new Intergroup Representatives this month:
 - Jacob M., Kester Group, Monday, 7pm
 - Linda S., Sobriety Sisters, Woodland Hills, Friday, 10:30am
 - Leesa M., Layers of the Onion Big Book Study, Tuesday, 6:30pm

V SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES

- District 1: Norm S. reported Area 93 Preconference GSC Opinion Poll was reviewed.
- District 17: Simmie C. PRAASA and Preconference GSC Opinion Poll was reviewed.
- SFV Hospital & Institutions (H&I) Committee: Next meeting is 3rd Monday at 7pm. Link is online.
- Santa Clarita Valley Convention Committee: Meetings are being held.

VI OLD BUSINESS: None.

VII NEW BUSINESS: It looks like meetings will be permitted to meet in person by mid-June.

VIII ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM AA GROUPS & 7TH TRADITION

- Carla R. asked that flyers for events be emailed to her for inclusion in the IGR packet and in addition, send flyers to: sfvco@outlook.com for inclusion on the website.
- REMINDER: Flyers must be for AA Related Events (defined as event that includes an AA meeting)

IX ACKNOWLEDGE BIRTHDAYS FOR THE MONTH OF APRIL: 133 YRS OF SOBRIETY!

Nathan 5 years 4/11/16
Jake 11 years 4/4/10
Casey 17 years 4/12/04
Bernard B. 27 years 4/
Hollis 35 years 4/28/86
Mark N. 38 years 4/27/83

X VACANCIES ON BOARD

- No Board vacancies.

XI CLOSING

- A motion to adjourn was recognized and seconded.
- The meeting adjourned at 7:31pm with Mo S. leading *The Lord's Prayer*

Prepared and submitted by Diane D., Recording Secretary

If you attend a meeting without an IGR, please elect a new IGR and have them join us on the 2nd Monday of the month at 6:30 p.m. for new IGR orientation using the following codes:

Zoom ID 2193438442
Password 12345

**NEXT SFV INTERGROUP MEETING:
MONDAY, MAY 10, 2021**

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 1st Wednesday of the month (virtually). 6 p.m. orientation; 6:30 for general meeting.

District 11: Meets the 1st Monday of the month (virtually) 6:30 orientation; 7 p.m. general meeting.

District 16: Meets the 1st Monday of the month (virtually) at 6 p.m. for orientation then meeting.

District 17: Meets the 1st Monday of the month (virtually) 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 Mtg ID#: 2193438442 Password: 12345



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.

Virtual Meetings: There are now 221 virtual A.A. meetings in the Valley (that we are aware of). 

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.

1st Sunday of the month @ 1 p.m. at Unit A., 10641 Burbank Blvd., North Hollywood. Regular weekly meeting Monday nights at 8 pm.

Consider making a donation to Central Office of a dollar per year for your AA anniversary.

In MARCH, we celebrated the following:

Anonymous – 49 Years,
Learning to Live Men's Stag – 43 Years,
Anonymous – 40 Years, David F. – 33 Years,
Bonnie H. – 30 Years, Ross – 27 Years
and Mara – 15 Years.

In APRIL we celebrated: Learning to Live Men's Stag - \$124.74 donation (years unknown), Dean – 40 Years and Belinda T. – 16 Years.

We remember those AA members who have passed on to the great meeting in the sky: None reported.



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. 

Continued from cover...



Photo by Jack Bell

The next night at my home group, I told my sponsor about the job offer but I was immediately gripped by fear. How would I stay sober? How would I get to meetings? I was in New York City, where there are hundreds of meetings a week at all hours. How would I connect with other AAs in a part of the country where there were more bighorn sheep than people? I felt overwhelmed at the idea of such a transition.

My sponsor was not fazed. For every “good” reason I had for why I couldn’t go, he had an answer. “But I don’t have a car. How am I going to get to meetings without a car? Glacier Park is a really long walk from the subway,” I joked. “You’ll find a way,” he answered. “People will help you. Just put sobriety first and you’ll be fine.”

Each time I looked up images of Glacier Park online, I was mesmerized. I knew I had to take the risk of leaving New York City for a chance to work in this paradise of raw wilderness. Grizzly bears, bighorn sheep and mountain goats would be my neighbors. I had to do it.

So I made my first step by visiting the New York Intergroup office in Manhattan. Grabbing a West Coast Directory, I searched for East Glacier Park Village, the town closest to my check-in point.

I found a list of alcoholics willing to publicly list their names and phone numbers in the directory. I wrote down a few and called one woman about two weeks before leaving the city. “Barbara” held meetings at her house and agreed to meet up with me when I landed.

One hundred four dollars and 46 hours later, I arrived by train at East Glacier.

I met a few of my new colleagues who had come from all over the country. Were any of them sober? Not that I could see. But I can tell you they were more than perplexed when I left to climb into some woman’s grey station

wagon the second day of my trip.

“How does a guy from New York City know someone in East Glacier?” one person asked. “Oh, she’s a friend of a friend of mine,” I said. “I’ll be back later.” Although I would spend the next five months working closely with these people, I wasn’t ready to break my anonymity yet.

The grey station wagon belonged to Kathy, Barbara’s sponsee. We drove about 10 minutes to Barbara’s house. The meeting was in the woods behind her home. I was definitely not in New York City anymore. Chairs encircled a campfire that warmed a cast iron coffeepot that everyone handled with a rubber oven mitt. It was my first outdoor meeting and I loved it.

After a few meetings, just as I was starting to get comfortable, I was transferred from East Glacier to an area called Many Glacier, about 12 miles past the park border. Now a resident of Glacier National Park, I no longer had access to AAs and fear began to creep in again.

I worked with about 200 other



seasonal employees. Surely one of them had to be sober! I borrowed a computer and created a flier, calling all friends of Bill to meet

down a path near the river that ran through the main road. Afraid to break my anonymity, I crept into the dorms at night and distributed my fliers. The next day I waited. No one showed. The day after that I waited again. Nothing. I couldn't believe it. But each time no one showed, I used that time to read the Big Book. I dedicated that time to sobriety.

Then, the main hotel in the park reopened for the summer season and I had direct access to the general public. I broke my anonymity to my boss. "I need a room to hold an AA meeting in. Can you help?" He showed me to a room on the fourth floor that the staff used to store mattresses. I piled the mattresses in a corner and put six chairs in a circle. I made another flier, announcing that "The Glacier Group" would meet Monday, Wednesday and Friday in room 405 at 7 p.m. I showed up expectantly but was by myself again. I listened to a speaker tape and read the Big Book for an hour.

But I stayed with it until drunks began showing up. "Thank God," one man from Missouri told me. "I



was praying to my Higher Power that I would find a meeting. I looked up and saw the 'Friends of Bill' flier at the Transportation Desk."

Two weeks later, after going on a hike, I felt very ill.

I thought I had eaten bad Salisbury steak at the employee cafeteria, but it turned out my appendix was on the verge of bursting. It took two ambulances to traverse the 60 miles of unforgiving mountain roads to bring me to the hospital, where I had emergency surgery. I was barred from working for three weeks.

What was I going to do while benched in the middle of the Rocky Mountains?

I didn't even have a TV! My AA instincts kicked in and I called

Barbara from East Glacier. "I have a friend you should meet," she said. "His name is Jim and they're holding an AA conference in his area this week. He lives about 50 miles away on the other side of town. You should go and stay with him."

"50 miles?" I said. "Barbara, I don't have a car. I can't get to him." "You don't need a car," she replied. "I have two. You can use mine." I got chills. This was another "Aha!" moment, a moment (and I've had many since) where God makes sure I know he cares about my life and is ever-present in my time of need. I call it a "wink" from God. My sponsor was right. I didn't need a car. The hand of AA, and my Higher Power working through it, took care of everything. This was love and service in action.

My forced convalescence period flew by, filled with meetings, dinners and fellowship with my new Montana friends.

In no time, I was back in the bus, cruising through the mountains,



educating travelers about Native American history, wildlife and flora of the park.

Many times, driving alone in the bus, I was overwhelmed with emotion, feeling so privileged to roll through the jagged 9,000-foot peaks, above deep, green valleys and surrounded by roaring waterfalls.

I knew in my heart of hearts the only reason I was permitted to do what I was doing in that beautiful place was because I was sober.

I thanked God who encouraged me through the words of my sponsor and who put people in my path that would help me, so long as I was willing to ask and receive the help.

I learned a valuable lesson being so far from what I thought was the “center” of my program. The AA program, our “design for living,” is not based in a city, town or meeting space. It’s in us. So where I go, the program goes. I don’t need to avoid traveling to a place because it doesn’t have AA meetings. I can start a meeting.

I’ve been sharing my Montana story ever since. It was there that I made the powerful discovery that my sobriety will never limit me nor be an excuse as to why I can’t try something new, even if my mind is whispering something different.



Photo by astrodonimaging.com

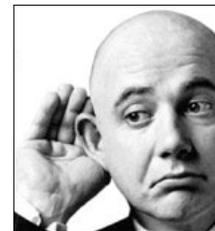
I learned that my sobriety offered me a life as big, beautiful and wild as Glacier National Park.

And as long as I stayed on the path—following the road of the Twelve Steps, building a relationship with God and practicing love and service—I’d be taken care of and destined to have wonderful adventures.

— *Brian M Portchester, New York, USA.* **RT**



Heard Around A.A.:



“These days I find that nothing is as precious as my sanity. I used to be addicted to drama and could only function on excitement and high levels of adrenaline. It’s very different today ... It’s all very ordinary and average and sane, and I wouldn’t trade it for anything”

London, England

“It took me a long time to find out that AA wasn’t here to limit my life, it was here to fulfill it.”

Schaumburg, Illinois

“The rewards of asking for help – increased humility, connection, and trust – are well worth the effort.”

Phoenix, AZ

“Every recovery, though it may go unnoticed, improves the world in some way.” **Toledo, OH**

From the Founders:



"During his first AA years every AA has had plenty of the urge to revolt against authority. I know I did, and can't claim to be over it yet. I've also served my time as a maker of rules, a regulator of other people's conduct ... I can now look back upon such experiences with much amusement.

And gratitude as well."

AA Co-Founder, Bill W.,

September 1945, From: "Rules' Dangerous but Unity Vital."

"Let us remember that great legion who still suffer from alcoholism and who are still without hope. Let us, at any cost or sacrifice, so improve our communication with all these that they may find what we have found - a new life of freedom under God."

AA Co-Founder, Bill W.,

February 1961, "The Shape of Things to Come."

"In AA we have no VIPs, nor have we need of any. Our organization needs no title-holders nor grandiose buildings ... Experience has taught us that simplicity is basic in preservation of our personal sobriety and helping those in need."

AA Co-Founder, Dr. Bob,

Sept. 1948, "The Fundamentals in Retrospect."

"A fine plan or idea can come from anybody, anywhere. Consequently, good leadership will often discard its own cherished plans for others that are better, and it will give credit to the source."

AA Co-Founder, Bill W.,

April 1959, "Leadership in AA: Ever a Vital Need."

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Please buy your meeting supplies from AA Central Office of the San Fernando Valley

By doing so, you are supporting your local AA Central office. (It's also 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.LAAOnlineMeetings.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.

Meeting changes must be made in writing please. **RT**

Heard Around A.A.:

Continued

"If [AA] had turned out to be a government-financed project or a charitable branch of some church, my feelings about it could not have been so instantly warm and comfortable. The fact that it was just us drunks, paying our own way, lessened my shame at having to ask for help."

Manhattan, New York

"Thanks to my God, AA, and the Twelve Steps, sobriety has become the 'easier, softer way' for me."

Magalia, California

"When I look into the eyes of the person next to me and ask, 'How are you?', I will take the time to listen. I want to keep in mind that at any given time, each of us may need the same love and support as someone who is attending their first meeting."

Jacksonville Beach, FL

"I was relieved to learn that I didn't have to believe, only be willing to believe. This I could do."

Charleston, West VA

"Truth is to inner space what sunshine is to a garden."

Key West, Florida

"I need to constantly inch forward in AA, closer to the center, to avoid being thrown from the spinning wheel that is my life."

New York, NY RT