

January 2004

# The Messenger

Published Monthly by the 23rd District Intergroup of Alcoholics Anonymous  
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## Powerlessness, Unmanageability & Unity

**H**appy New Year!

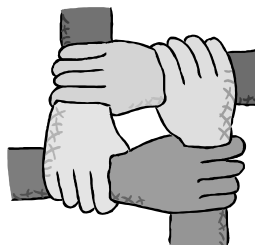
The New Year for me is an opportunity to reflect on the first Step and Tradition. My introduction came several months into recovery after moving to Durham, North Carolina.

Julian O., a recovering old drunk (as he called himself), took me under his wing introducing me to Anne, my local sponsor, and the meeting that would become my home group. On the first and third Tuesday we studied the Steps and Traditions, respectively, reflecting the calendar month. It was there I began to realize that a set of spiritual principles were being laid out for me. A diverse group of people were taking action to get and stay sober. If it could happen for them, why not for me?

There were quite a few "aha" moments back then. First, I was **not** alone nor did I have to be ever again. Julian, Anne and the group made sure of that! Without AA Unity, could my recovery be possible? I think not.

It's a "we" thing this program of ours. I don't ever have to be alone again. They were the first to teach me the "**HOW**" in "How It Works". With **H**onesty, **O**pen-mindedness & **W**illingness recovery is possible. As a sober member of Alcoholics Anonymous, I must continue to participate in my sobriety. Having been a beneficiary, I believe in AA unity. We can do it together that which we cannot do alone.

Admitting and accepting powerless-



ness and unmanageability in my life, brought a new freedom. This stark reality provided a strange serenity and peace. With help, I began to see I was defenseless against that first drink. For me, there is no drinking like "normal" people. I proved over and over I could not. Instead of my life progressing things got worse. Utter defeat brought with it a liberation and a foundation for happiness that remains a paradox. The cliché "more will be revealed" continues to inspire me. First came physical sobriety. But, continual surrender to life, people, places & events beyond my control is vital if I am to maintain emotional and spiritual sobriety.

~ Bev. J.

## The First Step...when living life on life's terms

Who cares to admit complete defeat? Not me for sure. This was a struggle when I was trying to get sober. Still today, my sponsor has to bring me back to the truth that I need to see just how powerless I am over certain situations, people, places or things in my life. This is a truth to my existence and happiness in AA today.

A recent situation which seemed to "tug at my heart" after trying to pass the message really drove this idea home to me. I was asked for help, gave of myself freely and ran smack dab into a wall so thick I landed on my rear and my feelings were hurt. Of course, I took it personally.



Why is it that some of us get it and some of us don't? Why is it that some of us see how good our lives can be

and others don't want to do the work to get to that point? How is it that a member in AA can pass on the light to you and not see the light themselves? Just how many licks does it take to get to that tootsie roll center?

As I read Step One again these words jumped off of the page at me...

*"...few people will sincerely try to practice the AA program unless they have hit bottom.... Who wants to confess his faults to another and make restitution for harm done? Who cares anything about a Higher Power, let alone meditation and prayer... self centered to the extreme, doesn't care for the prospect..."*

Thank God for friends in the program who participate in their own recovery and who keep bringing me the light.

Thank God for my sponsor who gently reminds me that "*delay is dangerous, and rebellion may be fatal*", and just how appropriate the first paragraph on page 96 in the Big Book is and that it can be used at any time when living life on life's terms.

Our "job" is to pass along the message along with our experience, strength and hope. The outcome will be between God and the other who is still suffering. I need not suffer along with them. I have my own path to follow.

The principles behind Step One are Honesty and Acceptance. Today I am very grateful to know this and to be willing to practice them when living life on life's terms.

~ Jacque J.

# The Managers Corner

**A**lmost twenty-one years ago I read....."Under the lash of alcoholism, we are driven to A.A. and there we discover the fatal nature of our situation. Then, and only then, do we become as open-minded to conviction and as willing to listen as the dying can be." That is what Bill Wilson wrote about the First Step in the book 12 Steps and Twelve Traditions. When I first read those words I had one of those 'man, this guy knows what he's talking about!' things happen to me. I had been dying, I was finally starting to understand that. I was still, at times, looking for some angle to shoot which would allow me to control and

enjoy my drinking, but Bill knew the mind of the real alcoholic and effectively plugged every hole I was trying to wriggle through. I spent a lot of time in my first thirty, sixty, and ninety days going through the whole 'Yes I am, No I'm not' thing with alcoholism. I came to understand that this is part of the disease, this trying to out-think what is crystal clear to everyone else. I had been told by friends and family for years that I had a problem, but I couldn't see it. If you had asked me at that point, I would have told you that my problem was a series of bad breaks, unfortunate circumstances, and people who didn't understand. And I would have believed it. I had to stop drinking long enough to let some of the fog clear away before I could begin to see that every time I took a drink I was going to take a great many more. What I had been viewing as random events began to come together as a continuous thread of instances tied together by me being

drunk during every one of them. Up until then, when I came-to somewhere feeling sick sad and sorry, I would think 'I'll never do that again' and then I'd take a drink to get well and start the entire cycle over again, coming-to somewhere thinking 'I'll never do that again.' Until I stopped drinking I couldn't see that pattern. But, when I did stop, and thanks to all of you, and to our co-founder who understood us all so well, I began to "become as willing to listen as the dying can be." I'm grateful to know that. I thank God for Bill Wilson. I thank God for all of you. And I thank God that I am sober. Today.

~ Tim W.



### Submit to the Messenger!

What better way to share your experience, strength, and hope? Have a great idea for a theme, or something that you would like to share with the AA community? Please bring stories, artwork, etc. to be published (yes, you can submit it anonymously if you are shy) to Central Office at 1213 State Street, Suite H Santa Barbara, CA 93101 or email us at [sbaa@silcom.com](mailto:sbaa@silcom.com)

### Use the Messenger to spread the word...

Has one of your meetings moved to a new location? Have you started a new meeting and want to get the word out there? What better way to reach the AA community, from Goleta to Carpinteria than with the Messenger? Please submit any meeting announcements, birthdays or upcoming events either in person at Central Office or electronically via email, to be published in the following month's issue. Remember, this is *your* Central Office Messenger.

## Supporting Member Donation Coupon

*this form can be used for both new sign-ups and regular contributions*

Yes, I would like to become a supporting member of the Santa Barbara AA Central Office, and help it continue 'carrying the message' and being there for the Alcoholic who still suffers. Please sign me up as a Supporting Member so that I may contribute on a regular basis throughout the year.

*"Every AA Group ought to be fully self supporting, declining outside contributions"*

Seventh Tradition (short form) reprinted with permission of AA World Services, Inc.

Enclosed is my first contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_, which I will continue to donate on a (please circle one) monthly, quarterly, annually, other \_\_\_\_\_ basis.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to: AA Central Office, S.M.C. 1213 State Street, Suite H  
Santa Barbara, Ca 93101

An alcoholic cannot fight alcohol."  
*Alcoholics Anonymous, page 338*

"No other kind of bankruptcy is like this one. Alcohol, now becomes the rapacious creditor, bleeds us of all self-sufficiency and all will to resist its demands."

*Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions  
Page 21*

"But upon entering AA we soon take quite another view of this absolute humiliation. We perceive that only through utter defeat are we able to take our first steps toward liberation and strength. Our admissions of personal powerlessness finally turn out to be firm bedrock upon which happy and purposeful lives may be built."

*Twelve Steps &  
Twelve Traditions,  
Pages 21-22*

"We know that little good can come to any alcoholic who joins AA unless he has first accepted his devastating weakness and all its consequences. Until he so humbles himself, his sobriety - if any - will be precarious. Of real happiness he will find none at all. Proved beyond doubt by an immense experience, this is one of the facts of AA life. The principle that we shall find no enduring strength until we first

admit complete defeat is the main taproot from which our whole Society has sprung and flowered."

*Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions,  
Pages 21-22*

"Under the lash of alcoholism, we are driven to AA, and there we discover the fatal nature of our situation. Then, and only then, do we become as open-minded to conviction and as willing to listen as the dying can be. We stand ready to do anything which will lift the merciless obsession from us."

*Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions, Page 24*

## STEP ONE

We admitted we were powerless over alcohol - that our lives had become unmanageable.

"Now we know drinking made things worse."

*Is AA for Me?, (AA Pamphlet page 36)*

"Adversity gives us more opportunity to grow than does comfort of success."

*As Bill Sees It, page 234*

"It's no great trick to stop drinking, the trick is to stay stopped."

*Alcoholics Anonymous,  
page 554*



**TRADITION ONE**  
Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on AA unity.



Without unity, A.A. dies. Individual liberty, yet great unity. Key to paradox: each A.A.'s life depends on obedience to spiritual principles. The group must survive or the individual will not. Common welfare comes first. How best to live and work together as groups. Each member of Alcoholics Anonymous is but a small part of a great whole. A.A. must continue to live or most of us will surely die. Hence our common welfare comes first. But individual welfare follows close afterward.

Articles on this page from the Illustrated Steps, Illustrated Traditions, and Illustrated Concepts. Copyright by Alcoholics Anonymous © World Services, Inc. New York, NY Reprinted with permission

Alcoholics Anonymous has been called an upside-down organization because the "ultimate responsibility and final authority for... world services" resides with the groups — rather than with the trustees of the General Service Board or the General Service Office in New York.

In Concept I, Bill traces how this came to be. The first step in 1938 was "the creation of a trusteeship," first called the Alcoholic Foundation, renamed in 1954 the General Service

Board. Why? To perform the services the groups could not do for themselves: e.g., uniform literature, uniform public information about A.A., helping new groups get started, sharing with them the experience of established groups, handling pleas for help, publishing a national magazine, and carrying the message in other languages and in other countries. A service office was formed to carry on these functions under the board's direction. Both the

board and the office looked to the co-founders, Bill and Dr. Bob, for policy leadership.

In the midst of the "exuberant success" of early A.A., Dr. Bob became fatally ill and Bill

## CONCEPT ONE

Final responsibility and ultimate authority for A.A. world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship.

asked, "When Dr. Bob and I are gone, who would then advise the trustees and the office?" The answer, Bill felt, was to be found in the collective conscience of the A.A. groups. But how could the autonomous, widely scattered groups exercise such a responsibility?

Over great resistance by trustees and members devoted to the status quo, Bill managed to "sell" the idea of calling an A.A.

General Service Conference (see Concept II), and eleven years later Bill was able to declare, "The results of the Conference have exceeded our highest expectations."

This Concept is rooted in Tradition Two, which states: "For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority — a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern."

The principles of Tradition Two are crystal-clear, Bill asserts: "The A.A. groups are to be the final authority; their leaders are to be entrusted with delegated responsibilities only." The outside world cannot imagine an organization run this way, but Bill calls it "a spiritualized society characterized by enough enlightenment, enough responsibility, and enough love of man and of God to insure that our democracy of world service will work .



# Announcements & Upcoming Events

## General Service Rep. (GSR) Meeting

Goleta Valley Community Center  
5679 Hollister, Room #7 6:00 PM  
Meets the first Monday of every month  
**\* Please note this is a new location !**

## Hospitals & Institutions (H & I) Meeting

Central Office, 6:00 PM  
1213 State Street, Suite H  
Meets the second Monday of every month.  
Donations to H & I are accepted at Central Office.

## InterGroup Representative (IGR) Meeting

First Presbyterian Church  
21 East Constance 6:00 PM  
Meets the second Tuesday of every month.

## Public Information (PI) Meeting

Please call 687-7673 for location.  
Meets the fourth Saturday of every month.



## The New Fellowship Hall Breakfast/Speaker Meeting January 10th

Breakfast \$5 donation 9:00 a.m.

Speaker meeting featuring  
Mary S. from Los Angeles  
10 a.m.



This monthly meeting is hosted by Your Central Office,  
and directly benefits the services it provides.

Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church 909 N. La Cumbre

## Temporary Relocation

The Harbor Group has temporarily relocated to the classroom in the Maritime Museum Bldg. Enter through the Valet parking lot adjacent to The Breakwater Restaurant



## Sundowners

20th Anniversary Celebration.  
January 17, 2004 - 3:00 p.m.

Alano Club

Featuring Founder Speakers

Big Al and Billy

Food, Fellowship, History and Fun!

(For All)

If you want to change something in your life...You've gotta change something in your life.

God doesn't help those who help themselves, He helps them who LET him.

Serenity isn't freedom from the storm, It is peace within the storm.

The Power behind me is greater than the problem in front of me.

## December Contributions to Central Office

	Group	Dec.	Nov.	YTD		Group	Dec.	Nov.	YTD
001	Sunrisers	150.00	0.00	150.00	112	Montecito/Carpinteria	0.00	0.00	126.00
003	Eye Opener	304.00	272.00	3,176.00	114	Schooner Group	0.00	0.00	448.75
004	Monday At A Time	0.00	0.00	175.00	115	11th Step Meditation	0.00	34.00	187.20
005	Noon Step Study	0.00	0.00	21.00	117	Way of Life	300.00	0.00	2,334.59
006	Start Your Week Right	0.00	200.00	1,200.00	118	Speaker Connection	0.00	0.00	502.00
007	Sound Off	0.00	38.00	73.00	120	Sat. Morn. Home Boys	0.00	200.00	2,235.50
010	Foundation Group	0.00	0.00	215.00	130	Alternative Sat.	0.00	0.00	117.00
011	Sundowner Group	0.00	0.00	180.00	133	Action Participation	0.00	0.00	70.00
016	Big Book Workshop	22.00	0.00	162.50	139	It's A Hell of a Deal	0.00	40.41	794.15
020	Cambridge Group	0.00	0.00	105.00	140	Gay Discussion Sun.	0.00	0.00	374.00
021	Summerland Mon. Group	0.00	0.00	216.00	141	Off Center	107.00	300.00	762.03
022	There Is A Solution	225.00	0.00	400.00	143	Sunday Go To Meeting	0.00	0.00	100.00
023	For Women Only	0.00	0.00	250.00	144	Back to Basics Young People	0.00	0.00	100.73
025	Grateful Group	0.00	0.00	240.85	145	The How and Why of It	0.00	0.00	129.35
026	Carpinteria Study Group	0.00	0.00	80.00	146	Out of Town Speaker, NH II	0.00	0.00	69.80
032	Winchester Roundtable	0.00	0.00	119.00	148	San Ysidro	0.00	0.00	320.00
034	Beginners-Step 123	0.00	0.00	5.20	149	Getting to Know You	0.00	0.00	710.15
034	Women of Change	0.00	0.00	27.00	150	Goleta Sun. Night Speaker	0.00	100.00	100.00
035	12 & 12 Study, Tues	0.00	0.00	88.00	153	Happy Destiny	0.00	50.00	157.00
039	Gratitude Group	0.00	60.00	105.00	156	Start Your Day Right	125.00	0.00	1,139.67
045	Alternative Group	40.00	0.00	250.00	160	Quit Playing God-3rd Step	0.00	0.00	30.00
047	Tues. Mens Stag	94.00	18.00	701.00	163	Mustard Seed	0.00	0.00	55.00
051	Men's Group at St. Marys	0.00	0.00	105.00	164	Men Who Have Lost Their Legs	0.00	259.00	1,676.00
052	As Bill Sees It-Wed.	0.00	0.00	50.00	165	Junkyard Dogs	0.00	193.59	698.00
055	Staying Alive	120.00	0.00	620.00	166	Serenity Sisters	0.00	0.00	218.81
056	Women By The Books	0.00	100.00	324.12	170	Barefoot Group	8.00	39.00	333.00
062	Do The Steps or Die	44.98	27.42	485.03	177	Key Group	0.00	0.00	1,500.00
064	Women's Serenity Group	0.00	0.00	174.60	181	Keep Coming Back Group	0.00	0.00	716.78
067	Rigorous Honesty	12.00	12.00	373.00	183	Summerland Thurs.	0.00	500.00	2,306.00
068	Stepping Stones	0.00	39.50	257.93	186	Sun. Night Alternative NH III	50.00	0.00	158.00
070	Success Group	0.00	0.00	100.00	188	Gay Men Discussion Mon.	0.00	0.00	83.00
071	The Loft	0.00	0.00	72.57	196	Powerful Cement	0.00	0.00	63.00
072	Discussion Gay Wed.	0.00	0.00	150.00	200	Anonymous Donations	0.00	5.00	1,403.22
077	Briefly Big Book	0.00	0.00	30.00	201	Birthday Donations	28.00	71.00	1,279.00
079	Harbor Group	0.00	220.00	2,331.03	202	Supporting Member	1,194.00	1,056.00	13,743.19
083	Sober Students-Tues. Eve.	0.00	0.00	114.00	204	Memorial Fund	0.00	0.00	595.00
089	Here & Now	65.00	0.00	233.62	207	Recovered Bad Checks	0.00	0.00	34.09
091	New Life	420.00	0.00	741.45	208	Coffee Can	0.00	0.00	\$37.00
093	Into Action Thurs.	50.00	0.00	50.00	209	Meeting Guide	54.00	53.39	827.63
097	Almost Saints	0.00	240.00	977.87	210	Convention Income	2,000.00	0.00	2,000.00
100	UCSB Discussion	0.00	0.00	64.45	211	Central Office Rent Received	152.00	165.00	1,940.00
106	Woman to Woman	0.00	0.00	180.00	212	Special Events	181.00	214.77	3,295.77
111	Carpinteria Canalino	300.00	0.00	506.00					

**Total Group Contributions for December \$2436.98**

**Total 'Other' Contributions for December \$3609.00**

*Treasurers, please keep in mind that monthly contributions, no matter how small, help with the financial planning at Central Office. You don't need to have a large sum of money to donate.*



# Happy Birthday !!

Jennifer..... 1 yr  
 Laurie R ..... 1 yr  
 Beverly..... 1 yr  
 Mike C ..... 1 yr  
 Elaine..... 1 yr  
 Collette E..... 1 yr  
 Lisa ..... 2 yrs  
 Matt..... 3 yrs  
 Clay ..... 3 yrs

Chris D ..... 4 yrs  
 Martha K..... 5 yrs.  
 John L. .... 5 yrs  
 Robin B ..... 11 yrs  
 Natalie B..... 12 yrs  
 Scott H ..... 18 yrs  
 Nancy K..... 18 yrs  
 Joe R..... 25 yrs

### Central Office Stats

656 AA info calls  
 33 Alanon referrals  
 65 Referrals to other programs  
 61 12-step via answering service  
 8 12-step via office  
 12 Out of town visitors  
 833 Office walk-ins  
 7868 Hits on our website

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