



The Santa Barbara

April 2006

MESSENGER

Dr. Silkworth on “Slips”

The mystery of slips is not so deep as may appear. While it does seem odd that an alcoholic who has restored himself to a dignified place among his fellow-men, and continued dry for years, should suddenly throw all his happiness overboard and find himself again in mortal peril of drowning in liquor—often the reason is very simple.

People are inclined to say: “There is something peculiar about alcoholics. They may seem to be well, yet at any moment they may turn back to their old ways. You can never be sure!”

This is largely twaddle. The alcoholic is a sick person. Under the techniques of Alcoholics Anonymous he gets well, that is to say, his disease is arrested. There is nothing unpredictable about him any more than there is anything weird about a person who has arrested diabetes.

Let’s get it clear, once and for all, that alcoholics are human beings just like other human beings—then we can safeguard ourselves intelligently against most of the slips.

Both in professional and lay circles, there is a tendency to label everything that an alcoholic may do as “alcoholic behavior.” The truth is, it is simply human nature!

It is very wrong to consider many of the personality traits observed in liquor addicts as peculiar to the alcoholic. Emotional and mental quirks are classified as symptoms of alcoholism merely because alcoholics have them—yet those same quirks can be found among nonalcoholics, too. Actually they are symptoms of mankind!

Of course, the alcoholic himself tends to think of himself as different; someone special, with unique tendencies and reactions. Many psychiatrists, doctors and therapists carry the same idea to extremes in their analyses and treatment of alcoholics. Sometimes they make a complicated mystery of a condition which is found in all human beings, whether they drink whiskey or buttermilk.

To be sure, alcoholism like every other disease does manifest itself in some unique ways. It does have a number of baffling peculiarities which differ from all other diseases. At the same time, many of the symptoms and much of the behavior of alcoholism are closely paralleled and even duplicated in other diseases.

The alcoholic “slip,” as it is known in Alcoholics Anonymous, furnishes a perfect example of how human nature can be mistaken for alcoholic behavior.

The “slip” is a relapse! It is a relapse that occurs after the

alcoholic has stopped drinking and started on the AA program of recovery. “Slips” usually occur in the early stages of the alcoholic’s AA indoctrination, before he has had time to learn enough of the AA technique and AA philosophy to give him solid footing. But “slips” may also occur after an alcoholic has been a member of AA for many months, or even several years, and it is in this kind, above all, that one finds a marked similarity between the alcoholic’s behavior and “normal” victims of other diseases.

No one is startled by the fact that relapses are not uncommon among arrested tubercular patients. But here is a startling fact—the cause is often the same as the cause which leads to “slips” for the alcoholic. It happens this way:

When a tubercular patient recovers sufficiently to be released from the sanitarium, the doctor gives him careful directions for the way he is to live when he gets home. He must be in bed every night by, say, 8 o’clock. He must drink plenty of milk. He must refrain from smoking. He must obey other stringent rules.

For the first several months, perhaps for several years, the patient follows directions. But as his strength increases and he feels fully recovered, he becomes slack. There may come the night when he decides he can stay up until 10 p.m. When he does this, nothing untoward happens. The next day he still feels good. He does it again. Soon he is disregarding the directions given him when he left the sanitarium. Eventually he has a relapse!

The same tragedy can be found in cardiac cases. After the heart attack, the patient is put on a strict rest schedule. Frightened, he naturally follows directions obediently for a long time. He, too, goes to bed early, avoids exercise such as walking up stairs, quits smoking and leads a Spartan life. Eventually, though, there comes a day after he has been feeling good for months, or several years, when he feels he has regained his strength and has also recovered from his fright. If the elevator is out of repair one day, he walks up the three flights of stairs. Or, he decides to go to a party—or do just a little smoking—or take a cocktail or two. If no serious after-effects follow the first departure from the rigorous schedule prescribed he may try it again, until he suffers a relapse.

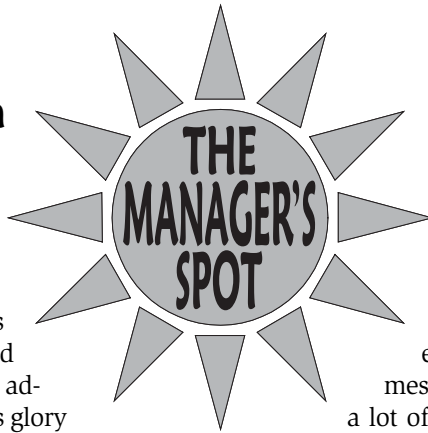
In both cardiac and the tubercular cases, the acts which led to the relapses were preceded by wrong thinking. The

(continued on p. 3)

Cause for Celebration

What a truly wonderful event the recent Fundraiser Breakfast was, even if we do say so ourselves! For many of us it brought back memories of “the good old days” when it seemed we used to have a lot more stuff like this going on. This could of course be glorified recall. Time and memory will sometimes do that to us. In addition, of course, every “old-timer” recalls glory days. That is the nature of things. However, having said all that, please allow us to reflect that the recent event held many of the aspects of older events a lot of us still recall with fondness. Times when we used to see people from other Groups and locations that we normally did not see on a regular basis. Times when a lot of people would show up and prove the truth that “many hands make light work.” Also times “when camaraderie, joyousness, and democracy” would pervade the event and people “who would normally not mix” would mix very well indeed.

For us it began when we arrived early to get things set up and actually found people there who had said they would be there. Those ahead-of-event setup times are some of the best in AA. People asking what they can do. New acquaintances being struck up. Old friendships being confirmed. Fellowship taking place. Priceless. All this long before Randy and his crew put the finishing touches on a scrumptious breakfast meal. We managed to serve a full-on breakfast for



\$5 a plate and we still made money. By the time this article appears you should be able to look under special events in the financials reporting (inside back page) and get some idea of just how well we actually did.

And then the speaker! Wow! Theresa F. from North Hollywood was kind enough to make the trip up and absolutely mesmerized us all with her message. We know a lot of good speakers, but there are some who are just a cut above. They are able to deliver their message of hope and recovery in such a clear pure way as to effectively touch every person in an audience. This was one of those talks. We do not record these events but we sure had many people asking if we had. Enough people that we have now taken the time to procure and copy another of Theresa's talks and have it available so that people who missed our event will at least have the opportunity to hear her. Call us at the office if you want a copy.

Finally, the people who said they would stay after and help clean up actually did what they said they would do also. The upshot being that, start to finish, we had a very special Saturday morning together.

Thank you to all the people who were there to help. You know who you are, and you understand the importance of that kind of service in your own recovery.

Tim

Supporting Member Donation Coupon

I would like to become a supporting member of the Santa Barbara AA Central Office, and help it continue to carry the message and be there for the alcoholic who still suffers. I look forward to finding my monthly newsletter in the mail each month! Enclosed is my first contribution of \$ _____. I will continue to donate this amount on a (circle one) monthly, quarterly, annual, other _____ basis.

I am already a supporting member. This is my regular contribution of \$ _____.

Name _____

Street _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

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

Every AA group ought to be fully self supporting, declining outside contributions. —Seventh Tradition (short form), reprinted by permission of AA World Services, Inc.

A Fourth Step Prayer

Dear God, It is I who has made my life a mess. I have done it, but I cannot undo it. My mistakes are mine and I will begin a searching and fearless moral inventory. I will write down my wrongs, but I will also include that which is good. I pray for the strength to complete the task.

Tradition Four Contemplation Questions

Tradition Four: Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or AA as a whole.

1. Do I insist that there are only a few right ways of doing things in AA?
2. Does my group always consider the welfare of the rest of AA? Of nearby groups? Of loners in Alaska? Of internationalists miles from port? Of a group in Rome or El Salvador?
3. Do I put down other members' behavior when it is different from mine, or do I learn from it?
4. Do I always bear in mind that, to those outsiders who know I am in AA, I to some extent represent our entire beloved fellowship?
5. Am I willing to help a newcomer go to any lengths—his lengths, not mine—to stay sober?
6. Do I share my knowledge of AA tools with other members who may not have heard of them?

—Originally published in the *AA Grapevine*

Concept IV

Throughout our Conference structure, we ought to maintain at all responsible levels a traditional "Right of Participation", taking care that each classification or group of our world servants shall be allowed a voting representation in reasonable proportion to the responsibility that each must discharge.

—*AA Service Manual*

“Slips” (continued from p. 1)

patient in each case rationalized himself out of a sense of his own perilous reality. He deliberately turned away from this knowledge of the fact he had been the victim of a serious disease. He grew overconfident. He decided he didn't have to follow directions.

Now that is precisely what happens with the alcoholic—the arrested alcoholic, or the alcoholic in AA—who has a “slip.” Obviously he decides again to take a drink some time before he actually takes it. He starts thinking wrong before he actually embarks on the course that leads to a “slip.”

There is no more reason to charge the “slip” to alcoholic behavior than there is to lay a tubercular relapse to tubercular behavior or a second heart attack to cardiac behavior.

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.

And that's human nature! It's life! It's happening all the time, not merely among alcoholics but among all kinds of people.

The preventative is plain. The patient must have full knowledge of his condition, keep in mind the facts of his case and the nature of his disease and follow directions.

For the alcoholic, AA offers the directions. A vital factor, or ingredient, of the preventative, especially for the alcoholic, is sustained emotion. The alcoholic who learns some of the technique or the mechanics of AA but misses the philosophy or the spirit may get tired of following directions—not because he is alcoholic but because he is human. Rules and regulations irk almost anyone, because they are restraining, prohibitive, negative. The philosophy of AA, however, is positive and provides ample sustained emotion—a sustained desire to follow directions voluntarily.

In any event, the psychology of the alcoholic is not as different as some people try to make it. The disease has certain physical differences, yes, and the alcoholic has problems peculiar to him, perhaps, in that he has been put on the defensive and consequently has developed nervous frustrations. But, in many instances, there is no more reason to be talking about “the alcoholic mind” than there is to try to describe something called “the cardiac mind” or “the TB mind.”

I think we'll help the alcoholic more if we can first recognize that he is primarily a human being—afflicted with human nature!

—Dr. William Duncan Silkworth, *AA Grapevine*, January 1947

A Visit Remembered

Staff at SB AA Central Office:

About 15 years ago I came to Santa Barbara from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, to bury my mother. She had been placed on a life support system and I had to make the painful decision to take her off. She died before I got there.

My sponsors, Big Karl (8-15-1961) and Otis P (3-25-1976), told me before I left to “check in with AA before I unpack.” Doing what I was told (why I’m sober today), I went straight to the Triangle Club in Goleta. Walking in, the counter person had his hand over the mouthpiece of the phone, asking if someone was willing to go on a 12th Step call. No one was jumping at the bit, and I said to myself, “that’s not what I was taught,” and took the call. I drove a few miles up the coast to pick up a man who turned out to be an old-timer. When we got back to the club, having talked our way back, he thought it might be a good idea for me to have a “temporary sponsor” while visiting. He introduced me to Karl Y, and I had a sponsor for the four months I was in Santa Barbara.

When I got back to Milwaukee, I told Otis, “Wow, I made it through something again.” Otis replied, “You dough-head! You never made it through anything in your life. You were carried through this by your support system.” I’ve since come to understand this profoundly.

While I was sad that the Triangle Club is no more, I want to thank you for the help in finding a meeting on my way to San Francisco. My 6000 mile drive, Milwaukee to San Francisco and back, took me to several clubs I have visited over the years, but none was so dear in my mind as the Triangle Club in Goleta, and the wonderful AA I found in Santa Barbara.

Thanks again,

—Greg S

Calling All Artists

Though October 21–22 seems far off, your convention committee is already hard at work preparing for the 22nd Annual Santa Barbara Convention. At the last meeting, we picked the theme for this year: *Simple Kit of Spiritual Tools*.

There is a solution. Almost none of us liked the self-searching, the leveling of our pride, the confession of shortcomings which the process requires for its successful consummation. But we saw that it really worked in others, and we had come to believe in the hopelessness and futility of life as we had been living it. When, therefore, we were approached by those in whom the problem had been solved, there was nothing left for us but to pick up the simple kit of spiritual tools laid at our feet. We have found much of heaven and we have been rocketed into a fourth dimen-

sion of existence of which we had not even dreamed. —*Alcoholics Anonymous*, page 25

Once again we need a logo to represent the convention and we are calling on our local AA talent to provide it. So get your creative juices flowing and submit a design. The logo will be used on the convention web site (www.sbaaconvention.org), registration forms, badges, T-shirts, mugs, and on the big banner above the speaker podium. This probably won’t make you rich or famous, but it will get your work in front of thousands of people, and it will earn you the gratitude of your convention committee.

You can give your artwork to any committee member, mail it to or drop it off at Central Office, or bring it to the next committee meeting. (Call Central Office to get directions to the meeting.) Be sure to give us a way to contact you if you don’t submit your work in person.

The next committee meeting will be at 6:00 P.M. on April 12. We will select the logo then. If you mail your artwork or drop it off at Central Office, it must arrive by April 12.

There are still plenty of opportunities for you to get involved in this year’s convention. We need chairpersons to head the graphics committee and decorations committee, and co-chairs for these and other committees. The convention would not be possible without the help of all our volunteers. Not only is this a way to be of service, but it’s a lot of fun, and an opportunity to work with and get to know a good group of sober men and women. There is such satisfaction when the convention finally comes together. Come to the next meeting to find out more.

And for everyone in the AA community, save those dates in October. Plan on a weekend of fun, fellowship, good food, and strong messages of the program of Alcoholics Anonymous. We look forward to seeing you there, and between now and then we’ll keep you informed about the progress your committee is making.

—Your Convention Committee



Take a Bucket

Sometime when you are feeling important;
 Sometime when the ego's in bloom;
 Sometime when you take it for granted,
 You are the most qualified one in the room;
 Sometime when you feel that
 Your going would leave an unfillable hole;
 Just follow these simple instructions, and see how
 They humble your soul.
 Take a bucket and fill it with water;
 Put your hand in it up to your wrist.
 Pull it out, and the hole that remains is

A measure of how you'll be missed.
 You may splash all you please when you enter;
 You may stir up the water galore.
 But stop and you'll still see in a minute
 That it looks just the same as before.
 The moral of this story is quite simple.
 Just do the best that you can.
 Be proud of yourself, but remember:
 There is no indispensable man.

—Eve D, *Messenger*, January 1989



March Birthdays

| | |
|-------------------|----|
| Jacki W | 1 |
| Alison K | 1 |
| Patsy A | 2 |
| JD | 2 |
| Michel W | 3 |
| Joe W | 6 |
| Peter U | 7 |
| Randy F | 8 |
| Rose D | 9 |
| Scot M | 10 |
| John M. | 12 |
| Carmel V | 13 |
| Bob D | 13 |
| Barbara | 17 |
| Penny | 18 |
| Jonathon | 20 |
| Richard K-G | 22 |
| Chuck H | 22 |
| Joan W | 23 |
| Theresa | 23 |
| Dave F | 26 |
| Uncle Leo | 28 |
| Renee L | 29 |

The Messenger is published monthly by:

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sbaa@santabarbaraAA.com

Submissions Needed

The Messenger needs your submissions and letters. We especially seek submissions on the step or tradition associated with the month of the same number. For the fifth month, May, we need writing on Step 5 and Tradition 5. Send submissions to jimstoic@hotmail.com.

Central Office Statistics

During March your Central Office had:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-----|
| AA information calls | 803 |
| Al-Anon | 48 |
| Referrals to other programs | 52 |
| 12-step via answering service | 60 |
| Out-of-town visitors | 12 |
| 12-step via office | 4 |
| Office walk-ins | 551 |
| Hits on our Web site | 681 |

Service Meetings

GSRs (Group Service Representatives) meet at 6:00 P.M. the first Monday each month at the Cottage Hospital, Conference Rooms E and F.

IGRs (Intergroup Representatives) meet at 6:00 P.M. the second Tuesday each month at First Presbyterian Church, 21 E Constance, in Santa Barbara.

H&I (Hospitals & Institutions) meets at 6:00 P.M. the second Monday each month at the Central Office.

PI (Public Information) meets the fourth Saturday of each month. Call 687-7673 for more information.

Santa Barbara Recovery Trivia

Q. What are the names of the four horsemen in the Big Book?

A. See next month's *Messenger*.

Answer to last month's question:

Q. What was the name of the first women's recovery house in Santa Barbara?

A. Casa Serena, in 1959, on Bath Street.

March Financials

| | March | February | YTD | | March | February | YTD |
|-----------------------------|--------|----------|----------|--|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| 003 Eye Opener | 272.00 | 270.00 | 847.00 | 099 Sink Or Swim | 0.00 | 0.00 | 60.00 |
| 004 Monday At A Time | 0.00 | 0.00 | 173.66 | 100 UCSB Discussion | 127.89 | 0.00 | 127.89 |
| 006 Start Your Week Right | 0.00 | 0.00 | 60.00 | 112 Montecito/Carpinteria | 0.00 | 0.00 | 130.00 |
| 007 Sound Off | 0.00 | 0.00 | 60.00 | 113 Sought Through Prayer & Meditation | 0.00 | 9.00 | 9.00 |
| 010 Foundation Group | 74.00 | 67.00 | 206.00 | 114 Schooner Group | 0.00 | 0.00 | 277.00 |
| 011 Sundowner Group | 264.00 | 0.00 | 264.00 | 115 Eleventh Step Meditation | 0.00 | 16.71 | 29.71 |
| 013 No Shenanigans | 40.00 | 0.00 | 40.00 | 117 Way Of Life | 0.00 | 225.00 | 600.00 |
| 023 For Women Only | 106.00 | 0.00 | 106.00 | 120 Sat. Morn. Home Boys | 0.00 | 0.00 | 138.05 |
| 025 Grateful Group | 0.00 | 0.00 | 120.00 | 130 Saturday Night Sobriety | 0.00 | 72.00 | 72.00 |
| 026 Carpinteria Study Group | 100.00 | 0.00 | 100.00 | 139 It's A Hell Of A Deal | 288.00 | 0.00 | 288.00 |
| 034 Women of Change | 0.00 | 70.00 | 107.62 | 141 Off Center | 0.00 | 0.00 | 325.00 |
| 035 12 & 12 Study, Tues. | 0.00 | 0.00 | 60.00 | 144 Back To Basics, Young People | 0.00 | 54.00 | 54.00 |
| 036 Tuesday Trudgers | 0.00 | 100.00 | 100.00 | 146 Out Of Town Speaker, NH II | 15.00 | 0.00 | 15.00 |
| 045 Alternative Group | 75.00 | 0.00 | 75.00 | 149 Getting To Know You | 219.00 | 0.00 | 302.00 |
| 047 Tuesday Men's Stag | 126.00 | 0.00 | 126.00 | 150 Goleta Sun. Night Speaker | 80.00 | 0.00 | 80.00 |
| 052 As Bill Sees It, Weds. | 0.00 | 71.29 | 71.29 | 164 Men Who Have Lost Their Legs | 0.00 | 415.00 | 415.00 |
| 053 Both Oars In The Water | 0.00 | 0.00 | 60.00 | 165 Junkyard Dogs | 29.44 | 68.61 | 134.35 |
| 055 Staying Alive | 0.00 | 20.00 | 150.30 | 166 Serenity Sisters | 0.00 | 0.00 | 58.00 |
| 062 Do The Steps Or Die | 36.19 | 40.16 | 122.58 | 170 Barefoot Group | 1.00 | 15.00 | 32.00 |
| 064 Women's Serenity Group | 0.00 | 50.00 | 50.00 | 177 Key Group | 700.00 | 0.00 | 700.00 |
| 067 Rigorous Honesty | 12.00 | 12.00 | 44.00 | 181 Keep Coming Back Group | 0.00 | 0.00 | 169.69 |
| 068 Stepping Stones | 0.00 | 0.00 | 56.00 | 183 Summerland, Thurs. | 161.10 | 0.00 | 454.40 |
| 071 The Loft | 0.00 | 350.00 | 350.00 | 186 Turning Point | 105.00 | 528.00 | 633.00 |
| 073 Young People's | 181.68 | 0.00 | 181.68 | 200 Anonymous Donations | 0.00 | 0.00 | 46.00 |
| 074 Casa Serena (BB Study) | 0.00 | 6.00 | 6.00 | 201 Birthday Donations | 0.00 | 0.00 | 19.00 |
| 076 11th Step | 0.00 | 15.00 | 75.00 | 202 Supporting Member | 2,830.00 | 619.00 | 5,108.00 |
| 079 Harbor Group | 0.00 | 376.04 | 1,164.67 | 203 SBYPAA | 0.00 | 0.00 | 105.65 |
| 091 New Life | 0.00 | 240.00 | 240.00 | 204 Memorial Fund | 0.00 | 0.00 | 100.00 |
| 093 Into Action, Thurs | 0.00 | 0.00 | 30.00 | 211 Central Office Rent Received | 160.00 | 175.00 | 490.00 |
| 097 Almost Saints | 122.00 | 0.00 | 237.00 | 212 Special Events | 1,304.00 | 0.00 | 1,304.00 |
| | | | | TOTAL | \$7,429.30 | \$3,884.81 | \$17,560.54 |

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