



MESSENGER

The Seventh Tradition & Your Central Office

Below this article you will see a coupon for the Supporting Member Club (SMC) of your Central Office. Sometimes when I discuss this possibility with people they will say, "Oh, I give at my meeting." What they fail to understand is that the money put in the basket at meetings does not necessarily make it to Central Office. For one thing there is the rent, and the other expenses like literature, that the meeting needs to cover. There is also the suggested split of the remaining funds that go to the other AA services, like our New York office. All of these are of course important and need to be done. The thing is that when the dust settles there is often not much left over that goes directly to support your Central Office. That is why we began the SMC: to allow our members who wished to the opportunity to make a donation to the office that would be intended only for the office and the services we provide. We have no donation amounts we suggest and no number of times we suggest any be made. We send out no reminders, except the monthly copy of the Messenger we mail all SMC donators, and we do not pass any information about contributors on to any other agen-

cies, or publish any lists of who they are. The one thing we do adhere to is the limit suggested by New York for individual contributions of no more than two thousand dollars a year. We also offer the opportunity, for anyone who wishes, to make their donation for an AA member who is incarcerated and cannot afford to contribute themselves. Many people who are doing time receive our newsletter because of someone else's kindness. So, and here comes the bite, if you are not at this time a Supporting Member of your Central Office. Or if you have not made your SMC donation lately, this is a gentle reminder that we can always use your help. If you are not aware of what the services you would be supporting are, please call or come by the office so that we can explain what it is we do here. And, if you are one of the many, many people who made their first initial contact with Alcoholics Anonymous by calling Central Office, or got your first Big Book or meeting guide here, then please consider taking a moment to put something in the mail that will help insure that we are here for the next person who calls. Thank you. —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.

Humility! What's in it for me?

I heard someone say that as a joke recently. We all laughed, but I think part of the reason we did is because that exclamation and question really do frequently describe the alcoholic state of mind. In my 1939 dictionary, which I got so I could see what they thought words meant back when our book was being written, defines humility as "freedom from pride or arrogance" or "an act of submission or humble courtesy," both of which don't sound much like to me. Certainly not when I was drinking. And certainly not as an ideal I've actually achieved with any regularity since I've been sober. But Bill W., when he wrote about Step Seven in the 12 & 12, stressed the fact that this Step concerns itself with humility, and that it is a desirable quality to strive for. He says that unless we achieve more of it than is necessary for just sobriety we will not have much chance of being happy.

Well I didn't start this journey to stay miserable, so how do I begin to achieve some of this quality? Bill writes that for most of us it required repeated humiliations to begin. That our admission of powerlessness over alcohol is only the beginning of the process. When we are no longer drunk, and no longer have that excuse, we are faced with looking at ourselves as we truly are,



not as we would like to be. And we utilize the tools of Steps Four and Five to help us in this.

With them we can determine the truth about our stock-in-trade as going human concerns.

Now in Steps Six and Seven we can begin working toward the removal of the things we find objectionable. My own experience is that this is a huge pride-buster. This facing of defects, and achieving a true desire to be rid of them. For one thing, the defects I discovered had been part of me for so long I actually feared being rid of them, even if I knew they were not in my own best interest. For another, that terrible pride of mine kept insisting that I knew what was right, all evidence to the contrary. It was only when I began to see that perhaps with humility I could experience some peace of mind did I actually begin to desire it. Then, and only then, could I "Humbly ask Him to remove my shortcomings" and really mean it.

I would just like to add that the process of taking the Steps is truly an amazing journey, and I am more and more aware of that as time goes on and, hopefully, my understanding grows.

Tim

Big Thanks to Jacque!

Thank you Jacque for her year of service as editor of *The Messenger*.

New Editor Contact Information

You can reach the new *Messenger* editor, Jim S., at jimstoic@hotmail.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 eighth month, August, we need writing on the Step 8 and Tradition 8. Send submissions to jimstoic@hotmail.com.

Rarely—or Never?

How cofounder Bill Wilson answered a frequently asked question

From time to time over the years, some AA members will question the wording of the first sentence of Chapter 5 of *Alcoholics Anonymous*: “Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path.” Why, the enthusiastic member asks, doesn’t the Big Book say, “Never have we seen a person fail...”?

This question was answered—several times—by an AA well qualified to speak on the subject, since he wrote the book, with the assistance of other early members.

Bill Wilson, AA’s cofounder, answered a 1961 letter from Minnesota with these words (preserved, like those of the following letter, in the archives at the AA General Service Office): “Concerning your comment about the use of the word ‘rarely’ in Chapter 5 of the Big Book: My recollection is that we did give this considerable thought at the time of writing. I think the main reason for the use of the word ‘rarely’ was to avoid anything that would look

like a claim of a 100% result. Assuming, of course, that an alcoholic is willing enough and sane enough, there can be a perfect score on [a person of this sort]. But since willingness and sanity are such elusive and fluctuating values, we simply didn’t want to be too positive. The medical profession could jump right down our throats.

“Then, too, we have seen people who have apparently tried their very best, and then failed, not because of unwillingness, but perhaps by reason of physical tension or some undisclosed quirk, not known to them or anyone else. Neither did we want to over encourage relatives and friends in the supposition that their dear ones could surely get well in AA if only they were willing. I think that’s why we chose that word. I remember thinking about it a lot.

“Maybe some of these same reasons would apply to present conditions. Anyhow, I do know this: The text of the AA book is so frozen in the minds of tens

of thousands of AA’s that even the slightest change creates an uproar.”

In 1967, Bill made the following reply to a Florida member asking the same question: “Respecting my use of the word ‘rarely,’ I think it was chosen because it did not express an absolute state of affairs, such as ‘never’ does. Anyhow, we are certainly stuck with the word ‘rarely.’ My few efforts to change the wording of the AA book have always come to naught—the protests are always too many.”

And at the 1970 General Service Conference, this Ask-It-Basket question was addressed directly to Bill: “If there was any change you would make in the Big Book, would it be to change the word ‘rarely’ to ‘never’ at the start of Chapter 5.

Bill answered, “No.”
—AA *Grapevine*, December 1978

Concept VII

The Conference recognizes that the Charter and the Bylaws of the General Service Board are legal instruments: that the Trustees are thereby fully empowered to manage and conduct all of the world service affairs of Alcoholics Anonymous. It is further understood that the Conference Charter itself is not a legal document: that it relies instead upon the force of tradition and the power of the AA purse for its final effectiveness. —AA *Service Manual*

Letters

A Message of Hope and Freedom

Hello again everyone! My name is Shane and I am an alcoholic. I submit an article to the Messenger every year when I celebrate my AA birthday. I feel this year is very special because it is one of those milestones I never imagined I would reach. 5 years!

I found AA, or rather it found me, in a pretty unlikely place. The United States penitentiary at Lompoc. I was one of those desperate cases when I came to the rooms, like most of us I guess. I couldn't keep going the way I was going, but I couldn't imagine a life without booze either. I still had 15 years to go on my sentence and I was angry, depressed, and resentful. Consumed with self-loathing and self-pity I attended my first meeting. What I found was entirely different from what I expected. I guess I did not believe that AA in prison could be very serious, and I thought it would be some watered down version of 'real AA.'

Much to my surprise I found a group of men who were living the program. They took me in and showed me a way of life I could not have believed was possible for a loser like me. I met people from Santa Barbara H&I who brought the message to those of us on the inside. These people will always have a special place in my heart. Today I know that God has a plan for me, and that for now my job is to carry the message to other people behind these walls. I get to be of service in a way which few people ever have the opportunity to do. Because I actually live in an environment where the majority of people desperately need AA and a few, like myself, occasionally want what the program has to offer. I get to see their eyes shine with that mystical light when they get this thing of ours, and in turn make it their own. I get to experience friendship on a level I never before imagined, and I feel loved. I thank God today for the life He has given me in Alcoholics Anonymous, and I look forward to the day when I get to attend meetings out there. Even though I will spend the next 10 years in prison, today I have hope, and today

I am a free man.

Respectfully Submitted,

—Shane M.

Federal Correctional Institution, Phoenix

Group T-Shirts and Tradition Four

I haven't written an article for the Messenger for a long time, but when I saw the little article under the Central Office financials about the JunkYard Dogs, I felt compelled to say something. As a young knucklehead who was driven to AA by four horrible horsemen and arrived in a total state of hopelessness, I will be forever grateful to the group that really reached out to me and made me feel a part of; The JunkYard Dogs. I respect that not everybody likes the tight knit camaraderie that goes on at a men's stag, and that's fine, but I for one would have been in a world of trouble had I not found a men's group that gave me the straight dope. In other words, had I heard "just don't drink no matter what" instead of "show up, do your commitment, work the steps, and be a part of" I would probably be dead today and not enjoying the life I live. I don't want to sound as if anybody's experience or opinion is invalid or wrong (you don't have to like our shirts, or the fact that we sell them), but I just wanted to make sure that other knuckleheads out there knew that my home group did a lot more for me than just stroke my ego by giving me a shirt, they made me feel a part of, and started me down the road of recovery that introduced me to a Power greater than myself, and ultimately revolutionized my life. The truth is that to be "likened" to a junkyard dog was a heck of a step up from where I was...

In regards to Tradition 4 in particular, we are not impacting other groups, or AA as a whole, and I would argue that our T-Shirt sale activity is lower profile than many other AA related activities that sell t-shirts, sweatshirts, mugs, pins, hats, etc...

That's just my experience.

—Noah

2005 Convention Update

Mark your calendars: only four more months until our Santa Barbara Convention. Your Convention Committee has been meeting every month for the past few months to put this event together. We are making great progress.

One of the themes this year is "Reunion." We hope to invite all those folks who got sober here in the Santa Barbara area who have since moved away. So far we have made contact with quite a few. They will be coming from as far away as Florida. If you know of anyone who got sober here and has moved away please tell them we would love to see them at our convention October 21 through 23.

Brochures will be available in the very near future.

—Your Convention Committee



DON'T ISOLATE... PARTICIPATE!



JUNE BIRTHDAYS

Barrett B.	1
Carmen	2
Shane M.	5
Scott L.	7
Gordon	7
Bill P.	11
Beverly J.	11
Robert F.	14
Scott G.	14
Sandy S.	15
Adrian L.	15
Charmien	17
Richard B.	17
Geoff T.	18
Lars	18
Tom R.	19
Bob K.	19
Jennifer O.	30
Steve	23
Peggy E.	28
Matt J.	32
Lee R.	34

Along the Road

I walked a mile with Pleasure;
She chattered all the way;
But left me none the wiser
For all she had to say.

I walked a mile with Sorrow,
And ne'er a word said she;
But, oh! The things I learned
from her,
When sorrow walked with
me.

—Robert Browning Hamilton

The Messenger is published monthly by:

23rd District Intergroup of Alcoholics Anonymous
1213 State Street, Suite H
Santa Barbara, California 93101

805-962-3332
sbaa@santabarbaraAA.com

Central Office Statistics

During June your Central Office had:

AA information calls	714
Alanon referrals	18
Referrals to other programs	12
12-step via answering service	52
Out-of-town visitors	18
12-step via office	8
Office walk-ins	677
Hits on our Web site	552

Book Costs Increase

AA World Service in New York has informed us that as of July 1st the cost of all conference approved books except the Big Book will increase in cost by \$1.00 per book. With a shipping cost of 10% added to all orders under \$250.00. Your Central Office will attempt to make a large purchase of all these books prior to the date of increase. If your Group needs a larger than ordinary amount please inform the office at the earliest possible opportunity.

Service Meetings

GSRs (Group Service Representatives) meet at 6:00 p.m. the first Monday each month at the Goleta Valley Community Center, 5679 Hollister, Room 7 in Goleta.

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.

June Financials

Group	June	May	YTD	Group	June	May	YTD
001 Sunrisers	0.00	0.00	40.00	098 Keep It Simple, Saturday	0.00	0.00	66.00
003 Eye Opener	725.00	208.00	2,420.00	099 Sink Or Swim	0.00	0.00	100.00
004 Monday At A Time	0.00	75.00	175.00	100 UCSB Discussion	0.00	0.00	55.00
006 Start Your Week Right	0.00	0.00	100.00	110 Focus On Recovery	0.00	0.00	34.17
007 Sound Off	0.00	0.00	50.00	111 Carpinteria Canalino	300.00	0.00	600.00
008 Beginner's Group	0.00	0.00	61.38	112 Montecito/Carpinteria	0.00	0.00	420.00
010 Foundation Group	128.00	0.00	352.00	113 Sought Through Prayer & Meditat'n	20.00	0.00	43.00
011 Sundowner Group	264.00	0.00	384.00	114 Schooner Group	0.00	230.00	230.00
013 No Shenanigans	0.00	40.00	101.00	115 Eleventh Step Meditation	0.00	91.00	91.00
016 Big Book Workshop	0.00	16.00	32.00	117 Way Of Life	225.00	225.00	1,467.00
021 Summerland Monday Group	0.00	0.00	84.00	120 Sat. Morn. Home Boys	61.33	85.66	658.60
022 There Is A Solution	172.80	0.00	312.80	130 Saturday Night Sobriety	0.00	0.00	144.00
023 For Women Only	0.00	60.00	240.00	139 It's A Hell Of A Deal	0.00	180.00	420.00
030 Sisters In Solution	0.00	0.00	15.00	140 Gay Discussion, Sunday	0.00	0.00	95.05
034 Women of Change	120.00	0.00	120.00	141 Off Center	217.47	0.00	540.87
035 12 & 12 Study, Tues.	0.00	0.00	100.00	144 Back To Basics, Young People	0.00	0.00	124.00
045 Alternative Group	90.00	0.00	179.00	146 Out Of Town Speaker, NH II	60.00	30.00	261.95
047 Tuesday Men's Stag	60.00	66.00	345.00	149 Getting To Know You	0.00	0.00	144.00
051 Men's Group At St. Mary's	0.00	88.58	306.98	153 Happy Destiny	0.00	0.00	300.00
052 As Bill Sees It, Weds.	0.00	0.00	30.00	162 No Frills	0.00	0.00	187.35
053 Both Oars In The Water	0.00	0.00	100.00	164 Men Who Have Lost Their Legs	0.00	260.00	632.18
055 Staying Alive	0.00	169.00	229.00	165 Junkyard Dogs	55.00	40.00	407.44
056 Women By The Books	0.00	0.00	98.40	166 Serenity Sisters	0.00	52.00	104.00
062 Do The Steps Or Die	45.92	47.17	285.73	170 Barefoot Group	11.11	9.00	97.11
064 Women's Serenity Group	70.00	0.00	266.00	177 Key Group	0.00	0.00	600.00
067 Rigorous Honesty	152.00	292.00	507.00	181 Keep Coming Back Group	0.00	0.00	396.39
068 Stepping Stones	0.00	35.00	159.64	183 Summerland, Thurs.	553.09	0.00	823.09
070 Success roup	0.00	0.00	150.00	186 Turning Point	0.00	123.00	123.00
071 The Loft	0.00	0.00	135.00	196 Powerful Cement	0.00	0.00	20.00
073 Young People's	0.00	0.00	177.08	200 Anonymous Donations	0.00	4.00	109.00
076 11th Step	0.00	0.00	100.00	201 Birthday Donations	173.00	0.00	618.00
077 Briefly Big Book	0.00	0.00	21.00	202 Supporting Member	1,684.00	359.00	6,023.00
079 Harbor Group	511.00	438.00	2,563.00	204 Memorial Fund	0.00	0.00	100.00
083 Sober Students, Tues Eve	0.00	0.00	103.00	205 Refunds	0.00	0.00	88.80
089 Here & Now	0.00	0.00	50.00	209 Meeting Guide	85.00	0.00	422.00
093 Into Action, Thurs	0.00	0.00	50.00	210 Convention Income	0.00	0.00	811.79
097 Almost Saints	0.00	156.83	525.45	211 Central Office Rent Received	165.00	172.00	992.80
TOTAL					2,338.72	1,691.58	10,968.46

Seventh Step Prayer

My Creator, I am now willing that you should have all of me, good and bad. I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows. Grant me strength, as I go out from here, to do your bidding. Amen.

—From page 76 of the Big Book

Central Office
1213 State Street, Suite H
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 962-3332

