



The Santa Barbara

May 2006

MESSENGER

Who's Sitting Next to You?

I know who you are. You are "X" who attend the ABC Meeting at the XYZ Club where AAs meet in Anywhere, USA.

I saw you there the other night at the eight o'clock meeting. I don't know how long you've been sober, but I know you've been coming around for a while because you spoke to a lot of people who knew you. I wasn't one of them.

You don't know who I am. I wandered into your meeting place alone the other night, a stranger in a strange town. I got a cup of coffee, paid for it, and sat down by myself.

You didn't speak to me.

Oh, you saw me. You glanced my way, but you didn't recognize me, so you quickly averted your eyes and sought out a familiar face.

I sat there through the meeting. It was okay, a slightly different format but basically the same kind of meeting as the one I go to at home.

The topic was gratitude. You and your friends spoke about how much AA means to you. You talked about the camaraderie in your meeting place. You said how much the people there had helped you when you first came through the door—how they extended the hand of friendship to make you feel welcome, and asked you to come back. And I wondered where they had gone, those nice people who made your entrance so welcoming and so comfortable.

You talked about how the newcomer is the life blood of AA. I agree, but I didn't say so. In fact, I didn't share in your meeting. I signed my name in the book that was passed around, but the chairperson didn't refer to it. He only called on those people in the room whom he knew.

So who am I? You don't know, because you didn't bother to find out. Although yours was a closed meeting, you didn't even ask if I belonged there. It might have been my first meeting, I could have been full of fear and distrust, knowing AA wouldn't work any better than anything else I'd tried, and I would have left convinced that I was right. I might have been suicidal, grasping at one last straw, hoping someone would reach out and pull me from the pit of loathing and self-pity from which, by myself, I could find no escape. I might have been a student with a tape recorder in my pocket, assigned to write a paper on how AA works—someone who shouldn't have been permitted to sit there at

all but could have been directed to an open meeting to learn what I needed to know. Or I could have been sent by the courts, wanting to know more, but afraid to ask.

It happens that I was none of the above. I was just an ordinary drunk with a few years of sober living in AA who was traveling and was in need of a meeting.

My only problem that night was that I'd been alone with my own mind too long. I just needed to touch base with my AA family.

I know from past experience that I could have walked into your meeting place smiling, stuck out my hand to the first person I saw and said, "Hi. My name is—. I'm an alcoholic from—."

If I'd felt like doing that, I probably would have been warmly welcomed. You would have asked me if I knew Old So-and-so from my state, or you might have shared a part of your drunk-a-log that occurred in my part of the country.

Why didn't I? I was hungry, lonely, and tired. The only thing missing was angry, but three out of four isn't a good place for me to be. So I sat silently through your meeting, and when it was over I watched enviously as all of you gathered in small groups, talking to one another the same way we do in my home town.

You and some of your friends were planning a meeting after the meeting at a nearby coffee shop. By this time I had been silent too long to reach out to you. I stopped by the bulletin board to read the notices there, kind of hanging around without being too obvious, hoping you might ask if I wanted to join you, but you didn't.

As I walked slowly across the parking lot to my car with the out-of-state license plates you looked my way again. Our eyes met briefly and I mustered a smile. Again, you looked away.

I buckled my seat belt, started the car, and drove to the motel where I was staying. As I lay in my bed waiting for sleep to come, I made a gratitude list. You were on it, along with your friends at the meeting place. I knew that you were there for me, and that I needed you far more than you needed me. I knew that if I had needed help, and had asked for it, you would have gladly given it. But I wondered...what if I hadn't been able to ask?

I know who you are. Do you remember me?
—AA Grapevine, March 1991

It's a Process

I am once again feeling the need to say that, ever since I have had the privilege of being in this job I have been truly blessed by the people who volunteer their time and energy to their Central Office. Not just the people who answer the phones, although they are of course important, but also the people who serve on the Intergroup Board, and the editor of this *Messenger*. Plus all the behind-the-scenes people who help in so many ways. One of my duties as the special worker in this service center is to attend a national Intergroup conference once a year. My attendance at those seminars has let me understand how lucky I really am. When I sit with other Central Office managers and hear about the troubles some of them have, it makes me especially grateful for the AA community in Santa Barbara, and their support of this office. Over the years (almost nine now!) that I've been working here I've had a number of boards, editors, volunteers, and others who have been of invaluable assistance to me. Every one of them has done a great deal of work, for fun and for free.

This all comes to mind because the person who has been editing the *Messenger* for the last year has informed me that he needs to rotate out of this job. Like most people who stay sober, he has a life. That life has now given him other obligations he needs time to meet. My first response, of



course, was..... Oh No! Not Again! But the fact is that this person has been doing a really remarkable job for the last year, and it is probably time for someone else to have a chance. My initial response has a lot to do with the fact that this person has been so easy to work with and responsible about his duties. It is only upon reflection that I realize that so were Jacque, and Noah, and Mark, and Susan, and all the others (nine total now I believe) who did this job before. And like those others before him, I have heard great things from people about the job he has been doing. I just need to remember that change happens. My job is to just roll with it as gracefully as I can. Ah! The benefit of some sober experience. So, thank you Jim, for all your hard work. Thank you for being responsible. Thanks for the ample warning so someone else, the next right person, will have a chance to step up to the task. If that person is you who are reading this, please feel free to call me at Central Office (962-3332) or email me at SBAA@SantabarbaraAA.com

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.

A Fifth Step Prayer

Higher Power, My inventory has shown me who I am, yet I ask for your help in admitting my wrongs to another person and to you. Assure me and be with me in this step, for without this step I cannot progress in my recovery. With your help, I can do this and I will do it.

Tradition Five Contemplation Questions

Tradition Five: Each group has but one primary purpose-to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

1. Do I ever cop out by saying, "I'm not a group, so this or that tradition doesn't apply to me"?
2. Am I willing to explain firmly to a newcomer the limitations of AA help, even if he gets mad at me for not giving him a loan?
3. Have I today imposed on any AA member for a special favor or consideration simply because I am a fellow alcoholic?
4. Am I willing to twelfth-step the next newcomer without regard to who or what is in it for me?
5. Do I help my group in every way I can to fulfill our primary purpose?
6. Do I remember that AA old-timers, too, can be alcoholics who still suffer? Do I try to help them and to learn from them?

—Originally published in the *AA Grapevine*

Concept V

Throughout our world service structure, a traditional "Right of Appeal" ought to prevail, thus assuring us that minority opinion will be heard and that petitions for the redress of personal grievances will be carefully considered.

—*AA Service Manual*



Grateful Alcoholic I

Dear Messenger:

On April 6, 2006 I celebrated eleven years of sobriety. Five of the eleven were at the penitentiary at Lompoc. I would not have chosen to go there, but speaking in terms of sobriety and recovery, the experience was priceless. It was one of those situations where God gives what is needed, but not necessarily wanted. I didn't know that I needed it, but I'm grateful for the experience.

I have been incarcerated on this term since August 1988, and will be in until April, 2019. I do it "one day at a time", and I try to "practice these principles in all my affairs." The fourth and fifth steps of the program helped to free me from the bondage of my past, and now I am just having to pay the price for being young, dumb, selfish, and self-seeking.

Within my first few months of sobriety I had admitted to God, myself, and another human being the exact nature of my wrongs; however, more was to be revealed. More issues surfaced, but it a while before God put someone in my life to share them with, as the first person was no longer available. While at Lompoc, and before my third year of sobriety, I was able to share my deepest, darkest, and sickest secret with the first person that had asked me to sponsor them. I have been spiritually free ever since then, and I now live in a way that helps me to avoid doing any acts that might cause me to experience overwhelming negative emotion. When I do end up doing things that are not quite so wholesome, I know to write about it and share it with someone, and to make amends.

I am truly grateful for the blueprint for living given to us in the Big Book and the Twelve and Twelve.

Sincerely,
Wayne D

Grateful Alcoholic II

Dear Central Office,

Thank you so much for sending me the *Messenger* for the last four years since I left Lompoc penitentiary and transferred to this prison in Oregon. It has helped me maintain a feeling of connection with AA on the outside.

I am writing because I am being released in three weeks so I won't be here to receive the *Messenger* anymore. I am so looking forward to experiencing AA on the outside once again. With any luck I hope that our paths will cross at some meeting in the future.

Thanks again,
Mark A
Sheridan, Oregon

New Messenger Editor Needed

Dear Readers in Recovery:

I have had the privilege of serving as editor of the *Messenger* since last July. Like all service commitments, this one has helped keep me sober, and I've enjoyed using the abilities my higher power gave me. If my plate weren't so full—thanks to recovery, of course—I might have tried to hold onto the commitment beyond a year, but my work and school load are such that I need to limit my service positions to the group level for now.

That means we'll need a new *Messenger* editor starting with the July issue. The responsibility requires knowledge of PageMaker or another page-layout program. I've been using PageMaker, so there is already a PageMaker template for the existing design. The previous editor used Microsoft Publisher, so there is a template available for that product as well. Or the new editor may want to rebuild the newsletter from the ground up using one of those products or InDesign or something else entirely.

Knowledge of Adobe Acrobat, Microsoft Excel, and Microsoft Word is helpful. Our current system involves a lot of e-mail communication with the Central Office. Tim sends me the financial information in an Excel file and many other files reach me in Microsoft Word format. I import or copy and paste the information into PageMaker. Access to a scanner is also beneficial, for those cases when you want to add artwork.

When the newsletter is complete, I e-mail it to Tim as an Adobe Acrobat PDF. Tim deals with the printer.

If you are interested in the role, talk to Tim or contact me. You can reach me at jimstoic@hotmail.com.

Sincerely,
Jim S.
Santa Barbara



Fourth of July BBQ
To benefit Central Office
11 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.
(Meal served at Noon)
Tucker's Grove
Games, Fellowship, Fun
\$5 per plate





April Birthdays

Alison	1
Sergio M.....	1
David W	1
Scott	1
Vicki B	2
Mike V	2
Ron O	3
Guy M	4
Mandi M	4
Corrine	5
Juan A	6
Angela M	7
Elizabeth	7
Roz	7
John P	11
Wayne D	11
Traci L	13
Pam O	14
Nan S	14
Sherrie S	15
Steve C	16
Angela K	17
John R	18
Blanca O	18
Amy G	18
Jill D	20
CD	22
John C	22
Mara F	28
Teri R	28
David S	29
Craig B	29
Pat F	30
David D	34
Gil E	35
Bill V	40

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

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 sixth month, June, we need writing on Step 6 and Tradition 6. Send submissions to jimstoic@hotmail.com.

Central Office Statistics

During March your Central Office had:

AA information calls	794
Al-Anon	53
Referrals to other programs	44
12-step via answering service	49
Out-of-town visitors	6
12-step via office	8
Office walk-ins	648
Hits on our Web site	621

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. Where was the first Central Office in Santa Barbara?
A. See next month's *Messenger*.

Answer to last month's question:

Q. What are the names of the four horsemen in the Big Book?
A. Terror, Bewilderment, Frustration, and Despair

April Financials

	April	March	YTD		April	March	YTD
002 Courage To Change	120.00	0.00	120.00	097 Almost Saints	0.00	122.00	237.00
003 Eye Opener	385.00	272.00	1,232.00	099 Sink Or Swim	0.00	0.00	60.00
004 Monday At A Time	0.00	0.00	173.66	100 UCSB Discussion	0.00	127.89	127.89
006 Start Your Week Right	0.00	0.00	60.00	111 Carpinteria Canalino	400.00	0.00	400.00
007 Sound Off	0.00	0.00	60.00	112 Montecito/Carpinteria	96.00	0.00	226.00
010 Foundation Group	90.00	74.00	296.00	113 Sought Through Prayer & Meditation	26.00	0.00	35.00
011 Sundowner Group	0.00	264.00	264.00	114 Schooner Group	162.00	0.00	439.00
013 No Shenanigans	0.00	40.00	40.00	115 Eleventh Step Meditation	0.00	0.00	29.71
020 Cambridge Group	100.00	0.00	100.00	117 Way Of Life	75.00	0.00	675.00
021 Summerland Monday Group	105.00	0.00	105.00	120 Sat. Morn. Home Boys	233.00	0.00	371.05
023 For Women Only	0.00	106.00	106.00	130 Saturday Night Sobriety	0.00	0.00	72.00
025 Grateful Group	0.00	0.00	120.00	139 It's A Hell Of A Deal	0.00	288.00	288.00
026 Carpinteria Study Group	0.00	100.00	100.00	140 Gay Discussion, Sunday	75.00	0.00	75.00
030 Sisters In Solution	70.00	0.00	70.00	141 Off Center	0.00	0.00	325.00
034 Women of Change	0.00	0.00	107.62	144 Back To Basics, Young People	29.40	0.00	83.40
035 12 & 12 Study, Tues.	0.00	0.00	60.00	146 Out Of Town Speaker, NH II	0.00	15.00	15.00
036 Tuesday Trudgers	0.00	0.00	100.00	149 Getting To Know You	128.00	219.00	430.00
045 Alternative Group	0.00	75.00	75.00	150 Goleta Sun. Night Speaker	0.00	80.00	80.00
047 Tuesday Men's Stag	0.00	126.00	126.00	153 Happy Destiny	350.00	0.00	350.00
051 Men's Group At St. Mary's	102.00	0.00	102.00	161 Back To Basics Group	5.80	0.00	5.80
052 As Bill Sees It, Weds.	0.00	0.00	71.29	164 Men Who Have Lost Their Legs	330.00	0.00	745.00
053 Both Oars In The Water	0.00	0.00	60.00	165 Junkyard Dogs	0.00	29.44	134.35
055 Staying Alive	40.00	0.00	190.30	166 Serenity Sisters	0.00	0.00	58.00
056 Women By The Books	70.00	0.00	70.00	170 Barefoot Group	2.00	1.00	34.00
062 Do The Steps Or Die	28.06	36.19	150.64	177 Key Group	0.00	700.00	700.00
064 Women's Serenity Group	0.00	0.00	50.00	181 Keep Coming Back Group	411.75	0.00	581.44
067 Rigorous Honesty	0.00	12.00	44.00	183 Summerland, Thurs.	0.00	161.10	454.40
068 Stepping Stones	36.00	0.00	92.00	186 Turning Point	0.00	105.00	633.00
071 The Loft	200.00	0.00	550.00	200 Anonymous Donations	20.00	0.00	66.00
073 Young People's	0.00	181.68	181.68	201 Birthday Donations	0.00	0.00	19.00
074 Casa Serena (BB Study)	0.00	0.00	6.00	202 Supporting Members	991.00	2,830.00	6,099.00
076 11th Step	0.00	0.00	75.00	203 SBYPAA	0.00	0.00	105.65
079 Harbor Group	576.12	0.00	1,740.79	204 Memorial Fund	0.00	0.00	100.00
091 New Life	0.00	0.00	240.00	211 Central Office Rent Received	152.00	160.00	642.00
093 Into Action, Thurs	50.00	0.00	80.00	212 Special Events	0.00	1,304.00	1,304.00
					\$5,459.13	\$7,429.30	\$23,019.67

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