



# MESSENGER

## Food For Thought

**“Self-supporting alcoholics? Who ever heard of such a thing?  
Yet we find that’s what we have to be.”**

**Tradition Seven, 12 Steps & 12 Traditions, page 160**

At the bottom of this page you will see a coupon allowing you to enroll as a Supporting Member of your Central Office. If you have not already done so, we are asking you to please consider it. Frequently, when we speak to people about doing this, their response is that they put money in the basket at their meeting. We understand that, we do it too. What they may not be aware of is that money put into the basket is for the Group and its expenses, with any extra money going to Central Office. Frequently there is not a lot left over after the Group’s bills have been paid. And because, at this time, only about half of the meetings have enough left over to donate anything at all, your Central Office is usually running close to the edge with finances.

We decided a long time ago that we were not going to continually be asking for member support. We know people tire of that quickly. So consider this the one time this year that we have made a direct request to you, the self-supporting alcoholic. If every member of the local AA community were to give a dollar a month we would have more than enough dough. That is because all of the money donated by Supporting Members goes directly to Central Office. It helps us keep the doors open so we can be there to answer the phone if a suffering alcoholic calls. It’s as simple as that.

You’ll notice that there are no specific dollar amounts mentioned. That’s because every bit helps. If you can send five bucks a year, it helps. If you can send five bucks a month it helps. If you can send a one time donation in any amount it helps. There are no requirements for how much or how often. The only limit we put on, because it is suggested by New York, is that no individual member should donate over three thousand dollars a year. Other than that, there are no limits. Some people send a monthly contribution, some a quarterly, some a yearly amount.....you get the idea. We’ll take what we can get. What you’ll get, besides the satisfaction of helping support your Central Office, is a copy of The Messenger mailed directly to you every month. That’s our way of saying thanks to those who donate. We look forward to hearing from you.

Your Central Office

## 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.

Encloses in 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.

## Home Group



I belong to the best Home Group in Alcoholics Anonymous. I say that because my Sponsor always told me that it was important to have a Home Group, and that if it wasn't the best Home Group in AA I had better find another one. That is not to say that he didn't warn me about the potential for friction within the framework of the Fellowship. Actually, what he said was that if I could manage to not drink (with God's help) AND I could survive the Fellowship, I would be alright. In the pamphlet "The AA Group" put out by World Services it talks about the importance of a Home Group. It also says, in that understated way they employ, that "They (the group members) also learn firsthand, through the group's workings, how to place 'principles before personalities' in the interest of carrying the AA message." That has certainly

been my own experience. Even at those times when I felt the strongest about how 'wrong' the other group members were about something, I didn't let it overpower the fact that, in AA, it is the Group's conscience that prevails. It also always felt good that, even at those times when I was in the minority, I had the right to be heard. And, in the interest of honest reporting, there was more than once when I was able to see the wisdom of the decision reached. But only in hindsight of course. I don't mean to make it sound as though I belong to one of those Groups which frequently has controversy. That is not the case. Actually, in my Group we really get along most of the time. There is a feeling of brotherhood (it is a men's meeting) and solidarity that feels absolutely wonderful to experience. We get a lot of newcomers from New House and the Salvation Army, and that is a constant reminder to all of us about our primary purpose. The truth is that I have been a member of the Group for so long now that I feel downright fatherly about all the fine upstanding young men that I have been privileged to watch come in and 'get the deal' so that they can pass it on. Home Group, right on boys!

Tim W.

**TIM**

### "WHAT HAPPENED", RESPONSE

I would like to respond to the recently written "what happened" article in the September issue. I have been sober for 5 years now. I was the type of person who had enough self esteem left that if an old timer told me to "shut up and just listen" I would have bailed on this wonderful program. The writer of this article fails to realize that the times and culture in California has changed since 1955 and the "kids" now can be reached and helped in a number of ways. I also would like to know who is concerned about statistics?? Isn't it one person at a time, one day at a time???

The 11th tradition states; "Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotions; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films". I now hear AA commercials on the local am radio and I once saw a commercial on TV. I cannot tell you how pompous I find several individuals in this program. I ignored the old timers and their canned statements. I can honestly tell you that the four or five big book thumpers who rode my ass are no longer sober. Nobody has the right to say what works for one person is going to work for another! Sobriety is deeper than what you read in a book and "sayings", the will and desire for this program is internal .Nobody is part of "the problem or the solution". I will not be labeled as one or the other. How arrogant does that sound???

The AA that I cling to is unconditional love and acceptance of "hearing" all of my daily fears and worries. Had any of my AA friends kept shoving the big book in my face when I needed to vent..... I would not have been sober this long.

Sincerely,  
Catie

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## It's What's Happening Not What Happened

The 75% success rate is based upon an important caveat that is always left out in these discussions.

The Forward to the Second Edition says "Of those who came to AA *and really tried*, 50% got sober at once and remained that way; 25% sobered up after some relapses and among the remainder those who stayed on with AA showed improvement." (Page XX 4th Edition)

The other source for the 75% is an AA Grapevine article about an AA Group in Minnesota that kept records and used a Beginners Meeting format of four one hour meetings for working the steps. There are other groups that also kept records but it is all anecdotal (like our fellowship).

A couple of weeks ago I had the pleasure of examining a copy of the original manuscript that was circulated for editing before the book Alcoholics Anonymous was published. It was owned by Jim Burwell and contained some personal notes about the early fellowship.

Jim said there were 50 people that were involved in the formation of the Big Book. Of that group, he counted 11 that maintained continuous sobriety from the Book's publication.

That man had no axe to grind and no agenda but to record his experiences.

I sobered up in AA in 1979 and can only tell you what I have experienced. In my community, AA's success rate for those *who really try* is over 75%. There is a difference between those who actually work the steps and those who just agree with parts of it. I am responsible for creating an environment where people get help and can be successful in working the program. Instead of idealizing the past, what about the present.

One reason AA's growth rate is slowing is that CA (Cocaine Anonymous) really works. We gave them the steps and the structure and look what they've done with it. It is 25 years old this year. There are over 250 12 Step organizations today that have spun off from us. That's growth.

Am I doing what was done for me?

*What does really try mean to me?*

To me really trying requires a set of actions called working the steps but just for discussion here is what I consider really trying in AA.

1. Getting a sponsor
2. Regularly attending meetings
3. Daily Surrender
4. Taking inventory
5. Making amends
6. Prayer and meditation
7. Helping others

25% of my home group is under 20 years old and they are on fire. It is a joy to be on the sidelines cheering them on instead of scowling and scolding. This is what Bill Wilson and the first generation of sober alcoholics wanted, access to recovery for all, the stigma removed. Where there is strong Sponsorship there is strong AA. Where there is weak sponsorship there is weak AA. For that I am responsible.

These are the good old days.

Love and Service,  
Jay S.

## HOPE WITHIN

I was first introduced to an H and I Panel when I attended my very first AA Meeting at Solano State Prison in May of 1990. It was there that I found an attraction to the program, and I received this from an H and I Member. Being that it was my first meeting, I was there to check it out to see what the program had to offer. I didn't think I had an alcohol problem at that time, although I had been incarcerated since August of 1982, I thought about drinking each and every day. For eight years I tormented myself about using again to make the situation better. The situation being that I was serving a life sentence.

When the meeting started, I found a seat in the back of the room. I felt safe there. When it came time for an H and I Member to speak, at first, I didn't pay much attention to what he had to say, but his story suddenly became very familiar. Familiar in the fact that who he was speaking about was me. I had done the same things in life that he had done. He spoke about how he hurt his family, friends, and loved ones. He stole from them, he lied, he burned a lot of people, most importantly, these were people that loved him. I sat up in my chair and listened to this man talk about his experience, his strength and hope. When he spoke, he was looking right at me, as I was one to agree to everything he said about the terrible person that he was until he found the program of Alcoholics Anonymous. This was me. When he spoke about hope, I listened closely because this is what I wanted. His hope being that he could recovery from his lifestyle of abusing alcohol and that he didn't have to drink again. As I sat there and listened, he became emotional, and so did I. I thought about all the damage I had done to the relationships with my family and friends. I strongly felt that if this man could change his life, by going to meetings, working the steps, working with others and being of service to those in need, I could change too. I wanted what he had. It wasn't going to be easy, but I had to start somewhere.

After the meeting, I walked up to him and extended my hand. He shook my hand and pulled me closer to him and gave me a hug. It felt good. I told him my name and he seemed like he was waiting for the words that follow your first name (my disease). It didn't come. He sensed that I wasn't ready yet. He told me that when I was ready, it would come. I thanked him for sharing his message and that he would see me at the next meeting. I watched him walk to the gate and he was gone. Two weeks later, I was back in a meeting. He came back. When the meeting started, the Chairman asked if there were any newcomers therefore the first time? I stood up and looked at the H and I Member and said, "My name is David and I am an Alcoholic." He looked at me and smiled. Yes, I was in the right place and this is where I needed to be.

For the past 17 years, that I have been attending AA Meetings, I have met many H and I Panel Members, and I take something from every story, and experience, home with me. I commend all of you for the things you do on a daily basis, the message you carry, and the hope that you bring to those that are working the program of Alcoholics Anonymous. You are role models and proof that the program works. I hope that when I am released from prison, that I can walk the same path that you do. I think back to that first meeting, if I hadn't been affected by what the H and I Member said, I don't know where I would be today. Thank you H and I Members, my sincerest respect goes out to each and every one of you that work the program of Alcoholics Anonymous.

In Serenity,

David Q.  
CMC W.

**NEW ITEM AT  
YOUR CENTRAL OFFICE  
“MEETING IN A POCKET”  
A POCKET SIZE PAMPHLET/BOOK  
THAT HAS ALL THE  
A.A. READINGS IN IT.  
“YOUR PRICE IS \$1.00 EACH”  
A GREAT BUY!!**

**Santa Barbara District 23  
General Service Representatives**

<http://www.ccaadistrict23.com>

**Archives**

Your District 23 Archives committee has assembled a large display of items including:

- Archives Photos display board
- Stand-alone AA historical photos
- AA-related newspaper articles 1935-1941
- Two original copies of the Big Book

With the help of many local AA members, the District has created and maintains a piece called

*Passing it On: A Brief History of AA in Santa Barbara*, which describes how AA came about in our District. It is available at Central Office.

Archives materials are available to share with your group or activity. For more information or to schedule a display, contact the Archives Committee Chair at

[archives@ccaadistrict23.com](mailto:archives@ccaadistrict23.com)

***Responsibility Pledge***

**“I am responsible...**

**When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help,  
I want the hand of AA always to be there.  
And for that, I am responsible.”**

Reprinted from Pamphlet P-1, This Is A.A., page 24,  
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**STEP 10**

Step Ten helps to keep me running like to fined tuned piano, that is, if I continue doing as it suggests; especially the last part (“and when we were wrong, promptly admit it”). That helps me to stay humble, which is in direct opposition to my pride and arrogance that has a tendency to crop up when I am not spiritually centered. It also helps me to maintain healthier relationships. My problem is often wanting to cast blame on the other party, but as it was when working Step Nine, and Steps Four and Five, I might add, it’s not about the other person. It’s about my biggest enemy: the sick one that looks at me in the mirror. I can’t control other people, nor can I be responsible for their decisions. If they choose to hold onto a resentment after I have cleaned up my side of the street, then that’s their issue. Not mine. I am resolved of it when I truly accept responsibility for what I have done, and have humbled myself by going to make the amends that I owe.

I don’t always write each night, but do know that it is an important process that I can’t ignore when things aren’t going quite right. I have been fortunate enough to acquire over twelve years of sobriety, and have sponsored a few of your contributors from the penitentiary at Lompoc, many guilty of labeling me as an “A.A. Nazi,” but one thing that I have learned is to just do the next right thing and leave the outcome up to

God. As a result, several of those guys have multiple years of sobriety, but it wasn’t me that had anything to do with it. That’s between them and their “Higher Power.” I just did what I had to do to stay sober, and helped love them until they could love themselves.

Wayne D.



**September 2007 Birthdays**

Ben F.	1
Chester	1
Dirk B	1
Ann T.	3
George T	3
Steve R.	3
Kitti S.	4
Mack N	4
Daphanie, B	5
Margie H	6
Mart K.	8
George C.	9
Andy F.	13
Rey A	13
Marilyn W.	17
Max M.	17
Dee	20
Carla M.	20
Kathie O.	21
Laurette	21
Mike C.	21
Emilio R	22
Peter C.	22
John B.	25
Skip J.	25
Bruce C.	27

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The Messenger is published monthly by:

**23<sup>rd</sup> District Intergroup of Alcoholics Anonymous**  
**1213 State Street, Suit H**  
**Santa Barbara, California, 93101**

**805-962-3332**  
**sbaa@santabarbaraAA.com**

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**SUBMISSIONS NEEDED**

The Messenger needs your submissions and letters. We are looking for articles for the step or tradition associated with the month of the same number. For the Eleventh month, November, we need writing on Step 11 and Tradition 11. Send submissions to [JohnS@santabarbaraAA.com](mailto:JohnS@santabarbaraAA.com)

**Central Office Statistics**

During the September 2007 your Central Office had:

AA Information calls .....	910
AI-Anon Referrals .....	51
Referrals to other programs .....	35
12step via answering service .....	59
Out-of-town visitors .....	25
12-step via office .....	23
Office walk-ins .....	701
Hits on our Web site .....	1,073

**SERVICE MEETINGS**

**General Service Representatives (GSR) Monday at 6:00pm meet at: Holy Cross Church Hall, 1740 Cliff Dr. Behind the Church**

**IGR's (Intergroup Representatives) meet at 6:00 P.M. the second Tuesday each month at First Presbyterian Church 21 East Constance in Santa Barbara**

**H&I (Hospitals & Institutions) meets at 6:00 P.M. at 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.**

**22<sup>nd</sup> ANNUAL Santa Barbara Convention Committee – 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each Month, 6:00 P.M. at 3523 Modoc Rd. Commitments Available!**

## Donations by Group August 2007

	Sep 07	Aug 07	Jan - Sep 07		Sep 07	Aug 07	Jan - Sep 07
001 Sunrisers	75.00	0.00	229.00	099 Sink Or Swim	0.00	0.00	160.00
003 Eye Opener	285.00	285.00	2,130.00	100 UCSB Discussion	100.00	0.00	210.00
004 Monday At A Time	0.00	0.00	536.00	101 Big Book Study, Friday	50.00	0.00	50.00
006 Start Your Week Right	0.00	0.00	160.00	103 Munch Bunch	0.00	0.00	41.22
007 Sound Off	0.00	0.00	75.00	111 Carpinteria Canalino	0.00	0.00	400.00
008 Beginner's Group	0.00	0.00	20.00	112 Montecito/Carpinteria	0.00	130.06	242.06
010 Foundation Group	0.00	140.00	386.50	113 Sought Through Prayer & Meditation	23.01	30.25	189.86
011 Sundowner Group	328.00	0.00	2,436.00	114 Schooner Group	0.00	0.00	278.00
013 New Pair Of Glasses	0.00	50.00	120.00	115 Eleventh Step Meditation	15.00	10.00	186.51
014 El Montecito Saturday Night	140.00	0.00	320.00	117 Way Of Life	0.00	0.00	300.00
019 Onward & Upward	0.00	0.00	160.00	118 Speaker Connection	0.00	0.00	231.58
020 Cambridge Group	0.00	0.00	60.00	120 Sat. Morn. Home Boys	0.00	0.00	830.40
021 Summerland Monday Group	0.00	200.00	200.00	122 Came to Believe Candlelight	50.00	0.00	110.00
022 There Is A Solution	0.00	0.00	394.00	130 Saturday Night Sobriety	0.00	0.00	72.00
023 For Women Only	0.00	0.00	234.00	133 Action Participation	0.00	0.00	1,280.00
024, Mesa-Singleness of Purpose	40.00	0.00	75.00	139 It's A Hell Of A Deal	0.00	182.00	1,092.00
025 Grateful Group	0.00	0.00	70.00	140 Gay Discussion, Sunday	0.00	0.00	147.00
028 The Mother Group	0.00	50.00	110.00	141 Off Center	182.65	0.00	1,387.65
034 Women of Change	70.00	0.00	217.00	144 Back To Basics, Young People	0.00	0.00	78.00
035 12 & 12 Study, Tues.	0.00	0.00	160.00	149 Getting To Know You	0.00	216.00	376.00
045 Alternative Group	95.00	0.00	396.00	151 Our Meeting	0.00	0.00	35.00
047 Tuesday Men's Stag	133.00	0.00	280.00	153 Happy Destiny	0.00	0.00	400.00
051 Men's Group At St. Mary's	0.00	0.00	386.00	156 Start Your Day Right	0.00	0.00	1,300.00
053 Both Oars In The Water	0.00	0.00	160.00	158 Isla Vista Sobriety	0.00	0.00	43.65
055 Staying Alive	0.00	80.00	270.00	163 Mustard Seed	15.00	0.00	30.00
062 Do The Steps Or Die	32.24	51.75	510.63	164 Men Who Have Lost Their Legs	0.00	206.00	1,309.77
067 Rigorous Honesty	0.00	241.00	836.00	165 Junkyard Dogs	0.00	0.00	701.00
068 Stepping Stones	63.00	61.00	421.26	166 Serenity Sisters	0.00	146.30	243.15
070 Success roup	0.00	0.00	80.00	170 Barefoot Group	44.00	57.00	537.56
071 The Loft	0.00	0.00	250.00	177 Key Group	0.00	0.00	1,250.00
073 Young People's	0.00	0.00	210.00	181 Keep Coming Back Group	0.00	0.00	1,118.69
074 Casa Serena (BB Study)	0.00	0.00	137.00	183 Summerland, Thurs.	0.00	0.00	721.80
076 11th Step	0.00	0.00	160.00	186 Sunday Night Alternative, NH III	48.58	263.60	312.18
077 Briefly Big Book	50.00	35.00	85.00	200 Anonymous Donations	32.00	0.00	538.00
079 Harbor Group	357.00	688.00	3,857.20	201 Birthday Donations	98.00	195.00	1,046.00
083 Sober Students, Tues Eve	0.00	0.00	120.00	202 Supporting Members	2,349.00	503.00	8,948.50
089 Here & Now	0.00	60.00	145.00	204 Memorial Fund	125.00	0.00	580.00
091 New Life	0.00	0.00	232.00	210 Convention Income	0.00	0.00	3,156.75
093 Into Action, Thurs	0.00	80.00	160.00	211 Rent Received	125.00	125.00	1,000.00
094 Questions & Answers	0.00	0.00	39.80	212 Special Events	0.00	0.00	4,005.00
097 Almost Saints	0.00	0.00	1,237.00				
				Totals:	4,925.48	4085.96	53,004.72

Central Office  
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(805) 962-3332

