



# MESSENGER

## On the Value of Tradition

Mutual experience is the common ground on which A.A.s meet individually and upon which A.A. has been built collectively.

As written in the pamphlet, "Alcoholics Anonymous Tradition; Twelve Points to Assure Our Future," A.A. was not invented by anyone--it grew. "Trial and error has produced a rich experience. Little by little we have been adopting the lessons of that experience first as policy and then as tradition. That process still goes on and we hope it never stops. Should we ever harden too much, the letter might crush the spirit. We could victimize ourselves by petty rules and prohibitions; we could imagine that we had said the last word. We might even be asking alcoholics to accept our rigid ideas or stay away. . . ."

But, as the pamphlet says further, "the lessons of our experience count for a great deal--a very great deal. . . ."

What each of us has experienced individually counts for a great deal in helping to show another how to gain sobriety in A.A., and in developing even beyond the level of sobriety into a new and fuller way of life.

Likewise, the experience of each group may be invaluable to other groups, new and old.

Sharing experience for mutual good is an A.A. principle and practice.

The "Twelve Points of Tradition" cover all of the most vital experiences encountered in A.A. For instance, why is anonymity so important; what are its spiritual values? Why should A.A. as a whole, and each group individually, have but one primary purpose? What has been learned through actual experience about the problems of money, property and authority? What does experience say on the question of professionalism?

These are some of the topics incorporated in the Twelve Points. They are indeed vital to A.A. now and to the future of A.A.

For this reason, the Grapevine editorials, beginning with the next issue, will take up each one of the "Twelve Points of Tradition" in succession in the same manner that "The 12 Steps" have been covered successively in the past. And, as was done with the Steps, different writers will give their views on and interpretations of the Points of Tradition, so as to gain a cross-section treatment.

Again this will be a sharing of experience--the practice and the principle by which A.A. grows, and A.A.s grow.

## Old Enough to Qualify

SOMETIMES, I get discouraged and lose sight of our primary purpose. Tonight, I was reminded of it and given the encouragement to keep on working in AA.

When asked why I so strongly support young people's groups, I have always said, "To carry the message to the alcoholic who is still suffering--and feels he is not old enough to be an alcoholic." The value of young people's groups is not so much for those of us who have found sobriety as it is for those young people who don't yet know that they qualify for AA.

I've always said this--but I haven't always *felt* it. Tonight, I *know* it.

Our little young people's group has struggled here for eight months. It started out with about fifteen and quickly dwindled to six or eight in regular attendance. I came to love our small meetings, where we could share on a level not always possible at the bigger meetings. I guess we all tend to judge groups as either successes or failures. If we never hold another meeting, I know that we have been successful.

Last week, two of our members went out to a boys' long-term detention center nearby--usually called "the ranch"--and carried the AA message.

Tonight, we began the meeting with seven regulars and one new man in his twenties. In the middle of reading a portion of the Big Book, we were disturbed by nine strangers. The spokesman among the nine asked if it was all right for them to come in. He is a recovering alcoholic who is a counselor at the ranch. After last week's session there, sixteen of the boys had asked if they could come to our young people's meeting. Unfortunately, their van could hold only eight of them.

What a beautiful meeting we had! God alone knows what the future holds for these young men (all under twenty). They want us to come to the ranch once a week, and they want to come to our meeting on Wednesday nights. While the guys in our group (two of whom are still in their teens) were rapping with the newcomers, I had a chance to chat with the counselor. He found his sobriety three years ago in New York in a young people's group, developed other interests, and did not stay active in AA. However, after six months of working at the ranch, he remembered *where* his newfound life had been found. He went to his superiors, broke his anonymity, and asked if he could bring the AA program in to these kids.

Maybe none of these kids will find sobriety now. Then again, maybe one, two, or all eight will. Who knows? But I believe in miracles. Tonight, the seed was planted--and we welcomed back an old member, who remembered where he found his sobriety.

This will keep me going for a long time to come.

H. T.

Reprinted with permission by The AA Grapevine Inc

## Lest We Forget There Is A Solution

WE, of Alcoholics Anonymous, know thousands of men and women who were once just as hopeless as Bill. All have recovered. They have solved the drink problem.

We are average Americans. All sections of this country and many of its occupations are represented, as well as many political, economic, social and religious backgrounds. We are people who normally would not mix. But there exists among us a fellowship, a friendliness, and an understanding which is indescribably wonderful. We are like the passengers of a great liner the moment after rescue from shipwreck when camaraderie, joyousness and democracy pervade the vessel from steerage to Captain's table. Unlike the feelings of the ship's passengers, however, our joy in escape from disaster does not subside as we go our individual ways. The feeling of having shared in a common peril is one element in the powerful cement which binds us. But that in itself would never have held us together as we are now joined.

The tremendous fact for every one of us is that we have discovered a common solution. We have a way out on which we can absolutely agree, and upon which we can join in brotherly and harmonious action. This is the great news this book carries to those who suffer alcoholism.

An illness of this sort. . .and we have come to believe it an illness. . .involves those about us in a way no other human sickness can. If a person has cancer all are sorry for him and no one is angry or hurt. But not so with the alcoholic illness, for with it there goes annihilation of all the things worth while in life. It engulfs all whose lives touch the sufferer's. It brings misunderstanding, fierce resentment, financial insecurity, disgusted friends and employers, warped lives of blameless children, sad wives and parents. . .anyone can increase the list.

We hope this volume will inform and comfort those who are, or who may be affected. They are many. Highly competent psychiatrists who have dealt with us, found it sometimes impossible to persuade an alcoholic to discuss his situation without reserve. Strangely enough, wives, parents and intimate friends usually find us even more unapproachable than do the psychiatrist and the doctor.

*But the ex-problem drinker who has found this solution, who is properly armed with facts about himself, can generally win the entire confidence of another alcoholic in a few hours. Until such an understanding is reached, little or nothing can be accomplished.*

That the man who is making the approach has had the same difficulty, that he obviously knows what he is talking about, that his whole deportment shouts at the new prospect that he is a man with a real answer, that he has no attitude of holier than thou, nothing whatever except the sincere desire to be helpful; that there are no fees to pay, no axes to grind, no people to please, no lectures to be endured. . .these are the conditions we found most effective. After such an approach many take up their beds and walk again.

Reprinted with permission by The AA Grapevine Inc

### 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, delining outside contributions. – Seventh Tradition (short form), reprinted by permission of A World Services, Inc.

## District 23 General Service

www.ccaadistrict23.com

*Featured this month:*

### The AA Grapevine Magazine

“The AA Grapevine is the international journal of Alcoholics Anonymous. Written, edited, illustrated, and read by AA members...the Grapevine is a lifeline linking one alcoholic to another.” (*Excerpt from the AA Grapevine Statement of Purpose*)

Your District 23 Grapevine committee is happy to come and share Grapevine magazines, books, literature, and CD's with any local AA group.

### Be a Grapevine Representative for your Group!

Engaged in practical, hands-on work, the GVR performs a service for their group by bringing them a vital tool of recovery: the AA Grapevine. In our District, GVR's meet regularly to share with each other about Grapevine materials and how they can be used as a Twelfth Step tool. For more information, please contact the Grapevine Committee Chair (Jennifer G.) at:

grapevine@ccaadistrict23.com

Or visit: [www.aagrapevine.org](http://www.aagrapevine.org)

#### Upcoming GSR events:

**GSR meeting: 1<sup>st</sup> Monday, March 2,  
Holy Cross Church, 1740 Cliff Dr., at 6 PM**

**PRAASA (Pacific Region AA Service  
Assembly): March 6-8, Oakland, CA.**

**Pre-Conference Workshop/Area Assembly:  
March 14-15, Arroyo Grande, CA**

**District 23 Free Food, Fun, Fellowship &  
Feedback Day:** Date in March TBD.

To share & discuss GSO conference topics.  
For more info, please contact DCM (Don H.)

Phone: 630-4834 or email:  
dcm@ccaadistrict23.com

#### *Responsibility Declaration:*

“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 the AA pamphlet: “This Is AA”,  
with permission of AA World Services, Inc.*

## CONVENTION UPDATE

Just a reminder that our first planning meeting for the 2009 Santa Barbara AA Convention will be held on the second Thursday of February which is February 12<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 PM.

All are welcome to come and be part of the team for this year's annual convention. The planning and preparation that go on all year are fun and rewarding service commitments as well as a great opportunity to meet and work with your fellow AA's.

At the first meeting we will be picking a theme for the 2009 convention. Please bring any and all suggestions to the meeting, drop them off at Central Office, or give them to a committee member. To reiterate, themes must be a quote from conference approved literature – hardcover books such as the Big Book, Twelve and Twelve, Daily Reflections, etc. – not pamphlets. Please include the quote itself, as well as where it came from including the publication and page number.

For directions to the meeting or to contact a committee member, go to the web site at <http://www.sbaaconvention.org/participate.htm> or call Central Office.

We look forward to seeing everyone in February!!

Your Convention Committee

## NEW ITEMS

**AT YOUR CENTRAL OFFICE  
TRI-PLATE BIRTHDAY CHIPS**

**YEARS 31 – 60**

**\$15.00 plus tax**

## HONESTY

I love the freedom that honesty brings! But I always have a deceptive little scheme going on somewhere in my calculating little head - a remnant from my 'survival' days. I can remember the moment when I discovered that I could lie – I was a little girl when I tried lying for the first time and I got away with it. There were several times when I tried lying and didn't get away with it and the punishment from my father was severe – out to the garage for a beating. My mother said that she could tell I was lying by looking into my eyes so I didn't look at her when I lied and that was a dead giveaway (she was smart). There were times that I got those beatings from my dad for telling the truth too since the form of discipline in my home was corporal punishment. Those beatings were humiliating and instead of making me more honest, I got more cunning about lying.

At 17 years old when I left my parent's house I began a long career of cunning deception. I got so good at lying that eventually I didn't trust anyone or anything. Since I didn't tell the truth I figured nobody else did. Life was hard with that attitude.

After hitting bottom with a lifestyle of drinking, lying, cheating and stealing, I crawled into AA and got the message pretty quickly that I had to change to achieve sobriety. In meetings they kept reading that part of the Big Book that says we had a chance at recovery if we were capable of being honest with ourselves. I soon discovered that I didn't really know the difference in my own self what was the truth and what was a lie. A lifetime of deception deprives one of knowing the truth. So I began to practice ... practice ... practice and I did lots of 10<sup>th</sup> Steps. One day I could feel the difference in the way telling the truth felt in my body compared to telling a lie. Even though it was difficult and scary to tell the truth, when I did, my body and mind felt at peace. I also learned that omitting information was a form of lying so I started working on telling the whole truth, except when to do so would injure others. I was awkward at first and hurt some people because I would just blurt out the truth. I didn't know how to deliver the truth in a kind way. More practice.

Eventually I found the wisdom that says words need to pass through three portals before being spoken:

- (1) Is it the truth?
- (2) Is it necessary?
- (3) Is it kind?

If words don't meet all those criteria then they are better left unspoken.

In love and service,  
Tall Beth

GAY DISCUSSION  
#140  
COTTAGE HOSPITAL  
SUITE E & F  
SUNDAY 11:00 AM  
IS STILL MEETING

**If there is any change in your group,  
Please contact your Central Office  
and let us know.  
There is a form at the office  
you can fill out and then  
we will make the changes on the  
Website and meeting guide.  
Any question please contact:  
John S 805.962.3332  
Or JohnS@SantaBarbaraAA.com**

**January 2009  
Birthdays**

Name	Years
Chris c	1
David P	1
Doug T	1
Ivonne S	1
Marshal	1
Sarah	1
Tom M	1
Brian K	2
Tony A	2
Lena A	3
Louie	3
Susan H	3
Amy L	4
Anthony B	4
Augie	4
Dave H	4
Jim B	4
Warren Y	4
Donald C	5
Heidi F	5
Joe F	5
Robbin B	6
Matt F	7
Michelle M	7
Sarah A	7
Steve R	8
Dawn	12
Stephen	12
Rudy S	17
Sky J	17
Peggy H	18
Tall Beth	18
Dinah M	19
Monica A	19
Don H	20
Joe S	20
Kris B	20
Bob T	21
Shannon A	22
Chris M	23
Laura	23
David C	24
Linda T	26
Tim W	26
Luwana K	29
Bill S	30
Kathy H	30
Doris W	31
Kurt F	31
Irish Tony	34
Carlton P	39
Sally A	46

**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**

**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 Third month, March we need writing on Step 3 and Tradition 3.

Send submissions to **JohnS@santabarbaraAA.com**

**Central Office Statistics**

During January 2009 your Central Office had:

AA Information calls .....	805
Al-Anon Referrals .....	55
Referrals to other programs .....	51
12step via answering service .....	45
Out-of-town visitors .....	35
12-step via office .....	41
Office walk-ins .....	576
Hits on our Web site .....	1,638

**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.

25<sup>th</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 January 2009

	Jan 09	Dec 08	Jan 09
11th Step 076	100.00	0.00	100.00
12 & 12 Study, Tues. 035	100.00	0.00	100.00
83 - 87 Group 084	177.88	0.00	177.88
Action Participation 133	166.20	0.00	166.20
Alternative Group 045	91.20	0.00	91.20
Barefoot Group 170	27.00	46.00	27.00
Both Oars In The Water 053	100.00	0.00	100.00
Carpinteria Canalino 111	0.00	400.00	0.00
Casa Serena (BB Study) 074	0.00	163.10	0.00
Do The Steps Or Die 062	29.33	26.54	29.33
Eleventh Step Meditation 115	0.00	60.00	0.00
Eye Opener 003	225.00	250.00	225.00
For Women Only 023	0.00	143.00	0.00
Harbor Group 079	232.00	175.00	232.00
Into Action, Thurs 093	100.00	0.00	100.00
Isla Vista Sobriety 158	0.00	38.00	0.00
It's A Hell Of A Deal 139	0.00	426.51	0.00
Junkyard Dogs 165	0.00	198.10	0.00
Keep Coming Back Group 181	551.55	0.00	551.55
Key Group 177	700.00	0.00	700.00
Men Who Have Lost Their Legs 164	225.00	513.00	225.00
Men's Group At St. Mary's 051	79.00	0.00	79.00
Mesa-Singleness of Purpose 024	0.00	40.00	0.00
Monday At A Time 004	0.00	177.00	0.00
Montecito/Carpinteria 112	0.00	109.60	0.00
Off Center 141	0.00	123.00	0.00
Onward & Upward 019	234.00	0.00	234.00
Our Meeting 151	0.00	70.00	0.00
Out Of Town Speaker, NH II 146	0.00	50.00	0.00
Rigorous Honesty 067	236.30	24.00	236.30

### Donations by Group January 2009

	Jan 09	Dec 08	Jan 09
San Ysidro 148	0.00	32.90	0.00
Sat. Morn. Home Boys 120	168.60	121.20	168.60
Saturday Night Sobriety 130	72.00	0.00	72.00
Schooner Group 114	88.00	0.00	88.00
Serenity Sisters 166	65.38	0.00	65.38
Sink Or Swim 099	100.00	0.00	100.00
Sought Through Prayer & Meditation 113	12.00	0.00	12.00
Sound Off 007	0.00	30.00	0.00
Start Your Day Right 156	0.00	150.00	0.00
Start Your Week Right 006	100.00	0.00	100.00
Stepping Stones 068	57.00	0.00	57.00
Student of Life 100	0.00	40.00	0.00
Success Group 070	10.00	0.00	10.00
Summerland Monday Group 021	0.00	224.00	0.00
Sundowner Group 011	0.00	140.00	0.00
The How And Why Of It 145	50.00	0.00	50.00
There Is A Solution 022	120.00	0.00	120.00
Tuesday Men's Stag 047	0.00	98.50	0.00
Women of Change 034	0.00	217.00	0.00
201 Birthday Donations	253.00	0.00	253.00
202 Supporting Members	3,141.00	7,752.00	3,141.00
204 Memorial Fund	0.00	4,000.00	0.00
207 Gratitude Month	51.95	4,516.82	51.95
210 Convention Income	2,706.00	0.00	2,706.00
211 Rent Received	30.00	300.00	30.00
212 Special Events	0.00	35.00	0.00
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>10,399.39</b>	<b>20,690.27</b>	<b>10,399.39</b>

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

