



MESSENGER

To Be Self-Supporting

I believe the Seventh Tradition is a pretty clear indication that a Higher Power had a hand in making AA what it is today. As a fairly average human being, to say nothing of being an alcoholic, if I were setting up an organization I'd probably be more than willing to accept donations to help get things going. In fact, our founders felt just that way.

In the early days when Bill W. and Dr. Bob were struggling financially and needed money to publish the book they were writing, Bill was put in contact with John D. Rockefeller, Jr. and his staff. The fellowship was less than three years old, and already had a good record helping drunks get sober. Mr. Rockefeller was impressed, but wondered, "Won't money spoil this thing?"

In 1940, Bill and Dr. Bob's hopes were raised again when Mr. Rockefeller invited them to a dinner, along with a number of New York's wealthiest citizens. Bill and Dr. Bob had visions of a system of hospitals, paid counselors, promotion campaigns and the like. At the last minute, Mr. Rockefeller fell ill, so his son, Nelson, acted as host.

Bill remembered the dinner: "As we watched the faces of the guests, it was evident that we had captured their sympathetic interest. Great influence and great wealth were soon to be at our disposal. Weariness and worry were to be things of the past ...

"Breathlessly we waited for the climax - the matter of money. Nelson Rockefeller obliged us ... 'Gentlemen, you can all see that this is a work of goodwill. Its power lies in the fact that one member carries the good message to the next, without any thought of financial income or reward. Therefore, it is our belief that Alcoholics Anonymous should be self-supporting so far as money is concerned. It needs only our goodwill.' Whereupon the guests clapped lustily, and after cordial handshakes and goodbyes all around, the whole billion dollars' worth of them walked out the door." ("Pass It On", p. 233)

So the initial idea of self-support came from outside the fellowship. After a time, however, the founders realized, "Whoever pays the piper is apt to call the tune, and if the AA Foundation obtained money from outside sources, its trustees might be tempted to run things without reference to the wishes of AA as a whole." ("12 & 12", p. 164) Not accepting outside money gives AA the freedom to do, without interference, what it does best - one alcoholic working with another alcoholic, helping each other stay sober. No outside force, government or private, corporation or individual, has the power to influence how we go about serving our primary purpose.

But with freedom comes responsibility. To be self-supporting we must pay our own way. AA has no dues or fees, so it is up to the individual how much to give, or even whether to contribute anything at all. However, as Bill W. points out in the "12 & 12" (p. 161), "We were astounded to find that we were as tight as bark on a tree." So the question for me becomes, "Considering what I can realistically afford, am I giving my fair share? Am I doing my part?"

That Simple Sixth Step

I have talked to many people in AA who have had, or are having, great difficulties with Step Six, myself included. Step Six suggests: "Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character."

"Too simple," I said, "much too simple! Can't possibly work that way." And once again I was immediately in trouble, for this is what I did:

"I'll just put Steps Six and Seven together and get this over with," I said. "Bill W. was just trying to stretch these principles out to twelve because he was superstitious or something."

Here I made my first mistake. I was "asking" before I was "ready." It didn't work that way for me and still doesn't. I had to become ready first, and this Step provides the proving ground for that to happen.

Sometimes my decision to let go of a defect is quick because of the intense pain it causes me. But other defects are more subtle and I actually enjoy the sick kind of excitement and color they add to my life. I hate the "defect" but I love the "effect." These, I found, will take me a long time to let go of. A lot of pain and praying for willingness will be required. I try to accept this part of myself, share it with others, seek progress in these areas of my life, and move on in the Steps. To sit and wait always hurts me.

Continuing with my analysis I said to myself, "There's nothing to do here! There's no challenge, nothing for me to fight with and overcome."

Here I made my second mistake. This Step, like One, Two, Three and Eight, requires a submissive type action of me that my bulldozer ego finds intolerable. In this Step I do not go out and fix something but instead allow myself to "become entirely ready."

For me this is an act of letting go, not of grasping or controlling. For me this is an action I find harder to perform, have cried over, have rebelled against more than any other in my entire life. In this Step I literally have to try to let myself go and trust my Higher Power. I cannot beat myself into readiness with my own willpower. And I let myself go by accepting all my defects, not by analyzing or fixing them. To me this simply means repeating the process of the first Five Steps again on a new level: Admitting my defects (and assets) are truly who I am at this moment and then admitting further that I am powerless to change any of them by my own willpower alone. So simple to understand but so very hard to want to do! It is inside this Step that I began to really experience the true nature of my powerlessness, and the extent of it. I found that I stubbornly clung to many of my defects of character because of the comfort and security I believed they gave me. Just as with alcohol, I couldn't imagine life without them.

Analyzing this Step further I said, "Finally! Here is the Step I was looking for! Here at last is my chance to be perfect!"

Give me words like "entirely" and "all," and look out! I'm off and running in an attempt to be canonized by the end of the week. Needless to say, I haven't made it yet. I forgot this Step, like the others, was written by humans for humans. I now am beginning to see this Step as a process of letting go by acceptance, a little at a time. As each defect brings me to my knees, I let it go by accepting it as mine and by admitting my powerlessness over it just as I did with alcohol. One day at a time I am becoming "entirely ready." Because of my perfectionism, I must continually remember that Step Six is a guide, something to shoot for, not something I must accomplish perfectly before I move on, because I'd never do any more than five Steps the rest of my life, and five are not enough.

With further probing, into this Step with my brilliant mind I said to myself, "Good deal! Here is a Step I finally get to work by myself. Now I can do it the way I want to!"

I had just made my biggest mistake of all, and not for the first time either. I tried to work this Step alone. I read it as saying "remove all my defects of character." It doesn't say "my." None of the Steps use pronouns like "I," "me" or "my." The Steps, as I see them, are a shared way of life. They are the common experience of many people working together to solve a common problem. I cannot work Step Six all by myself.

In the book *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, it says that this is the Step that separates the men from the boys. This has certainly been my experience for it has brought out and is still bringing out my defects of character in a very revealing way through daily experience. In this Step, for the first time, I am beginning to understand just a little bit the need for true humility to live a happy and serene life. Part of true humility I believe is self-acceptance, which as it replaces the self-hatred of failing to fix myself, adds that dimension of serenity I need so badly in my life. Bill W. expressed this idea so beautifully when he wrote: "To those who have made progress in AA, humility amounts to a clear recognition of what and who we really are, followed by a sincere attempt to become what we could be."

So when it comes to living Step Six, I can say to you and to myself, "Boy, I sure have a long way to go, and some days I don't feel like going at all, but I thank God that I know that much today about myself, because for me, that's progress."

See how it works?

E. C.



A.A. was founded on the premise that it would be self-supported through member contributions. For the past 48 years, contributing a single dollar has been almost a tradition.

	1960	10¢		1960...	25¢		1960...	22¢
	1970	20¢		1970...	65¢		1970...	35¢
	1980	35¢		1980...	\$1.65		1980...	90¢
	1990	50¢		1990...	\$2.00		1990...	\$1.10
	2000	\$1.00		2000...	\$3.00		2000...	\$1.20
	2008	\$1.50		2008...	\$5.00		2008...	\$4.00

Today's dollar has only 16 cents of the purchasing power of a 1960's dollar.



1960...	\$1.00
1970...	\$1.00
1980...	\$1.00
1990...	\$1.00
2000...	\$1.00
2008...	\$3.00

Acknowledging these economic facts, why not responsibly compensate

**BY DROPPING IN
3 BUCKS FOR 2008?**

For those who can't afford it, the important thing is to keep coming back

This poster is unofficial. It has not been published by General Services.

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.

Convention News

Your convention committee has plans for you! The registration forms should be at meetings and in your hands by the time you read this article, so now it's up to you to do your part: Register!

So what are the plans for the convention? What's included in the price of registration? While it offers many opportunities for fellowship and fun in sobriety, the convention is also a chance to immerse yourself in your program of recovery for the entire weekend. To begin with, there will be meetings, meetings, and more meetings. Of course there are the main meetings, including the big speaker meetings Friday and Saturday night and on Sunday morning, plus the H&I Breakfast meeting, and the Long-timers' meeting. In addition to the joint AA/Al-Anon split pitch, Al-Anon will be hosting their own meetings as well. Then there are the young people's meetings, gay and lesbian meetings, and Spanish speaking meetings. Both AA and Al-Anon will have Marathon Meetings going on every day, too, and on into the night, and on Saturday, weather permitting, there will be meditation meetings in the Elk's Grove. So, if you find yourself out of sorts, or – heaven forbid – restless, irritable and discontented, or if you just want to top up your sobriety bank account, there will be a place for you to go throughout the weekend. We're hoping there will be something for everyone who attends the convention.

And what about the fellowship and fun part of it? Well, among the hundreds who will attend that weekend, you'll probably see familiar faces from your regular meetings, old friends you may not have seen since last year's convention, and perhaps make new friends. The tables around the Hospitality area are a good place for a cup of coffee and quiet conversation.

The SOBER game begins the more organized (if you can call it that) fun on Friday night, after the speaker. SOBER is like BINGO, except when you think you've got a winner on your card, you yell ... well, you get it. This has been a lot of fun in years past, with a variety of games to test your skill, your luck and your patience. The favorite among most alcoholics seems to be "Blackout" for some reason (can't imagine why), where you must cover all the squares on your card. Toward the end, there are always several players with "just one more" square to fill, and each time a number is called there are groans and sighs throughout the room – along with teasing from friends and cheers from those who got a little closer on their own card. It's a great way to wrap up the first day of the convention, and the winners go home with a nice cash prize.

Saturday, after the speaker meeting, is the dance. The lights are turned down low, the music is rocking, and the dance floor is filled with dozens of alcoholics showing their stuff. Many of those attending will have gotten dressed for the banquet, and both men and women will be looking real fine. As a friend of mine says, "We clean up pretty good". If you don't think there's any fun to be had after getting sober, you need to come to the dance. Even if you don't dance yourself, just come to watch and socialize. If you're new, you may even find a strange expression on your face; it's called a smile. And all that is included in the price of registration. What a deal!

Do you have to register? We ask that you do, because it helps pay for the facility and for bringing our fabulous speakers from out of town. Registering also lets you feel "part of" the weekend, rather than separate and different – most of us know what that's like and don't want to go back to it. And we have scholarships to help anyone who just can't afford to register. See the Volunteer Chair, Marcus, or the Convention Chair, Maggie, and they will set you up.

So get those forms in as soon as possible, because it gives us the funds to meet our up-front expenses. And consider signing up for the package for the entire weekend, for even greater savings. Whatever you do, remember to save the weekend of October 24, 25 and 26, and plan to join us.

~ **Your Convention Committee**

Santa Barbara District 23

General Service Representatives

<http://www.ccaadistrict23.com>

Registration Committee

Your Dist #23 Registration Committee helps to maintain the link between our local Groups and AA as a whole.

Do you know if your Group is Registered with AA as a whole thru GSO and listed in the AA World Directory which shows all Registered Groups in the US & Canada and the Six Digit ID# assigned by GSO?

Your District Registrar's responsibility is to get updated information from your Group and pass it on to AA World Services just as your Group passes on updates to Central Office for our Local meeting Directory

To get more information Contact

Gil E. your Dist. #23 Registrar

@ 805-403-0578

or by E-m at Registrar@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, with permission of A. A. World Services, Inc.

"Aren't people funny?"

"Yes. If you tell a person that there are 270,678,934,341 stars in the universe, he'll believe you.

But if you tell an alcoholic to stay away from "that first drink," he has to make a personal investigation."

Gratitude From a Newcomer

I WONDER if we new members give much thought to what went on before AA found us.

Maybe we might wonder what happened to the pioneers and what they did to keep such a thing as Alcoholics Anonymous, so vital to us, alive and interesting. I know that these old-timers or founders of AA in every town had to fight for their very lives, and with few tools, alone and without social acceptance. They had to fight day by day. They had to love and *care for each other* for they had so little to fight with. Like all pioneers, with liberty, life and freedom in the balance, with only themselves and a faith in the infinite help of a loving, tender and understanding God, they fought through and attained a goal that they had been seeking for years. When they received a call from another fellow-sufferer they didn't dare say, "I'll see you tomorrow," or "Call Joe, he lives closer than I do." They got up and made the call regardless of the time of day, kind of day or distance, because they knew that their very existence depended upon their helping another sick alcoholic in the same condition they had been in but few short days or weeks before.

We who came later to the program had the tools and the way laid out for us. We had thousands of members to call on for advice. We had the acceptance of outside society as well as its unmerited praise. It seems to me that we have a great obligation to AA. I am also wondering if we are in some small way fulfilling any of these obligations. If we aren't, we stand in very real danger of losing this priceless heritage that has been passed on to us. Our kind of freedom cannot be taken for granted but must be forever earned and justified. When I stop to think of the dreams that were never fulfilled, that faded gradually from my mind, and of the things that I was going to accomplish in my life and what I was going to become in the business world; when I so desperately wanted to be the man that God created me to be; to be able to bring joy, security and comfort as a husband and father; when I wanted to be able to live a constructive life and one of sanity, I am forever grateful to AA because now, even though I am getting a late start, I will still be able to accomplish all of these things that I once dreamed of and yearned for.

I say we owe a debt of gratitude to the old-timers and founders of AA that we will never be able to repay except by accepting our responsibilities as good AA members and living the program to the best of our abilities. Think it over and see if you don't agree.



The Messenger is published monthly by:

23rd District Intergroup of Alcoholics Anonymous
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 Santa Barbara, California, 93101

805-962-3332

JohnS@SantaBarbaraAA.com

Name	Years
Karen T	1
Julie H	1
Beth C.	1
Warren M.	1
Alex J.	1
Dulce G.	1
Alex A	1
Grant	2
Karl	2
Jenny	3
Wendy F.	3
Bernie C	4
Jimmy S	5
Susan L	5
Patrick D	6
Sean	7
Bruce M.	7
Suzy C.	8
Darcee D	9
Amy W	9
Anne	9
Gordon D.	10
David H	12
David R	12
Jean B	12
Beverly J.	14
Joe M.	15
Robert F.	17
Scott	17
Sandy S.	18
Anna Maria	19
Karen Mc.	20
Greg	20
Robert A.	21
Jeff	21
Jo R	22
Jennifer O	23
John S.	23
Cheryl L	24
Alice P.	25
Mike	33
Lee R.	37
Julie C	47

Submissions Needed

The Messenger needs your submissions and letters. For the August 2008 Messenger we are looking for articles for Step 8, Tradition 8. or Concept 8. Or any other AA related story, H and I, or any on your experience, strength and hope.

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

Central Office Statistics

During the June 2008 your Central Office had:

- AA Information calls
- Al-Anon Referrals
- Referrals to other programs
- 12step via answering service
- Out-of-town visitors
- 12-step via office
- Office walk-ins
- Hits on our Web site

Service Meetings

General Service Representatives (GSR) on the 1st Monday of each month at 6:00pm at: Holy Cross Church Hall, 1740 Cliff Dr. Behind the Church

IGR's (Intergroup Representatives) meet at 6:00 P.M. the 2nd Tuesday each month at First Presbyterian Church 21 East Constance in Santa Barbara

H&I (Hospitals & Institutions) meets at 6:00 P.M. on the 2nd Monday each month at the Central Office.

PI (Public Information) meets the 4th Saturday of each month. Call 687-7673 for more information.

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

Donations by Group June 2008

	Jun 08	May 08	Jan - Jun 08		Jun 08	May 08	Jan - Jun 08
11th Step 076	0.00	0.00	160.00	Montecito/Carpinteria 112	0.00	59.60	224.26
12 & 12 Study, Tues. 035	0.00	0.00	160.00	Mustard Seed 163	0.00	0.00	115.00
Action Participation 133	0.00	0.00	1,058.30	New Life 091	0.00	0.00	200.00
Almost Saints 097	0.00	175.00	649.00	New Pair Of Glasses 013	35.00	0.00	35.00
Alternative Group 045	56.00	0.00	294.00	Off Center 141	125.00	0.00	574.85
Back To Basics Group 161	0.00	0.00	194.62	Questions & Answers 094	27.85	27.85	55.70
Back To Basics, Young People 144	0.00	123.89	182.00	Rigorous Honesty 067	0.00	24.00	54.00
Barefoot Group 170	29.00	42.00	314.75	Sat. Morn. Home Boys 120	248.50	0.00	584.50
Big Book Study, Friday 101	0.00	0.00	11.50	Saturday Night Sobriety 130	0.00	0.00	72.00
Big Book Workshop 016	30.00	0.00	50.00	Schooner Group 114	0.00	0.00	201.00
Both Oars In The Water 053	0.00	0.00	160.00	Serenity Sisters 166	0.00	0.00	124.12
Cambridge Group 020	0.00	120.00	120.00	Sink Or Swim 099	0.00	0.00	160.00
Came to Believe Candlelight 122	0.00	40.00	40.00	Sisters In Solution 030	0.00	0.00	25.00
Carpinteria Canalino 111	0.00	400.00	640.00	Sought Through Prayer & Meditation 113	20.00	0.00	47.00
Casa Serena (BB Study) 074	40.00	294.00	334.00	Start Your Day Right 156	225.00	125.00	1,550.00
Courage To Change 002	0.00	100.00	100.00	Start Your Week Right 006	0.00	0.00	160.00
Do The Steps Or Die 062	33.32	40.58	233.86	Staying Alive 055	80.00	70.00	345.00
El Montecito Saturday Night 014	75.00	0.00	148.00	Stepping Stones 068	76.80	162.60	365.61
Eleventh Step Meditation 115	0.00	0.00	59.00	Student of Life 100	45.00	0.00	95.00
Eye Opener 003	210.00	175.00	1,330.00	Success Group 070	0.00	0.00	80.00
For Women Only 023	0.00	114.00	174.00	Summerland Monday Group 021	210.00	0.00	426.00
Foundation Group 010	79.00	0.00	79.00	Summerland, Thurs. 183	0.00	200.00	1,000.00
Gay Discussion, Sunday 140	0.00	75.00	75.00	Sunday Night Alternative, NH III 186	0.00	204.35	378.20
Getting To Know You 149	0.00	307.00	307.00	Sundowner Group 011	450.00	350.00	1,412.00
Goleta Sun. Night Speaker 150	0.00	0.00	50.00	Sunrisers 001	80.00	0.00	180.00
Happy Destiny 153	0.00	400.00	400.00	There Is A Solution 022	0.00	0.00	60.00
Harbor Group 079	294.20	155.26	1,211.66	Tuesday Men's Stag 047	0.00	0.00	250.88
Here & Now 089	0.00	80.00	80.00	Way Of Life 117	400.00	0.00	1,030.00
Into Action, Thurs 093	0.00	0.00	100.00	Women of Change 034	0.00	0.00	124.00
Isla Vista Sobriety 158	50.00	0.00	50.00	Women of Courage 199	20.00	0.00	20.00
It's A Hell Of A Deal 139	110.16	0.00	436.98	Anonymous Donations 200	210.00	140.65	1,875.09
Junkyard Dogs 165	0.00	0.00	350.00	Birthday Donations 201	26.00	5.00	623.00
Keep Coming Back Group 181	0.00	0.00	626.03	Supporting Members 202	564.84	1,047.00	3,573.30
Key Group 177	770.00	0.00	770.00	Memorial Fund 204	0.00	535.00	560.00
Men Who Have Lost Their Legs 164	0.00	290.00	927.00	World Services Donation 208	85.50	0.00	85.50
Men's Group At St. Mary's 051	115.00	0.00	211.00	Rent Received 211	154.00	40.00	889.00
Mesa-Singleness of Purpose 024	0.00	40.00	160.00	Special Events 212	0.00	705.00	6,339.05
Monday At A Time 004	0.00	117.50	415.50				
				Totals:	\$4,975.17	\$6,785.28	\$36,556.26

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