



MESSENGER

On the 3rd Tradition

"Our membership ought to include all who suffer alcoholism. Hence we may refuse none who wish to recover. Nor ought A.A. membership ever depend upon money or conformity. Any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an A.A. group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation."

This is a sweeping statement indeed; it takes in a lot of territory. Some people might think it too idealistic to be practical. It tells every alcoholic in the world that he may become, and remain, a member of Alcoholics Anonymous *so long as he says so*. In short, Alcoholics Anonymous has no membership rule.

Why is this so? Our answer is simple and practical. Even in self protection, we do not wish to erect the slightest barrier between ourselves and the brother alcoholic who still suffers. We know that society has been demanding that he conform to its laws and conventions. But the essence of his alcoholic malady is the fact that he has been unable or unwilling to conform either to the laws of man or God. If he is anything, the sick alcoholic is a rebellious nonconformist. How well we understand that; every member of Alcoholics Anonymous was once a rebel himself. Hence we cannot offer to meet him at any half-way mark. We must enter the dark cave where he is and show him that we understand. We realize that he is altogether too weak and confused to jump hurdles. If we raise obstacles, he might stay away and perish. He might be denied his priceless opportunity.

So when he asks, "Are there any conditions?" we joyfully reply, "No, not a one." When skeptically he comes back saying, "But certainly there must be things that I have to do and believe," we quickly answer, "In Alcoholics Anonymous there are no *musts*." Cynically, perhaps, he then inquires, "What is this all going to cost me?" We are able to laugh and say, "Nothing at all, there are no fees and dues." Thus, in a brief hour, is our friend disarmed of his suspicion and rebellion. His eyes begin to open on a new world of friendship and understanding. Bankrupt idealist that he has been, his ideal is no longer a dream. After years of lonely search it now stands revealed. The reality of Alcoholics Anonymous bursts upon him. For Alcoholics Anonymous is saying, "We have something priceless to give, if only you will receive." That is all. But to our new friend, it is everything. Without more ado, he becomes one of us.

Our membership tradition does contain, however, one vitally important qualification. That qualification relates to the use of our name, Alcoholics Anonymous. We believe that any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an A.A. group provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation. Here our purpose is clear and unequivocal. For obvious reasons we wish the name Alcoholics Anonymous to be used only in connection with straight A.A. activities. One can think of no A.A. member who would like, for example, to see the formation of "dry" A.A. groups, "wet" A.A. groups, Republican A.A. groups, Communist A.A. groups. Few, if any, would wish our groups to be designated by religious denominations. We cannot lend the A.A. name, even indirectly to other activities, however worthy. If we do so we shall become hopelessly compromised and divided. We think that A.A. should offer its experience to the whole world for whatever use can be made of it. But not its name. Nothing could be more certain.

Let us of A.A. therefore resolve that we shall always be inclusive, and never exclusive, offering all we have to all men save our title. May all barriers be thus leveled, may our unity thus be preserved. And may God grant us a long life --and a useful one!

Bill W

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Why We Were Chosen

An often seen piece of AA literature is a small pamphlet called "Why We Were Chosen". The source of this pamphlet is a speech given by Judge John T. on the 4th Anniversary of the Chicago Group in 1943. A portion of it follows.

God in His wisdom selected this group of men and women to be purveyors of His goodness. In selecting them through whom to bring about this phenomenon He went not to the proud, the mighty, the famous or the brilliant. He went instead to the humble, to the sick, to the unfortunate. He went right to the drunkard, the so-called weakling of the world. Well might He have said the following words to us:

"Unto your weak and feeble hands I have entrusted a power beyond estimate. To you has been given that which has been denied the most learned of your fellows. Not to scientists or statesmen, not to wives or mothers, not even to my priests or ministers have I given this gift of healing other alcoholics which I entrust to you."

"It must be used unselfishly; it carries with it grave responsibility. No day can be too long; no demands upon your time can be too urgent; no case can be too pitiful; no task too hard; no effort too great. It must be used with tolerance for I have restricted its application to no race, no creed, and no denomination. Personal criticism you must expect; lack of appreciation will be common; ridicule will be your lot; your motives will be misjudged. You must be prepared for adversity, for what men call adversity is the ladder you must use to ascend the rungs toward spiritual perfection, and remember, in the exercise of this power I shall not exact from you beyond your capabilities."

"You are not selected because of exceptional talents, and be careful always, if success attends your efforts not to ascribe to personal superiority that to which you can lay claim only by virtue of my gift. If I had wanted learned men to accomplish this mission, this power would have been entrusted to the physician and scientist. If I had wanted eloquent men, there would have been many anxious for the assignment, for talk is the easiest used of all talents with which I have endowed mankind. If I had wanted scholarly men, the world is filled with better qualified men than you who would be available. You were selected because you have been the outcasts of the world and your long experience as drunkards has made or should make you humbly alert to the cries of distress that come from the lonely hearts of alcoholics everywhere."

"Keep ever in mind the admission you made on the day of your profession in AA -- namely that you are powerless and that it was only with your willingness to turn your life and will unto my keeping that relief came to you."

Submitted by Beth P

******District 23******

**Free Food, Fun,
Fellowship & Feedback Day**

Where: Veteran's Memorial Building (Upstairs)

-112 W. Carrillo, Santa Barbara-

When: Saturday, March 28th 2009

Time: 9 AM-12 Noon

Why? (Well, there's free food) -AND-

We Need Your Voice To Be Heard!

AA is taking its annual inventory and District 23 GSR's invite you to participate in answering questions, discussing topics and issues that affect AA as a whole. These are contained in the "2009 General Service Conference Personal & Group Opinion Poll" available through your Group's GSR.

Come learn and share your written or verbal feedback about these questions and topics. We need you to help us be better informed so that our Area 93 Delegate (Jeff J.) can go to the 2009 General Service Conference (at GSO in New York in April) with a good sense of our opinions.

At this event we will make sure to have as much background information as we can pertaining to those questions and topics. So you can come sit, relax, eat, and discuss with fellow members and GSR's. We will have local Archives and Literature displays. And you will have access to the background materials, plus time for fellowship, sharing, and discussion on this year's questionnaire.

To get copies of the "2009 General Service Conference Personal & Group Opinion Poll" and the background information, contact your group GSR -OR- contact DCM (Don H.) at 805-630-4834, e-mail at dcm@ccadistrict23.com

**To volunteer to help out, please contact: Don H. or Steve G. at recorder@ccadistrict23.com
Contact us through our website www.ccadistrict23.com**

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 2009 General Service Conference Group
Opinion Poll**

This is the time of year that our Area Delegate is asking the AA fellowship for our collective and personal Group Conscience on various topics that affect AA as a whole. Delegate Jeff J. will travel to New York for a week-long service meeting (April 26th - May 2nd). The Theme this year is:

**“Our Commitment to Carry AA’s Message:
Enthusiasm and Gratitude in Action”**

Some of the questions and topics that Jeff needs our input on are:

New Special Needs/Accessibility Pamphlet
Consider a 2nd Volume of Daily Reflections
New 7th Tradition Wall Poster for AA groups
Group Contributions to the AA Service

Structure

Carrying the message using AA Grapevine and La Viña
Your group’s GSR has the Opinion Poll and is ready to help your group participate. PLEASE come to the District 23 Free Food, Fun, Fellowship & Feedback Day (Vets Bldg, Mar. 28th, see below) for more info AND help us out on this important commitment.

Upcoming GSR events:

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

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

Free Food, Fun, Fellowship & Feedback Day:
Saturday, March 28th, 9AM-12PM. Relax, eat, share, discuss and fill out the Group Opinion Poll for the 2009 GSO General Service Conference.

April GSR meeting: 1st Monday, April 6th, Holy Cross Church, 1740 Cliff Dr., 6 PM

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.”

CONVENTION NEWS

The Convention Committee held the first of many monthly planning meetings in February to begin the task of organizing what is to be the **25th** Santa Barbara Alcoholics Anonymous Convention!! (Our silver anniversary.)

The turnout of volunteers to serve on this year’s committee was impressive and lots of enthusiasm and ideas were expressed. Don G. is the Chair for the 2009 convention and he outlined to the group his proposed timeline for the progression of decisions and activities to be accomplished. After a group consensus, it was decided to wait until the March meeting to make a final decision on the **theme** for this year’s event. It was felt that more time and publicity was needed to reach out into our membership for ideas and submissions. This is a meaningful milestone year and our theme should reflect that.

So here goes one more time: please bring any and all suggestions to the next meeting, drop them off at Central Office, or give them to a committee member. Themes must be a quote from conference approved literature – hardcover books such as the Big Book, Twelve and Twelve, or Daily Reflections, not pamphlets. Please include the quote itself, as well as where it came from including the publication and the page number.

The next meeting will be held at 6:00 PM on March 12th at Maggie’s preschool. Go to the convention web site and click the “participate” button for directions to the meeting place if you would like to attend and be part of the process. Lots of volunteer opportunities will be available all year right up to and during the convention weekend.

Finally, please mark your calendars with the dates for the 25th annual convention: October 23rd, 24th, and 25th, 2009. This year’s convention is sure to provide a weekend of fun, fellowship, recovery and renewal for all.

Your Convention Committee

Faith

I came to AA paralyzed with fear. I was terrified of being alone and afraid of being with others. I feared failure, but suffered from anxiety over success. While I wanted to quit drinking, I was afraid to stop. These dichotomies gripped my life in a never ending stranglehold making it impossible for me to believe in a power greater than myself. I had become the center of my universe.

Suffering from selfishness and self-centeredness, I spent all my time measuring every activity in “what’s in it for me” increments. During daily drinking, I viewed my behavior as self preservation anchored in a philosophy that says we must pull ourselves up by our bootstraps. I was the poster child from the dysfunctional family taught early on not to feel, trust or talk. Once I started drinking, my spiritual growth was arrested. I experienced one year of growth twenty-seven times. By the time AA found me I had become a spiritual cripple. Naturally when I was introduced to this spiritually based program, I balked. It wasn’t so much that I didn’t believe in God, I simply didn’t believe He could or would help me. God, the

creator, was one thing, but God the personal care giver was another. Sometimes I wish my spiritual awakening had come in the form of a sudden and overwhelming God-consciousness. It would have made for a more compelling story. However, my experience was more of an educational one. Once I put the bottle down, the fog began to lift as I read and reread the Big Book searching for answers. The preface on page ii suggests we read the personal stories and hopefully say, “Yes, that happened to me, Yes, I felt like that.” Much to my astonishment Bill’s Story on page 10 and 11 described my God dilemma. He concluded, “I simply had to believe in a spirit of the universe, who knew neither time nor limitation.” This, then became my personal quest. Looking back, I often wonder if the academic approach I took in my spiritual journey was necessary. In the final analysis, it all boils down to faith. For example, during all the years I drank destructively I never once asked, “What’s in this stuff? What’s it doing to my mind, body and soul?” There are times I wish I hadn’t delayed my recovery by placing every aspect of it under a microscope. In fact, the Big Book tells us that a mere code of morals or a better philosophy of life is not sufficient to overcome alcoholism. On page 45, it says “Lack of power, that was our dilemma. We had to find a power by which we could live and it had to be a power greater than ourselves.” We are told that the whole purpose of this book is to enable us to find that power. An old-timer told me that fear and faith cannot live in the same house. Meanwhile, I was filled with stark terror. However, as my faith strengthened, my fears faded. Buoyed by the belief that God will do for us that which we cannot do for ourselves, I placed my trust in Him. Though my faith in His loving care has been occasionally tested during hard times, I have come to understand that my higher power is not here to prevent bad things from happening, but to comfort me when they do. He has never failed me.

Sandy H.

MEETING CHANGE
BACK TO BASICS/CANDLELIGHT
FRIDAY AT 8:00PM
AT COTTAGE HOSPITAL
HAS MOVED TO
NEWHOUSE III
2435 BATH STREET

MEETING CHANGE
BIGBOOK COMES ALIVE
TUESDAY 10:00AM
AT THE UNITARIAN CHURCH
HAS MOVED TO
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH



February 2009 Birthdays

Name	Years
Hope Z	1
Lee J	1
Nicole S	2
Crissy	4
Patrick N	5
Peter D	10
Barton	13
Aloha	14
Lowell B	18
Peggy F	18
Liz K	19
Michael I	21
Jan H	24
Jim F	25
Julia R	25
Anne	26
Brian S	26
John Mu	26
Dawn D	27
Joan S	29
Jon H	32
Elle	36

The Messenger is published monthly by:

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1213 State Street, Suit H
Santa Barbara, California, 93101

805-962-3332
sbaa@santabarbaraAA.com

Submissions Needed for April 2009

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 Fourth month, April we need writing on Step 4 and Tradition 4. Send submissions to **JohnS@santabarbaraAA.com**

Central Office Statistics

During February 2009 your Central Office had:

AA Information calls	785
AI-Anon Referrals	51
Referrals to other programs	48
12step via answering service	41
Out-of-town visitors	31
12-step via office	38
Office walk-ins	485
Hits on our Web site	1,450

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.

25th ANNUAL Santa Barbara Convention Committee
 2nd Thursday of each Month, 6:00 P.M. at 3523 Modoc Rd.
 Commitments Available!

Donations by Group February 2009

	Feb 09	Jan 09	Jan - Feb 09
11 th Step 076	0.00	100.00	100.00
12 & 12 Study, Tues. 035	0.00	100.00	100.00
83 – 87 Group 084	0.00	177.88	177.88
Action Participation 133	0.00	166.20	166.20
Almost Saints 097	225.00	0.00	225.00
Alternative Group 045	0.00	91.20	91.20
Back To Basics, Young People 144	193.96	0.00	193.96
Barefoot Group 170	28.00	27.00	55.00
Big Book Comes Alive Women's Meeting 197	70.00	0.00	70.00
Both Oars In The Water 053	0.00	100.00	100.00
Cambridge Group 020	100.00	0.00	100.00
Do The Steps Or Die 062	46.00	29.33	75.33
Eye Opener 003	220.00	225.00	445.00
Harbor Group 079	0.00	232.00	232.00
Here & Now 089	80.00	0.00	80.00
Into Action, Thurs 093	0.00	100.00	100.00
Junkyard Dogs 165	190.00	0.00	190.00
Keep Coming Back Group 181	0.00	551.55	551.55
Key Group 177	0.00	700.00	700.00
Men Who Have Lost Their Legs 164	0.00	225.00	225.00
Men's Group At St. Mary's 051	0.00	79.00	79.00
Monday At A Time 004	209.00	0.00	209.00
Onward & Upward 019	0.00	234.00	234.00

Donations by Group February 2009

	Feb 09	Jan 09	Jan - Feb 09
Rigorous Honesty 067	0.00	236.30	236.30
Sat. Morn. Home Boys 120	0.00	168.60	168.60
Saturday Night Sobriety 130	0.00	72.00	72.00
Schooner Group 114	0.00	88.00	88.00
Serenity Sisters 166	0.00	65.38	65.38
Sink Or Swim 099	0.00	100.00	100.00
Sought Through Prayer & Meditation 113	10.00	12.00	22.00
Start Your Week Right 006	0.00	100.00	100.00
Staying Alive 055	216.00	0.00	216.00
Stepping Stones 068	0.00	57.00	57.00
Success Group 070	0.00	10.00	10.00
Summerland, Thurs. 183	360.00	0.00	360.00
Sunday Night Alternative, NH III 186	67.00	0.00	67.00
Sundowner Group 011	210.00	0.00	210.00
The How And Why Of It 145	0.00	50.00	50.00
There Is A Solution 022	0.00	120.00	120.00
Tuesday Men's Stag 047	60.00	0.00	60.00
201 Birthday Donations	0.00	253.00	253.00
202 Supporting Members	1,476.49	3,141.00	4,617.49
207 Gratitude Month	0.00	51.95	51.95
210 Convention Income	0.00	2,706.00	2,706.00
211 Rent Received	165.00	30.00	195.00
Totals	3,926.45	10,399.39	14,325.84

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

