



The Santa Barbara

November 2006

MESSENGER

Step Eleven suggests prayer and meditation. We shouldn't be shy on this matter of prayer. Better men than we are using it constantly. It works, if we have the proper attitude and work at it. It would be easy to be vague about this matter. Yet, we believe we can make some definite and valuable suggestions.

When we retire at night, we constructively review our day. Were we resentful, selfish, dishonest or afraid? Do we owe an apology? Have we kept something to ourselves which should be discussed with another person at once? Were we kind and loving toward all? What could we have done better? Were we thinking of ourselves most of the time? Or were we thinking of what we could do for others, of what we could pack into the stream of life? But we must be careful not to drift into worry, remorse or morbid reflection, for that would diminish our usefulness to others. After making our review we ask God's forgiveness and inquire what corrective measures should be taken.

On awakening let us think about the twenty-four hours ahead. We consider our plans for the day. Before we begin, we ask God to direct our thinking, especially asking that it be divorced from self-pity, dishonest or self-seeking motives. Under these conditions we can employ our mental faculties with assurance, for after all God gave us brains to use. Our thought-life will be placed on a much higher plane when our thinking is cleared of wrong motives.

In thinking about our day we may face indecision. We may not be able to determine which course to take. Here we ask God for inspiration, an intuitive thought or a decision. We relax and take it easy. We don't struggle. We are often surprised how the right answers come after we have tried this for a while. What used to be the hunch or the occasional inspiration gradually becomes a working part of the mind. Being still inexperienced and having just made conscious contact with God, it is not probable that we are going to be inspired at all times. We might pay for this presumption in all sorts of absurd actions and ideas. Nevertheless, we find that our thinking will, as time passes, be more and more on the plane of inspiration. We come to rely upon it.

We usually conclude the period of meditation with a prayer that we be shown all through the day what our next step is to be, that we be given whatever we need to take care of such problems. We ask especially for freedom from self-will, and are careful to make no request for ourselves only. We may ask for ourselves, however, if others will be helped. We are careful never to pray for our own selfish ends. Many of us have wasted a lot of time doing that and it doesn't work. You can easily see why.

If circumstances warrant, we ask our wives or friends to join us in morning meditation. If we belong to a religious denomination which requires a definite morning devotion, we attend to that also. If not members of religious bodies, we sometimes select and memorize a few set prayers which emphasize the principles we have been discussing. There are many helpful books also. Suggestions about these may be obtained from one's priest, minister, or rabbi. Be quick to see where religious people are right. Make use of what they offer.

As we go through the day we pause, when agitated or doubtful, and ask for the right thought or action. We constantly remind ourselves we are no longer running the show, humbly saying to ourselves many times each day "Thy will be done." We are then in much less danger of excitement, fear, anger, worry, self-pity, or foolish decisions. We become much more efficient. We do not tire so easily, for we are not burning up energy foolishly as we did when we were trying to arrange life to suit ourselves.

It works - it really does.

We alcoholics are undisciplined. So we let God discipline us in the simple way we have just outlined.

But this is not all. There is action and more action. "Faith without works is dead."

OUR Convention



THE MANAGER'S SPOT

Was it just me, or did his year's convention go above and beyond as far as inclusion and spirit? I'll answer my own question this way.....it certainly did for me! Granted, I did spend a little more time just hanging out this year, maybe that helped foster my opinion to some extent. All I know for certain, is that every time I looked around, I sure saw a lot of Fellowship going on. Fellowship in the absolute best sense of that word. People going out of their way to be kind, generous, and supportive,, in my experience, of each other in word AND in deed. A lot of walking the talk, if you will. I know our scholarship fund was the highest it has ever been. As a consequence no one was made to feel excluded or less-than. That is priceless. That is, in my experience, AA at it's most wonderful.

I know that beginning to acknowledge people by name can be a very dangerous thing. I run the risk of leaving someone out, and causing resentment. I'm going to do it anyway. And please, if you feel slighted, please understand it is not intentional on my part. Just consider this a sampling of the many, many, people who served. Pam. Pam, Pam. What an outstanding job as Chairperson! You made it look easy. Naima and all the other 'divas'. They sure added to the fun didn't they? And how about that Tim C., aka Tibonious Funk, and his Boogie Nights? Fun even for a guy that doesn't dance. Also, Beverly J. and that art auction? I admit I was skeptical about it, but by the time it was over, I had become a believer. Sami the auctioneer with her patter, and all the wonderful artwork donated by members of our program. Plus it raised a fair amount of money. Let's not forget that!

Perhaps the main thing that struck me about the entire weekend was how much laughing (and a little crying) we all did. That to me is the music of AA. That deep-down belly laugh we can share when we see and hear things that remind us of the joy (and the seriousness) of our escape from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body. That joyousness and democracy that pervades the vessel, for all of us who normally would not mix. It sure was nice hanging out with you. All of 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.

Eleventh Step Prayer

Lord, make me a channel of thy peace—that where there is hatred, I may bring love—that where there is wrong, I may bring the spirit of forgiveness—that where there is discord, I may bring harmony—that where there is error, I may bring truth—that where there is doubt, I may bring faith—that where there is despair, I may bring hope—that where there are shadows, I may bring light—that where there is sadness, I may bring joy. Lord, grant that I may seek rather to comfort than to be comforted—to understand, than to be understood—to love, than to be loved. For it is by self-forgetting that one finds. It is by forgiving that one is forgiven. It is by dying that one awakens to eternal life. Amen.

—*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*

Understanding Anonymity

“What is the purpose of anonymity in Alcoholics Anonymous? Why is it often referred to as the greatest single protection the Fellowship has to assure its continued existence and growth?”

If we look at the history of A.A., from its beginning in 1935 until now, it is clear that anonymity serves two different yet equally vital functions:

1. At the personal level, anonymity provides protection for all members from identification as alcoholics, a safeguard often of special importance to newcomers.
2. At the level of press, radio, TV, films and the new media technologies such as the Internet, anonymity stresses the equality in the Fellowship of all members by putting the brake on those who might otherwise exploit their A.A. affiliation to achieve recognition, power, or personal gain."

—*Understanding Anonymity*

Tradition Eleven Contemplation Questions

Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.

1. Do I sometimes promote AA so fanatically that I make it seem unattractive?
2. Am I always careful to keep the confidences reposed in me as an AA member?
3. Am I careful about throwing AA names around — even within the Fellowship?
4. Am I ashamed of being a recovered, or recovering, alcoholic?
5. What would AA be like if we were not guided by the ideas in Tradition Eleven? Where would I be?
6. Is my AA sobriety attractive enough that a sick drunk would want such a quality for himself?

—Originally published in the *AA Grapevine*

Concept XI

The trustees should always have the best possible committees, corporate service directors, executives, staffs, and consultants. Composition, qualification, induction procedures, and the rights and duties will always be matters of serious concern.

—*AA Service Manual*

Step Eleven: Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

I remember the darkness of that day the most. I lay in bed curled up in the fetal position. I had already called my closest friend more than once and could tell that, even he, was tired of hearing from me. I wanted so badly for the phone to ring. Anybody's voice on the other end of the line would have been okay... a telemarketer would have been fine... I wasn't particular that day.

I thought of God and the old tapes rolled through my mind. I thought of the times going back where the hand of God had been in my life (even though I was purportedly an agnostic/atheist). My thoughts suddenly turned to asking Him for help. I lay there in the darkness and dismissed the thought. Tears were running down my face and the agony was so severe that the thought came back. It was in that place that I cried out something along these lines..."Okay, I give up... You gave Moses a burning bush! You had better give me something now or I am going to die!"

I lay in bed a few minutes thinking that my words were wasted... that they just went into the void like we all eventually do ourselves. I lay there thinking about the futility of life, my pain and how miserable I was when the thought occurred to me, "Why don't you get on your knees and make your request a formal one?"

So I rolled out of bed, naked and sweating, where I dared, cursed and berated God one last time before saying in so many words..."Alright, you _____! Here I am. I will do whatever the F___ you want! Just give me a direction... any direction!" and I paused a minute. Nothing happened. I crawled back into my stained and dirty sheets and resumed the fetal position muttering something like... "See, that is what I thought... nothing." and closed my eyes to a deep sweet sleep.

I woke up an hour later to a knock on my door. I peered through the blinds and shattered panes to see enough of the blue uniform to know that it was a cop. I also knew why he was there. All the windows in my place were busted out and there was a bag of weed on my coffee table... broken bottles strewn everywhere. I opened the door anyway. I was strangely surrendered to whatever was going to happen.

The officer let me know right away that he wasn't there to arrest me. He told me that he was just there to fill out a report on a bar incident that had happened earlier. He read the report and I agreed with most of it but didn't argue with him about the details I didn't agree with. It surprises me today when I think of it but the words I spoke next had never passed my lips before... as he turned to leave my porch I found myself saying, "Look I did everything I am accused of. I'm not making excuses but I'm an alcoholic. I don't know what to do about it. I have tried everything but I just can't stay sober and this kind of sh*t keeps happening."

What the officer said next surprised me even more, "You seem like a decent guy. Why don't you stop by the Alano Club before going to work in the morning? You might meet a better class of people there than the ones you have been hanging out with."

His words seared into my heart like a branding iron. I knew he was right and, as much as I might have argued with him about trying A.A. before and so on with the usual sob story and how I didn't "want to meet new people and I didn't like the one's I knew that well anyway...", I just said okay. It was eight-thirty pm on the 15th of September 1998 and I had just done my first twenty-four hours of many more to come without a drink.

I have given much thought to what occurred that day. I have gone over and over again in my mind the subtle ways in which I had followed the Steps toward recovery all encapsulated within that brief span of a few hours. Significant to me was the complete surrender and willingness to be honest and open with myself, my God and another human-being about my alcoholism and the harm I had done. But more than that it was that cry for help from my bed and the action of rolling onto my knees to ask God for direction. As obnoxious as my language was there was a humility in my heart that I ascribe to today as I sit in meditation. The act of rolling out of bed and onto my knees was an important action that signified I was doing something sacred and holy, out of the ordinary. I put aside a few moments each day to give myself, completely surrendered, to my Higher Power. It really is as simple as that and, as much as I can wax philosophical about it, it is simply sitting and sending a few honest words into the void and waiting that makes meditation a very ordinary and special thing that keeps me in conscious contact with the God of my understanding.

My name is George C.
and I am an alcoholic.

I MUST BE WILLING

I am an alcoholic, my name is Natalie. I am a real alcoholic as described on page 21 in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. I started drinking at a very young age and from the first time I took a drink; I was obsessed with alcohol and never new where it would take me or what I would become. I was belligerent, violent and though I never did any length of time incarcerated, I did spend my fair share of nights in jail and in psychiatric institutions. The people I new felt one of two things for me: fear or disgust and many times, both.

My sobriety date is December 9, 1991. It is my third time in the program. What has made this time successful? A higher power as I understand Him, the 12 steps and the 12 traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous, a sponsor whose direction and example I follow to the best of my ability and service work. There came a point in my sobriety when I wondered what happened to the days when sober alcoholics reached out the way they did back in the days of Bill W. and Dr. Bob. Then I discovered Hospitals & Institutions work.

Around 7 years of sobriety I got involved in Hospitals & Institutions a.k.a. H&I. I started out as a liaison to the Santa Barbara Inter-group committee for Central Office. I then moved into the position of Treasurer, which then led me to chairing the Committee. In that time I have become more and more involved. I have been taking a panel into our local juvenile facility for 5 years now, have clearance to some of the state and federal institutional facilities and attend other H&I panels and meetings whenever possible. I have, also, gotten involved in the Southern California H&I Inter-group. It has been an honor for me to work with people who have been doing H&I service work for many years.

I have not only found that H&I is a very rewarding experience, I have found that it is something I must do. I was willing to do anything and go to any lengths to get drunk, and because of that, I MUST BE willing to go to any lengths to stay sober. H&I, as laid out in the So Cal H&I Inter-group pamphlet, is “the closest action you can find today that is like it was in the very beginning of A.A. when Bill and Bob first went into hospitals searching for drunken outcasts to give them the A.A. message of recovery”. I have to remember, in order for me to keep it; I have to give it away.

Please join us in carrying the message. We need your experience, strength & hope! You will not regret it.

Natalie B.

Correction:

Last month in October’s Messenger I listed the September birthday people with the heading: October Birthdays.

Here is the list again, sorry everybody. I’m just a flawed human being, what can I say?

Dinah M.

September Birthdays

Liz T.....	1
Ann T.....	2
George T.....	2
Patrice.....	2
Cleaver.....	2
Cathy N.....	5
Margie H.....	5
Mike H.....	6
Bill F.....	7
George C.....	8
Jessica.....	10
Sami.....	11
Cody F.....	12
Rey A.....	12
Bob U.....	12
Trish H.....	13
Max M.....	16
Charlie A.....	16
Mary Jones.....	16
Marciel.....	17
Dee.....	19
Kathie O.....	20
Laurette.....	20
Emilio R.....	21
Beverley.....	33

A Declaration of Unity
This we owe to A.A.’s future:
To place our common
welfare first; To keep our
fellowship united.
For on A.A. unity depend our lives,
And the lives of
those to come.

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October Birthdays

Jack C.	1
Shadina	1
Vack	1
Nina V.....	2
Sharon S.....	2
Vicki D.....	2
Cindy S.	3
Josh M.....	3
Nancy I.....	3
John D.....	4
John E.	4
Nina A.	4
Pete A.....	6
Pat	7
Bob M.....	9
Kathy S.....	9
Jack B.	11
Pam I.....	11
Blanca	17
Liz M.....	17
Al C.....	18
Mike A.....	18
Alison D.....	19
Mik H.....	19
Dominque	20
Leslie H.....	20
Bogart C.....	21
Pete L.	21
Billy N.....	22
Ron N.	22
Ellen B.	27

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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 12th month, December, we need writing on Step 12 and Tradition 12. Send submissions to DinahMason@aol.com

Central Office Statistics

During October your Central Office had:

AA information calls	812
Al-Anon	38
Referrals to other programs	44
12-step via answering service.....	50
Out-of-town visitors	15
12-step via office	7
Office walk-ins	902
Hits on our Web site	831

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.

Recovery Trivia

Q. What was the name of the first men’s recovery house in Santa Barbara?

A. See next month’s Messenger.

Answer to last month’s question:

Q. What AA General Service District is Santa Barbara in?

A. District 23.

Financials

Donations by Group

October 2006

	Oct 06	Sep 06	Jan - Oct 06		Oct 06	Sep 06	Jan - Oct 06
013 No Shenanigans	0.00	60.00	60.00	091 New Life	0.00	0.00	440.00
002 Courage To Change	0.00	0.00	120.00	093 Into Action, Thurs	60.00	0.00	140.00
003 Eye Opener	285.00	335.00	3,062.00	094 Questions & Answers	0.00	0.00	28.75
004 Monday At A Time	0.00	0.00	356.15	097 Almost Saints	0.00	0.00	237.00
006 Start Your Week Right	0.00	1,747.18	1,887.18	099 Sink Or Swim	0.00	0.00	140.00
007 Sound Off	0.00	25.00	100.00	100 UCSB Discussion	0.00	0.00	127.89
010 Foundation Group	0.00	81.00	665.44	101 Big Book Study, Friday	0.00	0.00	3.05
011 Sundowner Group	0.00	271.00	1,007.00	111 Carpinteria Canalino	0.00	0.00	600.00
013 No Shenanigans	0.00	0.00	40.00	112 Montecito/Carpinteria	73.00	0.00	394.00
019 Onward & Upward	0.00	150.00	150.00	113 Sought Through Prayer & Medita	0.00	46.10	122.10
020 Cambridge Group	65.00	0.00	265.00	114 Schooner Group	0.00	0.00	579.00
021 Summerland Monday Grou	0.00	0.00	180.00	115 Eleventh Step Meditation	23.51	13.00	104.47
022 There Is A Solution	0.00	0.00	255.00	117 Way Of Life	125.00	0.00	1,600.00
023 For Women Only	0.00	0.00	214.00	120 Sat. Morn. Home Boys	0.00	135.10	959.07
025 Grateful Group	0.00	0.00	120.00	130 Saturday Night Sobriety	0.00	0.00	144.00
026 Carpinteria Study Group	97.75	0.00	269.75	133 Action Participation	0.00	0.00	648.00
028 The Mother Group	0.00	0.00	64.00	139 It's A Hell Of A Deal	0.00	0.00	534.02
030 Sisters In Solution	78.00	0.00	148.00	140 Gay Discussion, Sunday	75.00	100.00	325.00
034 Women of Change	89.00	0.00	404.62	141 Off Center	0.00	147.00	1,714.20
035 12 & 12 Study, Tues.	0.00	0.00	140.00	144 Back To Basics, Young People	0.00	0.00	372.45
036 Tuesday Trudgers	0.00	0.00	100.00	146 Out Of Town Speaker, NH II	0.00	0.00	274.66
045 Alternative Group	0.00	74.00	325.00	148 San Ysidro	300.00	0.00	300.00
047 Tuesday Men's Stag	0.00	167.40	410.40	149 Getting To Know You	0.00	106.00	650.00
051 Men's Group At St. Mary's	0.00	0.00	230.00	150 Goleta Sun. Night Speaker	0.00	0.00	80.00
052 As Bill Sees It, Weds.	0.00	0.00	71.29	153 Happy Destiny	0.00	0.00	350.00
053 Both Oars In The Water	0.00	0.00	140.00	156 Start Your Day Right	250.00	0.00	650.00
055 Staying Alive	0.00	0.00	390.05	161 Back To Basics Group	0.00	0.00	5.80
056 Women By The Books	0.00	0.00	161.50	163 Mustard Seed	0.00	0.00	166.00
062 Do The Steps Or Die	11.00	31.44	360.88	164 Men Who Have Lost Their Legs	255.00	0.00	1,579.00
064 Women's Serenity Group	110.00	0.00	251.00	165 Junkyard Dogs	0.00	0.00	641.35
067 Rigorous Honesty	12.00	78.00	455.00	166 Serenity Sisters	0.00	60.00	228.00
068 Stepping Stones	49.22	0.00	179.72	170 Barefoot Group	4.00	6.00	71.00
070 Success roup	0.00	0.00	80.00	177 Key Group	1,120.00	0.00	2,840.00
071 The Loft	0.00	0.00	1,030.00	181 Keep Coming Back Group	425.23	0.00	1,343.51
072 Discussion Gay Wednesda	0.00	110.00	110.00	183 Summerland, Thurs.	0.00	313.00	1,448.40
073 Young People's	100.00	0.00	342.48	186 Turning Point	0.00	0.00	1,028.00
074 Casa Serena (BB Study)	0.00	0.00	6.00	200 Anonymous Donations	132.00	0.00	213.00
076 11th Step	0.00	0.00	165.00	201 Birthday Donations	0.00	40.00	521.00
079 Harbor Group	0.00	933.05	4,051.82	202 Supporting Members	1,031.00	2,216.00	14,025.09
083 Sober Students, Tues Eve	0.00	120.00	240.00				
089 Here & Now	0.00	85.00	170.00	Totals	<u>3,873.74</u>	<u>3,182.20</u>	<u>35,627.81</u>

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