



The Santa Barbara **MESSENGER** CONVENTION WRAPUP

November 2008

So, did you have fun? Your committee sure did, and we hope you did too. This year's convention has come and gone, and it is now another entry in our shared memory book. From the time the doors opened on Friday until the cleanup was finished on Sunday afternoon, the Elks Lodge was the scene of laughter, hugs, tears, shared conversation and good fellowship. We hosted guests from all over the USA and beyond. We renewed old friendships and made new ones. Perhaps some even got started on a sober life there.

Friday began with the golf tournament. It was a beautiful, sunny (and warm) Santa Barbara day. We had fourteen groups participate this year, and everyone had a great time, being outdoors, enjoying their fellow players, and even making the occasional fantastic golf shot.

Meanwhile, at the Elks Lodge, tables were arranged, literature was set out, the registration computers were all networked, and case after case of sodas and water were carried in for the Hospitality table. The decorations committee was hard at work setting up the stage in the main hall. Finally, all was ready, and the only thing we needed was you.

And you came! You came by the hundreds! Slowly at first, throughout the afternoon, you drifted in one at a time or by twos and threes. You chatted with the committee members and volunteers, drank coffee (free with your convention mug!), and attended marathon meetings.

As usual, the rush really began late Friday afternoon as people got off work. By 5:30, people were lined up at the registration desk, filling out forms, making payments, and getting their badges printed. The lucky ones were those who had pre-registered; they got to go directly to the end of the table and pick up their packet with little or no waiting. About the time the crowds began to arrive, the Elks brought out their famous barbeque chicken and tri-tip. Delicious! The turnout was very good this year, nearly selling out – something you might want to keep in mind when you're signing up next year. Don't miss out.

Al-Anon had their opening meeting at 6:30, and that was followed by the first AA speaker meeting at 8:00. I'm not going to go into the individual speakers at this year's convention. If you were there, you know what they were like, and you were probably touched by the message they shared, just as I was. If you weren't there, I'm sorry you missed it. My few words in the Messenger can't begin to touch on what the experience of hearing them was like. It's one of those things that you just had to be there for.

And so the convention continues on into Saturday, with the H&I Panel, the Long Timers' Meeting, and Marathon Meetings all day. It was so good to have a broad range of participation this year, too, including special events for our sober gay and lesbian friends, the young people who bring such positive energy to our fellowship, wonderful Spanish speaking meetings, and, of course, a variety of Al-Anon events.

The Saturday night banquet was a big success, also. We completely sold out this year, even though the committee increased the number of meals at the last minute based upon the number of early registrations requesting the banquet. The food was excellent, as always, and the Elks Club staff got a well-deserved round of applause from the crowd.

Saturday night was capped off by a wonderful speaker meeting, followed by the dance. The DJ managed to mix in a little something for everyone, and that dance floor was crowded most of the night.

By the time Sunday morning arrived, I think nearly everyone was tired but very happy. Attendance at the "Spiritual" Meeting was good, and the sobriety countdown tallied up 4,859 years of communal sobriety (or 1,773,462 days, one at a time). We heard another heartfelt message of experience, strength and hope, reminding us, once again, that the "Age of Miracles" is still with us in this wonderful fellowship. Afterwards we said goodbye to our old and new friends, some until next year and some until the next meeting.

In only a few weeks, we'll begin the process again, planning for the 25th annual Santa Barbara convention. Watch the Messenger for an announcement for the first committee meeting if you want to participate. But for now, on behalf of the committee, I want to extend our thanks to all those who make the convention possible, especially to the great volunteers we again had this year, many from Casa Serena, New House, and other recovery centers. Most of all, thanks to all of you who came to enjoy our celebration – we had 740 people register for this year's event. I love my fellow committee members, but I don't think any of us would volunteer for all this work if we were the only ones who showed up. So keep on coming, all of you. You are the reason Santa Barbara has a convention. See you again next year!

Your Convention Committee



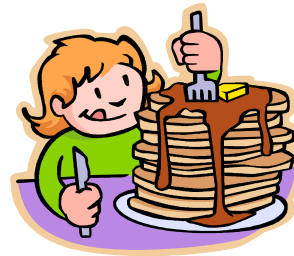
Central Office Breakfast

Saturday November 15, 2008
Goleta Valley Community Center
5679 Hollister Ave
Breakfast at 9:00 am
Speaker Meeting after breakfast
50/50 Raffle

You can purchase tickets
at Your Central Office
Or at the breakfast

Tickets \$5.00 each
Call 962-3332 for information

Eggs,
Hotcakes,
Sausage,
bacon,
Coffee and
more.



PLEASE
COME AND
SUPPORT
YOUR
CENTRAL
OFFICE

Supporting Member

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.

Take Step Eleven One Man's View

WHEN IT COMES TO THE PRACTICE of AA's 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'm sure I am still very much in the beginner's class; I'm almost a case of arrested development.

Around me I see many people who make a far better job of relating themselves to God than I do. Certainly it mustn't be said I haven't made any progress at all over the years; I simply confess that I haven't made the progress that I might have made, my opportunities being what they have been, and still are.

My twenty-fourth AA anniversary is just ahead; I haven't had a drink in all this time. In fact, I've scarcely been tempted at all. This is some evidence that I must have taken and ever since maintained Step One: "We admitted we were powerless over alcohol, that our lives had become unmanageable." Step One was easy for me.

Then, at the very beginning, I was fortunate enough to receive a tremendous spiritual awakening and was instantly "made conscious of the presence of God" and "restored to sanity"--at least so far as alcohol is concerned. Therefore I've had no difficulty with AA's Step Two because, in my case, its content was an outright gift. Step Four and Step Five, dealing with self-survey and confession of one's defects, have not been overly difficult, either.

Of course, my self-analysis has frequently been faulty. Sometimes I've failed to share my defects with the right people; at other times, I've confessed *their* defects, rather than my own; and at still other times, my confession of defects has been more in the nature of loud complaints about my circumstances and my problems.

Nevertheless, I think I've usually been able to make a fairly thorough and searching job of finding and admitting my personal defects. So far as I know, there isn't at this moment a single defect or current problem of mine which hasn't been discussed with my close advisers. Yet this pretty well-ventilated condition is nothing for self-congratulation.

Long ago I was lucky enough to see that I'd have to keep up my self-analysis or else blow my top completely. Though driven by stark necessity, this continuous self-revelation--to myself and to others--was rough medicine to take. But years of repetition has made this job far easier. Step Nine, making restitution for harms done, has fallen into much the same bracket.

In Step Twelve--carrying the AA message to others--I've found little else than great joy. We alkie are folks of action and I'm no exception. When action pays off as it does in AA, it's small wonder that Step Twelve is the most popular and, for most of us, the easiest one of all.

This little sketch of my own "pilgrim's progress" is offered to illustrate where I, and maybe lots of other AA's, have still been missing something of top importance. Through lack of disciplined attention and sometimes through lack of the right kind of faith, many of us keep ourselves year after year in the rather easy spiritual kindergarten I've just described. But almost inevitably we become dissatisfied; we have to admit we have hit an uncomfortable and maybe a very painful sticking point.

Twelfth-Stepping, talking at meetings, recitals of drinking histories, confession of our defects and what progress we have made with them no longer provide us with the released and the abundant life. Our lack of growth is often revealed by an unexpected calamity or a big emotional upset. Perhaps we hit the financial jackpot and are surprised that this solves almost nothing; that we are still bored and miserable, notwithstanding.

As we usually don't get drunk on these occasions, our bright-eyed friends tell us how well we are doing.

But inside, we know better. We know we aren't doing well enough. We still can't handle life, as life is. There must be a serious flaw somewhere in our spiritual practice and development.

What then, is it?

The chances are better than even that we shall locate our trouble in our misunderstanding or neglect of AA's Step Eleven--prayer, meditation and the guidance of God. The other Steps can keep most of us sober and somehow functioning. But Step Eleven can keep us growing, if we try hard and work at it continually. If we expend even five percent of the time on Step Eleven that we habitually (and rightly) lavish on Step Twelve, the results can be wonderfully far-reaching. That is an almost uniform experience of those who constantly practice Step Eleven.

(Continued on page 4)

In this article, I'd like to develop Step Eleven further--for the benefit of the complete doubter, the unlucky one who can't believe it has any real merit at all.

In lots of instances I think that people find their first great obstacle in the phrase "God as we understand Him." The doubter is apt to say, "On the face of it, nobody can understand God. I half believe that there is a First Cause, a Something, and maybe a Somebody. But I can't get any further than this. I think people are kidding themselves when they say they can. Even if there were a Somebody, why should he bother with little me, when, in making the Cosmos run, he already has plenty to do? As for those folks who claim that God tells them where to drill for oil, or when to brush their teeth--well, they just make me tired."

Our friend is clearly one who believes in some kind of God--"God as he understands Him." But he doesn't believe any bigger concept or better feeling about God to be possible. So he looks upon meditation, prayer and guidance as the means of a self-delusion. Now what can our hard-pressed friend do about this?

Well, he can strenuously try meditation, prayer and guidance, just as an experiment. He can address himself to whatever God he thinks there is. Or, if he thinks there is none, he can admit--just for experimental purposes--that he might be wrong. This is all-important. As soon as he is able to take this attitude, it means that he has stopped playing God himself; his mind has opened. Like any good scientist in his laboratory, our friend can assume a theory and can make an experiment. He can pray to a "higher power" that *may* exist and *may* be willing to help and guide him. He keeps on experimenting--in this case, praying--for a long time. Again he tries to behave like the scientist, an experimenter who is never supposed to give up so long as there is a vestige of any chance of success.

As he goes along with his process of prayer, he begins to add up the results. If he persists, he will almost surely find more serenity, more tolerance, less fear and less anger. He will acquire a quiet courage, the kind that doesn't strain him. He can look at so-called failure and success for what they really are. Problems and calamity will begin to mean instruction, instead of destruction. He will feel freer and saner. The idea that he may have been hypnotizing himself by auto-suggestion will become laughable. His sense of purpose and of direction will increase. His tensions and anxieties will commence to fade. His physical health is likely to improve. Wonderful and unaccountable things will start to happen. Twisted relations in his family and on the outside will unaccountably improve.

Even if few of these things happen, he will still find himself in possession of great gifts. When he has to deal with hard circumstances he can face them and accept them. He can now accept himself and the world around him. He can do this because he now accepts a God who is All--and who loves all. When he now says, "Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name," our friend deeply and humbly means it. When in good meditation and thus freed from the clamors of the world, he knows that he is in God's hands; that his own destiny is really secure, here and hereafter.

A great theologian once declared, "The chief critics of prayer are those who have never really tried it enough." That's good advice; good advice I'm trying to take ever more seriously for myself. Many AA's have long been striving for a better conscious contact with God and I trust that many more of us will presently join with that wise company.

I've just finished re-reading the chapter on Step Eleven in our book, "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions." This was written almost five years ago. I was astonished when I realized how little time I had actually been giving to my own elementary advice on meditation, prayer and guidance--practices that I had so earnestly recommended to everybody else!

In this lack of attention I probably have plenty of company. But I do know that this is a neglect that can cause us to miss the finest experiences of life, a neglect that can seriously slacken the growth that God hopes we may achieve right here on earth; here in this great day at school, this very first of our Father's Many Mansions.

Bill W

Santa Barbara District 23
General Service Representatives
<http://www.ccaadistrict23.com>

Public Information

Public Information (P.I.) in Alcoholics Anonymous means carrying the message of recovery to the still-suffering alcoholic by informing the general public about A.A. Some of the projects your District 23

P.I. Committee carries the message through are:

- PACT Parolee Orientation & Health Fairs
- PSAs - radio, television and newspapers
- Placards & Telephone Tear-off Signs
- Meeting Guides at hotels, inns and motels

As our cofounder, Bill W., wrote:

Public Information takes many forms...Whatever the form, it comes down to "one drunk carrying the message to another drunk," whether through personal contact or through the use of third parties and the media.

For more info or to volunteer:
pi@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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"Drinking out of little glasses and staying out of slippery places."

I would start drinking wine out of a pretty little glass but inevitably I would end up on the front porch, in a tattered house dress, drinking whiskey out of an old mayonnaise jar. Once I took that first drink, there was no container large enough to satisfy me for the rest of the night. I would have made my drinks in a flowerpot if I could have held it. I confess to still preferring large containers even for my non-alcoholic drinks today - ice tea is a favorite and the bigger the better ... progress not perfection. There are definitely slippery places in my world today - not that I would pick up a drink but I could become restless, irritable and discontent. Just last night, while waiting for a table to have dinner with a friend, the hostess offered us a booth in the bar area and I turned it down because staring at that big beautiful mirror behind that big beautiful bar full of those big beautiful liquor bottles would definitely have distracted me from a serene supper. There are emotionally slippery places in my world too - like the ex-boyfriend's house. When I take a walk or drive downtown, I make a point to turn off his street before passing his house to avoid being triggered into my obsession over him. I avoid his territory just like I avoid walking down the liquor aisle at Vons to get to the fruits and vegetables.

There is something wonderfully comforting about taking care of myself and staying out of slippery places. AA has taught me to be loving and protective toward myself making sure that I am safe and sound. When I do find myself in a slippery place, I say one of our AA prayers for protection, offering myself to be of service to others rather than staying in self-centered fear.

Gratefully staying sober one day at a time,
Beth P.
Santa Barbara, CA

EYE OPENER GROUP

"CELEBRATES ITS 20TH ANNIVERSARY"

WITH A POTLUCK 6:45 AM – 8:30 AM, NOVEMBER 15, 2008

ST. RAPHAEL'S CATHOLIC CHURCH, 5444 Hollister, Goleta, CA.

JOHN H. ONE OF THE ORIGINAL FOUNDERS OF THE GROUP WILL BE PRESENT.

The Central Office appreciates the 20 years of continued support from the Eye Opener Group.



The Messenger is published monthly by:

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

805-962-3332

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Website: www.SantaBarbaraAA.com

October Birthdays

Name	Years
Frank D	1
Lucy W	1
Mark G	1
Denise M	2
Garrett S	2
John H	2
Laurie M	2
James M	2
Sheena	2
Jack C	3
Katie G	3
Mikey K	3
Steve C	3
Nina V	4
Vicki D	4
Cyndi S	5
Greg	6
John D	6
Jon E	6
Pete A	8
Pat M	9
Joe G	10
Diane	13
Pam I	13
Betty C	17
Liz G	19
Al C	20
Mike A	20
Kim H	20
Al C	20
Alison D	21
Russ R	21
Leslie H	22
Bryant C	23
Pete L	23
Penny H	24
Tony M	24
Jill	25
Alice	27
Ellen B	29

Submissions Needed

The Messenger needs your submissions and letters. For the December 2008 Messenger we are looking for articles for Step 12, Tradition 12, or Concept 12. 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 October 2008 your Central Office had:

AA Information calls	750
Al-Anon Referrals	45
Referrals to other programs	51
12step via answering service	41
Out-of-town visitors	35
12-step via office	38
Office walk-ins	575
Hits on our Web site	1,465

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 October 2008

	Oct 08	Sep 08	Jan - Oct 08		Oct 08	Sep 08	Jan - Oct 08
11th Step, 076	100.00	0.00	340.00	Mustard Seed, 163	0.00	0.00	115.00
12 & 12 Study, Tues., 035	100.00	0.00	340.00	New Life, 091	0.00	0.00	200.00
83 - 87 Group, 084	0.00	229.00	229.00	New Pair Of Glasses, 013	46.00	0.00	81.00
Action Participation, 133	0.00	0.00	1,228.10	Noon Step Study, 005	0.00	0.00	100.00
Almost Saints, 097	0.00	0.00	799.00	Off Center, 141	100.00	0.00	824.85
Alternative Group, 045	0.00	56.00	414.00	Questions & Answers, 094	0.00	0.00	55.70
Back To Basics Group, 161	0.00	0.00	194.62	Rigorous Honesty, 067	278.33	0.00	354.33
Back To Basics, Young People, 144	0.00	0.00	232.06	San Ysidro, 148	0.00	40.25	40.25
Barefoot Group, 170	45.00	37.00	476.75	Sat. Morn. Home Boys, 120	185.40	0.00	1,031.50
Big Book Comes Alive Women's Meeting, 197	0.00	30.00	30.00	Saturday Night Sobriety, 130	0.00	72.00	144.00
Big Book Study, Friday, 101	0.00	0.00	11.50	Schooner Group, 114	77.00	0.00	348.00
Big Book Workshop, 016	0.00	0.00	50.00	Serenity Sisters, 166	0.00	0.00	196.25
Both Oars In The Water, 053	100.00	0.00	340.00	Sink Or Swim, 099	100.00	0.00	340.00
Cambridge Group, 020	0.00	0.00	120.00	Sisters In Solution, 030	0.00	0.00	25.00
Came to Believe Candlelight, 122	81.48	0.00	171.48	Sought Through Prayer & Meditation, 113	20.00	13.00	126.35
Carpinteria Canalino, 111	0.00	0.00	640.00	Start Your Day Right, 156	300.00	250.00	2,900.00
Casa Serena (BB Study), 074	0.00	46.06	380.06	Start Your Week Right, 006	100.00	0.00	340.00
Courage To Change, 002	0.00	100.00	200.00	Staying Alive, 055	100.00	0.00	570.00
Do The Steps Or Die, 062	30.00	14.25	335.02	Stepping Stones068,	60.00	60.00	485.61
El Montecito Saturday Night, 014	0.00	0.00	148.00	Student of Life, 100	40.00	0.00	210.00
Eleventh Step Meditation, 115	0.00	0.00	139.00	Success Group, 070	0.00	0.00	80.00
Eye Opener, 003	150.00	300.00	2,115.00	Summerland Monday Group, 021	0.00	189.00	615.00
For Women Only, 023	120.00	0.00	394.00	Summerland, Thurs., 183	0.00	0.00	1,595.70
Foundation Group, 010	318.45	0.00	397.45	Sunday Night Alternative, NH III, 186	0.00	0.00	378.20
Gay Discussion, Sunday, 140	225.00	0.00	300.00	Sundowner Group, 011	0.00	0.00	1,802.00
Getting To Know You, 149	0.00	0.00	307.00	Sunrisers, 001	0.00	0.00	180.00
Goleta Sun. Night Speaker, 150	0.00	0.00	100.00	The Loft, 071	0.00	0.00	350.00
Happy Destiny, 153	400.00	0.00	800.00	There Is A Solution, 022	210.00	0.00	390.00
Harbor Group, 079	212.00	170.10	2,277.73	Thursday Ladies Night, 180	0.00	0.00	72.33
Here & Now, 089	0.00	0.00	164.00	Tuesday Men's Stag, 047	203.50	0.00	579.38
Into Action, Thurs, 093	0.00	80.00	180.00	Vision for You, 195	0.00	3.14	3.14
Isla Vista Sobriety, 158	0.00	0.00	50.00	Way Of Life, 117	400.00	400.00	2,230.00
It's A Hell Of A Deal, 139	0.00	0.00	537.31	Women of Change, 034	0.00	0.00	201.00
Junkyard Dogs, 165	0.00	371.00	721.00	Women of Courage, 199	0.00	0.00	20.00
Keep Coming Back Group, 181	408.00	0.00	1,034.03	Women's Serenity Group, 064	0.00	0.00	120.00
Key Group, 177	0.00	0.00	770.00	201 Birthday Donations	24.00	169.84	935.84
Men Who Have Lost Their Legs, 164	0.00	240.00	1,647.00	202 Supporting Members	887.00	670.00	6,478.30
Men's Group At St. Mary's, 051	118.00	0.00	329.00	204 Memorial Fund	0.00	50.00	610.00
Mesa-Singleness of Purpose, 024	0.00	40.00	240.00	211 Rent Received	165.00	154.00	1,538.00
Monday At A Time, 004	284.02	0.00	965.92	212 Special Events	0.00	0.00	8,019.05
Montecito/Carpinteria, 112	116.00	0.00	470.26				
				TOTALS:	\$6,104.18	\$3,784.64	\$55,304.07

Central Office
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