



MESSENGER

CONVENTION NEWS

Since this is the September issue of the Messenger, that must mean the convention is just around the corner. How time flies when you're having fun! The pace is really picking up for all committee members, with last minute plans coming together and everyone making sure all loose ends are tied up. It's a lot of work, but everyone is doing their part with a spirit of cheerful unity that makes me proud to be part of this fellowship.

Just for my own education, I have been doing an informal survey, asking people in meetings I attend, "What is your favorite part of the convention?" The fellowship and great speakers are often mentioned, of course, as is the wonderful food the Elks dish out for us. The barbeque and the banquet are virtually tied in that department. It's hard to compete with the chicken and tri-tip they serve on Friday night, but many people say they especially like getting all dressed up for the banquet (which also offers a very tasty selection, by the way). They like socializing over dinner in an elegant setting, hearing a powerful message from the Saturday night speaker, then going to the dance afterwards. So many choices, and so much fun, it's hard to pick just one thing.

But more than anything else, people say the sobriety countdown during the Sunday morning "Spiritual Meeting" is the best part for them. There are probably seven or eight hundred people at the meeting that morning, and there is something special about the energy in the room as we, as a group, recognize and applaud our sobriety. Starting with the long-timers having forty or fifty years or more, we count down the years, then months, then days. This is not a ranking. No one individual is more important than anyone else by virtue of his or her time sober. Rather, this is an appreciation of what sobriety means to all of us. It is, after all, a crucial part of our lives, of our primary purpose.

That being said, the energy does seem to ramp even higher as we begin counting months and then days. For me, part of what I'm feeling during that part of the countdown comes from remembering what early sobriety was like – the fear, the uncertainty, not knowing how it could be possible for me to live without alcohol. The other part of what I feel, though, is hope for all those beginning their journey. I feel hope because I know from my own experience what a wonderful path is presented to each of us, and I know where that path has brought me today. And as each person stands up with twenty days, or twelve, or five, or one, I, along with everyone in the room, join in the hope that that person will find what we have found. I feel that, every time – the hope and the love – and it never fails to move me. By the time the newest newcomer makes their shaky way to the front of the room, I always have tears in my eyes. Caring and sharing, that's what I've found in AA. What a wonderful thing we have!

So join us, please, for everything your convention has to offer, including the countdown. Do you have to register if you only want to attend the Sunday morning meeting? Not really. No guards will be at the door checking. But we'd appreciate it if you would. It's how we pay for the facilities, for bringing all the speakers in, for the entire weekend. And it's the right thing to do.

For the best deal, register now, ahead of time. It saves you money, and assures your seat at events that may sell out. There are forms available at most meetings, as well as at Central Office, or you can register on-line at www.sbaaconvention.org. No matter what, though, keep the weekend of October 24, 25 and 26 open. We'll see you there!



The Alcoholics Anonymous Camel symbol

Dr Bob, physician, and a cofounder of Alcoholics Anonymous - ". . . would explain prayer by telling how the camels in a caravan would kneel down in the evening, and the men would unload their burdens. In the morning, they would kneel down again, and the men would put the burdens back on. 'It's the same with prayer,' Dr. Bob said. 'We get on our knees to unload at night. And in the morning when we get on our knees again, God gives us just the load we are able to carry for that day.'"

Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers (1980), page 229

The camel each day goes twice to his knees.
He picks up his load with the greatest of ease.
He walks through the day with his head held high.
And stays for that day, completely dry.

CAMEL PRAYER

"The tasks of the day can pass with ease
when a camel or I start on our knees.
One Master we serve, the camel and I,
and stay for that day completely dry."

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.

STEP 9

STEP 9... Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

First off I would like to say that an amends is not an apology. How many times have we told people in the past we were sorry, only to let them down time and time again. They just don't want to hear it any more.

After completing Step 4 and Step 8, I found I have this list of people I have caused harm to. Family, co workers, friends, husbands, wives -- the list can go on and on. This seems like a bitter pill to swallow, but for those of us who are serious about recovery it can be medicine for the soul and the spirit.

Step 9 initially appears most difficult, but the rewards of putting this principle into action can be immense. The spiritual principle involved is that of forgiveness, not only from others, but forgiveness of self, which can bring healing to both parties.

Our basic text (The Big Book) Has promises offered to us before we are half way through with this step.

Simple but not easy!!

I have found many times that the person I have harmed is more than willing to accept the amends happily, and the healing process begins not only in the relationship, but in each individual. This is not always the case, however. Sometimes the other party is not willing to forgive and forget. Regardless, spiritual progress for us in recovery depends upon doing our part right and making the amends.

What I have learned about this step for me is to make a living amends. For example, if there was someone in my life that I was always lying to, I have to come clean and tell them honestly what was going on. But even more important is that, God willing, that person will not ever have to hear a lie come out of my mouth ever again.

Be very cautious this step has a condition "... except when to do so would injure them or others." If the act of making the amends will open old wounds or create new harm, then making the amends should be avoided. The benefit of making amends to the recovering person does not outweigh the need to do more harm.

I have found it very helpful to work these steps in order, they are laid out that way for a reason, being the alcoholic I am I wanted to run out and try to repair all the damage I caused in my life and fix every thing all at once, please take it east and let God heal you slow.

These are not my original thoughts, these are the things I learn from you people. With the help of the fellowship and my Higher Power I am able to live a happy, joyous, and free life from day to day. And for that I am forever grateful.

Tim C 11-27-2000

TRADITION NINE

"AA, AS SUCH, OUGHT NEVER BE ORGANIZED; BUT WE MAY CREATE SERVICE BOARDS OR COMMITTEES DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE TO THOSE THEY SERVE."

WHEN Tradition Nine was first written, it said that "Alcoholics Anonymous needs the least possible organization." In years since then, we have changed our minds about that. Today we are able to say with assurance that Alcoholics Anonymous. . . AA as a whole. . . should never be organized at all. Then, in seeming contradiction, we proceed to create special service boards and committees which in themselves are organized. How, then, can we have an unorganized movement which can and does create a service organization for itself? Scanning this puzzler, people say, "What do they mean, no organization?!"

Well, let's see. Did anyone ever hear of a nation, a church, a political party, even a benevolent association that had no membership rules? Did anyone ever hear of a society which couldn't somehow discipline its members and enforce obedience to necessary rules and regulations? Doesn't every society on earth give authority of some of its members to impose obedience upon the rest and to punish or expel offenders? Therefore every nation, in fact every form of society, has to be a government administered by human beings. Power to direct or govern is the essence of organization everywhere.

Yet Alcoholics Anonymous is an exception. It does not conform to this pattern. Neither its General Service Conference, its Foundation Board, nor the humblest group committee can issue a single directive to an AA member and make it stick, let alone mete out any punishment. We've tried it lots of times, but utter failure is always the result. Groups have tried to expel members, but the banished come back to sit in the meeting place saying, "This is life for us; you can't keep us out." Committees have instructed many an AA to stop working on a chronic backslider, only to be told: "How I do my Twelfth Step work is my business. Who are you to judge?" This doesn't mean an AA won't take advice or suggestion from more experienced members, but he surely won't take orders. Who is more unpopular than the old-time AA, full of wisdom, who moves to another area and tries to tell the group there how to run its business? He and all like him who "view with alarm for the good of AA" meet the most stubborn resistance or, worse still, laughter. You might think AA's headquarters in New York would be an exception. Surely the people there would have to have some authority. But long ago, trustees and secretaries alike found they could do no more than make suggestions, and very mild ones at that. They even had to coin a couple of sentences which still go into half the letters they write: "Of course you are at perfect liberty to handle this matter any way you please. But the majority experience in AA does seem to suggest. . ." Now, that attitude is far removed from central government, isn't it? We recognize that alcoholics can't be dictated to. . . individually or collectively.

At this junction we can hear a churchman exclaim, "They are making disobedience a virtue!" He is joined by a psychiatrist who says, "Defiant brats! They won't grow up and conform to social usage!" The man in the street says, "I don't understand it. They must be nuts!" But all these observers have overlooked something unique in Alcoholics Anonymous. Unless each AA member follows to the best of his ability our suggested Twelve Steps to recovery, he almost certainly signs his own death warrant. His drunkenness and dissolution are not penalties inflicted by people in authority; they result from his personal disobedience to spiritual principles.

(Continued page 5)

Santa Barbara District 23

General Service Representatives

<http://www.ccaadistrict23.com>

Accessibilities / Special Needs

“While there are no special AA members, many members have special needs.”

The goal of the Accessibilities / Special Needs committee is to make the AA message and participation in our program available to anyone in our District who reaches out for it. The need for more trusted servants to help your Accessibilities Committee carry the message to those members with Special Needs is always great.

Accessibilities Committee activities include taking meetings to AA members who are house or hospital bound and /or driving members who have limited ambulatory ability to and from AA meetings and providing members with ASL video, audio, Braille and large-print editions of AA conference approved literature.

For more information or to volunteer, please contact the Accessibilities chair at accessibilities@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

(Tradition 9 continued from page 4)

The same stern threat applies to the group itself. Unless there is approximate conformity to AA's Twelve Traditions, the group too can deteriorate and die. So we of AA do obey spiritual principles, first because we must, and ultimately because we love the kind of life such obedience brings. Great suffering and great love are AA's disciplinarians; we need no others.

It is clear now that we ought never to name boards to govern us, but it is equally clear that we shall always need to authorize workers to serve us. It is the difference between the spirit of vested authority and the spirit of service; two concepts which are poles apart. It is in this spirit of service that we elect the AA's group informal rotating committee, the Intergroup Association for the area, and the General Service Conferences of

Alcoholics Anonymous for AA as a whole. Even our Foundation, once an independent Board, is today directly accountable to our fellowship. Its trustees are the caretakers and expeditors of our world services.

Just as the aim of each AA member is personal sobriety, the aim of our services is to bring sobriety within reach of all who want it. If nobody does the group's chores, if the area's telephone rings unanswered, if we do not reply to our mail, then AA as we know it would stop. Our communications lines with those who need our help would be broken.

AA has to function, but at the same time it must avoid those dangers of great wealth, prestige, and entrenched power which necessarily tempt other societies. Though Tradition Nine at first sight seems to deal with a purely practical matter, in its actual operation it discloses a society without organization, animated only by the spirit of service. . . a true fellowship.

Bill W.

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January 1953

**JULY BIRTHDAY MISSED
MARY-ANNE D. 22 YEARS**

**When I woke up this morning,
I didn't have to have a drink.** Max M.

August Birthdays	
Name	Years
Alejandro	1
Cheryl S.	1
Denise R.	1
Georgene	1
Harry	1
Lola	1
Nick C.	1
Rebecca R.	1
Jeff	1
Sue K	1
Cheryl S.	2
Don W.	2
Eddie F.	2
John O	3
Mike V	3
Robin T.	3
Sherry S.	3
Mandy H.	4
Cleaver	4
Bob D.	5
Helen A.	5
Laura R	5
Lorilee T	6
Patrick D	6
Sarah	6
Jesse	8
Fred C.	9
Michelle	9
Michael S.	10
Dan M.	11
Tom P	11
Ernie	11
Michael S	11
Amanda M	12
Cheryl B	12
Andy R.	13
Jenifer V.	13
Noah D.	13
Sharon K	13
Chrissy B	14
Don	14
Michelle B	14
Andrea	15
Chrissy B	15
Kevin B	15
Michael S.	16
Andrea W	16
John H.	18
Marcial	18
Mike W.	18
Kristen S	19
Mary Michael	21
Paul S.	21
Ralph B.	25
Dolores M.	26
Elinor	26
George H	51
Gardiner L.	60

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1213 State Street, Suit H
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805-962-3332

JohnS@SantaBarbaraAA.com

Website: www.SantaBarbaraAA.com

Submissions Needed

The Messenger needs your submissions and letters. For the October 2008 Messenger we are looking for articles for Step 10, Tradition 10, or Concept 10. 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 August 2008 your Central Office had:

AA Information calls	862
Al-Anon Referrals	68
Referrals to other programs	45
12step via answering service	42
Out-of-town visitors	35
12-step via office	39
Office walk-ins	625
Hits on our Web site	1,305

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!

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

