



MESSENGER

Editorial: The Shape of Things to Come

In the book Alcoholics Anonymous there is a chapter called "A Vision for You". Wandering through it recently, my eye was caught by this startling paragraph written a short five years ago. *"Someday we hope that every alcoholic who journeys will find a Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous at his destination. To some extent this is already true. Some of us are salesmen and go about. Little clusters of twos and threes and fives of us have sprung up in other communities through contact with our two large centers-----"* Rubbing my eyes I looked again. A lump came into my throat. "Only five years," I thought. "Then but two large centers--little clusters of twos and threes--travelers who hoped one day to find us at every destination."

Could it be that only yesterday this was just a hope--those little clusters of twos and threes, those little beacons so anxiously watched as they flickered, but never went out.

And today--hundreds of centers shedding their warm illumination upon the lives of thousands, lighting the dark shoals where the stranded and hopeless lie breaking up--those fingers of light already stretching to our beach heads in other lands.

Now comes another lighted lamp--this little newspaper called *"The Grapevine"*. May its rays of hope and ex-perience ever fall upon the current of our A.A. life and one day illumine every dark corner of this alcoholic world.

The aspirations of its editors, contributors and readers could well be voiced in the last words of *"A Vision for You"*. *"Abandon yourself to God as you understand God. Admit your faults to Him and your fellows. Clear away the wreckage of your past. Give freely of what you find, and join us. We shall be with you, in the Fellowship of The Spirit, and you will surely meet some of us as you trudge the Road of Happy Destiny. May God bless you and keep you--until then."*

Bill W
June 1944

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"There is a principle which is a bar against all information, which is proof against all arguments and which cannot fail to keep a man in everlasting ignorance - that principle is contempt prior to investigation." - Herbert Spencer, Appendix 2 of the AA Big Book.

As soon as I walked into my first AA meeting, I began hearing how important open mindedness was to recovery. If you asked me, I would have told you that I was very open minded and proud of it! But in reality, you couldn't tell me anything because I already knew it all. I was full of self-centered pride and denial. I had too many years of psychotherapy, which was a dangerous thing for this practicing alcoholic because psychotherapy just gave me information to use against you. I was the perfect example of self will run riot and alcoholic grandiosity. My mouth was open and my ears were shut.

I had missed out on so much of life because my mind was closed. I can't believe someone actually wanted to sponsor me but someone did and she lovingly guided me through the steps. When I became willing to work the steps, my grandiosity diminished. I didn't become open-minded overnight but I did learn to pray for the willingness to become willing to be open-minded.

Fueled by prayer and meditation and the experience, strength and hope I hear in meetings, I manage to stay somewhat open-minded these days. Although I admit that, because of self centered fear, I still turn down invitations to do new things that aren't my idea. Which reminds me - the best time in my recovery was when I was given the direction to say "Yes" to everything for a week – it was JOYOUS!

I have a long way to go before I stay open-minded all the time, but I have had a taste of the freedom it brings. My disease is cunning, baffling and powerful and wants to close doors on me but with you and God in my life, I have a chance to stay open-minded and full of Joy. Today I'll pray for the willingness to say "Yes" tomorrow.

*Tall Beth
Santa Barbara*

First Pitch

First A.A. talk

How much am I gonna balk

Think I'd rather go for a walk

Sponsor in the front row

Place lit up like an awards night show

People out there wantin to know if I know

Wish we were at the part where they collect the dough

Dear Higher Power please help me make it through

I promise to make it up to you

More Prayer and Meditation I'll do

Spend more time with people who are new

Is it really to much to ask, forty minutes for you to share

And when you were new was not someone talking from up there

If it wasn't for this message, were would you be – you know where

Come on man, this is your family, you know they care

Now was that really so bad, see you didn't die

All A.A. asks is that you initiate and try

So many won't be, won't be able to try

Because they'll be drinkin and cryin til they die.

Stephen – alcoholic

If you know of anyone who was a member of Alcoholics Anonymous and has passed away this year, please email me their name.

During the convention there is a list made of those brothers and sisters who were lost to us and we want to try to be sure no one is forgotten.

You can email me at

JohnS@SantaBarbaraAA.com, or call your Central Office at, 805.962.3332, with the name.

In Service,
John S.

2010 INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION
OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

The 2010 International Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous will be held July 1-4 in San Antonio, Texas with the theme "A Vision for You." A.A. members and guests from around the world will celebrate A.A.'s 75th year at this event with big meetings held Friday night, Saturday night and Sunday morning in the Alamodome. Other meetings, scheduled or informal, will take place throughout the weekend in the San Antonio Convention Center and local hotels. Convention registration and housing reservations will open on September 1, 2009. In August, the registration packet will be mailed to every group in the U.S. and Canada listed with G.S.O., as well as to intergroup/central offices and other G.S.O.s around the world. It will also be posted online.

**We look forward to seeing you
in San Antonio!**

**Forms are available at Your Central
Office.**

Coming Soon: Gratitude Month

November is traditionally Gratitude Month in A.A. During the month of November, a special collection is made during each meeting. A second basket is passed and the money collected is used to directly support the services of the Santa Barbara Central Office of Alcoholics Anonymous.

If you wish to be able to declare the donation on your taxes, please drop a check into the basket and your Central Office will send you a receipt acknowledging your donation.

Count the blessings you have been given as a result of your sobriety. Be generous with your donations so that we may continue to support you and your group and most importantly...Help us carry the message to the still suffering alcoholic!

Envelopes will be available in your Central Office starting in September. So if you are a treasurer or secretary for a meeting, please come get your envelope and participate in supporting your Central Office during Gratitude Month.

John S.
Manager

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.

Editorial: On Cultivating Tolerance

During nine years in A.A. I have observed that those who follow the Alcoholics Anonymous program with the greatest earnestness and zeal, not only maintain sobriety, but often acquire finer characteristics and attitudes as well. One of these is tolerance. Tolerance expresses itself in a variety of ways: in kindness and consideration toward the man or woman who is just beginning the march along the spiritual path; in the understanding of those who perhaps have been less fortunate in educational advantages, and in sympathy toward those whose religious ideas may seem to be at great variance with our own. I am reminded in this connection of the picture of a hub with its radiating spokes. We all start at the outer circumference and approach our destination by one of many routes.

To say that one spoke is much better than all the other spokes is true only in the sense of its being best suited to you as an individual. Human nature is such that without some degree of tolerance, each one of us might be inclined to believe that we have found the best or perhaps the shortest spoke. Without some tolerance we might tend to become a bit smug or superior--which of course is not helpful to the person we are trying to help, and may be quite painful or obnoxious to others. No one of us wishes to do anything which might act as a deterrent to the advancement of another--and a patronizing attitude can readily slow up this process.

Tolerance furnishes, as a by-product, a greater freedom from the tendency to cling to preconceived ideas and stubbornly adhered-to opinions. In other words it often promotes an open-mindedness which is vastly important--in fact a prerequisite to the successful termination of any line of search, whether it be scientific or spiritual.

These, then, are a few of the reasons why an attempt to acquire tolerance should be made by each one of us.

Dr. Bob of Akron
July 1944

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All Twelve Steps

Acceptance, change, and sustained sobriety can be ours when we work

THE TWELVE STEPS--all twelve--have been my salvation for almost thirty-four years of continuous sobriety. I'm concerned when I hear members say they have been sober for nine years and have not gone past the Third Step. One man I know states he has made no effort to go past the First Step in seven years in the Fellowship. He follows that up by saying he simply relies on his higher power to sustain him--a higher power he found in AA meetings.

I suspect that most of the people who have not bothered to formally "take" all Twelve Steps have actually been applying most of the principles, or they wouldn't be sober.

When I first came to the program, I don't recall that we had anything but the Big Book. We discussed the Steps in every meeting. The person who read the Steps usually gave his or her interpretation. The Steps *were* the program to most of us. I was extremely fortunate to have the sponsor I had. Without him, I doubt that I could have grasped the program. His patience and understanding of the principles were outstanding. When I came, there was only one person who had not admitted I was an alcoholic. Of course, I was that person. When I was able to admit it and accept it, I began to make progress.

My sponsor's explanation or interpretation of the Steps was simple but of such great help to me that I pass it on. He told me the first three Steps set up the objective: to find a higher power. The first two or three words of each Step were the key words: "We admitted," "Came to believe," and "Made a decision."

Many members refer to the Third Step as turning their will and their lives over to the care of God as they understand Him. The Step doesn't say that. It says we "made a decision" to do so.

It was further explained to me that the action Steps, Four through Nine, were the tools with which we implemented the decision we made in Step Three.

The last three Steps were described as the maintenance Steps. These are the things we will continue to do to maintain a comfortable sobriety. I can't imagine trying to survive without the last three Steps, especially Step Eleven. In the final analysis, "The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking." But I was told that ours is a selfish program, and I am selfish enough to want all of the benefits from using all of the tools, not twenty-five percent of them.

Anonymous

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CONVENTION UPDATE

"HOPE IS THE KEY"

The work continues and the 2009 Convention draws closer. Only two planning meetings left until the convention begins on October 23rd and continues over the weekend of the 24th and 25th.

Convention committee service opportunities are still available:

We still need Co-Chairs to help in the areas of: marathon meetings, ticketing and gay and lesbian. Call Robbin B. at 969-9006 for details.

At the next meeting of the Convention Committee on September 10th at 6:00 PM, we will be finalizing many details. Please join us at our regular location which can be found on the website or by calling Central Office.

If you haven't already done so, please pick up a convention flyer and mail in your registration or go to the website at sbaaconvention.org and register on-line.

There is a package deal for all the fun meals and events including this year's coffee mug and a logo t-shirt. Friday night features a BBQ and a great speaker. Saturday night is the banquet followed by a speaker meeting and a dance. While for some of us, sober dancing is a new experience, come try it !! Sunday morning winds down the week-end with our traditional "sobriety count down" followed by our closing speaker.

There is also a golf tournament on Friday at the Muni golf course. Don't miss this event if you play (or attempt) the game of golf. Lots of fun, laughs and a little healthy competition will kick off the weekend. There are team prizes and a raffle so that everyone can win.

Santa Barbara's 25th Annual AA Convention promises to be the best one yet. We hope to see a great turn-out from our fellowship as well as out-of-town visitors.

Your Convention committee



August 2009

Name	Years
Angela B	1
Emily A	1
Arnold S	1
Erin B	1
Stacy W	1
Victor S	1
Grisel	2
Jeff T	2
Lauren T	2
Stuart K	2
Sue K	2
Susan W	2
Val H	2
Becky L	3
Cheryl S	3
Gary G	3
Mike W	3
Mike V	4
Cleaver C	5
Darren W	7
Lorilee T.	7
Paige P	7
Fred C	10
Ernie	12
Michael S	12
Tom P	12
Henry M	13
Chrissy B	16
George P	16
Andrea W	17
Kevin B	17
Jim W	18
Mike W.	19
Kristen S	20
Mary	22
Dolores M	27
Elinor C	27
Kay H	37
Bill D	43
Rick M	50
George H	52
Gardner L	61

The Messenger is published monthly by:

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

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JohnS@SantaBarbaraAA.com

Submissions Needed

The Messenger needs your submissions and letters. For the October 2009 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 story on your experience, strength and hope. Send submissions to **JohnS@SantaBarbaraAA.com**

Central Office Statistics

During the August 2009 your Central Office had:

AA Information calls	675
Al-Anon Referrals	46
Referrals to other programs	42
12 step via answering service	41
Out-of-town visitors	31
12-step via office	32
Office walk-ins	475
Hits on our Web site	1,705

Service Meetings

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

IGR's (Intergroup Representatives) meet at 6:00 p.m. on the 2nd Tuesday of 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 of each month at Central Office.

PI (Public Information) meets on the 3rd Tuesday of each month. at your Central Office.

25th ANNUAL Santa Barbara Convention Committee meets at 6:00 p.m. on the 2nd Thursday of each month at 3523 Modoc Rd. Commitments Available!

Donations by Group August 2009

	Aug 09	Jul 09	Jan - Aug 09		Aug 09	Jul 09	Jan - Aug 09
001 Sunrisers	0.00	0.00	216.00	113 Sought Through Prayer & Meditation	24.00	10.00	117.75
003 Eye Opener	375.00	325.00	2,096.00	114 Schooner Group	87.00	0.00	293.00
004 Monday At A Time	0.00	405.20	761.77	115 Eleventh Step Meditation	100.00	0.00	193.00
005 Noon Step Study	0.00	0.00	9.00	117 Way Of Life	0.00	0.00	750.00
006 Start Your Week Right	0.00	160.00	380.00	120 Sat. Morn. Home Boys	0.00	154.00	794.60
010 Foundation Group	0.00	50.00	313.77	122 Came to Believe Candlelight	0.00	0.00	50.00
011 Sundowner Group	0.00	0.00	350.00	130 Saturday Night Sobriety	0.00	0.00	144.00
014 El Montecito Saturday Night	0.00	0.00	100.00	133 Action Participation	0.00	0.00	372.83
019 Onward & Upward	0.00	0.00	344.00	139 It's A Hell Of A Deal	0.00	0.00	366.00
020 Cambridge Group	0.00	0.00	100.00	140 Gay Discussion, Sunday	0.00	80.00	80.00
021 Summerland Monday Group	0.00	107.00	432.19	144 Back To Basics, Young People	94.00	0.00	347.96
022 There Is A Solution	0.00	75.00	327.00	145 The How And Why Of It	51.60	0.00	141.60
023 For Women Only	0.00	0.00	142.40	148 San Ysidro	0.00	0.00	84.00
024, Mesa-Singleness of Purpose	0.00	40.00	120.00	150 Goleta Sun. Night Speaker	0.00	0.00	151.60
026 Carpinteria Study Group	49.00	0.00	99.00	153 Happy Destiny	0.00	213.50	563.50
034 Women of Change	0.00	0.00	127.10	163 Mustard Seed	50.00	0.00	125.00
035 12 & 12 Study, Tues.	0.00	160.00	380.00	164 Men Who Have Lost Their Legs	450.00	0.00	1,390.00
045 Alternative Group	106.40	0.00	453.60	165 Junkyard Dogs	0.00	0.00	400.00
047 Tuesday Men's Stag	84.00	42.00	396.00	166 Serenity Sisters	0.00	39.65	105.03
051 Men's Group At St. Mary's	0.00	0.00	194.00	170 Barefoot Group	18.00	14.00	142.00
053 Both Oars In The Water	0.00	160.00	380.00	177 Key Group	0.00	0.00	1,960.00
055 Staying Alive	0.00	279.00	495.00	180 Thursday Ladies Night	0.00	0.00	110.00
062 Do The Steps Or Die	0.00	0.00	75.33	181 Keep Coming Back Group	0.00	77.00	1,122.46
064 Women's Serenity Group	0.00	0.00	173.61	182 Just the Black Print	0.00	0.00	68.00
067 Rigorous Honesty	0.00	337.35	705.91	183 Summerland/Montecito, Thurs.	0.00	0.00	710.00
068 Stepping Stones	0.00	0.00	148.20	186 Sunday Night Alternative, NH III	0.00	0.00	189.00
070 Success Group	0.00	0.00	90.00	187 Turning Point	0.00	0.00	50.00
074 Casa Serena (BB Study)	56.00	0.00	56.00	191 Men on a Mission	104.00	0.00	104.00
076 11 th Step	0.00	160.00	380.00	197 Big Book Comes Alive Women's Meeting	0.00	0.00	176.00
079 Harbor Group	87.50	92.15	726.65	200 Anonymous Donations	0.00	0.00	103.23
083 Sober Students, Tues Eve	0.00	0.00	100.00	201 Birthday Donations	696.00	170.00	2,848.00
084, 83 - 87 Group	75.00	120.00	967.48	202 Supporting Members	923.88	737.00	10,593.87
089 Here & Now	0.00	0.00	180.00	204 Memorial Fund	300.00	0.00	1,400.00
093 Into Action, Thurs	170.00	0.00	270.00	207 Gratitude Month	0.00	0.00	51.95
094 Questions & Answers	0.00	4.62	39.62	210 Convention Income	0.00	0.00	2,706.00
097 Almost Saints	0.00	30.00	705.00	211 Rent Received	160.00	169.00	980.55
099 Sink Or Swim	0.00	160.00	380.00	212 Special Events	35.00	2,115.00	3,685.00
112 Montecito/Carpinteria	0.00	144.96	268.96				
				Totals:	\$4,096.38	\$6,631.43	\$46,953.52

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

