



The Santa Barbara MESSENGER

April 2009

The Next Frontier--Emotional Sobriety

Below you will find the substance of a revealing letter which Bill wrote several years ago to a close friend who also had troublesome depressions. Bill asks us to note that this letter should occasion no concern as both Bill and his friend are today "in the clear"--Ed.

I THINK THAT MANY oldsters who have put our AA "booze cure" to severe but successful tests still find they often lack emotional sobriety. Perhaps they will be the spearhead for the next major development in AA--the development of much more real maturity and balance (which is to say, humility) in our relations with ourselves, with our fellows, and with God.

Those adolescent urges that so many of us have for top approval, perfect security, and perfect romance--urges quite appropriate to age seventeen--prove to be an impossible way of life when we are at age forty-seven or fifty-seven.

Since AA began, I've taken immense wallops in all these areas because of my failure to grow up, emotionally and spiritually. My God, how painful it is to keep demanding the impossible, and how very painful to discover finally, that all along we have had the cart before the horse! Then comes the final agony of seeing how awfully wrong we have been, but still finding ourselves unable to get off the emotional merry-go-round.

How to translate a right mental conviction into a right emotional result, and so into easy, happy and good living--well, that's not only the neurotic's problem, it's the problem of life itself for all of us who have got to the point of real willingness to hew to right principles in all our affairs.

Even then, as we hew away, peace and joy may still elude us. That's the place so many of us AA oldsters have come to. And it's a hell of a spot, literally. How shall our unconscious--from which so many of our fears, compulsions and phony aspirations still stream--be brought into line with what we actually believe, know and want! How to convince our dumb, raging and hidden "Mr. Hyde" becomes our main task.

I've recently come to believe that this can be achieved. I believe so because I begin to see many benighted ones--folks like you and me--commencing to get results. Last autumn [several years back--*ed*], depression, having no really rational cause at all, almost took me to the cleaners. I began to be scared that I was in for another long chronic spell. Considering the grief I've had with depressions, it wasn't a bright prospect.

I kept asking myself, "Why can't the Twelve Steps work to release depression?" By the hour, I stared at the St. Francis Prayer. . . "It's better to comfort than to be comforted." Here was the formula, all right. But why didn't it work?

Suddenly I realized what the matter was. My basic flaw had always been dependence--almost absolute dependence--on people or circumstances to supply me with prestige, security, and the like. Failing to get these things according to my perfectionist dreams and specifications, I had fought for them. And when defeat came, so did my depression.

There wasn't a chance of making the outgoing love of St. Francis a workable and joyous way of life until these fatal and almost absolute dependencies were cut away.

Because I had over the years undergone a little spiritual development, the *absolute* quality of these frightful dependencies had never before been so starkly revealed. Reinforced by what Grace I could secure in prayer, I found I had to exert every ounce of will and action to cut off these faulty emotional dependencies upon people, upon AA, indeed, upon any set of circumstances whatsoever.

Then only could I be free to love as Francis had. Emotional and instinctual satisfactions, I saw, were really the extra dividends of having love, offering love, and expressing, a love appropriate to each relation of life.

Plainly, I could not avail myself of God's love until I was able to offer it back to Him by loving others as He would have me. And I couldn't possibly do that so long as I was victimized by false dependencies.

For my dependency meant demand--a demand for the possession and control of the people and the conditions surrounding me.

While those words "absolute dependency" may look like a gimmick, they were the ones that helped to trigger my release into my present degree of stability and quietness of mind, qualities which I am now trying to consolidate by offering love to others regardless of the return to me.

This seems to be the primary healing circuit: an outgoing love of God's creation and His people, by means of which we avail ourselves of His love for us. It is most clear that the real current can't flow until our paralyzing dependencies are broken, and broken at depth. Only then can we possibly have a glimmer of what adult love really is.

Spiritual calculus, you say? Not a bit of it. Watch any AA of six months working with a new Twelfth Step case. If the case says "To the devil with you" the Twelfth Stepper only smiles and turns to another case. He doesn't feel frustrated or rejected. If his next case responds, and in turn starts to give love and attention to other alcoholics, yet gives none back to him, the sponsor is happy about it anyway. He still doesn't feel rejected; instead he rejoices that his one-time prospect is sober and happy. And if his next following case turns out in later time to be his best friend (or romance) then the sponsor is most joyful. But he well knows that his happiness is a by-product--the--extra dividend of giving without any demand for a return.

The really stabilizing thing for him was having and offering love to that strange drunk on his doorstep. That was Francis at work, powerful and practical, minus dependency and minus demand.

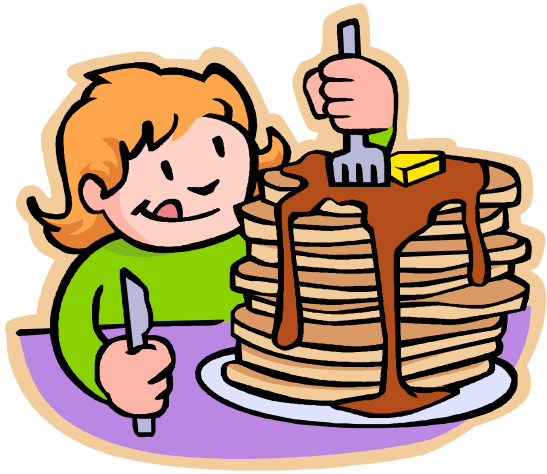
In the first six months of my own sobriety, I worked hard with many alcoholics. Not a one responded. Yet this work kept me sober. It wasn't a question of those alcoholics giving me anything. My stability came out of trying to give, not out of demanding that I receive.

Thus I think it can work out with emotional sobriety. If we examine every disturbance we have, great or small, we will find at the root of it some unhealthy dependency and its consequent unhealthy demand. Let us, with God's help, continually surrender these hobbling demands. Then we can be set free to live and love; we may then be able to Twelfth Step ourselves and others into emotional sobriety.

Of course I haven't offered you a really new idea--only a gimmick that has started to unhook several of my own "hexes" at depth. Nowadays my brain no longer races compulsively in either elation, grandiosity or depression. I have been given a quiet place in bright sunshine.

Ed. note--The Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi, twelfth century Italian friar who founded the Franciscan Order, will be found on page 47.

Bill W., January 1958



Central Office Fundraiser Breakfast

When: Saturday May 16, 2009

Where: Goleta Valley Community Center

5679 Hollister Ave

Breakfast at 9:00 am

Speaker Meeting after breakfast

Tickets \$5 each

Call: 962-3332 for information

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:

“Free Food, Fun, Fellowship, and Feedback Day” Report

Thanks to all who attended this General Service event last March 28 at the Veteran’s Building! We had great participation from the local District 23 fellowship. The sandwiches, doughnuts, bagels, pizza and drinks were awesome!

Over 40 hard-copy questionnaires and 30 CD-ROM’s of information were handed out to AA members. 18 questionnaires were filled out and turned in the same day. 37 agenda topics and questions were posted on the wall, where many AA members wrote down their answers and opinions. Lots of GSR’s were on-hand to help out and answer questions.

All of this will be in the hands of our Area 93 delegate (Jeff J.) soon, where he will read and absorb the District 23 group and member conscience in preparation for the General Service Conference in New York.

THANKS AGAIN FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!!

There is still time to let your voice be heard. Contact your GSR or DCM (see below), and we will get the questionnaires to you ASAP.

Upcoming GSR events:

April GSR meeting: 1st Monday, April 6th, Holy Cross Church, 1740 Cliff Dr., 6 PM
Delegate Report-Back Day: Coming up in May or June

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.”

April 2009

CONVENTION UPDATE

Your Convention Committee met in March to continue planning for the 2009 Annual Santa Barbara Alcoholics Anonymous convention.

This year our 25th anniversary convention will be held October 23rd, 24th and 25th 2009.

We voted on the theme for this year’s convention and the winner is “This Promise of Hope” from a speech by Bill Wilson at which the responsibility pledge was first introduced. It goes on to say “When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there. And for that, I am responsible.”

This month we will be voting on the art work submitted to convey the theme in print. The art work and logos will be used on our various memorabilia such as tee shirts, coffee mugs and other items. The next meeting will be held on Thursday April 9th at 6:00 PM at Maggie’s, 3523 Modoc Rd. If you would like to be part of the convention planning process, please join us. For additional information, you can ask one of the committee members or call central office.

Better yet, the new convention web site is up and running and has all the information you need : visit sbaaconvention.org for details. This web site will also be used for registrations (for those wishing to register on-line) at a future date which will be announced.

Looking forward to seeing everyone at the next meeting!!

Your Convention Committee

I am responsible; Historical Background

A mighty message of hope for the world's suffering victims of alcoholism thundered forth from here at 10:25 p.m. last night, Saturday, July 3.

The largest assemblage in history of recovered, once-thought-hopeless drunks...more than 10,000 A.A. members, their families and friends representing 30 countries... at that instant solemnly clasped hands and led by Bill W. and Lois, clearly and loudly pronounced this promise of hope in one tremendous, strong voice.

***I am responsible, When anyone, anywhere reaches out for help,
I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. And for that: I am responsible***

It was the moving climax to the biggest A.A. gathering yet, the 30th Anniversary Year International Convention which brought together A.A., Al-Anon and Alateen members from all over the globe for three days packed with opportunity to share experiences, strengths, hopes and fun.

In Toronto's vast Maple Leaf Gardens on Friday night a crowd mindful of its own size heard from their own lips the stories of Bill W., A.A.'s co-founder and author of the basic books; Lois W., his wife, the First Lady of the Al-Anon Family Groups; and Marty M., one of A.A.'s first women members.

On Saturday evening, an even larger throng heard Bill and nonalcoholic Trustee Bernard Smith, describe one of the most glorious fruits of A.A. recovery from alcoholism; individual freedom to accept responsibility for ourselves and for our share in A.A. as a whole.

"Newcomers are approaching A.A. at the rate of tens of thousands yearly," Bill declared. "Let us not pressure anyone with our individual or collective views. Let us instead accord each other the respect and love due to every human being. I trust we shall continue to have tremendous awareness of our responsibilities for improvement," Bill continued.

Attorney Smith, associated with A.A.'s General Service Board for 21 years, said, "You have something great and awesome going for you, treat it tenderly, and respect what it has done for you and what it can do for others..." "As long as one man dwells in the darkness you once knew, you cannot rest; you must try to find him and help him become one of you...By the grace of God, may A.A. last for all time!"

Bill had already sketched in colorful terms a picture of A.A.'s fantastic history, and the "old days" were also mentioned amusingly over coffee cups, by hundreds of 20 and 25-year sober members to the thousands of newcomers here. Their memories of early A.A. hardship contrasted sharply with the joyous human kaleidoscope in Canada's "Queen City" this last three days. More than 150 A.A. members, 100 Al-Anons and Alateens, and 24 internationally known nonalcoholic authorities on alcoholism have addressed 69 jam-packed sessions at the Convention. Even when unspoken, the "I Am Responsible" theme seemed almost so present you could see it. A.A. at 30 is now so big and highly respected it must live up to a tremendous reputation for selfless helpfulness-and it must expect and welcome constructive criticism and challenge both from within and outside its own ranks. Much that was said in Toronto will provide stimulating discussion material for thoughtful A.A.'s all over the world for many years to come.

Toronto Ontario, July 4, 1965
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IS YOUR GROUP MOVING OR STARTING A NEW GROUP

If you group is listed in our directory or on our website and your group is moving to a new location. Please contact John S at your Central Office @ 805.962.3332 or email me at JohnS@SantaBarbaraAA.com and update your information, so people won't go to the wrong place looking for your meeting and the meeting information will be current.



March 2009 Birthdays

Name	Years
Annie	1
Bret	1
David D	1
Al R	2
Gail F	2
Hopper	2
Kate D	2
Mark C	2
Shelly S	2
Jacklyn W	4
Kathleen	4
Patsy A	5
Michelle	6
Erika	6
Scott J	8
Joe W	9
Peter	10
Judy Mac	11
Randy F	11
Scot M	13
Carmel D	16
Kim M	16
Bob D	16
Robert B	17
Nancy R	18
Angela K	20
Jonathan	23
Paul T	27
Judy C	29
Jeremy F	30
ReVay S	30
Bunny M	30
Peter M	34

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 May 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 Fifth month, May, we need writing on Step 5 and Tradition 5.

Send submissions to **JohnS@santabarbaraAA.com**

Central Office Statistics

During March 2009 your Central Office had:

AA Information calls	798
Al-Anon Referrals	49
Referrals to other programs	51
12step via answering service	45
Out-of-town visitors	38
12-step via office	41
Office walk-ins	491
Hits on our Web site	1,500

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. 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 March 2009

Donations by Group March 2009

	Mar 09	Feb 09	Jan - Mar
001 Sunrisers	216.00	0.00	216.00
003 Eye Opener	220.00	220.00	665.00
004 Monday At A Time	147.57	209.00	356.57
005 Noon Step Study	9.00	0.00	9.00
006 Start Your Week Right	0.00	0.00	100.00
011 Sundowner Group	0.00	210.00	210.00
019 Onward & Upward	60.00	0.00	294.00
020 Cambridge Group	0.00	100.00	100.00
021 Summerland Monday Group	325.19	0.00	325.19
022 There Is A Solution	0.00	0.00	120.00
023 For Women Only	70.20	0.00	70.20
024, Mesa-Singleness of Purpose	40.00	0.00	40.00
035 12 & 12 Study, Tues.	0.00	0.00	100.00
045 Alternative Group	112.00	0.00	203.20
047 Tuesday Men's Stag	0.00	60.00	60.00
051 Men's Group At St. Mary's	0.00	0.00	79.00
053 Both Oars In The Water	0.00	0.00	100.00
055 Staying Alive	0.00	216.00	216.00
062 Do The Steps Or Die	0.00	46.00	75.33
067 Rigorous Honesty	0.00	0.00	236.30
068 Stepping Stones	0.00	0.00	57.00
070 Success Group	0.00	0.00	10.00
076 11th Step	0.00	0.00	100.00
079 Harbor Group	140.00	0.00	372.00
084, 83 - 87 Group	213.60	0.00	391.48
089 Here & Now	0.00	80.00	80.00
093 Into Action, Thurs	0.00	0.00	100.00
097 Almost Saints	150.00	225.00	375.00
099 Sink Or Swim	0.00	0.00	100.00

	Mar 09	Feb 09	Jan - Mar
112 Montecito/Carpinteria	124.00	0.00	124.00
113 Sought Through Prayer & Meditation	23.72	10.00	45.72
114 Schooner Group	0.00	0.00	88.00
120 Sat. Morn. Home Boys	192.00	0.00	360.60
130 Saturday Night Sobriety	0.00	0.00	72.00
133 Action Participation	0.00	0.00	166.20
139 It's A Hell Of A Deal	209.00	0.00	209.00
144 Back To Basics, Young People	0.00	193.96	193.96
145 The How And Why Of It	40.00	0.00	90.00
153 Happy Destiny	350.00	0.00	350.00
163 Mustard Seed	75.00	0.00	75.00
164 Men Who Have Lost Their Legs	0.00	0.00	225.00
165 Junkyard Dogs	0.00	190.00	190.00
166 Serenity Sisters	0.00	0.00	65.38
170 Barefoot Group	20.00	28.00	75.00
177 Key Group	0.00	0.00	700.00
181 Keep Coming Back Group	0.00	0.00	551.55
183 Summerland, Thurs.	0.00	360.00	360.00
186 Sunday Night Alternative, NH III	0.00	67.00	67.00
197 Big Book Comes Alive Women's Meetina	0.00	70.00	70.00
200 Anonymous Donations	103.23	0.00	103.23
201 Birthday Donations	800.00	0.00	1,053.00
202 Supporting Members	1,272.00	1,476.49	5,889.49
204 Memorial Fund	250.00	0.00	250.00
207 Gratitude Month	0.00	0.00	51.95
210 Convention Income	0.00	0.00	2,706.00
211 Rent Received	52.00	165.00	247.00
Totals:	5,214.51	3,926.45	19,540.35

Central Office
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