



The Santa Barbara

November 2005

MESSENGER

Convention Wrap-Up

So, did you have fun? We 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 usual last-minute preparations by the committee and volunteers. Tables were arranged, literature was set out, the registration computers were 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, 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.

The outstanding thing about the Friday registration rush is how pleasant almost everyone is. There's no pushing or shoving. People are generally polite and patient. In fact, there's a good deal of joking and a spirit of excitement and fun.

And now the convention really gets underway. About the time the crowds began to arrive, the Elks brought out their famous barbeque chicken and tri-tip. Delicious! The turnout was good for the Friday night barbeque this year, probably because word has spread about how good the food is.

Al-Anon had their opening meeting at 6:30, and that was followed by the first AA speaker meeting at 8:00. If you were there, you were probably touched by the message they shared, just as we were. If you weren't there, we're sorry you missed it. My few

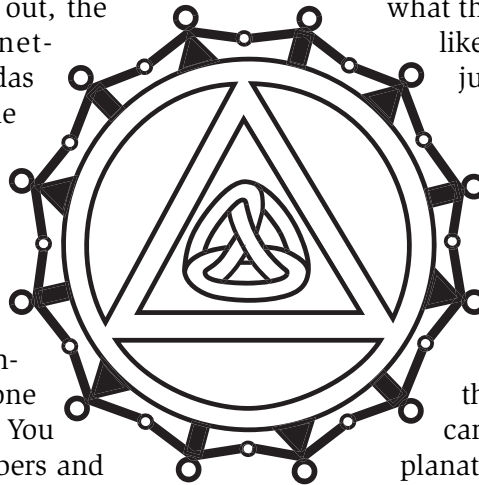
words in the *Messenger* can't begin to touch on what the experience of hearing them was like. It's one of those things that you just had to be there for.

But we will comment on Sober Bingo, even though you should have been there for that, too. Now that was some fun, in no small part thanks to Sam, our "caller." We played three games: "X" (fill in the squares from corner to corner), "square" (fill in all the squares around the edges of your card), and "blackout" (needs no explanation in a room full of alcoholics).

When you complete the pattern, you yell "sober," not "bingo". We can't tell you how many people were prematurely "sober." Somebody would yell it out, everyone else would groan, and the card would be brought for Sam to check. Whoops, a misunderstanding or mistake! The game goes on, amidst much friendly kidding directed toward the early "winner."

And so the convention continues on into Saturday. There's the H&I panel, the old-timers' meeting, the ice cream social, and the "reunion" meeting, where we got to catch up with people who got sober in Santa Barbara, then moved away. It was so good to have a broad range of participation this year, in-

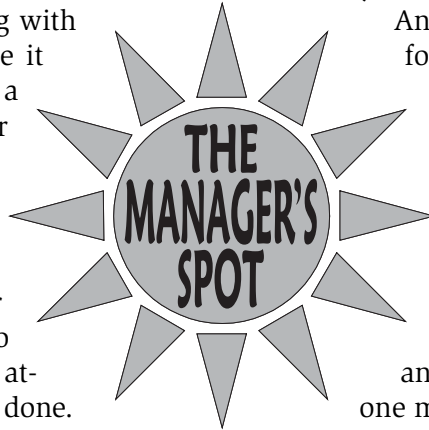
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Thanks for a Great Convention

What a fantastic convention!!! If you weren't there, you really missed a good one. I would like to thank everyone on the committee who worked so hard to bring this event off, starting with Dave S., our chairperson. He made it look easy, but that guy took care of a LOT of business, as did his co-chair Pam. And Maggie, and John U, and Tim C, and Don G, and Lisa N, and Sami M, and... and... well you see how it is. There were a bunch of worker bees just going about their quiet business. It all seemed so smooth I really had to stop and pay attention to see how much was getting done.

The speakers were all wonderful too. Starting with Kimm on Friday night, and going all the way through Paula on Sunday morning, we were blessed with hearing the message of our program carried in a variety of ways. Everyone had their own unique story, but the message of hope for the alcoholic who still suffers was there in all of them. And that old-timers panel!!! In many ways that was the high point of the whole event for me. To see Sally and Jim and George and Rick all share the same podium. To be reminded of their many, many individual kindnesses to me when I was new. To remember the wisdom I heard from them, and to know



how much it has helped me over my own years of recovery. Well, that's powerful stuff. I still want to be just like those guys if I ever grow up.

Another thing that made it very special for me was that my friend Paul S was able to be there and share the experience with me. It was Paul's first AA convention, although he has been sober for some time, and he said it was a true highpoint of his life up to now. I was also able to introduce him to a lot of other people who are friends of mine, and both my wife and I were touched by the way everyone made him feel like he was part of our Santa Barbara AA family. Paul said that in many ways he felt as if he had come home after a long journey.

So, again, thank you to everyone who was a part of the weekend. Let's do it again next year!

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*

Letters

It Is in the Seeking

Step eleven suggests that we seek through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with our Higher Power. Our book tells us that “faith without works is dead” and that “if an alcoholic failed to perfect and enlarge his spiritual life through work and self-sacrifice for others, he could not survive the certain trials and low spots ahead.” That would seem like a good reason to pursue the improvement of one’s conscious contact, wouldn’t it? My own experience over the years is that a lot of us, myself included, learn and utilize the prayer aspect of the Eleventh Step a lot more than we do the meditation component. Somehow it seems easier to pray (especially when things aren’t going well) than it does to mediate. I mean, meditating requires some actual commitment, and would seem more difficult than rattling off a few memorized words. But the Step does suggest that we need both components to fully achieve our desired goal of bettering our understanding, and improving our contact with God as we understand Him.

Like every other discipline I’ve encountered in Alcoholics Anonymous, this requires practice. Just like I had to practice going to meetings, had to begin practicing honesty, and had to practice working the Steps, I’ve found it necessary to practice the practice of meditation. Not perfectly, or as diligently as may be possible, but then I’ve never done any of those other things perfectly either. But, however imperfect my efforts have been, I can tell you what I’ve gained from them. This is a matter of personal experience, so results, as they say, may vary. What I have found when I practice meditation is that there is a place deep down in me where I can find the “fundamental idea of God.” That idea may sometimes be “obscured by calamity, by pomp, by worship of other things,” however it is there. And since I discovered and understood the fact that it is there, I have been drawn to return to that place to have those moments, though sometimes fleeting, where I feel myself to be in the presence of my Higher Power and know the peace that comes from that knowledge.

I mentioned practice. There are two meetings a week in Santa Barbara that are “meditation” meetings. There may be more, but these are the ones I am familiar with. At these meetings the practice of

meditation is engaged in at the group level, and the group as a whole sits together quietly for up to half an hour. This is done after someone, a different someone each time, has explained their take on the practice and discipline of “how” to meditate. What becomes clear is that there are as many ways to approach the practice as there are people who share about it. That was an eye-opener for me. I had assumed I’d have to learn a strict set of “rules” if I was ever to have any success. Instead I found that the path is broad, roomy, and all-inclusive. It also became apparent that the practice of meditation is not a goal someone arrives at, but rather an adventure that one undertakes—that the benefit comes from the seeking, not from the arriving.

—*A Sober (and Grateful) Member of Alcoholics*

What a Fun Convention!

As a convention delegate and a member of the committee, I was able to view this event from both sides of the fence and I think it was a great success. Registration numbers were up. The turnout was great. We had members come from near and far: Northern California, Utah, Down South, and Back East, to name a few. Old friends got to reunite at the Saturday Reunion meeting. The H&I Breakfast Panel was a great success. The main meeting speakers were great. Wow, what a message. The Friday Night barbecue? Mmmm! Tri tip and chicken with all the fixings. At the Saturday night banquet, we got close to feeding 300.

One of the highlights for me was the sober bingo on Friday night. Man, I never laughed so hard in my life. Sami, you kicked it in the bootie. And the Dance Saturday night? Boy, I know I got my groove on.

This is my own experience on the weekend. I can’t remember when I had so much fun. We even got to spread the message of recovery to the alcoholic who still suffers, while having all this fun. Man, it doesn’t get any better than that. We here in the Santa Barbara are very fortunate to have a special AA fellowship. It was a beautiful weekend. I would like to thank Dave S and all the committee for letting me be me and for letting me participate in my own recovery. “Unbreakable Kinship.” Thank you for the great memories, they are locked in my heart forever.

—*Tim C, 2005 Site Coordinator Chair*

(continued from page 1)

cluding special events for our sober gay and lesbian members and the young people who bring such positive energy to our fellowship, as well as 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. The mud pie served for desert was way too good, although we did observe a few alcoholics actually practicing moderation and leaving some on their plate.

Saturday night was capped 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 came, it seemed nearly everyone was tired but very happy. Attendance at the “spiritual” meeting was good, and the sobriety countdown tallied up well over 3,000 years of communal sobriety. We heard another heartfelt message of experience, strength and hope. We renewed, once again, that “unbreakable kinship” we have found 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 22nd annual Santa Barbara convention. But for now we want to extend my 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 love our fellow committee members, but none 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





OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

Nina V	1
Nancy I	2
John D	3
Nina D	3
John E	3
Pete A	5
Tim M	6
Bob M	8
Jack B	10
Pam I	10
Liz G	16
Al C	17
Alison D	18
Domonique M	19
Pete L	20
Bob V	20
Brayant C	20
Nick C	24
Ellen B	26

The Messenger is published monthly by:

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805-962-3332
 sbaa@santabarbaraAA.com

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 eleventh month, November, we need writing on the Step 11 and Tradition 11. Send submissions to jimstoic@hotmail.com.

Central Office Statistics

During October your Central Office had:

AA information calls	686
Al-Anon referrals	33
Referrals to other programs	46
12-step via answering service	31
Out-of-town visitors	12
12-step via office	4
Office walk-ins	558
Hits on our Web site	687

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.

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	October	September	YTD		October	September	YTD
001 Sunrisers	0.00	0.00	40.00	110 Focus On Recovery	0.00	0.00	34.17
002 Courage To Change	75.00	0.00	75.00	111 Carpinteria Canalino	0.00	0.00	759.00
003 Eye Opener	300.00	335.00	3,615.00	112 Montecito/Carpinteria	0.00	0.00	420.00
004 Monday At A Time	59.51	141.60	376.11	113 Sought Through Prayer & Meditation	0.00	34.00	97.00
005 Noon Step Study	0.00	0.00	50.00	114 Schooner Group	0.00	0.00	369.00
006 Start Your Week Right	0.00	0.00	180.00	115 Eleventh Step Meditation	23.00	0.00	127.38
007 Sound Off	0.00	50.00	150.00	117 Way Of Life	450.00	225.00	2,627.00
008 Beginner's Group	0.00	0.00	84.85	120 Sat. Morn. Home Boys	222.50	176.00	1,227.10
010 Foundation Group	81.00	87.15	685.15	121 Problems And Solutions	0.00	0.00	21.00
011 Sundowner Group	0.00	255.00	650.00	130 Saturday Night Sobriety	96.00	0.00	240.00
013 No Shenanigans	0.00	40.00	176.00	133 Action Participation	0.00	0.00	1,000.00
016 Big Book Workshop	0.00	14.00	46.00	139 It's A Hell Of A Deal	0.00	139.50	661.50
021 Summerland Monday Group	100.00	0.00	274.00	140 Gay Discussion, Sunday	0.00	111.00	206.05
022 There Is A Solution	0.00	0.00	458.60	141 Off Center	787.09	185.40	1,767.16
023 For Women Only	100.00	0.00	400.00	143 Sunday Go To Meeting	0.00	0.00	70.00
026 Carpinteria Study Group	0.00	0.00	100.00	144 Back To Basics, Young People	0.00	52.31	230.31
030 Sisters In Solution	0.00	0.00	15.00	146 Out Of Town Speaker, NH II	85.20	0.00	390.60
034 Women of Change	39.85	102.07	261.92	148 San Ysidro	0.00	0.00	130.00
035 12 & 12 Study, Tues.	0.00	0.00	100.00	149 Getting To Know You	64.00	0.00	468.00
045 Alternative Group	0.00	90.00	269.00	150 Goleta Sun. Night Speaker	0.00	0.00	79.00
047 Tuesday Men's Stag	0.00	84.00	579.00	153 Happy Destiny	0.00	0.00	300.00
051 Men's Group At St. Mary's	0.00	113.61	420.59	156 Start Your Day Right	0.00	0.00	80.00
052 As Bill Sees It, Weds.	0.00	0.00	30.00	158 Isla Vista Sobriety	49.50	0.00	49.50
053 Both Oars In The Water	0.00	0.00	180.00	161 Back To Basics Group	4.32	0.00	4.32
055 Staying Alive	20.00	40.00	367.00	162 No Frills	0.00	0.00	187.35
056 Women By The Books	0.00	0.00	98.40	164 Men Who Have Lost Their Legs	400.00	0.00	1,449.18
062 Do The Steps Or Die	31.65	64.21	481.67	165 Junkyard Dogs	57.72	75.96	696.31
064 Women's Serenity Group	45.00	0.00	437.00	166 Serenity Sisters	0.00	0.00	134.00
067 Rigorous Honesty	24.00	200.00	895.00	170 Barefoot Group	13.00	4.00	149.11
068 Stepping Stones	0.00	56.00	237.64	177 Key Group	0.00	0.00	1,200.00
070 Success roup	0.00	0.00	210.00	181 Keep Coming Back Group	323.25	0.00	1,089.99
071 The Loft	0.00	300.00	435.00	183 Summerland, Thurs.	198.66	543.00	1,564.75
072 Discussion Gay Wednesday	0.00	48.00	48.00	186 Turning Point	0.00	260.00	383.00
073 Young People's	0.00	0.00	177.08	196 Powerful Cement	0.00	0.00	50.00
076 11th Step	0.00	0.00	180.00	200 Anonymous Donations	0.00	23.00	153.04
077 Briefly Big Book	0.00	0.00	21.00	201 Birthday Donations	170.00	0.00	928.00
079 Harbor Group	318.65	0.00	3,842.77	202 Supporting Member	864.00	677.00	10,606.00
083 Sober Students, Tues Eve	0.00	107.00	210.00	203 SBYPAA	0.00	0.00	53.42
089 Here & Now	0.00	0.00	140.00	204 Memorial Fund	0.00	0.00	160.00
091 New Life	0.00	0.00	240.00	205 Refunds	0.00	0.00	243.27
093 Into Action, Thurs	0.00	30.00	80.00	209 Meeting Guide	65.00	115.00	850.00
097 Almost Saints	0.00	214.40	870.13	210 Convention Income	0.00	0.00	811.79
098 Keep It Simple, Saturday	0.00	0.00	66.00	211 Central Office Rent Received	288.00	38.00	1,638.80
099 Sink Or Swim	0.00	0.00	180.00	212 Special Events	0.00	276.00	3,063.50
100 UCSB Discussion	0.00	0.00	55.00	TOTAL	5,355.90	5,307.21	55,257.51

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Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 962-3332

