



The Santa Barbara

October 2006

MESSENGER

CONVENTION UPDATE

Gosh! It's hard to believe the 22nd Annual S.B. Convention is just around the corner: October 20-22. The Convention Committee's in high gear now finishing all the final preparations and enthusiastically anticipating its opening with lots of e-mails and tending to last minute details—I think its called doing the footwork-- to make the weekend a special occasion for carrying the message and celebrating sober living.

Decorations have been selected to complement the convention's theme (A Simple Kit of Spiritual Tools), beautiful hospitality baskets for the terrific slate of speakers are being created, the yummy menus for the Friday night barbeque and Saturday evening banquet are in place, SBYPAA is ready for the Ice-cream Social, games and raffles have been planned and our MC and DJ, Tibonious Funk, guarantees the biggest, hottest dance party the recovery world has ever seen—Boogie Night! Dress in a 70's Disco and compete for 1st and 2nd place prizes. Marathon meetings will be scheduled hourly and Alanon has created a great program of speakers and events as well. The Friday "Best Ball" Golf Tournament promises to be a lot of fun. (Pre registration is encouraged). The sweatshirts, tee shirts, and coffee mugs are awesome and ready for you to purchase as mementos.

Registration is \$20.00, and there's still time to register. The registration forms have been distributed to the big speaker meetings and IGR reps have been given forms to take back to their meetings. However, if you are unable to get hold of a form, call Central Office or register online at sbaaconvention.com. By the way, MasterCard and Visa are accepted.

It's been an honor to be of service in the planning of this event – a weekend of celebration of sober living and carrying the message. We look forward to seeing you for the 22nd Santa Barbara Annual Convention:

October 20-22, 2006

Elks Lodge
150 N. Kellogg
Goleta, California

~mmo for the Convention Committee



A PILGRIMAGE OF SORTS

I have just returned from Akron, Ohio, where I attended the national Intergroup conference. This event is held in a different location every year. This year I have to admit to more than the usual excitement about attending. After all, it was Akron! Birthplace of Alcoholics Anonymous and all that. Truthfully I didn't know what to expect. But I can tell you what I found. The Akron Central Office really did an outstanding job of arranging pre-conference activities. We had a group tour of all the AA historical spots in Akron that was facilitated by the Area archivist. Man, did she ever know her stuff! We really got an informed history lesson. We also had a stop at the Akron office, which houses the area archives, so anything the archivist did not cover in her talk we were able to see in the (extensive) display they have on-site.

We saw the Mayflower Hotel, where Bill place the call which resulted in him being hooked-up with Dr. Bob. We stopped at Bob's grave, and we went t to the gatehouse at the Seiberling estate where Bill and Bob first met. My wife got a bit wet-eyed at that juncture. I have to admit to a small heart-tug myself. The room where those two sat and talked for six hours is actually quite small so it is possible to really see how up-close and personal that first contact must have been. As I say, it was a little emotional for all of us.

However, let me tell you where I really lost it. Doctor Bob's house. Oh my goodness. We climbed off the bus and mounted those twelve steps up to the porch. There was a guy standing there who welcomed us. I thought I had escaped actually feeling too much until I stepped inside and a woman stood there offering the same greeting (Welcome Home!) at which point I broke down and cried like a little baby. She didn't seem too surprised by this, although it caught me unexpectedly. She just took it all in stride, reaching out to hug me and pat me until I quit blubbering. I'm guessing I'm not the first one who has had this reaction. What happened, I think, is that the import of everything I had been hearing about the miracle of our beginnings caught up with me all at once. Our tour guide kept stressing the 'slender threads' which had made it all come about. It made me think of Norm A and the 'seconds and inches' he always mentioned in his AA talk. Whatever it was, it hit me all at once like a ton of bricks. That much I do know. The sheer unlikelihood of all those seemingly random events coming together to allow me to be standing there sober was suddenly clearer to me than it ever had been before. And I was overcome by gratitude for it all.

If you ever have the opportunity to make this trip, to see these things, please don't miss it. Maybe, like me, you will start off thinking it will not have a big effect on you. All I have to suggest is that you try it, then report back to me.

In gratitude for the life you have given me,

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.

New Meetings:

Monday:

First Things First

7:30 PM

Salvation Army

423 Chapala Street.

Open Newcomers Meeting

Wednesday:

Goleta Community Center Mtg.

12:10 PM - 1:00 PM

GVCC Room 5a

5679 Hollister Ave., Goleta

Book Study

Friday:

MESA Singleness of Purpose

8 PM

Holy Cross Catholic Church

1740 Cliff Dr., (in the back)

Closed Participation Book Study

Saturday:

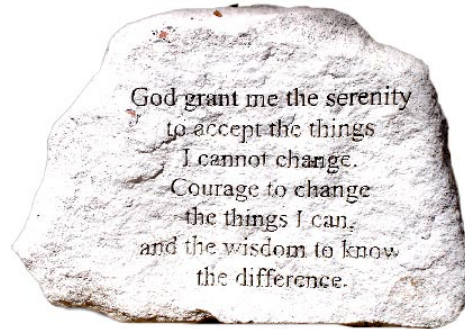
El Montecito Saturday Night

8 p.m. Closed Discussion meeting

El Montecito Presbyterian Church

1455 East Valley Rd.

Basement (Voyagers) Rm.



Tenth Step

Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.

Tradition Ten Contemplation Questions:

Tradition Ten: No A.A. group or member should ever, in such a way as to implicate A.A., express any opinion on outside controversial issues-particularly those of politics, alcohol reform, or sectarian religion. The Alcoholics Anonymous groups oppose no one. Concerning such matters they can express no views whatever.

1. Do I ever give the impression that there really is an "A.A. opinion" on Antibuse? Tranquilizers? Doctors? Psychiatrists? Churches? Hospitals? Jails? Alcohol? the Federal or state government? Legalizing marijuana? Vitamins? Al-Anon? Alateen?
2. Can I honestly share my own personal experience concerning any of those without giving the impression I am stating the "A.A opinion"?
3. What in A.A. history gave rise to our Tenth Tradition?
4. Have I had a similar experience in my own A.A. life?
5. What would A.A. be without this Tradition? Where would I be?
6. Do I breach this or any of its supporting Traditions in subtle, perhaps unconscious, ways?
7. How can I manifest the spirit of this Tradition in my personal life outside A.A.? Inside A.A.?

Concept X:

Every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority - the scope of such authority to be always well defined whether by tradition, by resolution, by specific job description or by appropriate charters and bylaws. – AA Service Manual.

Letters

The Sound of Faith Being Restored

Hi, Don M. Panel 55, Area 27 (Louisiana) here. I am just getting some very limited and sporadic e-mail access after Hurricane Katrina, and we are overwhelmed and touched by the outpouring of AA love and support we are receiving from around the AA world. Along with many others, my family and I evacuated from the New Orleans area before Hurricane Katrina devastated our city and homes. AAs across the Gulf South are spread throughout the country.

Communication is tough. No one with whom I have spoken seriously expected the evacuation to last the length of time now suggested (months), much less the damages experienced. We are crushed that we will not be hosting ICYPAA this coming weekend, but we promise that we will make up for it when we get up and going.

Things are still very much in a confused state throughout the Gulf South. For now, we are trying to find each other, and verify that our fellows are safe, and determine whether we can be of service to them and their loved ones.

There have been hundreds of e-mails from AAs from everywhere AA is. In all appropriate cases, I will post these on our website, consistent of course with our traditions. I haven't yet had a chance to read all of them, much less to respond. Each one that I read brings tears to my eyes, and I am not one to cry. The love and fellowship in AA is powerful beyond words, at least words I can express. Please pray for our fellows.

Now the good news. I have been able to speak with numerous AAs with stories of great individual loss and personal tragedy. The tremendous hope and serenity that our steps and traditions bring is evident in all of them with whom I have spoken. The dominant theme in each conversation is "to whom can I be of service?" In the face of these challenges, a drink hasn't been an answer or solution to the scores of us with whom I have spoken. Challenged, confused, angry, lost and scared? Sure. Drunk or drinking? No.

We love each of you, and we will make it through these challenging times, following the excellent example of many, many of our fellows who have faced adversity and tragedy and actually shown gratitude

for their lives. Consistent with our primary purpose, and of course our three legacies of recovery, unity and service, we assure you that we will find suffering alcoholics to whom we hope to carry our experience, strength and hope.

We hope to meet with you soon on the (dry) road to happy destiny.

—Don M., Panel 55/Area 27

We Pay Our Own Way

Once again, the time of the Santa Barbara AA Convention is fast approaching. This is the ninth Convention Committee I have served on, and for the most part, it has been an absolute pleasure. Let me be clear, though, that I am not writing on behalf of the committee, and this letter doesn't represent its views. These are only my personal thoughts on some things I have observed over the years.

I am one of those people who loves AA conventions. I love the renewed commitment to my program that I get at a convention, the "common bond" I feel, the messages I hear, and the confirmation that we recovering alcoholics "absolutely insist on enjoying life."

I know there are those who don't look at the convention the same way I do. Whether they are uncomfortable in crowds of people, or don't like the noise, or for whatever reason, they just don't enjoy conventions. And they don't come, which is fine.

But every year there are those who clearly are attracted to at least part of the convention, but don't want to pay even the minimum, to register. These are the perfectly nice people who come to the registration table and say, "I just want to go to the Al-Anon split pitch," (or Old Timers Meeting, or whatever), "do I have to register?" And then leave in a huff when the answer is yes.

Then there are the ones who send in their registration forms showing payment for one convention registration, but two banquets. They say, "My husband [or wife] wants to come the banquet and hear the Saturday night speaker, but doesn't want to attend the rest of the convention." The question, stated or not, is, "Why should someone have to register if they are attending only one event?"

Finally, there are the dozens, perhaps hundreds, who, without registering, attend the Sunday morning "Spiritual Meeting." I've heard so many say how much they love the Sunday meeting, the sobriety

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

countdown, the warm fellowship that marks the conclusion of the convention, but then they add, “It’s an AA meeting. Why should I have to pay?”

The General Service Organization in New York addressed this in their “Frequently Asked Questions” regarding the 2005 International Convention:

Q. Must everyone register? I thought I didn’t have to pay to go to an A.A. event.

A. Yes. Everyone must register. Attendance at this special celebration is voluntary and, as responsible A.A. members, “we pay our own way.”

So, first of all, let’s look at the Santa Barbara Convention as a special event. According to the *AA Guidelines on Conferences, Conventions and Round-ups*, published by G.S.O., “Registration fees cover costs for special events.” In other words, *we pay our own way*.

What does it mean to pay our way in this case? Even though the committee makes every effort to keep costs down, there are many expenses associated with putting on a convention. There is the cost of the site itself. The food for the barbeque and banquet is a significant expense, and we must commit to a minimum number of meals for each— *whether we sell them or not*. Then you have the expense of bringing speakers in, including travel and lodging.

What does this add up to? It may surprise you to learn that it costs more than \$25,000 to fund our convention. The cost of the site alone—just the location for holding the meetings, the banquet, and so forth—is more than \$3,700, including security, which is required for insurance purposes. That means nearly 250 people must register, at \$15 each, just to pay for the site.

So what happens to the money the convention does bring in? Do we make a profit? It takes a year to plan the convention. Hopefully we begin the year with a “prudent reserve” fund. Believe me that isn’t always the case, but that’s the goal, and when we don’t have that “seed” money it’s tough to get started. There are deposits to be paid, printing and mailing expenses for the flyers, payment for T-shirts, coffee mugs and other items. Early registrations offset these expenses somewhat, but we can’t count on those to make up for a lack of start-up money.

Every year, then, we hope to bring in enough to cover our expenses, plus enough set aside to start off the following year’s convention. Any proceeds beyond that go directly to benefit AA – G.S.O. in New York, the local G.S.R., Hospitals and Institu-

tions, and our own Central Office. In this way the Santa Barbara AA community, through our convention, helps carry the message. As a bonus, we get to have a darn good time, too!

We do know there are members who simply cannot afford the full registration fee. Because of the generosity of the AA community there are scholarships available, thanks to those who contribute to the scholarship fund when they register themselves for the convention,

There is plenty of work during the convention, and all we ask of scholarship recipients is that they pay a small “token” registration, and volunteer a couple of hours to help out. Earning your convention registration that way is a great way to become “part of” AA here in Santa Barbara, and to have fun too. Many of our volunteers enjoyed themselves so much they didn’t want to leave at the end of their shift, and many have come back for a second or third shift, even when they didn’t have to. And there are those—inspirations to me—who started their very first days of sobriety helping at the convention and now celebrate multiple years of sobriety.

Unlike the International Convention, where you can’t get into the main speaker meetings without a badge, no one will stop you from attending any of those events at the Santa Barbara Convention. We don’t have badge police. That’s just not the way we’ve ever done things here.

So there’s nothing to prevent you from attending the Sunday morning Spiritual Meeting without registering, or the Old Timers meeting, or anything else if that’s what you want to do. No one will stop you. But please think for a moment of the fact that the convention wouldn’t be here if not for those who *do* register. There wouldn’t be the fine speakers who come from all over the country. There wouldn’t even be a building to hold the meetings in.

And to those who do register and attend the convention every year, thank you! You are the reason we have a convention. Without your support and enthusiasm, it wouldn’t happen. Though I don’t speak for them, I know from experience that your convention committee members look forward to seeing you again at this year’s event.

—Anonymous



September Birthdays

Liz T.....	1
Ann T.....	2
George T.....	2
Patrice.....	2
Cleaver.....	2
Cathy N.....	5
Margie H.....	5
Mike H.....	6
Bill F.....	7
George C.....	8
Jessica.....	10
Sami.....	11
Cody F.....	12
Rey A.....	12
Bob U.....	12
Trish H.....	13
Max M.....	16
Charlie A.....	16
Mary Jones.....	16
Marciel.....	17
Dee.....	19
Kathie O.....	20
Laurette.....	20
Emilio R.....	21
Beverley.....	33

The Messenger is published monthly by:

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

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 Step 11 and Tradition 11. Send submissions to DinahMason@aol.com

Central Office Statistics

During August your Central Office had:

AA information calls.....	618
Al-Anon.....	49
Referrals to other programs.....	44
12-step via answering service.....	39
Out-of-town visitors.....	14
12-step via office.....	6
Office walk-ins.....	688
Hits on our Web site.....	855

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.

Recovery Trivia

Answer to last month's question:

Q. What year was the first Santa Barbara AA Convention held?

A. 1951 at Earl Warren Park

Q. What were the first three cities AA groups were formed in and in what order?

A. See next month's Messenger.

WE APOLOGIZE. BECAUSE WE ARE TRYING TO IMPLEMENT OUR NEW POINT OF SALES SYSTEM AND BECAUSE THE MANAGER WAS GONE FOR A WEEK AT THE END OF THE MONTH WE DO NOT HAVE THE GROUP CONTRIBUTION NUMBERS AVAILABLE IN TIME TO PUBLISH THEM IN THIS ISSUE. NEXT MONTH'S MESSENGER WILL HAVE BOTH THE SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER NUMBERS FOR ALL GROUP CONTRIBUTIONS. IF THERE IS ANY PRESSING NEED TO KNOW THE NUMBERS FOR YOUR GROUP PRIOR TO THAT PLEASE CALL TIM AT CENTRAL OFFICE AND HE CAN FURNISH YOU THE INFORMATION ON A ONE-TO-ONE BASIS.

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

