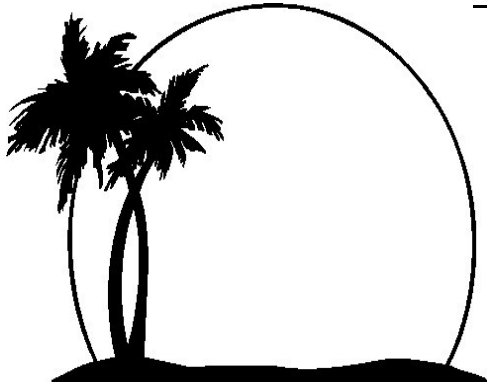


January, 2021

Your Santa Barbara Central Office

Presents



The Messenger

14 W. Anapamu Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 962-3332 www.santabarbaraaa.com

HAPPY
New Year
2021

The Manager's Corner

BY TIM W.

I define hitting bottom as “things getting worse faster than I could lower my standards.” A line I’m sure I borrowed from someone, somewhere along the line. Prior to coming to Alcoholics Anonymous, I was sure that my lot in life was due to bad breaks, unfortunate circumstances, and people who didn’t understand. The possibility that my drinking had anything to do with the way things were didn’t ever really occur to me, even though people were unkind enough to suggest it.

It is really only in retrospect can I see how big of a part denial played in my disease. And how big of a part it has played in the lives of those who've come after me. It is truly mindboggling to be sober and to watch other people attempt, by every form of self-

deception and experimentation, to prove themselves exceptions to the rule: that once an alcoholic, always and alcoholic.

It is January, so of course my mind is on the First Step. We're talking about it in our meetings, and we're beginning to see the yearly influx of New Year's newcomers. I also got sober in this month, so I always reflect back on how low my standards actually got before I was able to see that I had no power and no control over alcohol once I began to drink it.

Thanks for being there for me. Thanks for helping me understand.

- Tim W.

[illegible]

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IMPORTANT: Please indicate what Group is making the donation or what individual member is making the donation



Scan QR Code for payment

Member Submission

A MESSAGE OF GRATITUDE FOR SANTA BARBARA A.A.

BY ANNA R. (SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA)

This article has been extremely difficult to write. It's hard for me to put into words everything AA has done for me, and I hope I can do it justice in this short writing. It's still unbelievable to me that I'm sober. I never thought I could have or deserved the life I currently live. That's not to say I have loved every single minute of the four years that I've been sober. A lot of it, in fact, has been difficult and I wouldn't change a minute of it.

Almost five years ago, I finally conceded to my innermost self that I was an alcoholic and that I was powerless over alcohol. I had never been willing to admit it, but when I did, my whole world changed. The change happened slowly, and sort of without me realizing it. For the first time I was around other women who were my age and trying to get sober. They lived like I lived which helped me hear the message for the first time. I wasn't alone anymore, and I wanted to live. All of a sudden, I had freedom of choice. All of my decisions weren't based on how I was going to get drunk or loaded anymore. I was a ball of anxiety, insecurity, and fear. People loved me through that, and showed me how they lived and functioned in the world.

I feel extremely fortunate because service has always been a part of my sobriety, and I can't imagine life without it. It happened because I helped set up and break down the meetings I attended. I said yes to everything because that's what I heard old-timers tell me to

do. I learned that when all other measures had failed, work with another alcoholic would save the day. I realized that I wasn't as afraid or insecure when I was helping someone else. I grew to love being of service. I've met some of the best people in the world and had the most incredible experiences because I was willing to be of service.

No part of this year has been easy for me outside of everything COVID-19 related. I've walked through a breakup, moving, death, and a medical issue. In the past, those things would have driven me to drink and use. That was never a thought or an option for me. I never felt alone though and I was always connected. I've learned some really powerful lessons and things about myself in 2020.

I was elected chair of SWACYPAA 7 Host recently, and the road there was challenging. It still is challenging and will continue to be challenging, much like my own sobriety. I still wouldn't change it though. I feel really passionate about this conference and what it represents.

I was 21 the first time I tried to get sober and I had no idea that YPAA was even a thing. I didn't know that I could be sober and have a great time doing it. I'm so stoked that young people in the Santa Barbara area can have a YPAA conference here this year. The community we have here in Santa Barbara is just so special to me that I can't wait to show everyone in the six states making up SWACYPAA what Santa Barbara AA looks like.

Being on this committee has changed me for the better. We'd love to have anyone come to our business meetings, take a position, and help make this incredible. We meet the 2nd Thursday of every month at 6 pm and the 4th Sunday of every month at 1 pm. Come check us out!

*"For the first time I was
around other women
who were my age and
trying to get sober."*

Did you enjoy reading this submission?

The Messenger relies on submissions from our members. Please tell us about your own experience in Alcoholics Anonymous. Send submissions (of any length) to:

manager@santabarbaraAA.com

On the First Step

"We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable."

TOMORROW NEVER COMES

*He had promised himself many times to quit
but it was never the right day*

BY DARYL R. (OREGON)

As I sat on my couch that morning, it was just another day. It had started like so many other days. I got up early, took my child to day care and my wife to work. I would start the day with the best intentions of getting some great work done and really catching up on things for my job. I pulled my computer out, hooked it up and then the thought hit me that it would be great to have 'just a couple of beers' to help me get past the boredom of the administrative tasks that lay ahead.

I only lightly considered that I had gone through the 'two-to-three drink' scenario hundreds of times without a single success, but somehow my brain thought today might be different. So, I went to the local mini-mart, bought a 12-pack of cold beer. Deep down, I knew that when I got home, I would drink every one of them. The truth is, I drank one of them on the way home from the store. That too had become a habit. I had become a daily drinker in the previous five years.

Before that, I had been a binge drinker. Although, the binges were becoming more and more frequent. I had started hiding my liquor. I lied constantly about my drinking. I would leave town "for work," so that I could be free to drink as much as I wanted and not be seen by anyone I knew. I could get as sloppy as I wanted. Often, I told myself, "I have to quit drinking." But then, I'd think, "What's different about today? I'll quit tomorrow." Tomorrow never came.

On this particular morning, at around 9:30, I sat there filled with self-hatred for "doing it again." I had finished ten beers. I was concocting lies and explanations for my wife and trying to make up work I hadn't done to report to my boss. But meanwhile, I was also figuring out whether or not I could get away with another 12-pack. I wanted it for that evening. I thought I'd cook out on the grill. I was a good husband and always tried to help out with the activities of the family. If

you're a drinker like I was, you'll understand the irony in that statement.

But then, in that moment, I somehow knew that I was done drinking. Tomorrow had come.

I visited my first Alcoholics Anonymous meeting that evening, still smelling of alcohol. I don't really recall how I knew about AA, but I did know that's where you went if you were an alcoholic. So, I went and I began the greatest journey I could never imagine.

I don't remember much of that meeting, but I do remember hearing all the things that were good for me – "progress not perfection," "attraction, not promotion," that AA was "self supporting." But more than the words I heard, I felt something different. While the people they were alcoholic, imperfect, troubled, they were still laughing and smiling.

But then I heard someone say that it had taken God to get him sober and that that was what the program was all about. There it was. A deal breaker for me. I had separated myself from all things religious or God-related when I was 19.

But, I took the book of Alcoholics Anonymous home that evening and began reading. I read the first 164 pages by the end of the next day and was overwhelmed with how much sense it made. I think it only fair to say that I also thought it was very poorly written, elementary

in structure, and I certainly could help fix it up a bit!

I'm still sober today. I have not had a drink or a drug since that June day in 2007. I have thought about drinking, but the compulsion is gone and I've developed a relationship with God, as I understand God.

I now get to help other drunks like me reach out and gain their own understanding and trust in God, as they understand him. Alcoholics Anonymous, the God I still don't understand, the 12 Steps, my friends, my sponsors, my sponsees, and all the thousands of meetings I have attended, have allowed me to gain a peace that I never knew I wanted.

—From the February 2015 Grapevine



December Birthdays

| <u>Member</u> | <u>Years</u> |
|---------------|--------------|
| Lorenzo F. | 1 |
| Anezka | 2 |
| Ali E. | 3 |
| James V. | 4 |
| Joe R. | 5 |
| Susan B. | 5 |
| Jennifer S. | 5 |
| Maggie T. | 6 |
| Jim M. | 7 |
| Patty H. | 7 |
| Syd W. | 8 |
| Lisa AW. | 12 |
| Dave J. | 13 |
| Norm V. | 16 |
| Cheryl G. | 17 |
| Clay C. | 20 |
| Manny B. | 21 |
| Cindy T. | 32 |

The Messenger is published by
YOUR Central Office.

Please send submissions to:
manager@santabarbaraAA.com

***Have an AA birthday? Please let
your Central Office know so that we
can print it in The Messenger.***

Central Office Statistics

During December, your Central Office had:

| | |
|----------------------|-------|
| AA Info Calls | 96 |
| Alanon Referrals | 0 |
| Other Referrals | 0 |
| 12 Step Calls | 4 |
| 12 Step Office | 1 |
| Out of Town Visitors | 0 |
| Office Walk Ins | 74 |
| Website Pageviews | 5,529 |

"It becomes plain that the group must survive or the individual will not."

Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions, page 130

On the First Tradition

"Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on A.A. unity."

IT WORKS AT WORK (IF YOU WORK IT)

BY LORI B. (GLENDDORA, CALIFORNIA)

I've been sober for a little more than three years, and each year (heck, each month) of sobriety makes it clearer and clearer how little I know about living life on life's terms. But it's also clearer and clearer that I don't have to do it alone; I have a basis for living in the program of Alcoholics Anonymous. I feel as though each year sober I gain about seven years of emotional growth, so at age fifty I'm taking on life as a college-aged woman, and if I'm still sober at age seventy, emotionally I'll be 141 years old! My first sponsor used to say I think too much, and I guess that still holds true. My mind runs like a horse that's escaped its corral. But I'm in the process of recreating myself, which is tricky any way you look at it, but trickier around people who knew me "when" and don't know where I'm coming from now, since I choose to remain anonymous.

So here I am, growing along emotional and spiritual lines, going to work forty hours a week with people who are insecure, back-stabbing, and control-seeking. In other words, people just like me--except that I now have a program that suggests such things as taking a daily inventory, turning my life and my will over to my Higher Power and promptly admitting when I'm wrong, and avoiding gossip. I've worked with these people for ten years, and for seven of them I was in the thick of every nasty bit of slanderous, back-stabbing event. So, how do I survive now? Do I throw their defects in their faces and stand superior, waving my new insight aloft like a banner? Do I withdraw from all personal conversations and take all my breaks alone, hiding in the bathroom or in my car? By relating her difficulties working with personalities who weren't in a program, my sponsor has helped me realize that being superior and unavailable isn't the best or the only alternative.

Tradition One has kept me from going off the deep end at work. In the section about Tradition One, the "Twelve and Twelve" says that we realize we are but a small part of a great whole, that it becomes plain that

the group must survive or the individual will not, and that the struggle for wealth, power, and prestige tears humanity apart. Of course, this refers to us alcoholics. But when I apply it to my workplace, I can find some measure of peace in a stress-filled, dysfunctional environment.

First, when I refrain from seeing myself as the center of the universe and see myself as just one more person showing up to earn wages to survive, my ego deflates and I don't need to get embroiled in the latest gossip or even be liked in order to feel safe. Second, when I realize that without these other people, or another group just like them, the company wouldn't exist, I appreciate the job I have and accept that working with others is just a fact of life unless I want to work security on the graveyard shift at a cemetery. Third, when I watch others vie for morsels of power, haggle and complain about wages, and use passive-aggressive behavior, I can see it for what it is: sad and pathetic. Seeing that allows me to feel gratitude that I don't have to go there with them.

I am not a saint. It's a struggle to stay not just in the game but above the fray, and sometimes I slip. I always feel disappointed in myself afterward until I make an amends. Then I get right with my Higher Power, by admitting my defects and turning them over once again, knowing that I'm okay as long as I'm working from the heart. However, by applying the message found in Tradition One to my workplace, I can find a relative amount of sanity. All I have to do is keep sight of the bigger picture, keep my ego right-sized, and appreciate the fact that people in other positions allow the company to function and me to earn the wages I need to survive.

I use Tradition One when interacting with family, too, but that's another story. What I was like before sobriety was desperate. What I'm like today is hopeful and willing. For this, I thank my Higher Power and the program of Alcoholics Anonymous, which has provided me with fellowship and the tools for living a sober and spiritually based life.

—From the December 2000 Grapevine

"The principle that we shall find no enduring strength until we first admit complete defeat is the main taproot from which our whole Society has sprung and flowered."

Group Contributions to Central Office

| GROUP | Oct 20 | Nov 20 | Dec 20 | TOTAL |
|------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| 10th & 11th Step Prayer & Med | 0.00 | 95.00 | 0.00 | 95.00 |
| 83-87 Group (pages) | 600.00 | 500.00 | 800.00 | 1,900.00 |
| 9 Palms Meeting | 40.00 | 0.00 | 181.00 | 221.00 |
| Action Participation-SB #133 | 62.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 62.00 |
| Alano Friday Nooner | 10.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 10.00 |
| Armed with Facts | 32.00 | 51.00 | 0.00 | 83.00 |
| As Bill Sees It- Wednesday | 4.00 | 4.00 | 4.00 | 12.00 |
| Back-Basics-Young People | 142.20 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 142.20 |
| Back to Basics NHIII#161 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 282.00 | 282.00 |
| Bed Head Ladies | 145.80 | 179.40 | 195.00 | 520.20 |
| Big Book Comes Alive Women's Meeting | 0.00 | 64.00 | 49.20 | 113.20 |
| Briefly Big Book-Goleta | 0.00 | 50.00 | 0.00 | 50.00 |
| Cambridge Group | 0.00 | 0.00 | 90.00 | 90.00 |
| Came to Believe Candlelight | 0.00 | 80.00 | 0.00 | 80.00 |
| Carpinteria Homeboys | 0.00 | 0.00 | 200.00 | 200.00 |
| Casa Serena Thurs-Women's Big Book Study | 0.00 | 32.00 | 0.00 | 32.00 |
| Conscious Contact | 0.00 | 20.00 | 0.00 | 20.00 |
| Eye Opener | 225.00 | 380.00 | 225.00 | 830.00 |
| For Women Only Group | 0.00 | 0.00 | 40.00 | 40.00 |
| For Women Only Thursday Night | 0.00 | 20.00 | 0.00 | 20.00 |
| Foundation Group | 22.00 | 79.00 | 100.00 | 201.00 |
| Goleta Sun. Night Speaker | 0.00 | 0.00 | 512.00 | 512.00 |
| Grace | 12.00 | 10.00 | 23.00 | 45.00 |
| Grateful Group | 0.00 | 60.00 | 0.00 | 60.00 |
| Harbor Group | 901.00 | 282.00 | 462.00 | 1,645.00 |
| Here & Now #089 | 0.00 | 20.00 | 0.00 | 20.00 |
| It's a Hell of a Deal #139 | 20.00 | 48.00 | 2.00 | 70.00 |
| Junkyard Dogs | 161.00 | 191.70 | 29.00 | 381.70 |
| Just the Black Print | 50.00 | 20.00 | 40.00 | 110.00 |
| KCB | 486.39 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 486.39 |
| Keeping it Real | 0.00 | 0.00 | 7.00 | 7.00 |
| Key Group-ALL #177 | 110.00 | 37.00 | 22.00 | 169.00 |
| Ladies Night Thursday | 0.00 | 0.00 | 20.00 | 20.00 |
| Meeting At The Mall | 0.00 | 0.00 | 30.00 | 30.00 |
| Memorial Meditation Meeting | 0.00 | 24.00 | 0.00 | 24.00 |
| Men Who Have Lost Their Legs #164 | 56.00 | 137.00 | 42.00 | 235.00 |
| Mustard Seed #163 | 0.00 | 90.00 | 0.00 | 90.00 |
| Noon at the Vet's #006 | 7.33 | 25.00 | 0.00 | 32.33 |
| Rigorous Honesty #067 | 120.00 | 120.00 | 0.00 | 240.00 |
| Saturday Night Sobriety Grp #130 | 20.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 20.00 |
| Schooner Group #114 | 0.00 | 40.00 | 0.00 | 40.00 |
| Serenity Sisters | 200.00 | 0.00 | 25.00 | 225.00 |
| Start Your Day Right #156 | 1,875.00 | 1,275.00 | 1,845.00 | 4,995.00 |
| Stepping Stones Women's Mtg #068 | 80.00 | 0.00 | 140.00 | 220.00 |
| Sunday Night Speaker Meeting Goleta | 0.00 | 2.00 | 0.00 | 2.00 |
| Sundowner Friday | 0.00 | 50.00 | 70.00 | 120.00 |
| Sundowner Group #011 | 45.00 | 316.00 | 304.00 | 665.00 |
| Sundowner Group #011 Sunday | 0.00 | 50.00 | 0.00 | 50.00 |
| SWACYPAA VII | 97.50 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 97.50 |
| The Mother Group | 14.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 14.00 |
| Upon Awakening-Daily Reflections | 60.00 | 19.34 | 0.00 | 79.34 |
| Women's BB Study Carpinteria | 25.00 | 10.00 | 0.00 | 35.00 |
| TOTAL | 5,623.22 | 4,381.44 | 5,739.20 | 15,743.86 |

CENTRAL OFFICE

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