

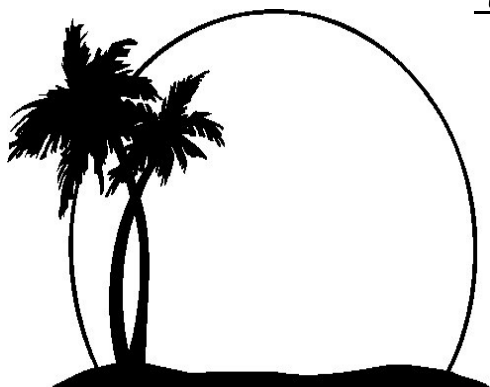
June, 2021

Your Santa Barbara Central Office

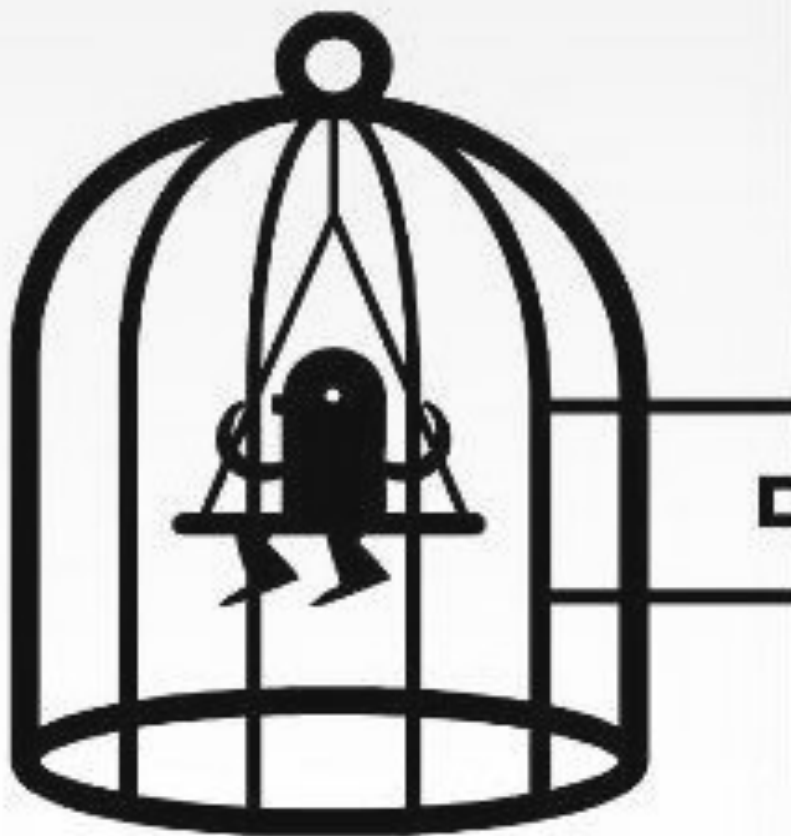
Presents

The Messenger

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



“Our defects of character are the bars of a cage. The central point is not to study the bars, but to get out of the cage.”



The Manager's Corner

BY TIM W.

"Were entirely ready." Those were the words I struggled with when I was new in recovery. As usual, after wrestling with it on my own, I finally got desperate enough to ask my Sponsor how I could ever be entirely ready. He gave me that smile, the one that that used to infuriate me sometimes, and finally said, "just get as ready as you can." He then reminded me of the defects he had assigned me. He called them EGGPALS, which stood for envy, greed, gluttony, pride, anger, lust and sloth. He told me that those seven were what I should work on as far as willingness was concerned. He told me that they were enough to get me started, and he also said that since I had come to believe, and had made a decision, I should remember that I had help available to me from a Higher Power, and that I could use that fact to generate the willingness to be entirely ready.

I know that in the length of time that I have

been sober, that Step, and the one following it, are the ones that I have continued to work on the most. The defects are still with me. But I can also say they don't rule me the way they used to.

That same guy, that Sponsor, also showed me how to get into action in Alcoholics Anonymous so that I wouldn't sit around consumed by maudlin self-pity about the way those defects had played out in my life up to that point. He also taught me about our Traditions. For that, I will be forever grateful. I've heard it shared that the Steps will keep you from suicide and the Traditions will keep you from homicide. Funny, yes, but it also has a little truth to it.

Looks like we may actually be winding down from all of the pandemic stuff. Let's be grateful for that. And let's be grateful for each other.

XX

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12 TRADITIONS WORKSHOP

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AND
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12 Week Workshop
Reading and learning about
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FOR MORE INFORMATION

AAGRAPEVINE, Inc.

Dear Conference Members:

Several people have asked when the revised Preamble will be seen in print. In keeping with the final advisory action of the 71st General Service Conference, the A.A. Preamble revision replacing the words "men and women" with "people" will appear in the July issue of Grapevine, and its translation will be in the July/August issue of La Viña. Both of these issues will be mailed, and posted online, on June 15, 2021. After June 15, as new Grapevine, La Viña and A.A.W.S. literature or reprints go to press, and as web pages are updated, the language will change wherever the A.A. Preamble appears.

The June issue of Grapevine was on press when the Conference requested the change, so this is the first opportunity to make the adjustment in the magazines.

We've also received a number of inquiries about whether this negatively impacts the editorial independence of Grapevine. Please remember that the Grapevine Board, Publisher and Editors discussed this topic for an entire year over a series of board meetings. Ultimately it was agreed that Grapevine has the right of decision and foundational editorial independence. We felt that such a change would affect the groups as a whole and in keeping with Tradition 4, we sought the input from those it might affect by sending the discussion to the General Service Conference.

The topic was actively discussed in groups across the United States and Canada for two years over both the 70th and 71st General Service conference panels. As a result of those conversations the Delegates of the General Service Conference passed a series of votes, in a sequence of events that culminated with the final advisory action requesting:

"The Preamble revision replacing the words "men and women" with the word "people" be presented to the General Service Board for approval as the new revised A.A. Preamble.

Having been accepted by the General Service Board and forwarded to Grapevine for fulfilment, the Publisher and editorial staff at A.A. Grapevine went to work to carry out the will of the Conference with love and service.

I hope you are all having a wonderful experience reporting out the results of the 71st General Service Conference and thank each of you so very much for your dedicated service.



Josh Eggleston
General Service Trustee
A.A. Grapevine Board Chair



May Birthdays

<u>Member</u>	<u>Years</u>
Trina O.	1
Laura L.	1
Rhiannon	1
Derek	1
Theresa A.	3
Barrett G.	3
Bruce H.	4
Leslie	7
Squeak	8
John H.	9
Pat C.	9
Jack	11
Jeff S.	16
Amanda	17
Gary I.	18
Richard K.	18
Robin G.	20
Mimi D.	27
Curtis T.	32
Rick H.	36
Lynda W.	44
Barbara H.	46

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 May, your Central Office had:

AA Info Calls	90
Alanon Referrals	2
Other Referrals	0
12 Step Calls	1
12 Step Office	0
Out of Town Visitors	2
Office Walk Ins	163
Website Pageviews	6,907

"At the very least, we shall have to come to grips with some of our worst character defects and take action toward their removal as quickly as we can."

Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions, page 69

On the Sixth Step

"Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character."

RELAPSE AFTER 11 YEARS

BY AHMED J. (CORAL SPRINGS, FLORIDA)

Honestly, I never thought I would wind up in jail, which is where I'm writing this letter right now. In fact, I am now incarcerated in the very same jail where I spoke as an AA member several times while sober.

I originally quit drinking when I was 25. From 17 until 25, I ran and ripped with the best of them. I stole, I lied, I cheated. The usual variables were involved. I felt that I didn't fit in, as I was originally from Baghdad, Iraq. We moved to the United States when I was 5 and I never felt like I belonged here. Also, my parents weren't very spiritual. I never had any concept of God growing up. After multiple arrests for DUI and possession and failures at four colleges, I finally hit bottom.

In December of 2002, I found myself virtually homeless—not for the first time—and I had nowhere to go. I got a job at a pizzeria in a town north of where my parents were living. It was there that I was introduced to recovery and the AA Fellowship. Notice that I prefer to call AA a "Fellowship" rather than a "program."

Since I had nowhere to go outside of work, I started going to meetings with the manager of the pizzeria where I worked. What a "God thing" it was that the manager was in recovery. I worked the Steps with a sponsor and, by the grace of God, had a spiritual awakening. I stayed sober for 11 years and got the opportunity to help many people along the way. I learned that helping other people actually also helps me.

While sober, I got married to a wonderful woman and we were blessed with two healthy, brilliant (of course, all parents think their kids are brilliant) children. My wife, who's not in recovery, and I enjoyed all of the gifts that sobriety brings. We went on frequent vacations and lived in a good home. Everything we ever needed was provided for, by the grace of God. I went back to school and became a professor of speech communication studies at a university. I also got my state certificate to become a substance abuse counselor. Life

was pretty good.

However, I had never worked a proper Step Six or Seven. Or I hadn't arrived at a proper understanding of them. During those 11 years of so-called sobriety, I was slowly moving closer to a drink (and other things). My conscious contact with God was diminishing. My wife and I would have fights because at times she would not want me to go to AA meetings. She wanted me to stay at home.

From the standpoint of my health, I found out that I had pretty bad kidney damage and I was put on a steroid medication to help my kidneys stay strong. As a side effect of the medication, the blood flow was taken away from my right hip, causing me major pain. I went to an orthopedic doctor and he prescribed a pain medication and I relapsed on it.

Imagine a lion, asleep for 11 years, and it suddenly awakens. That was what it was like. There I was—professor, substance abuse counselor, father, husband, son, brother—and I was once again on a run. My relapse caused me to be fired from two colleges and a rehab. My wife left me twice.

I was admitted to three rehabs and two psychiatric wards. I started indulging in crime to support my habit. Eventually my crime spree ended with me in jail, which is where I am now.

I share a cell and a toilet with five other guys. The food is horrible here. I miss my kids dearly. But the good news is that my wife and I have since made up. But this is the kicker: When I was first arrested, I was in terrible shape emotionally, as one can imagine. But as time has gone by, my spirituality is coming back. I actually thank God today for bringing me to jail. God always does for me what I cannot do for myself.

I am sober now. I am free again. I pray daily, meditate and help others when I can. My conscious contact with a Higher Power is coming back.

I can't wait to leave here and fix my hip and start going to meetings. Meetings and the Fellowship and God are what I need to stay sober. I can never ever forget that.

—From the September 2019 Grapevine

"I am sober now. I am free again. I pray daily, meditate and help others when I can. "

On Tradition Six

"An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose."

BREWING NEW IDEAS

When a group treasurer discovered a financial predicament, the members stepped up with a plan

BY WOODY R. (STOCKTON, CALIFORNIA)

A while back, our group's treasurer passed away and the status of our group's finances was unknown. The first order of business after his death was to audit our group's account.

The audit revealed that the Seventh Tradition basket contributions were not covering the group's expenses. Turns out, our former treasurer had been keeping our group afloat with his own out-of-pocket contributions. Without his contributions, our group's bank balance now began to rapidly decrease. Contributions to AA service entities were immediately stopped.

Our group's three-year lease on our meeting space was soon coming to an end. As the new treasurer, I wasn't willing to sign a three-year lease. Our bank balance was decreasing at a rate that would zero-out in about nine months. So I negotiated a six-month lease in the interim. We now have a month-to-month lease.

We found that the biggest drain to our expenses was coffee, coffee creamer and sugar. Also, meeting attendance was declining, mostly because of the disruption caused by those who were coming into our meetings looking only for a restroom or a free cup of coffee.

At our monthly business meeting, the group decided to stop serving coffee. Shortly after that business meeting, the rumor spread around town, via social media, that our group had closed its doors. There is an old saying that goes: A lie can travel halfway around the world before the truth can put its socks on. This misinformation about our group lingers still today.

A few weeks later, our group decided to resume

serving coffee, but also decided that we would no longer buy coffee, sugar or coffee creamer. Group members were free to contribute these items on their own. The group would continue to buy coffee cups and other group supplies.

Fortunately, our group's financial situation began to turn around. Membership slowly increased. Coffee and coffee supplies continued to be available through voluntary contributions. The group was able to resume making monthly contributions to GSO, our area and district, and to our Central Office. We were also able to buy new books for our book studies. Other groups in town took notice. One group even put out a special can for coffee contributions, telling its members that the group's Seventh Tradition basket contributions would not be used for coffee expenses.

Other groups around town are beginning to realize that coffee expenses are keeping them from supporting GSO and other AA service entities. Many members now bring their own coffee or bottled water to meetings.

The Fourth Tradition cautions against doing things that would harm other groups or AA as a whole. Wasteful use of Seventh Tradition funds could be considered harm to other groups or AA as a whole, if such waste means that local, area and world services are not financially supported.

It's been nearly two years since our group took what was considered drastic and unheard of action regarding coffee at our meetings. I am happy to report that our meeting attendance has increased and we've maintained a healthy checking account balance. It's

our wish that our experience will inspire other groups to look at their overall expenses and decide if they can find new ways to support AA and help carry the message of AA to those who have yet to find their way to our doors.

—From the May 2009 Grapevine

"A lie can travel halfway around the world before the truth can put its socks on. This misinformation about our group lingers still today."

CENTRAL OFFICE

14 W. Anapamu Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93031
(805) 962-3332

