

June 2023

Your Central Office presents

The Messenger

14 W. Anapamu Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93101

(805) 962-3332 www.santabarbaraaa.com

FOUNDERS DAY



Thank you founders! Without you, there would be no us.

Fun fact, Bill was 6 months sober when he met Bob, time to get into action!

June 10, 1935 - Founders' Day - the (un)official Beginning of Alcoholics Anonymous!!

AA began in Akron, Ohio, as the outcome of a meeting between Bill W., a New York stock speculator in Akron on business, and Dr. Bob S., an Akron surgeon. Both had been hopeless, chronic alcoholics. Hopeless to me means wanting to stop drinking but can't. Before they met, Bill and Dr. Bob had both been in contact with the Oxford Group, which was a mostly nonalcoholic fellowship that emphasized universal spiritual values in daily living. Clergyman Dr. Samuel Shoemaker led the Oxford Group in the United States at that time. Under this spiritual influence, and with the help and invitation to join the Oxford Group in 1934 by old-time friend, Ebby T., Bill had gotten sober. (Bill writes about this meeting with Ebby in "Bill's Story" in the Big Book, pages 8-11.) Bill maintained his sobriety by working with other alcoholics. Yet, before meeting Dr. Bob, none of these other alcoholics had recovered. At the same time, Dr. Bob's Oxford Group membership in Akron had not helped him enough to achieve sobriety. When Dr. Bob met Bill on his business trip, the effect on the doctor was immediate. This time, Dr. Bob found himself face-to-face with a fellow sufferer who was succeeding and who "knew his stuff."

Bill emphasized that alcoholism was a malady of the mind, emotions, and body. Bill learned this important fact from Dr. William D. Silkworth of Towns Hospital in New York. Bill had often been a patient of Dr. Silkworth. Though a physician, Dr. Bob had not known alcoholism to be a disease. Responding to Bill's convincing ideas, Dr. Bob soon got sober, never to drink again. This sparked the founding of AA.

Both men immediately set to work with alcoholics at Akron's City Hospital. One patient quickly achieved complete sobriety. This patient became AA #3, the man on the bed, whose name is Bill D. In June 1935, he entered the Akron City Hospital to detox for the last time. These three men made up the nucleus of the first AA group, though the name Alcoholics Anonymous was not yet used. Bill and Dr. Bob began to work on how to best approach alcoholics and began trying to help men recover from alcoholism. They realized their system had helped over 40 men stay sober for more than 2 years!

The idea of a book developed and today the Big Book has sold over 30 million copies, making it one of the bestselling books of all time. The Library of Congress designated it as one of the 88 "Books that Shaped America."

There are many celebrations of Founders Day that happen around the country. One is held in Akron every year on the June 10 th anniversary. Maybe next year, we could all go!! (www.akronaa.org).

Happy Birthday!

SAVE THE DATE!

— EXTRAORDINARY —
WOMEN

— 4 WOMEN = 265 YEARS OF SOBRIETY!!! —

EACH WILL SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCE, STRENGTH & HOPE WITH US!

JOIN US TO CELEBRATE

- **MISS GLORIA M** - October 21, 1957
- **MISS JOAN S** - June 15, 1957
- **MISS FRANCES B** - February 27, 1957
- **MISS ETHEL N** - June 15, 1955


Saturday June 17, 2023

4:00 Pacific Time
 5:00 Mountain Time
 6:00 Central Time
 7:00 Eastern Time

Zoom ID: 735 213 0514 • Password: 4021

Member	Years
Patrick C.	1
Elisa S.	2
Sarah S.	2
Skye N.	3
Anastacia	4
Chris H.	4
Andrew C.	5
Luca	5
Bruce H.	6
Dave P.	10
Fernando	10
Ilana T.	15
Gary I.	20
Steven E.	20
Richard K.	20
Brian B.	21
Luis W.	23
Carmen U.	24
Andy C.	31
Sharon F.	36
Kevin W.-S.	42
Barbara H.	48
Matt J.	50
Armando R.	54

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.*

S.B. Intergroup (IGR)
Meets the 2nd Tues. of the
month
6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Zoom ID - 905 623 8082
Password - 184289

Hospitals & Institutions (H&I)
Service Committee Meeting
Meets the 2nd Mon. of the
month
at Your Central Office
5:30 Orientation for new
members
Business meeting as usual
6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

SB Central Office - Office
Volunteer Shifts

Prerequisite - One year of
sobriety. Duties include, but not
limited to: answering the
phone, literature / medallion
sales, organizing, stocking
shelves.
Open Office Shifts: Mondays
10:00 - 2:00 p.m.
Saturdays 10:00 - 2:00 p.m.

General Service Committee
(GSR)
District 23
Meets the 1st Mon. of the
month
6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Zoom ID - 854 898 114
Password - 061035

AA Info Calls.....80
Alanon Referrals.....5
Out of Towners..... 4
Office Walk Ins.....203
12 Step Answering...1



Scan QR Code for payment

Become a Central Office Supporting Member!!

Supporting Member Donation Coupon

I would like to become a supporting member of the Santa Barbara AA Central Office and help it to carry the message of recovery and be there for the alcoholic who still suffers.

Enclosed is my first contribution of \$_____. I will continue to donate this amount on a (circle one) monthly, quarterly, or annual basis.

If you are already a supporting member, would you please be so kind and update your contact information so we may keep our records accurate?

Venmo and credit cards accepted: Venmo: @SBCentralOffice

Credit Card: Name on

Card:_____

Card Number:_____

Expiration Date:_____ Security Code:_____

Zip Code:_____

Update my records:

Name: _____

Address:_____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address:_____

If making a donation by check, please mail to: AA Central Office; 14 W. Anapamu St., Santa Barbara, CA 93101

I would like to receive my monthly newsletter, The Messenger, via email or snail mail, or I can pick one up at my meeting. (circle one).

If making a donation by credit card, feel free to scan and email the coupon to:

Manager@SantaBarbaraAA.com



ANNOUNCEMENT!

New Central Office Hours

Due to the low volume of activity, Central Office will no longer be open on Saturdays.

Our hours going forward will be M-F – 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Thank you!!

The Meeting Guide App



This is the first installment of a new Box 4-5-9 series on the technology that is changing the way Alcoholics Anonymous communicates to suffering alcoholics and interacts with its members.

Josh R., a web developer, did most of his drinking in New York City. In 2013, he decided a geographic would help and he moved to San Jose. Unlike most geographics, this one turned out to be fruitful — for both Josh and for Alcoholics Anonymous.

Once in San Jose, Josh got sober, found a sponsor and started going to A.A. meetings in the area. Only problem was, the local central office website — while it listed meetings — wasn't so user-friendly for someone using a mobile phone. Like most A.A. websites, the site had been developed before mobile design came into general use.

Such sites work fine for someone on a computer, but these days, A.A. sites get more than twice as many visitors from handheld devices as from traditional desktops or laptops.

"Essentially what I did," Josh says, "is take all the meeting listings and export them to an Excel file with links to directions, and then made my own little app, just for myself. That's where the germ of the idea for the Meeting Guide app developed — just me trying to find meetings."

From early sobriety, Josh has been a supporter of intergroups and central offices. The intergroup rep from his home group suggested that Josh develop his personal app into an app that all A.A.s in Santa Clara County could use. Josh agreed and conferred with the Santa Clara County central office.

Eventually, Josh went further than originally envisioned. He came up with the idea to develop a WordPress plug-in that intergroup/central offices, areas and districts across the country (and the world) could use, so that the meetings they listed on their sites could be added to the app and automatically

updated every 12 hours.

A turning point for Josh was making a presentation of his app to the National A.A. Technology Workshop (NAATW), where he received support and feedback. The free app was launched in November 2015 with seven connected A.A. websites — those in Austin, Mesa (Arizona), Oakland, Philadelphia, Portland (Oregon), San Francisco and San Jose.

Today, Meeting Guide is connected to 326 local A.A. organization websites. Getting connected wasn't easy for all of them. Some local sites had to find new web servants, while others had to draft new policies and pro- cedures, sign up for new web hosting, and try new soft- ware. In several cases, group consciences were sought to settle concerns about the Sixth Tradition and the future of the app: Would it always be free? Does this represent

affiliation with an outside entity?

In an era when smartphones dominate, Meeting Guide is a simple, useful tool for newcomers and oldtimers alike — one that standardizes meeting information so that it is always readily available and up to date. Recognizing this, Josh did something unusual, but which is also completely within the spirit of the Fellowship: he gave the Meeting Guide app to Alcoholics Anonymous, for free.

"I realized," Josh says, "that the only way we could continue to grow was to pass it on."

In the fall of 2018, A.A.W.S., Inc. licensed Meeting Guide and put together a working group of consultants, employees and trustees to help bring it to fruition, and an updated version was released in summer 2019. Lois L. is a member of the steering committee for the NAATW and an administrator on the Technology in A.A. (TIAA) online forum. As an A.A. member with 30 years sobriety

"Nothing matters more to A.A.'s future welfare than the manner in which we use the colossus of modern communication. Used unselfishly and well, it can produce results surpassing our present imagination."

— Bill W.

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G.S.O.'s A.A. Website: www.aa.org

Subscriptions: Individual, \$3.50 per year; group, \$6.00 for each unit of 10 per year. Check—made payable to A.A.W.S., Inc.—should accompany order. To have issues delivered directly to your inbox, register your email on the A.A. Digital Subscription Service on G.S.O.'s Website.

Note on anonymity: From time to time in this publication full names and/or pictures of G.S.O. employees, Class A trustees and other nonalcoholics are used. The anonymity of A.A. members is maintained, as they are identified throughout by first name and last initial only.

and a professional digital strategist and user experience (UX) consultant, she also advises G.S.O. on digital matters and technical strategy. She says, “What A.A.W.S. has done by acquiring and updating the app is to enable this vital piece of technology to live on forever, to be continually updated and improved upon. Providing the app is what G.S.O. is supposed to do — which is to disseminate public information on a national level for all A.A.s. It’s also important to point out that, although the app is provided to the end user for free, it costs money and time to maintain and update — money that comes from member donations to intergroup/central offices and G.S.O. itself.”

“Meeting Guide has multiple benefits,” says Clement C., staff member on the Communication Services desk at the General Service Office. “Professionals such as therapists and probation officers are able to use it to steer people to meetings very easily. Anytime anyone is traveling, they find the app extremely useful. One aspect I love is being able to text my favorite meetings to sponsees and to give them all the information they need to find them.”

Developed for iOS and Android, Meeting Guide is easily recognizable on G.S.O.'s website by its logo, a white folding chair on a blue background. The app clearly tells the user the name and address of a particular meeting, the time it is being held, how far it is from the user's current location, and what type of meeting it is. There are almost 110,000 meetings currently available on the app, and it currently has 186,000 monthly active users, increased from 84,000 in 2018.

“Meeting Guide is completely aligned

with A.A. and was designed with a full understanding of our Traditions and Concepts,” says Beau B., a Class B (alcoholic) general service trustee and a director on the A.A.W.S. board. “It’s a great example of the right use of new technology: not walking away from who we are as a Fellowship, while allowing us to do so much more.”

Clement C. agrees, and also sees another benefit of Meeting Guide: “Having licensed the app, G.S.O. is now seeking to collaborate with intergroup/central offices — the places where the meeting information resides, after all — to keep it fully updated and make sure it continues to be a vital Twelfth Step tool. It’s a true program-wide effort.”

“I would hope that people are inspired by this and see it as a kind of service model — that you can create some technology on your own and then perhaps give it to the Fellowship,” Josh says. “I hope there are people out there who want to create, for instance, a Twelfth Step volunteer database to get out to groups who might need it. There’s a lot that we can do.”

Beau B. personally feels that A.A. is at a “tipping point” when it comes to the use of technology, of which Meeting Guide is only the first example to come to full fruition. Within a year, G.S.O. will have a new website to replace the 2014 version it currently has, one in which the search function is notoriously balky. The new site, Clement says, will “speak directly to people in a conversational way and make it easier for members and people coming to A.A. for the first time to find what they want.”

Julie Gonzalez (nonalcoholic), Communications Services staff assistant, says that A.A. is “trying to do everything with current best practices. We’re listening to industry professionals and user feedback, and participating in the NAATW and Regional Forums.”

If so, it’s somehow fitting that people like Josh R., and those A.A.s who gather at NAATW conferences and online at the TIAA forum, may be the ones whose service at the local level can lead to effectiveness for carrying A.A.’s message to anyone, anywhere, who reaches out, or clicks for help.

“After five years of attending NAATW conferences,” Lois L. says, “you start to see what people all over are doing and thinking about on their own. Much of what people are doing is experimental. Which is fine. The Traditions and Concepts support that. Let’s try new things, and if they don’t work, we’ll try something else.”

Part Two of this series will continue in the Winter 2019 edition.



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