In this May issue: Step Five, Tradition Five, and Integrity

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Bruce: Thank You for your Service

[Editor’s Note: One result of the “Santa Clara County Central Office Restructuring”, is the elimination of a full-time Executive Director position. Longtime Executive Director Bruce left his position with Central Office.]

As one of the board members who hired Bruce I wanted to take this opportunity to acknowledge all he did for the fellowship here in Santa Clara county. First and foremost Central Office became a warm and welcoming place for members of our fellowship. After Bruce was hired to be Office Manager I always enjoyed visiting central office to buy books, turn in a seventh tradition contribution, do one of my service commitments or take a look at the AA archives exhibition.

During Bruce’s tenure as Office Manager and then Executive Director, he spearheaded the formation of the Activities Committee. Many of the fellowshipping events we now take for granted flourished - such as Take Your Sponsor to Brunch, the Chili Cook Off and the Central Office Tamale Party.

With Bruce’s guidance the Outreach Committee was created which helped and encouraged groups all across the county to participate in Intergroup.

I’m sure that’s not a complete list but it is one that captures most of the activities I am familiar with and have come to appreciate.

Thank you Bruce! And congratulations on your 38 year sobriety mile stone this past April 27!

— Paul C
SPECIAL WORKER POSITION  
AVAILABLE AT CENTRAL OFFICE  
OFFICE ASSISTANT

Central Office is a friendly work environment, having as its primary goal, the providing of quality service to the A.A. Fellowship in Santa Clara County. We are looking for a part time Office Assistant, 20—25 hours per week, with a starting wage of $15.00 per hour. If you are interested in making yourself available for this responsible and rewarding “Special Worker” position, send your resume, including A.A. service information, to Central Office (info@aasanjose.org). If you have questions you are welcome to call the Central Office (408-889-1001).

JOB DESCRIPTION

The Office Assistant works at the direction and under the supervision of the Manager.

1. General office work such as data entry, filing, ordering supplies, etc.
2. Processing contributions and the sales of books and other inventory items.
3. Stocking shelves and general office order and cleanliness, including guest services such as coffee, kitchen and bathroom supplies, etc.
4. Handling all mailings, including bulk mailings.
5. Recruiting, training, and monitoring volunteers.
6. Database maintenance, including data entry and assuring accurate, current information.
8. Prepare bank deposits and reconcile cash on hand.
10. Maintaining an image of competence, courtesy, helpfulness, and a welcoming atmosphere at Central Office.
11. Attendance at Intergroup and similar meetings.

The Office Assistant will work closely with the Manager to accomplish the following:

1. Responding to member questions, concerns, and suggestions.
2. Cooperation and coordination with other AA service entities.
4. Honoring the Traditions in all activities and operations.

The Office Assistant will assume the necessary duties of the Manager during the Manager’s absence, including such duties as payroll, inventory orders, bank deposits, Intergroup and meetings, and other duties as directed by the Manager.

Desired requirements and skills:

1. A minimum of 5 years of continuous sobriety.
2. A comfortable understanding of our Traditions and the workings of Alcoholics Anonymous.
3. Substantial computer skills (knowledge of QuickBooks Online, Access Database, and Microsoft Cloud programs is very desirable).
4. A cheerful, helpful, customer oriented disposition.
Writing for the COIN

Q: Who writes the COIN articles?
A: You do.

This is a publication forum for your personal stories celebrating sobriety and recovery. We welcome your stories, opinion pieces, learnings, questions, thoughts and ideas.

Q: What about sketches, photos, art and flyers?
A: Yes, please!

These are all welcomed and appreciated. We want to give A.A. members a chance to publish their original artwork and photos. We are not a glum lot and love humor, so please send in jokes and cartoons as well. We want the COIN to have a comprehensive listing of all upcoming events and flyers; email your event info as early as possible.

Q: What do I write about?
A: There are monthly newsletter topics that can be found in the COIN.

Each month’s topic is Step X, the Principle behind Step X, and Tradition X, where X is the number of the month. January=1 and December=12. For example, January’s topics are Step One, Honesty, and Tradition One. Stories about a month’s holidays or historic events are also accepted. For example, articles pertaining to a new year/new start in January, relationships and romance in February, stories about the founding of A.A. in June, independence in July, gratitude and giving thanks in November, etc. can all be fitting subject matter.

Write your stories in the first person (using “I” statements). Share your sobriety experience, strength, and hope: the wisdom you’ve gleaned, the mistakes you’ve made, the fun, the troubles, and humor you’ve found in recovery.

If you hear something at a meeting that makes you see things in a different light, write about it. If you have stayed sober through a difficult experience, write about it. Help us teach and learn from each other. Most importantly, help carry the message of A.A.

Q: What are the submission deadlines?
A: Deadlines are published in each month’s COIN.

If you miss the deadline, you may still send materials, but they may be saved for inclusion in a future COIN publication. Stories and art are published at the discretion of the COIN editor and the Central Office executive director.
Q: What are the style guidelines?
A: We strive for consistency.

We accept writings from a variety of authors, then edit them for style, length less than 900 words, correct spelling, fonts, and more. It is challenging to publish each issue in a timely manner. As editors, we do not change the message.

If you can follow some style guidelines, that would help us out a lot. Below is a non-exhaustive list of basic style guidelines.

1. Break all articles into several paragraphs, instead of one big paragraph.
2. Carefully avoid long run-on sentences.
3. Use “A.A.” and not “AA.”
4. In referencing A.A. books, please use the full titles for the first reference. Optionally include their nicknames for later references. Please italicize the full titles. Use “&” in “12 & 12”, not “12 X 12”.
   - Alcoholics Anonymous (or Big Book)
   - A.A.’s basic text Alcoholics Anonymous (or Big Book)
   - Big Book (Alcoholics Anonymous)
   - A.A.’s basic text Alcoholics Anonymous, affectionately nicknamed the Big Book
   - 12 & 12 (Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions)
   - Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (or 12 & 12)

Q: What about Quality?
A: Don’t worry about that.

There is nothing more powerful than one alcoholic speaking with and supporting another alcoholic. Indeed, most of us never trusted a professional about our drinking. How could they possibly know about our drinking? But I believe other alcoholics. We are amateurs by design. So never worry about whether what you write is good enough. Just speak from the heart with honesty.

Q: Anything else?
A: Yes.

Please keep the Twelve Traditions of A.A. in mind as you write. Take special care to respect other members’ anonymity. Have fun!

Send your submissions to: coin@aasanjose.org
Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers,

“Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.” Indeed, this is our focus. Mixing in other ideas dilutes our message.

There are over 100 “X Anonymous Groups.” If we discussed these other issues, we wouldn’t even hear much about alcoholism. That is not to say that we can’t mention drugs, gambling, nor food. But, they should be mentioned in passing. Afterall, we practice these principles in all our affairs. And, we must admit them to understand that we may have more work to do. However, if these issues become dominant in our lives, we should join an additional program.

Introducing ourselves at A.A. meetings, we state first that we are an alcoholic. We may add “and an addict”. But “alcoholic” always comes first.

We carry the message to other alcoholics. There is nothing more powerful than one alcoholic sharing their story and solutions to other alcoholics. One way to carry the message to other alcoholics is to write and submit an article to the COIN. It’s as much fun as it sounds.

I’ve been in A.A for well over ten years and I still can’t spell alcoholic. 😊

Sincerely,
Geena Louise
Your COIN Editor

The COIN is what the A.A. Fact File calls “A.A. Literature Produced by Local Groups.” The opinions are those of the individual authors and may or may not be representative of A.A. as a whole.
## COIN Schedule of Topics

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### Next Month’s Issue (June 2021)

Topics: Step Six, Willingness & Tradition Six
Please email all submissions to coin@aasanjose.org
I'm Just not Ready Yet
Refrain from Denial

Who can, positively, describe the dynamics of alcoholic thinking? No one can, as it is as diverse as the number of alcoholics in the world. So how can anyone have the definite answers to any of the multitude of difficulties that we face? We do find different ideas of how to address, so-called, problems that gives us a start towards reducing the effects that those problems have on us, until they are no longer interfering with our mental calmness.

If we are diligent about it, we will eventually find a place of acceptance which is hard to describe. I hear stories all the time about people with long term sobriety, who have relapses. Those relapses seem to contradict the first sentence in chapter five in the Big Book (Alcoholics Anonymous) that says, "Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path". Rumor has it that the cofounders wanted to change the word "Rarely" to “Never.”

One of the reasons some old timers that just decide to drink again after long term sobriety, may be the half measures approach to Step Five. This is not to criticize them for being unable to take that risk at the time. We know how difficult it is to overcome the shame and embarrassment of our past behaviors. These fears are also symptoms of the disease of alcoholism, and no one can judge another for being unable to bring them to disclose these things too soon.

My first attempt at the inventory challenge happened right before my one-year anniversary, and I was doing the best I could at the time, based on my shallow understanding of this process we are encouraged to be fearless and thorough about. Those tormenting ghosts of yesterday stood between me and the thoroughness clause. In desperation, I revisited Step Five and took that leap of faith and disclosed
them to a dear and trusted friend. I believe doing it that way is the cornerstone that governed all the remaining steps.

In time I have addressed them all with as much courage and thoroughness as I could muster. The results are an unshakable framework for life. If, however, I wasn't strong enough to revisit that step and had gone ahead with the original fourth and fifth steps, I may have convinced myself that I had done it, and went on with a halfhearted effort. This would have amounted to a facade that could have lead me to be satisfied with the "Just not drinking today" approach. I can see only one way is to bridge the difference between the half-measures approach and the fearless and thorough approach. That is to be honest with myself about being in fear concerning the things I’m not willing to disclose in Steps 4 and 5.

Denying them slams the door on the rest of the program. Admitting that they exist would be leaving the door open to getting back to it when you have a little more A.A. under your belt and allows you to go on with Steps Six and Seven and so on in an honest way. If, on the other hand, you attempt to slip by with the half-measures approach, you may never want to admit to it later, That would be tragic and could end in a relapse after some serious years of sobriety.

Some of these things take time and we should not be made to rush into them at the expense of self-honesty. Think of the phrase: “I know I must, but I’m just not ready”. This simple phrase allows you to move on to the rest of the steps and gives you time. One day you will run across someone that you feel you could trust with your life and be willing to take the risk. This is an approach that no one, who counts will ever fault you for. It is important to keep it clean.

Focus on Women: Step Five

Fear

Many of us are fearful of revealing all in Step Five. But, we can trust this process as many women have over many decades. Many of us find it to be a great relief when we complete this step.
We find that our sponsors accept us just as we are and don’t judge us. We notice that our sobriety sisters will stand with us, even if we've done terrible things in the past. We feel lifted by our understanding that we know ourselves better and can stop the wreckage of the past in sobriety.

**Finding Similarities**

Whatever we did, there is a name for it because others have done the same. Our behavior is not unique. It is important for us to share it all, leaving nothing out. We’re as sick as our secrets. Something omitted will haunt us.

**Double Standards for Sexuality**

Women have a lot of guilt and shame around sexuality. In our society, men have greater freedom in this area. We’re supposed to be sexy, but not too demanding. We should be assertive, but only at the right time. We’re expected to be sexually sophisticated, but we are not supposed to be too experienced. Most of us become very confused and anxious trying to figure out these “rules”.

— Dr. Stephanie Covington

In working the A.A. program, you might find that you have strayed from your own beliefs about sex while your alcoholic disease was active. This is your chance to correct that problem. We can let go of the past by sharing it with other A.A. sobriety sisters that we trust. We recommend against sharing all with everyone. Not all A.A. members are fully open minded. We are all on a journey towards that awareness.

**Learning about our True Selves**

We can become more peaceful and patient with ourselves by sharing our past in this Fifth Step. We think of our limitations in such a way that we accept them and don’t blame ourselves. Alcoholic disguised our true selves and hide our strengths. We can now change to become our best selves. We learn who we can be. No human will ever be perfect; only Goddess is perfect. And we can learn to live with
imperfection. The Fifth Steps helps us to heal.

Guilt

Like so many women, I felt so guilty about how my drinking affected my children. I used to drive them home from day care while drinking rum and coke from the coke can. I put them in danger of an accident. Also, I wasn’t emotionally present for them while drunk. Even when they were young, I left them home alone when I went to the liquor store. When they became teenagers, they resented my drinking. It took years of sobriety before they trusted me again.

Putting the Past into Perspective

Through sharing our sharing with our sobriety sisters, we can develop compassion for ourselves, just as we would for them. A.A.’s basic text, Alcoholics Anonymous, says “We won’t regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it”. We also don’t want to repeat it. Through the steps, we identify the life experiences that have hurt ourselves or others. We keep them in mind going forward to become our true best selves.

— Geena Louise

Be Yourself; everyone else is taken.

— Oscar Wilde

Step Five
A Confirmed Awareness

When I asked God to relieve me of the “bondage of self” in Step Three, I had only a vague concept of what that might be, but when my sponsor helped me go through the Step Four directions from the Big Book (Alcoholics Anonymous), I developed a much clearer insight — I began to realize that this bondage was what had been blocking me from the truth in drink. Someone said: “An alcoholic cannot drink on the truth, only on a lie.”

The Big Book suggests that we begin Step Five at the first opportunity (Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 74) which tuned out to be approximately ten minutes after completing Step Four. My sponsor, Carl, helped me realize, from my Step Four list, where I had been selfish; dishonest; resentful; and fearful to an extent that I had never realized. As a matter of fact, he pointed out that most all my character defects, etc., would fall under one or more of these four “grosser handicaps” (Alcoholics
Anonymous, p. 71). They were like an umbrella! If I improve on these four major items, then the minor ones would become less destructive, or hopefully disappear.

Step Five not only simplified the step process but brought about a confirmed awareness of my defects for God to remove in Step Seven. I also learned the necessity of facing up to selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, and fear if I were to live in the spirit of Step Ten. It was pointed out that these four defects are mentioned in Step Ten (Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 84) and Step Eleven (Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 86). These four demons were indeed enemies of my sobriety.

This new awareness has brought me to realize why going on the wagon or quitting drinking forever, year after year, never lasted. My personality problems (bondage of self) remained active throughout those periods of abstinence. Although Step Five has not completely removed these dangerous barriers, I have been able to maintain a “personality change sufficient to bring about recovery from alcoholism” (Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 567) for many years. Thank God for progress, not perfection.

— Bob S

The COIN — Central Office Intergroup Newsletter

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**Spiritual Journey**

**Just in Time**

When I was just starting my journey of sobriety I was so uncomfortable in my own skin. I trusted no one and thought others obviously had ulterior motives. I heard people speaking with such wisdom and levity. I simply thought the guys with time were liars. I was welcomed and people remembered my name. I was floored. I wanted what they had but didn’t know what “it” was. I was getting a sufficient substitute to my alcoholism and self-destructiveness.

What “it” was has turned out to be is a Spiritual Way of Living as a dear friend in A.A. says. I have learned through working the twelves steps of Alcoholics Anonymous that “it” is a “Design for Living” that works in rough going.

“Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path”. Out of all the alcoholics that come through the revolving door of A.A. I wondered how many of them never get a proper introduction to the program. How many of them
don’t have someone welcome them and take them through the steps? I hear Dave B., my first sponsor, in the back of my head. “I’m sponsoring you so you can help the next guy”. He flatly told me A.A. was not group therapy or a social club, our primary purpose is to stay sober and help the next guy achieve sobriety.

I have to remember that meetings are only a part of my recovery. Working the steps with a sponsor and sponsoring others is paramount and my Higher Power is in charge. I am reminded constantly that I can’t get someone sober and I can’t make them drink. I know now that I can’t break them, they are in Alcoholics Anonymous!

I was at an Adult Rehabilitation Center affectionately referred to as “The Sally” helping someone “drop that rock”. Someone had written a diagram on the title page of the book Alcoholics Anonymous. It showed a lineage between Frank Buckman, Carl Jung, Rowland Hazard, Ebbie Thatcher, and Bill Wilson. It also showed the connection of Rev. Shoemaker to Ebbie Thatcher as well as William Duncan Silkworth and Bill Wilson. I pondered what the early days must have been like and the cosmic odds of such a Spiritual Awakening of Bill W.

What a miracle it is we even have a program. I would have surely died if I had kept drinking. I was blessed to have been 12 stepped as my friends had started experimenting with heroin. The wreckage of my alcoholic drinking was already taking a major toll. I have to personally admit though that the window of opportunity was extremely brief.

I am responsible when anyone, anywhere reaches out for help. I want the hand of A.A. to always be there and for that I am responsible.

Subsequently, as I learn to be openminded to what this Power would have me do. I am finding that my expectations of others and fears are taking a back seat. As I continue working with others, I continue growing Spiritually. There really is no ceiling, I am finding, to Spiritual growth. Just a lifetime of awakening One Day at a Time.

In Memoriam

- Sandee P tragically passed away 3/18/21 with 37 years of sobriety.
- JuileAnne tragically passed away in her sleep at the young age of 22 with 2 years of sobriety.
Sunlight of the Spirit Art Corner — Elizabeth M

Grow and Thrive
Sobriety Cartoons — Alicia L

There is a light at the end of the tunnel... not a train.

Keep your eyes on the road ahead.
Tradition Five

Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

Long Form

Each Alcoholics Anonymous group ought to be a spiritual entity having but one primary purpose—that of carrying its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

Practice These Principles – Tradition Five

1. Do I ever cop out by saying, “I’m not a group, so this or that Tradition doesn’t apply to me”?

2. Am I willing to explain firmly to a newcomer the limitations of AA help, even if he gets mad at me for not giving him a loan?

3. Have I today imposed on any AA member for a special favor or consideration simply because I am a fellow alcoholic?

4. Am I willing to twelfth-step the next newcomer without regard to who or what is in it for me?

5. Do I help my group in every way I can to fulfill our primary purpose?

6. Do I remember that AA old-timers, too, can be alcoholics who still suffer? Do I try both to help them and to learn from them?
Calendar of Events

Until further notice these meetings and all future meetings will be conducted on Zoom.

For detailed information on any event visit https://aasanjose.org/events/category/virtual

May

Secretary Workshop – Virtual (Zoom Only)
   May 1, 2021 @ 10:00 am - 11:00 am
   Highly recommended for new Secretaries

PI/CPC Workshop & Meeting
   May 2, 2021 @ 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm
   New member orientation starts at 5:30.
   Urgent: PI/CPC committee chairperson needed; please click here. More information on the PI/CPC Committee page.

New Intergroup Rep Meeting-Virtual Zoom Only
   May 5, 2021 @ 6:30 pm - 7:00 pm

Intergroup Meeting-Virtual Zoom Only
   May 5, 2021 @ 7:30 pm - 9:00 pm

North County (District 04) General Service Meeting
   May 12, 2021 @ 7:30 pm - 9:00 pm
   New member orientation is at 6:45pm.
Diverter/12th Steppers Workshop is Virtual (Zoom Only)
   May 15, 2021 @ 10:00 am - 11:00 am

Bridging the Gap Meeting Virtual (Zoom Only)
   May 17, 2021 @ 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm

South County (District 40) General Service Meeting
   May 18, 2021 @ 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm

H&I Committee Meeting
   May 25, 2021 @ 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm

June

New Intergroup Rep Meeting-Virtual Zoom Only
   June 2, 2021 @ 6:30 pm - 7:00 pm

Intergroup Meeting-Virtual Zoom Only
   June 2, 2021 @ 7:30 pm - 9:00 pm

Secretary Workshop – Virtual (Zoom Only)
   June 5, 2021 @ 10:00 am - 11:00 am

PI/CPC Workshop & Meeting
   June 6, 2021 @ 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm
   New member orientation starts at 5:30.
   Urgent: PI/CPC committee chairperson needed; please click here. More information on the PI/CPC Committee page.
About our Central Office

Santa Clara County Central Office of A.A.
274 E. Hamilton Ave, Suite D
Campbell, CA 95008
Map

Our Central Office is open 6 days per week for in-person book and literature sales, as well as other functions.

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday 2:00 pm – 6:00 pm
Thursday, Friday, Saturday 10:00 am – 2:00 pm
Sunday: Closed

408 889-1001 • info@aasanjose.org • Holiday Closings