



A PUBLICATION OF THE INTERGROUP CENTRAL OFFICE OF SANTA CLARA COUNTY

In this January issue:
Step One, Tradition One,
and Honesty



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COIN Schedule of Topics

Topics in this Issue

Step One

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

Tradition One

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

Honesty

Adherence to the facts, sincerity, fairness and straightforwardness of conduct, lack of deception.

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Next Month's Issue (February 2022)

Topics: Step Two, Tradition Two, & Hope

Please email all submissions to coin@asaanjose.org

Newsletter Issue Month	Submission Deadline	Step & Tradition	Virtue
January	12-20	1	Honesty
February	01-20	2	Hope
March	02-20	3	Faith
April	03-20	4	Courage
May	04-20	5	Integrity
June	05-20	6	Willingness
July	06-20	7	Humility
August	07-20	8	Love
September	08-20	9	Justice
October	09-20	10	Perseverance
November	10-20	11	Spiritual Awareness
December	11-20	12	Service

Resources

COIN – Central Office Intergroup Newsletter

<https://aasanjose.org/coin>

Financials/Minutes

<https://aasanjose.org/central-office-financials-and-intergroup-minutes>

Calendar of Events

<https://aasanjose.org/events>

Celebrating Sobriety Birthdays

<https://aasanjose.org/celebrating-birthdays>

Meeting Guide

<https://aasanjose.org/meetings>

Contributions

<https://aasanjose.org/contributions>

Intergroup Information & Orientation

<https://aasanjose.org/intergroup-orientation>

Service Opportunities

<https://aasanjose.org/service>

Central Office Information

<https://aasanjose.org/central-office>

About the COIN

The COIN is the Central Office Intergroup Newsletter. It is what the *A.A. Fact File* calls “*A.A. Literature Prepared by Local Groups.*” The opinions are those of the individual authors and may or may not be representative of A.A. as a whole.

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Sunlight of the Spirit Cover Art: Elizabeth M.

Director of Operations: Toni F., **Website:** Phil

The COIN is published on behalf of the Santa Clara County Intergroup Service Group of Alcoholics Anonymous (Intergroup). Opinions expressed are the writers’, and publication of any article, event, or other information does not imply endorsement by Alcoholics Anonymous, Intergroup, or Central Office. Quotations from A.A. books and pamphlets, and the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions are reprinted with permission of A.A. World Services, Inc.

A.A. Literature

A substantial body of literature describing and interpreting the A.A. program has developed. This material may be classified under three headings:

(1) Conference-Approved Literature

Material in this classification, prepared at the General Service Office under the supervision of representative committees, carry the words “*This is A.A. General Service Conference-approved literature.*”

(2) A.A. Literature Prepared by Local Groups or Regional Committees

A number of local groups have produced pamphlets, books, and other material which, although excellent in many respects, are not considered representative of A.A. as a whole.

(3) Non-A.A. (Outside) Literature About A.A.

Material in this category includes articles in mass circulation media and technical journals and books in which the recovery program is described by non-A.A.s.

The A.A. Tradition

Alcoholics Anonymous has made the difference between misery and sobriety, and often the difference between life and death. A.A. can, of course, mean just as much to uncounted alcoholics not yet reached.

Therefore, no society of men and women ever had a more urgent need for continuous effectiveness and permanent unity. We alcoholics see that we must work together and hang together, else most of us will finally die alone.

The *12 Traditions* of Alcoholics Anonymous are the best answers that our experience has yet given to those ever-urgent questions, *How can A.A. best function?* and *How can A.A. best stay whole and so survive?*

A.A.'s 12 Traditions are seen in their so-called *short form*, the form in general use today. This is a condensed version of the original *long form* as first printed in 1946. Because the long form is more explicit and of possible historic value, it is also presented.

A.A. Statement of Unity

This we owe to AA's Future;

To place our common welfare first;

To keep our Fellowship united.

For on AA unity depend our lives,

and the lives of those to come.

Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers,

For this first issue of the year, I included the introductory text about the Traditions. It is so important for all of us to be knowledgeable of Traditions for several reasons.

For one, we need to practice the Traditions ourselves. We shouldn't expose another A.A. member to others such as their work colleagues. One time at work, my boss introduced to me her new executive assistant, who I knew well in A.A. I simply said, "*Glad to meet you Susan.*"

But, also, we are all *Guardians* of the A.A. Traditions. Sometimes we must remind or educate people outside of A.A. that may not honor our Traditions.

We do not lend the A.A. name to other groups or institutions. But, unfortunately, we lend half our name to Narcotics Anonymous, Overeaters Anonymous, and others.

Last year, a pastor at a local church, whom I highly admire, wanted to start a new 12-Step Program which we will call X Anonymous (X.A.). I wanted him to honor our Traditions, especially in the area of *anonymity*. I gave him copies of the books Alcoholics Anonymous and Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.

I said "*There is a lot here, but if you use the word Anonymous, please read Traditions 11 and 12 carefully.*" He told me that he invited a member of the press to the first X.A. meeting. I said the press should not take any photos. If they mention someone, it should only be their first name and no other personally-identifiable information. A couple of months later, on PBS Radio, I heard an interview with him about X.A.

I did my best to be a Guardian of the A.A. Traditions. What happens next is out of my control.

Best wishes,
Geena Louise
Your COIN Editor

Tradition One

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

Long Form

Each member of Alcoholics Anonymous is but a small part of a great whole. A.A. must continue to live or most of us will surely die. Hence our common welfare comes first. But individual welfare follows close afterward.

Practice These Principles – Tradition One

1. Am I in my group a healing, mending, integrating person, or am I divisive? What about gossip and taking other members' inventories?
2. Am I a peacemaker? Or do I, with pious preludes such as "just for the sake of discussion," plunge into argument?
3. Am I gentle with those who rub me the wrong way, or am I abrasive?
4. Do I make competitive A.A. remarks, such as comparing one group with another or contrasting A.A. in one place with A.A. in another?
5. Do I put down some A.A. activities as if I were superior for not participating in this or that aspect of A.A.?
6. Am I informed about A.A. as a whole? Do I support, in every way I can, A.A. as a whole, or just the parts I understand and approve of?
7. Am I as considerate of A.A. members as I want them to be of me?
8. Do I spout platitudes about love while indulging in and secretly justifying behavior that bristles with hostility?
9. Do I go to enough A.A. meetings or read enough A.A. literature to really keep in touch?
10. Do I share with A.A. all of me, the bad and the good, accepting as well as giving the help of fellowship?

These questions above were originally published in the A.A. Grapevine in conjunction with a series on the Twelve Traditions from November 1969 through September 1971.

Articles

My Journey to OZ

At AA meetings, I often say, “*When I drink, I am off to see the Wizard! Everything is on the menu after that! I become the Tin Man, the Scarecrow, the Cowardly Lion, and Dorothy all at the same time!*”

The way I treated my loved ones, I had no *heart*.

Anyone who continues to drink in light of the attendant harm and disaster that follows, has no *brain*.

I didn’t have *courage* because I couldn’t face life on life’s terms without taking something.

Finally, after the tornado that I created of my life due to years of drinking, I was *lost* and couldn’t find my way home.

So, I trudged the yellow-brick road to OZ where I met the Wizard. He said I have a *heart* because that’s the pain I felt in my chest when I hurt my loved ones.

He told me that I have a *brain* because I was wise enough to seek help.

He said that I have *courage* because I would not have faced the trials and tribulations it took to find him without it.

And now that I *found* him, he will show me the way home.

I didn’t know OZ was another name for Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.), and that my higher power would protect his anonymity by masquerading as the Wizard.

— Michael J.

Step One: Understanding Alcoholism The Road of Happy Destiny

How heart wrenching it is to see newcomers arrive in the meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) after losing families, friends, jobs, relationships, and hope? And, then, to watch them struggle through relapse after relapse while they see others around them building happy and resourceful lives. What makes them different from the rest of us? Why is it that all their efforts to make a happy life for themselves continue to fail? My heart goes out to them, and I am always trying to find a way to articulate things in simple terms that the newcomer can understand.

My problems started long before I ever touched a drop of alcohol. I always felt different from the other kids, but I did not know it at the time. I thought they all felt like I did, but they did not. It may have been as simple as how I reacted the first time I was humiliated

in public. Or, when I was punished for doing something wrong and learned that it was easier to lie my way out of trouble. I went covert when I violated the rules. I will never know exactly why but I do know my mental makeup was different.

Now, what can I do about it? On a scale of 1 to 10, let us say that I woke up each morning at an emotional level of 2, the normal person wakes up at an 8. When I took my first drink, and I went from a 2, to a 9, and everything was right with the world. (So, I thought) A normal drinker took a drink and went from an 8 to a 9. No big deal.

The world had not changed but *my perception* of it had changed. With the euphoria I felt, I thought I had found the solution to my problem. Later, I discovered that *it only temporally masked the real problem*, which was much deeper. When, after a while, *my tolerance for alcohol ran out*, I completely lost control. In time, lost almost everything that was meaningful in my life. I had unknowingly hit bottom and I had little choice but to try A.A.

“My name is Rick and I’m an alcoholic.” Knowing that I was an alcoholic got me in to the program, but knowing it, did not solve my problem. I started to have success in the program when I came to understand the cause

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and effects of my core issues, such as low self-esteem, fear, guilt, neediness, unworthiness etc. and how they kept driving people away from me.

I had to understand that those symptoms were caused by my faulty self-perception, and that my mind was lying to me. I had been at a level 2, since childhood. That is my problem and alcoholism is the symptom of my problem. If I woke up this morning with amnesia, I would be just like everyone else, because I would not be dragging my past around with me in my head.

Many of my surface behaviors failed, mainly because I was overcompensating for my feelings of inadequacy. My solutions have been to establish a pattern of behavior that is unselfish in nature, consistent with the suggestions in the books Alcoholics Anonymous and Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, practicing them without fanfare. (Tough order, I know.)

But by doing this, with patience, in time, others noticed the change. Before too long I was receiving more than my share of affirmations. If you can understand that you are not responsible for being emotionally diverted as a child and for the alcoholism that resulted from it, you can move forward. You contracted a disease. With this understanding of its cause and effect, you can draw a line the sand, start the

recovery process today, and join us on the road of happy destiny. We will be waiting for you.

— Rick R.

Suggestions for Success Step One

We Don't do it Alone

We don't have to attempt recovery just on our own. We connect with other women and men to recover from alcoholism and maintain sobriety. Other mutual-help programs, addressing various needs, hold up A.A. as the leader in best practices for peer-group-help programs.

In strong mutual-support programs, we can honestly speak of our challenges in life, our hopes for a life of sobriety, and our struggles and victories along the way. And we can do all this without fear of being judged by our peers, since they also had similarities in their lives. This kind of mutual understanding is a powerful force for our healing.

We work with a Sobriety Advisor

We ask another alcoholic to be our sobriety advisor, traditionally called our Sponsor. We work the twelve steps with them. We develop a network of sobriety peers with which we can socialize and get to know. We speak with our Sponsor and sobriety peers

regularly. If we get an urge to drink, we call one of them before we drink. We call people on our list until we reach someone live.

High-Functioning Alcoholic

"I had a successful career as a software engineer in the Silicon Valley, owned my home, and didn't beat my kids ;). Everything looked good on the outside. As a high-functioning alcoholic, it was very hard for me to see the powerlessness and unmanageability in my life. But alcohol called the shots, deciding who I would be with, where I would go, and what I would do. My personal relationships were unmanageable. Fortunately, I worked the steps and got sober before I lost it all."

Defense Against the First Drink

Once more: The alcoholic, at certain times, has no effective mental defense against the first drink, which usually lead to many more drinks. *"One drink is too many; a dozen drinks are never enough."*

Except in a few cases, neither the alcoholic nor any other human being can provide such a defense. Our defense must come from a Higher Power.

We don't have to do this alone. Teamwork makes the dream work.

— Geena Louise

“Nothing will work unless you do.”

— Maya Angelou

“I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand.”

— Confucius

“I must give up what I am to become what I can be.”

— Lao Tzu

“To thine own self be true and it must follow, thou cannot then be false to anyone.”

— William Shakespeare

“Honesty is the fastest way to prevent a mistake from turning into a failure.”

— James Altucher

Step One for Bill W.

December 11, 1934, remains one of the important dates in AA history—the day Bill W. guzzled his last drink en route to Towns Hospital. But the events leading up to this fortunate event also provide important reflection.

On a bleak day in November Ebby T. carried his Oxford Group message of sobriety to Bill who was extremely impressed. But the gin and pineapple juice cocktail on the kitchen table won the day. Ebby visited again which ignited his curiosity enough to produce a visit the Calvary Mission where Ebby was a resident. This was on Friday, December 7th. However, Bill drank on

the way and began a drunken testimony from the podium.

Bill spent Saturday and Sunday, December 8th and 9th, in his bedroom tapering off. Amazingly ,Bill then, temporarily, lost all desire to drink, however, he came home roaring on Monday, December 10th. This provoked an argument with his wife, Lois who angrily lamented: *“You don’t even have the decency to die! You’re crazy! You’re crazy!”* Upon which Bill picked up her small sewing machine and slammed it against the wall. Lois was, of course, terrified!

Bill rode the subways that night, panhandling funds for a bottle of booze. (Just imagine!) He came back home on Tuesday morning, December 11th. When he noticed the damaged wall caused by his drinking episode, he fell into deep remorse. Recalling Ebby’s success he left a note for Lois explaining he was off to Towns Hospital for yet another treatment. He had been treated there several times previously. The train fare Brooklyn to south Manhattan was a nickel and, fortunately for us, Bill had six cents left. Then he espied a store where he still had credit and departed with four bottles of beer.

Bill arrived at Towns Hospital with a beer in one hand and two philosophy books in the other. He announced to his

loyal physician, Dr. William Duncan Silkworth, that he had found an answer. This was Bill's final treatment at Town's Hospital. He never drank again!

Page 13 of Alcoholics Anonymous (the Big Book) explains how, after Ebby's visit, Bill ingested the basic ingredients of what now constitutes our Twelve Steps. This was December 13, 1934, seven days after his first trip to Calvary Mission. Bill, on that day, had a sudden and profound spiritual experience (Alcoholics Anonymous, pg. 14). If not for Bill's final surrender to Step One during those seven days in December, A.A. would not be here today.

— Bob S.

Alcoholism: A Disease of Perception When My Desperation Outweighed My Denial

Alcoholism is often referred to as a disease of perception. Oh how I find that statement to be true. Like most Alcoholics, early in my drinking days, I did not have a problem as I was single and had no one to answer to. It was perfectly normal to go from work directly to the bar room and spend the evening pouring alcohol down my throat. It was fun, and I did a lot of foolish things in those days.

As my tolerance for alcohol grew, I developed a pattern of drinking that I could open a bar at 6:00 AM and close it at 2:00 AM and you could not tell I was drinking if you did not smell the alcohol on my breath. I reached the pinnacle and that only lasted for a while.

Next, I developed a pattern of forgetting what happened the night before (Blackout Drinking) and then people started telling me about the things I did last night, and it was not flattering. Normal drinkers do not have those kinds of experiences.

Then came the DUI's, the nights in jail, the wrecked cars, the broken knuckles, marriage, divorce; I could go on forever. When I was in the throes of this disease I was living by the dictates of my ego, to bolster my pride and it was telling me that I did not have a problem. The progression of the malady varies in each individual due to environmental issues. Some people drink into their 60s and 70s before they come to Alcoholics Anonymous.

Waking each morning to face the hideous four horsemen, Terror, Bewilderment, Frustration, and Despair is not a problem that normal drinkers must face. For me, alcohol seemed to me to be the solution to the problems and to abandon it would be horrifying to me. My perception at that time was

that if I quit drinking, I would spend the rest of my life waking up in that emotional pit. I did everything in my power to deny my condition.

As the progression wore on, one by one, I was running out of options and the drink could no longer mask the deception of it all. I was backed into the corner of life and now, what can I do?

On October 15, 1969, my desperation out-weighted my denial I called the telephone operator and asked for the number of Alcoholics Anonymous. She gave me the number of a local A.A. club in a little house about six miles from my apartment. I showed up there to be greeted by three people sitting on a bench in the front yard.

Within ten minutes of talking to them and seeing the compassion and empathy in their eyes, I laid down in the grass and covered my eyes with my forearm. I thought to myself *Thank God, this nightmare is over.*

It was. I have never drunk, nor wanted to drink ever since that moment. I was 28 years old at the time and most of the members of that group were over 40 years old and they referred to me as the fortunate one, and I was.

From that moment on, I have done a 180 degree turn in my thinking. Embraced the program of Alcoholics

Anonymous in its entirety and it has evolved into a life of peace and serenity that I could not have imagined when I showed up on that lawn in 1969. Right now, as I am trying to explain this miracle, I am wiping tears of joy from my eyes just thinking about it. Go figure.

— Rick R.

The First Step

A year of Step Ones. Day Ones.

I took my first step last year (2021). I am still on my first step.

What progress? Lots.

I have learned something from all the steps suggested.

Thank goodness: the people, the meetings together - our fellowship - and yeah a program for recovery and *life*, my life and all others.

Thank you my sponsor; all sponsors.

Thank you all.

— Anonymous

Art and Photos

We will understand the word Serenity ...



– Peter C.

... and we will know Peace.



Special Events



Sobriety by the Bay



Friday, January 7th - Sunday, January 9th 2022

Grace Cathedral; 1100 California St
San Francisco, California



REGISTER: SobrietyByTheBay.org

\$30 before January 1st/ \$35 after January 1st

Friday 1/7

5:00 pm Set-up

7:00 pm Speaker
Greg H. Brentwood, CA
(Gresham Hall)

Saturday 1/8

8:00 am Too Early Big Book
(Gresham Hall)

10:30 am Speaker
Samantha B. Santa Barbra, CA
(Gresham Hall)

2:00 pm 4th Step Workshop
(Gresham Hall)

7:00 pm Speaker
Chris R. Ingram, TX
(Nave)

Sunday 1/9

11:00 am Speaker
Terri M. Sunnyvale, CA
(Gresham Hall)

Our mission statement is in accordance with the Fifth Tradition, which states,

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

Sobriety by the Bay will be compliant with all CDC guidelines, including protocols specific to San Francisco.

masks and vaccination cards will be required

Open Intergroup Positions

If you are interested, please email jayezdaisy@yahoo.com with a short bio, sobriety date and why you would like the position. Looking forward to hearing from you!

Activities Chair

2 Years Sobriety

2 Year Commitment

- Coordinate and oversee activities sponsored by Intergroup. Act as responsible party for budget and communication of events to Santa Clara County.
- Sit on ad-hoc committees for additional special activities as directed by Intergroup Chair.
- Attend monthly Intergroup meeting to report on upcoming activities, ask for help with communication and build up excitement.
- Suggested events: Chili Cookoff, Sponsor Brunch, Old Timers Meeting, Annual December Intergroup Potluck at Intergroup meeting.

Outreach Committee Coordinator

2 Years Sobriety

2 Year Commitment

- The purpose of the Outreach Committee is to encourage each meeting in Santa Clara County to have an Intergroup Rep. Committee members attend physical meetings (or Zoom meetings) to recruit Intergroup Reps.
- Coordinate the monthly Outreach Committee Workshop, held the 1st Wednesday of the month at 6:45 (prior to the Intergroup meeting).
- Attend the monthly Intergroup meeting to give a report on the Outreach Service and ask for volunteers to attend meetings and recruit Intergroup Reps.
- Assist in maintaining the accuracy of the Santa Clara County Meeting Guide by reporting to Central Office any changes to individual meeting details or meetings which are no longer in existence.

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. Avoid long run-on sentences.
3. Use “A.A.” and not “AA”
4. Carefully avoid long, run-on sentences.

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

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

**Open 6 days a week for in-person
book and literature sales, and more.**

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday 2:00 pm – 6:00 pm

Thursday, Friday, Saturday 10:00 am – 2:00 pm

Sunday: Closed



Details, Map, Calendar, Holiday Closings, and More:

<https://aasanjose.org/central-office>

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