



# Nameless Newsletter

## BECOMING AN AA

### Things Would Get Worse Before They Got Better

IN the spring of 1992, after nearly six years of sobriety in AA and four sponsors, I met a man who, in a very short period of time, convinced me he knew more about alcoholism and AA than anyone I'd ever met. In visiting with him, I got hope that my life would change. Much like the description in the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*, this man, Joe, was armed with facts about himself and had found the solution contained in that book. His whole deportment shouted at me that he knew. He knew what it was like to be me, he understood the frustration, pain and confusion I had been living with. He was the first human being I'd met who'd convinced me that he knew. He told me he believed I was dying from a part of alcoholism I never even knew existed. I asked if he could show me how he had changed. He said he'd love to, that his life depended on that opportunity.

And so we started. He explained to me from the start that a very important part of this process is that I try to help other drunks who are hopeless, drunks like me. He said the first thing I needed to do was find out if I had alcoholism. He was adamant about this, insisting that if I had alcoholism, there was a solution for my life in AA. If I wasn't alcoholic, AA was not the place for me.

We started through the Big Book at the title page, turning statements into questions for me to consider. A few weeks and much reading and considering later, I was convinced that I was alcoholic, and that no person, not me or even Joe, could fix me--and that didn't feel very good.

This man, my sponsor, had brought the truth to me, knowing that the truth wouldn't be pleasant. He was prepared for that, and immediately took me and my agnosticism to the fourth chapter of our book. He had told me my ego and this disease would not die without a fight, and that as I sought the truth, things would probably get worse before they got better. And so I persisted. In that hopelessness that I knew my sponsor couldn't fix, I sought God. I experienced the presence of God within me, and I was changed. Joe, God and I continued through the Steps and in time another man asked me if I could show him how I'd been changed. And I started to sponsor men into the program of AA.

A few years later, Joe suggested that I call his sponsor and ask him to work with me. Feeling an allegiance to Joe, I was hesitant. I didn't want to hurt Joe's feelings; he had saved my life. He laughed at this, insisting my life had more value than his sensitive alcoholic feelings. So I called. I asked this man to work with me and he said, "Why?" That wasn't the word I'd expected.

A new chapter of my life started. From Joe I'd learned much about method and technique, much about spiritual practice. From my new sponsor I was to learn love and application, and a part of AA I never even knew existed. I was becoming an AA member and that was taking up a lot of time. This led to the experience that changed my view of sponsorship.

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## **THE SECOND STEP CHALLENGE**

### **Talking About the God Stuff With Newcomers**

A sober friend raised his hand at a Step study meeting and related, in a self-effacing manner, his trouble with the Christian-derived practices some groups adopt to share the spiritual foundation of recovery. "He's not my father," my friend said, "he's not in heaven, and he's not a he. To me, those words don't have the ring of comfort, truth, or meaning. And 'fake it till you make it' makes no sense to me. Sobriety requires honesty, not faking anything."

He admitted that he hadn't gotten sober on his own power. "There is certainly something out there. But all this God stuff just doesn't get me near it."

A few days later, at the Big Book meeting, another sober friend recounted how troubling it was to sell his staunchly atheist, alcoholic, German niece on reading Alcoholic Anonymous in translation because of the book's insistence on spiritual awakening as the foundation of recovery. He acknowledged his own resistance to "the God stuff" at the beginning of his sobriety, but then chuckled with humility, adding, "Thank God, I was desperate enough to try anything." Years of daily spiritual practice had turned a vague, distrustful apprehension into the simple, central fact of his life: Thy will, not mine, be done.

But he was baffled about "how to sell the God stuff" to wary, skeptical newcomers. Add isolated, arrogant, contentious, and assertively agnostic to those shortcomings, and you've got the baggage I lugged into early sobriety.

Yet, my relationship with a Higher Power is the central fact of my life today, too. This means that I've come to accept that what I know, understand, and can control or manage about my life is far outweighed by what I don't and can't know, understand, control, or manage.

You'd think being spared the ravages of a terminal illness that kills about eighty percent of those afflicted--a rate higher than a lot of cancers--would be enough to drive that home. Not so with me in the beginning. I was a "show me" kind of guy. So, my sponsor addressed my resistance to "the God stuff," not with prescription, but with fact. "The central fact of your life right now," he said, "is that, on your own, you can't stay away from a drink, not even for one day." I had to agree. The evidence was overwhelming.

Then he assured me that getting and remaining sober didn't depend on what I believed, what I thought, what I understood, or what I felt. "This is a program of action" he said. "It's what we do that provides the power to stay sober and to change and grow."

Among the things he suggested I do were a daily practice of prayer, a careful study of the Twelve Steps, and service work helpful to others. It didn't matter that I didn't understand or believe in any of it. What mattered was that I do it, that I keep an open mind, and that I be vigilant and honest about the results.

So I prayed, using words from AA literature, to the Great Whatever. I attended a regular Step meeting and talked with my sponsor long and skeptically about what I read and heard there. And I volunteered for service positions at my home group.

My sponsor pointed out that AA literature insists that "willingness is the key." Not faith, not belief, not spiritual awakening, not understanding, not courage, not acceptance. Willingness.

*Continued on page 3*

He also marked the heading to Step Three, where it reads, "We made a decision..." I still didn't have to believe anything, understand anything, know anything. All I had to do was make a decision.

So I decided that--even though I didn't believe in God, couldn't understand God, didn't particularly desire a relationship with what I didn't understand, and didn't think it would work anyway--I would still take the daily action of asking for God's help and thanking God for it at the end of the day. I was willing to take this action, I told my sponsor, only because my life was a hopeless mess, and he and others said that doing this--as pointless as it seemed--had worked for them. And besides, what did I have to lose?

"You're on your way," he said, and chuckled.

"Today I call my Higher Power 'God' because it's real easy to spell," an AA speaker said last week. I laughed and nodded. Yes, that's it exactly, I thought. Using the "God" word also makes my experience comprehensible to others whose spiritual practice and vocabulary may be different from mine, but whose key insight and experience is (in my opinion) the same. That applies equally to conservative orthodox as well as those who beat drums and dance naked by the sea at the full moon.

I didn't arrive at this conclusion because I believed in, had faith in, or understood anything; and certainly not because I had courage. I started on the path scared, confused, and defiant. But I've made progress in acceptance and surrender because of what I did, and still do. It's a program of action. What you're willing to do determines the quality of your sobriety and life. And anyone--enthusiastic, ambivalent, or kicking, screaming, and arguing like me--can take the same action.

This is where it's brought me: solely on the basis of evidence, I've come to believe in and to rely on a power outside myself, which I still do not understand or otherwise comprehend. I took--and still take--the specific action recommended in Alcoholics Anonymous and in Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, and my life gets better, my problems help me grow, and the little I do understand of life dwells ever more serenely in the shadow of what I don't and never will understand. Honestly evaluating my track record in sobriety gives me the faith--not the desperate magical thinking, but the faith--that I can expect to move deeper in this direction in my life, as long as I'm willing to make the decision each day to take the action recommended.

That much I understand because that's how it has worked for me so far. The rest is still a mystery--but what a magnificent mystery! And what a life I've been given in return for my willingness and my daily decision.

There's no trick to getting "the God stuff." We're not "selling" anything. It's a results-oriented proposition. It's free and simple: Try doing this, and see what happens. The key is willingness. The door is action. The payoff is patience, tolerance, understanding (a little, anyway), and love. It's all in our literature.

I hope my experience makes getting the "God stuff" and sharing it a little easier for others. Just keep in mind when you read Bill's old-style fervent prose that--He, She, It, or Whatever--"God" is still real easy to spell.

*Anonymous*

## SLO AA MEETING UPDATES

<u>City</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Meeting</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Change</u>
Los Osos	Monday	5:30pm	Home Girls – Book Study	Address change to: 1462 7th St	
Oceano	Wed	Noon	Change Group Name from: <i>Village Group</i> to: <i>Village Group - 12x12</i>		
Los Osos	Tues	5:30pm	“Liv-In” The Steps	2050 Palisades Ave. Women’s 12 x 12, Open - NEW	

*Note concerning SLO AA Meetings: we have made a concerted effort to synchronize meeting information found in the printed Directory of Meetings and the online directory at sloaa.org. As you would expect, it is progress, not perfection.*

*But we strive for perfection. And we need your help. Please check the printed and the online directories for your meetings and let us know if you find any issues. If you do, please do one of the following:*

- 1- Drop by Central Office and enter the change(s) on a meeting change report form, or*
- 2- Call Central Office (541-3211) and relay the change info to the phone volunteer, or*
- 3- Email the change info to: [nnleditor@gmail.com](mailto:nnleditor@gmail.com)*



## BIRTHDAYS

*None this month*



*If you are celebrating a birthday, send the details to us: [nnleditor@gmail.com](mailto:nnleditor@gmail.com)*

*Deadline for birthday submittal is the 18th of the month*

### Central Coast Central Office Intergroup Officers & Staff

Chairman	Mike M. <a href="mailto:ccoichair@gmail.com">ccoichair@gmail.com</a>
Vice Chair	Terry R. <a href="mailto:ccoovice@gmail.com">ccoovice@gmail.com</a>
Secretary	Judy G. <a href="mailto:ccoisecretary@gmail.com">ccoisecretary@gmail.com</a>
Treasurer	Gina S. <a href="mailto:ccoitreasurer@gmail.com">ccoitreasurer@gmail.com</a>
Literature Chair	Jim L. <a href="mailto:ccoilit@gmail.com">ccoilit@gmail.com</a>
Web Chair	R.J. C. <a href="mailto:ccowebchair@gmail.com">ccowebchair@gmail.com</a>
Communications Chair	Bob R. <a href="mailto:ccoinnlchair@gmail.com">ccoinnlchair@gmail.com</a>
Office Manager	Bonnie N. <a href="mailto:ccoimanager@gmail.com">ccoimanager@gmail.com</a>
Volunteer Coordinator	Dave S. <a href="mailto:sheldonservices@charter.net">sheldonservices@charter.net</a>
Call Forwarding Coord.	Sharon H. <a href="mailto:shay79@charter.net">shay79@charter.net</a>
Website Design	Hunter K. <a href="mailto:centraloffice22gmail.com">centraloffice22gmail.com</a>
Nameless Newsletter	Bob R. <a href="mailto:nnleditor@gmail.com">nnleditor@gmail.com</a>

## AREA SPEAKER MEETINGS

### **Five Cities Speaker Meeting**

2nd Friday, 7:00pm Potluck, 8:00pm meeting  
564 Mesa View Dr., Arroyo Grande

### **Fellowship Speaker Meeting**

Every Friday, 7:00pm, United Methodist Church  
1515 Fredricks St., San Luis Obispo

### **Middle House Speaker Meeting**

Every Sunday, 10:00am  
(Pastries/coffee at 9:30am)  
2939 Augusta St., San Luis Obispo

### **Sunday Night Speaker**

Every Sunday, 6:00pm, Lutheran Church  
4500 El Camino Real, Atascadero

### *Week*      **SATURDAY SPEAKER MEETINGS**

**1<sup>st</sup> South County Speaker Meeting**  
8:00pm, St. John’s Lutheran Church  
959 Valley Rd., Arroyo Grande

**2<sup>nd</sup> Morro Bay Speaker Meeting**  
7:30pm, St. Timothy’s Parish Hall  
962 Piney Way, Morro Bay

**3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday Night Live**  
7:30pm, Mountainbrook Community Church  
1775 Calle Joaquin Rd., San Luis Obispo

**4<sup>th</sup> Cambria Speaker Meeting**  
8:00pm, Santa Rosa Catholic Church  
1174 Main St., Cambria

**Last Easy Does It Speaker Meeting**  
7:00pm, St. James Church,  
14th & Oak St., Paso Robles

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**April 14 - 17, 2016**

### **Springtime in the Ozarks**

Best Western

Eureka Springs, Arkansas

<http://www.nwarkaa.org/springtime.htm>

**May 6 - 8, 2016**

### **23rd Costa Rica International Convention**

Manuel Antonio

Costa Rica

<http://www.costaricaaa.com/international-aa-convention-in-costa-rica/>

**May 6 - 8, 2016**

### **28th Annual Big Island Bash**

Sheraton Kona Resort & Spa

Kona Coast, Hawaii

<http://www.bigislandbash.com/>

**June 10 - 12, 2016**

### **35th Annual Calgary AA Roundup**

Glenwood Inn & Convention Center

Calgary, Alberta, Canada

<http://www.gratituderoundup.com/lodginglocation/>

**July 8 - 10, 2016**

### **15th Tehachapi Mountain Roundup**

Tehachapi, CA

[www.tehachapiroundup.org](http://www.tehachapiroundup.org)

**August 26 - 28, 2016**

### **District 22 49th Annual Convention**

Veterans Memorial Building

San Luis Obispo

<http://www.district22convention.org>

**July 2-5, 2020**

### **2020 International AA Convention**

Detroit, MI

To find out what else is going on, you can:  
Visit Central Office at 1137 #B Pacific St, SLO, or  
Call us at: 805-541-3211, or  
Visit our website at sloaa.org

## SERVICE COMMITTEE SCHEDULE

### **Central Office Board of Directors Meeting**

1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday, 5:30pm, Central Office  
1137 Pacific Ave., #B, S.L.O.

### **Intergroup Central Office Rep. Meeting**

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday, 8:45am, ALANO Club  
3075 Broad St., S.L.O.

### **22nd District General Service Rep. & Comm. Mtg**

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday, 10:15am, Alano Club  
3075 Broad St., S.L.O.

### **Hospitals and Institutions Mtg + Bridging The Gap**

3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday, 6:40pm, Alano Club  
3075 Broad St., S.L.O.

### **District 22 Convention Committee**

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday, 12:00pm  
560 Higuera St., Suite E, S.L.O.

### **7th Tradition Mailing List**

<b>General Service Office</b>	<b>22nd District</b>
P.O. Box 459	P.O. Box 1891
New York, NY. 10163-0459	S.L.O., CA. 93406

### **Central Coast Central Office Intergroup (CCCOI)**

P.O. Box 12737  
San Luis Obispo, CA. 93406

### **Central California Area Assembly Area 93**

606 Alamo Pintado, #140  
Solvang, CA. 93463

### **Hospitals and Institutions (H&I)**

P.O. Box 12737  
San Luis Obispo, CA. 93406

### **Service Opportunities at the Central Office**

Our Central Office provides AA-Approved Literature and general information to alcoholics, the public and the groups of San Luis Obispo County. We are entirely staffed by volunteers ... **Would you like to be of service?**

We maintain regular business hours Monday through Saturday with our **Office Volunteers** who work a 3-hour shift every week or every other week. We also have an answering service who contact our **Call Forwarding Volunteers** who are available by phone when the office is closed.

**Our goal** is for anyone who is looking for help for themselves or someone else to be able to talk to an alcoholic 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

If you'd like more information or would like to volunteer **please call 805-541-3211**. Six months continuous sobriety is required and training is provided.

**To volunteer** to be on the Central Coast Central Office 12th step list please call the office at 541-3211 and leave a message for the Office Manager with first name, last initial, phone # and email address (optional).

Or send an email to: [CCCOIManager@gmail.com](mailto:CCCOIManager@gmail.com) with the same information and a return email will be sent to you with details. Thank you for your service!

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## BECOMING AN AA

(continued)

I'd been working with drunks four or five nights a week and most weekends. Trying to do God's work and to be a husband, as well as a dad to two teenagers, was a little overwhelming. I got an idea! I called my mentor and let him know about it. I'd decided to focus on my family, to quit working with new drunks. I'd sponsor the guys I was working with, but no more new guys. The old man said he thought that was a wonderful idea, and my life started to change.

Within 90 days, my wife wasn't very friendly and I didn't like her too much either. The kids were about ready to die at my hands and they didn't like me much either. I was under a lot of stress, and I didn't like me much either.

I went to an AA meeting one day at noon. I answered the phone about five minutes before the meeting started. It was a guy looking for directions to our group. He showed up five minutes after the meeting was over. A young man in our group started to talk to the new guy. A buddy of mine suggested that I step in; I suggested that he keep his thoughts to himself. As we watched the exchange between the young guy and the new guy a minute longer, my buddy said, "You know, if we leave those two alone, Devon is probably going to kill that new guy." So I went and sat with Devon and the guy who couldn't tell time, and I started to tell him about me. We laughed and we cried and I felt whole. I was fully aware of God and unaware of time. About three hours later we parted. I never saw the new guy again, but I hope I never forget him and what he did for me.

I realized my life depended on the opportunity to work with alcoholics. These men were saving my life; without them my spirit became stagnant. My prior arrogance of thinking I was helping them was obvious. I needed them much more than they needed me. My sponsor then told me I'd had a spiritual experience with the Twelfth Step, not unlike the experience Bill W. had in the lobby of the Mayflower Hotel. He said he doubted that I'd ever approach sponsorship with the old attitude again. He was right.

*Anonymous*



## Co-founder Quotes

### **Anonymity and Sobriety**

As the A.A. groups multiplied, so did anonymity problems. Enthusiastic over the spectacular recovery of a brother alcoholic, we'd sometimes discuss those intimate and harrowing aspects of his case meant for his sponsor's ear alone. The aggrieved victim would then rightly declare that his trust had been broken.

When stories get into circulation outside of A.A., the loss of confidence in our anonymity promise was severe. It frequently turned people from us. Clearly, every A.A. member's name -- and story, too -- had to be confidential, if he wished.

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We now fully realize that 100 per cent personal anonymity before the public is just as vital to the life of A.A. as 100 per cent sobriety is to the life of each and every member. This is not the counsel of fear; it is the prudent voice of long experience.

1. TWELVE AND TWELVE, P. 185
2. A.A. COMES OF AGE, P. 293

### **SHORT TAKES**

*When I hear someone complain that AA is changing, I'm prone to asking, "What are you doing about it?" Nostalgia is natural, but growth produces new situations. There are those who have many more sober years than my own thirteen who are staying away from meetings because of things they don't like. To these I say, if you don't like what's happening, attend meetings and help keep the groups strong.*

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*If there is a single word to describe the way out for me, it is willingness. For all the slow mornings, there are just as many when I arise with an open mind, willing to see what God has in store for me that day. Every chapter of self-pity ends when I am willing to abandon my pride and reach out to another alcoholic.*



## **WHEN THIS FIRST STARTED**

- *CUP OF COFFEE WAS .5¢*
- *GALLON OF GAS WAS .17¢*
- *MOVIE TICKET WAS .25¢*

**A BUCK DOESN'T GET  
IT ANYMORE!**

**PLEASE INCREASE YOUR  
DONATIONS  
WE CAN'T DO THIS  
WITHOUT YOU!**

**WE ARE SELF SUPPORTING THROUGH OUR OWN CONTRIBUTIONS**

## MEETING CHANGE REPORT FORM

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Effective Date of Change: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ DAY OF WEEK: \_\_\_\_\_

MEETING TIME: \_\_\_\_\_ MEETING DURATION:  1 hour  90 minutes Other \_\_\_\_\_

MEETING NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

MEETING ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

### TYPE OF MEETING CHANGE:

\_\_\_\_\_ DISCONTINUED

\_\_\_\_\_ DAY/TIME CHANGE (enter new info below)

New Day \_\_\_\_\_

New Time \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ NEW ADDRESS (enter new info below)

NEW ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ NEW MEETING (enter info at top, additional info below)

Meeting Type:  OPEN  CLOSED

Gender:  MEN  WOMEN  MIXED

Format:  DISCUSSION  BOOK STUDY

OTHER \_\_\_\_\_

Location:  CHURCH  HOME  SCHOOL

OTHER \_\_\_\_\_

### YOUR INFO

(ALL of the info in this box MUST be filled out for this meeting change to take effect)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact Phone No: \_\_\_\_\_

Email (if available) \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

You can submit this form as follows:

1. Fill out, scan and email to: NNLEditor@GMAIL.COM, or
2. Drop off at Central Office: 1137 Pacific St, #B, SLO, CA 93401, or
3. Mail to Central Office: CCCOI, PO Box 12737, SLO, CA 93406, or
4. Bring to the Intergroup Meeting (2nd Sunday, 8:45am, Alano Club, 3075 Broad St., SLO)