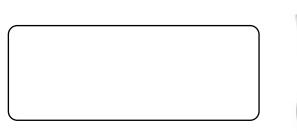
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MARCH 2017 Volume 37 — Issue 3

Monthly Newsletter of the Ventura County Central Service Office Inc.

Features ..

NEGLECTED CONCEPTS - J.B. Southhampton, PA

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PAGE -1

Cover Story

Office Information PAGE - 2

 Main Story Continued Poet's Corner

PAGE - 3

- Living Step #3
- A Review of Tradition #3
- **Humor COlumn**

PAGE - 4

The Grapevine Corner

Word Search

PAGE - 5

- A.A. Birthday Club
- **Trivia Question Contest**
- Call Log
- Staff and Contact Information

PAGE - 6

- Major Events Calendar
- Monthly Local Event Calendars

PAGE - 7

Districts, Area & AAWS Contacts

Concept III

PAGE - 8

♦ Subscription Order Form

Flyers Inside

Info Lines ..

Visit Our Website. Just want a meeting or other A.A. information? Check out the expanded Ventura County website. www.aaventuracounty.org

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One day, after more years in sobriety than this alcoholic likes to admit. I stumbled across an integral element of our program called the Twelve Concepts for World Service. Previously, I had heard of them, but I couldn't have told you what they were or where they came from. In fact, my first major discovery was that these Concepts had been written by Bill W. And with this discovery came an immensely increased appreciation of this man and of his role in formulating and recording the Three Legacies that he, Dr. Bob, and the old-timers have left us. Just as Bill wrote the Twelve Steps that make possible our Recovery, and just as he wrote the Twelve Traditions that promote and sustain the Unity of

two of the three Legacies. To say merely that the Concepts impressed me is a gross understatement of what happened. It soon became apparent to me that they contain some of the most perceptive and profoundly wise thinking I have ever encountered. Early into them, I began to wish I had read them sooner. But let me start at the be-

our Fellowship, he also wrote the Twelve

Concepts to foster and strengthen our Third

Legacy, that of Service, Come to think of it. I

might have known he would not address only

I had been a group GSR (general service representative) for about a year and definitely did not like it. Without having given it any serious thought, my impressions of our district GSR meetings were that they were overly long and characterized by needless arguments and dumb debates over matters of little consequence. GSRs, I had decided, were the "great legal minds" of our Fellowship, the proverbial hairsplitters. My conception (or rather, misconception) of a "typical GSR" was that of an aggravating character with a talent for finding something wrong with whatever you were doing. No matter how careful you were, somehow, somewhere, sometime, this "typical GSR" of mine would find that you had broken at least one, and probably more, of the Traditions. The only thing that kept me coming to those meetings was the two-year GSR commitment I had assumed.

But at the same time, I was vaguely ashamed of myself for not having read the Concepts. I knew they had to do with service. Whenever the subject of the Concepts was raised, either in our district meetings or in some AA literature, there was this slight feeling of guilt at not knowing exactly what they were or where they fit into the program.

Then last summer, in need of a good rest, my wife and I decided to spend a week in the mountains doing as little as possible. So while packing, I included some reading material and happened (or was led) to include a book entitled The AA Service Manual and Twelve Concepts for World Service. And therein lies the tale of my belated reading of the directions.

Probably the first impressive thing encountered in my reading of the Concepts came in the very beginning of the introduction where Bill states the nature of the Concepts as well as his purpose in writing them in the way that he did. His stated purpose was to ". . .record the 'why' of our service structure in such a fashion that the highly valuable experience of the past, and the lessons we have drawn from that experience, can never be forgotten or lost." His goal then was not only to present the Twelve Concepts, but also to record their evolution, development, and refinement to their present form.

Right here I received my first message, and it did not make me pleased with myself. Here was the work of a man who had labored mightily lest "valuable experience" or "lessons we have drawn from that experience" be forgotten or lost. Up until now, I had not even bothered to read about this experience or these lessons. Could I have been engaged, I asked myself, in the equivalent of trying to assemble something without first reading the directions? Was some of my dislike of service work due to the aggravation so commonly encountered when one unnecessarily decides to reinvent the wheel?

On continuing to read, I had a second growing realization, that of the vital importance of service, not only to those who still suffer, but to the Fellowship itself, and there-Continued Page 2 fore to me.

Neglected Concepts continued from page 1

The triangular shape of the AA logo signifying Recovery, Unity, and Service took on new significance. Eventually came the realization that just as a triangle needs three sides in order to exist as a triangle, our Fellowship needs all three legacies to remain what it is, a threefold program of Recovery, Unity, and Service to enable us to deal in turn with our disease. Viewed in that light, it became obvious that my like or dislike of service work was very secondary. For without any one of its three elements, AA (and I) might not endure. Thus it came to me that I truly need this purpose outside of and greater than myself. Whether I like it or not, I do indeed have to give it away if I would keep what has been given me.

The Twelve Concepts articulated and reduced to writing a number of valuable principles that had already become traditional within the AA service structure. Thus Bill's recording and explanation of these principles serve the additional function of preserving for posterity such valuable ideas as the "Right of Decision," the "Right of Participation," and the "Right of Appeal." These particular Concepts deal specifically with situations that can surface at any time in service work.

For example, Concept III quite adequately deals with any possible conflict in voting between a service worker's conscience and the wishes of those he represents. Concept IV provides principles and mechanisms which resolve such questions as how much ". . .authority over money and people any one of us drunks could handle; how much of this type of coercion we alkies on the receiving end could take." Concept V, recognizing that humans are imperfect, protects and encourages minority opinion, while Concept VI is our guarantee that grievances will be heard and acted upon.

Still another impressive aspect of the Concepts is the many instances of wisdom they contain. Time after time, there are gems of advice I would do well to follow in my dealings with others, with my fellows both inside the program and without. Gems such as the one in Concept V, where Bill writes, "The well-heard minority, therefore, is our chief protection against an uninformed, hasty, or angry majority." Thus he counsels us to pay particular attention to those of the minority opinion. The message for me here was that the long-winded little guy in my "overly long" district GSR meetings may have been trying to do me a favor, and maybe would have, had my mind been open.

There is also, for example, Bill's subtle but effective reminder that an idea does not have to be mine to be good. As he wrote in Concept IX, ". . .a fine plan or idea can come from anybody, anywhere." On reading it, I had to wonder how many times in our group business meetings I had automatically rejected an idea merely because it came from what I, in my wisdom, had deemed an unlikely source.

Finally for me, there was the realization that much of the "heat" generated in our district meetings was due to the spinning of wheels. Many of my "needless arguments and dumb debates" were just that, needless and dumb. But they were needless and dumb for reasons other than I thought. They were needless and dumb because often the subject of our debate had already been comprehensively discussed and explained in one of those Concepts that I had not bothered to read. But then as Bill knew, we who will not learn from the past are destined to repeat its mistakes. Indeed, this is one reason why he wrote the Concepts and the Steps, and the Traditions—that we might learn from the past. What a beautifully complete program it is.

* Poets' Corner *

INSANE TO BLAME - Dana M.

This urge
To blame
Is so insane
This point of view
Won't leave my brain

I wake up thinking
In Victimeeze
It finally brings me
To my knees
I pray to God
For some relief
And somehow see
My disbelief

It's me who is dissatisfied It's in my thinking Where I have lied

The positive outlook
I used to have
Is replaced with doubt
And that is sad

The serenity prayer
Is what I hear
It brings me faith
Year after year

And as I grow
Into the change
Acceptance comes
No ones to blame.

<u>ಾಂಲಾಂಲಾ</u>

Concept III

MARCH 2017

As a traditional means of creating and maintaining a clearly defined working relation between the groups, the Conference, the A.A. General Service Board and its several service corporations, staffs, committees and executives, and of thus insuring their effective leadership, it is here suggested that we endow each of these elements of world service with a traditional "Right of Decision."

A background for this Concept, you should be familiar with the Conference Charter and the Bylaws of the General Service Board, both of which are found in The A.A. Service Manual. For, except for the specific directions in these documents, every trusted servant and every A.A. entity — at all levels of service — has the right "to decide . . . how they will interpret and apply their own authority and responsibility to each particular problem or situation as it arises." That is, they can "decide which problems they will dispose of themselves and upon which matters they will report, consult, or ask specific directions." This is "the essence of 'The Right of Decision."

But this right also means the Fellowship must have trust in its "trusted servants." If the groups instruct their G.S.R.s rather than giving them a "Right of Decision," then the area conference is hamstrung. If the G.S.R.s instruct the area delegates rather than giving them a "Right of Decision," then the General Service Conference is hamstrung. As Bill points out, "our Conference delegates are primarily the servants of A.A. as they should . . . cast their votes . . . According to the best dictates of their own judgment and conscience at that time."

Similarly, if the General Service Board, acting through its subsidiary boards, "were to attempt to manage" the General Service Office and the A.A. Grapevine "in detail, then.

. . the staff members . . .would quickly become demoralized; they would be turned into buck-passers and rubber stamps; their choice would be to rebel and resign, or to submit and rot."

Bill warns against using "The Right of Decision" as an excuse for failure to make the proper reports of actions taken; or for exceeding a clearly defined authority; or for failing to consult the proper people before making an important decision. But he concludes:

"Our entire A.A. program rests squarely upon the principle of mutual trust. We trust God, we trust A.A., and we trust each other."

(Reprinted from the pamphlet "The Twelve Concepts Illustrated," pages 6-7 with permission of A.A. World Services, Inc.)



District 13
Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 166
Ventura, CA 93002

Gold Coast Districts (9 & 12)

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 132
Camarillo, Ca. 93011

<u>District 24</u>
Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 843
Simi Valley, CA 93065

District 28
Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 3432
Thousand Oaks, CA 91359

Area 93
Mailing Address:
PMB #140
606 Alamo Pintado #3
Solvang, CA 93463

<u>AAWS</u>

P.O. Box 459 Grand Central Station New York, NY 10163 (212)870-3400 The Ventura County Central Service Office Inc. Monthly Newsletter

Gold Coast Workshop

The 12 Traditions Come to Life
April 1, 2017
1:30-3:30
The Buck
321 N. Aviador St #111. Camarillo

36th Annual So. Cal H&I Conference

April 7-9, 2017 Holiday Inn 14299 Firestone Blvd, La Mirada www.socalhandi.org

District 28 Spring Workshop

Safety in A.A.
April 22, 2017
9:00 - 1:00
St. Patrick's Episcopal Church
1 Church Road, Thousand Oaks

Serenity By the Sea

April 28 - 30, 2017 Oxnard Performing Arts Center 800 Hobson Way, Oxnard www.vcaaroundup.com

The Ventura County Central Office

has listings and flyers of many other AA related events in Southern California and throughout the United States.

Call 805-389-1444 or drop by to see us even if it's only for a cup of coffee.

www.aaventuracounty.org

MAR 2017 Calendar

Wed 1st 6:00 pm District 13 GSR Meeting @ Ventura Center for Spiritual Living @ 101 S. Laurel, Ventura

Thu 2nd 7:00 pm Inter-group Board Meeting @ Central Office

Wed 8th 7:00 pm Inter-group Meeting @ The Buck 321 N Aviador Suite 111, Camarillo

Sat 11th 10:00 am Newsletter Stuff and Fold @ Central Office

Sun 12th 12:00 pm VCYPAA Committee Mtg Central Office 5.30 pm H & I Committee Mtg @ Central Office Sun 12th 3:30 pm VCAAC Committee Mtg @ The Buck

Sun 12th 7:00 pm H& I Board Meeting @ Central Office

Wed 15th 7:00 pm Gold Coast Districts General Service Mtg
The Buck 321 N Aviador Ste 111 Camarillo

Thu 16th 7:00 pm District 24 General Service Meeting
United Methodist Church 2394 Erringer Rd
Rm # 10. Simi Vallev

Sun 19th 12:00 pm VCYPAA Committee Mtg @ Central Office

Tue 21st 7:00 pm GSR District 28 Meeting @
King of Glory Lutheran Church
2500 Borchard Road, Newbury Park

Mar 20th Last day to submit items to the April Newsletter

APR 2017 Calendar

Wed 5th 6:00 pm District 13 GSR Meeting @ Ventura Center for Spiritual Living @ 101 S. Laurel, Ventura

Thu 6th 7:00 pm Inter-group Board Meeting @ Central Office

Sun 9th 12:00 pm VCYPAA Committee Mtg Central Office 5.30 pm H & I Committee Mtg @ Central Office Sun 9th 3:30 pm VCAAC Committee Mtg @ The Buck

Wed 12th 7:00 pm Inter-group Meeting @ The Buck 321 N Aviador Suite 111, Camarillo

Sat 15th 10:00 am Newsletter Stuff and Fold @ Central Office

Tue 18th 7:00 pm GSR District 28 Meeting @
King of Glory Lutheran Church
2500 Borchard Road, Newbury Park

Wed 19th 7:00 pm Gold Coast Districts General Service Mtg
The Buck 321 N Aviador Ste 111 Camarillo

Thu 20th 7:00 pm District 24 General Service Meeting
United Methodist Church 2394 Erringer Rd
Rm # 10, Simi Valley

Sun 23rd 12:00 pm VCYPAA Committee Mtg @ Central Office

Apr 17th Last day to submit items to the May Newsletter

A Review of Tradition #3

MARCH 2017

"The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking."

- In my mind, do I prejudge some new AA members as losers?
- Is there some kind of alcoholic that I privately do not want in my AA group?
- Do I set myself up as a judge of whether a newcomer is sincere or phony?
- Do I let language, religion (or lack of it), race, education, age or other such things interfere with my carrying the message?
- Am I over impressed by a celebrity? By a doctor, a clergyman, an ex-convict? Or can I just treat this new member simply and naturally as one more sick human, like the rest of us?
- When someone turns up at AA needing information or help (even if he can't ask for it aloud), does it really matter to me what he does for a living? Where he lives? What his domestic arrangements are? Whether he had been to AA before? What his other problems are?

Living Step # 3

The Ventura County Central Service Office Inc. Monthly Newsletter

"Made a decision to turn our will and our life over to the care of God as we understood Him."

When we decide that we want what other recovering members have found, and are ready to go to any lengths to get it, we become ready to turn our will and our life over to a higher power. We learn that our life, prior coming to Alcoholics Anonymous was filled with our vain attempts to control people places and things in order to run things by self-will. Our best thinking got us to the point where we sought help by attending AA meetings. Our lives were filled with disappointments and un-fulfilled goals. As we began to attend meetings, we heard from other members that their turning point in recovery started with a "surrender" to the fact that God can do what we could not do by shear will-power. Many thousands of recovering alcoholics have found that their God is ready and willing to help them. All they had to do is ask for God to come into their lives. As the Big Book explains, "God could and would if he is sought."

Step #3 points out that our Higher Power is one of each individuals choosing.



The barkeep asks the guy sitting at the bar, "What can I get for you?" The guy answers, "A scotch, please." The bartender hands him the drink, and says "That'll be five dollars," to which the guy replies, "What are

you talking about? I don't owe you anything for this." A lawyer, sitting nearby and overhearing the conversation, then says to the bartender, "You know, he's got you there. In the original offer, which constitutes a binding contract upon acceptance, there was no stipulation of remuneration." The barkeep was not impressed, but says to the guy, "Okay, you beat me for a drink. But don't ever let me catch you in here again." The next day, same guy walks into the bar. Bartender says, "What the heck are you doing in here? I can't believe you've got the audacity to come back!" The guy says, "What are you talking about? I've never been in this place in my life!" The bartender replies, "I'm very sorry, but this is uncanny. You must have a double." To which the guy replies, "Thank you. Make it a scotch."

A man goes into a bar and seats himself on a stool. The bartender looks at him and says, "What'll it be buddy?" The man says, "Set me up with seven whiskey shots and make them doubles." The bartender does this and watches the man slug one down, then the next, then the next, and so on until all seven are gone almost as quickly as they were served. Staring in disbelief, the bartender asks why he's doing all this drinking. "You'd drink them this fast too if you had what I have." The bartender hastily asks, "What do you have pal?" The man quickly replies, "I have a dollar."

A construction worker walks into a bar. He's a rather large, menacing guy. He orders a beer, chugs it back, and bellows, "All you guys on this side of the bar are a bunch of idiots!" A sudden silence descends. After a moment he asks "Anyone got a problem with that?" The silence lengthens. He then chugs back another beer and growls, "And all you guys on the other side of the bar are all scum!" Once again, the bar is silent. He looks around belligerently and roars, "Anyone got a problem with that?" A lone man gets up from his stool unsteadily and starts to walk towards the man. "You got a problem, buddy?" "Oh no; I'm just on the wrong side of the bar."

GRAPEVINE CORNER The Meeting In Print

By Michele B. of Newbury Park

Twelve ways to use the AA Grapevine to strengthen and insure your sobriety.

3. IT IS A "THOUGHT STARTER"

Looking for ideas that will help you make more effective AA talks?

You will find them month after month, in personal stories, interpretive articles and humorous anecdotes appearing in the Grapevine magazine.

At Wit's End

Vintage newcomer

Q: What's an AA newcomer's favorite wine? A: Ugh, I have to call my sponsor every day?

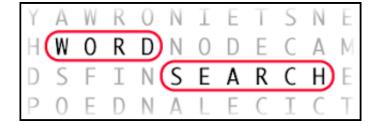
Road show

A cop pulls a car over for speeding. As he walks up to the car, he sees that the backseat is full of machetes and axes. There's also a chainsaw. He asks the driver where he's going in such a hurry and what's the meaning of the dangerous items. The driver tells the officer that he's late for work and that he's a circus juggler. The cop says, "Ok, show me your act and maybe I'll let you off with a warning." The driver gets out and starts juggling the machetes and axes and finally the chainsaw, keeping them all whirling through the air with incredible skill and flair as the officer looks on in amazement. Meanwhile, two AA members drive by on their way to a meeting. The newcomer turns to his sponsor and exclaims, "Wow, thank God I stopped drinking when I did. Those field sobriety tests are getting tougher all the time."

Recycle Your Copies of

The Grapevine Magazine

The Grapevine is timeless! Articles written ten or twenty years ago are still fresh and inspiring. Central Office provides a box for collecting back issues of The Grapevine. These issues are picked up by H & I and re-circulated in institutions and jails. So . . . before discarding your back issues, bring them in for use by another recovering alcoholic! Recycle and help spread recovery!



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ANONYMITY ARCHIVES BELIEVE GROUP **MEETING**

NEEDS NEWCOMER SERVICE PREAMBLE PROBLEM SELF

SERENITY SOBER **TREATMENT UNITY**

The Ventura County Central Service open house, held on February 26th, was a huge success!

Thank you everyone who came out to celebrate our 50+ years of serving the community. Make sure you stop by the office and check out our "HANDS OF AA" wall.





CELEBRATE YOUR AA BIRTHDAY HERE!

Celebrate your annual sobriety anniversary with us. To participate in this tradition, just send in the form provided in this column or submit it to vcaaco@verizon.net with your Birthday information. Member's birthdays submitted will be published in this section the following month.

Join the winners and celebrate your recovery.

February & Previous AA Birthdays

HAPPY SOBRIETY BIRTHDAY



MARCH 2017

Diana R - 25 Simi Valley **Tracy O - 26** Thousand Oaks Ed S. - 29 Thousand Oaks

Mary R - 29 Simi Valley Sol G. - 47 Ventura



Birthday Club Listing For:

Name City Sobriety Date ____ Years **Voluntary Donation Amount \$** Please mail to:

> **Ventura County Central Service Office** 321 N. Aviador Street, Suite 115 Camarillo, CA 93010



Meeting Info	347	
Twelve Step Calls	31	
Other Twelve Steps Programs	30	
Activities	83	
Directions to Office	24	
Other Type Calls	<u> 182</u>	
TOTAL	697	

AATRIVIA QUESTION Of The Month

MARCH QUESTION:

When patients, that Sister Ignatia's cared for, left St Thomas Hospital she would often give them a Sacred Hearts medallion or sometimes a St. Christopher medal. What did she ask of them in return?

FEBRUARY ANSWER:



In what year and why did A.A.W.S. stop using the Circle and Triangle on literature?

The 1994 General Service Conference phased out the use Circle and Triangle logo due to legal issues with outside entities.

Congratulation to Michele B. for submitting the correct answer.

Answers will be published the following month. Mail your answer to: Ventura County Central Service Office Inc.,

321 N. Aviador Street, Suite 115, Camarillo, Ca. 93010. The correct answer will win a free one-year subscription to this publication. If the winner already has a subscription, a gift subscription will be awarded to another member — winner's choice.

NEWSLETTER STUFF-N-FOLD GROUP

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