

GRAPESCCIN

September 2023

Gifts of the Program

by Cheryl R.

The speaker had just finished sharing, and it was finally time. I'd been looking forward to this Birthday Speaker meeting for weeks. My heart felt full as I looked around at all the smiling faces, the members of my sponsor family and my daughter close by my side.

"Get up there!" My grand sponsor was almost more excited than I was.

The room buzzed with excitement as I made my way up the steps to the stage. I turned to see one of my A.A. sisters shining her light at me. "Congratulations!" She gave me a hug, spun me around and nudged me toward the podium.

I leaned into the microphone: "My name is Cheryl. I am an alcoholic. Thanks to my family in A.A. and by the grace of God, I'm celebrating one year of sobriety." I heard the crowd roar and my 19-year-old daughter scream her head off. A lady hugged me and handed me a brass chip. It was heavy and solid; I held it tightly in my fingers. I walked down the stairs back to my seat, and my daughter's face beamed with pride. Her eyes sparkled as she pulled me into a heartwarming embrace.

That night as I lay cozy in bed, my heart overflowed with gratitude. I thanked God for my sobriety, my loving daughter and my sponsor, who's adopted me into her A.A. family.

Before I came to A.A. I drank two martinis and a bottle of wine every day. Alcohol had me in its clutches and I couldn't see a way out. I knew I had a serious problem but because of my job I was afraid to ask for help. I was a slave to alcohol, in the chains of addiction. Emotionally, physically and spiritually damaged, I finally let go of my pride and found a women's meeting. Awash in tears, I announced I was an alcoholic. I sobbed through the meeting until we

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Intergroup minutes and reports are now published on our website:
<https://aasantacruz.org/documents/>



joined hands and prayed. Suddenly, I felt surrounded by love. The women didn't judge me. Their kind eyes told me they understood. They gave me a Big Book and a long list of phone numbers. I didn't realize how much my life would change over the next year.

I learned alcoholism is a disease that affects everyone in the family, even if they're not drinking. My mother and father had passed it down to me. One of my biggest regrets is drinking in front of my daughter; I even drove drunk with her in the car. I'd been sober for two days when she told me that when I was drinking, she wished I would just pass out so I'd be myself again when I awoke.


My daughter has never drunk, but she's learned behaviors that I struggle to overcome. I know I can't change the past. But my daily amends to her is to stay sober and work the steps to the best of my ability, so I can be a positive role model for her. As I gain confidence and self-esteem, this will have a positive effect on her. One of the greatest gifts of working the program is feeling happy and peaceful inside myself for the first time in my life.

Another invaluable gift I've received this year is the friendship I've built with the women in the program. Relationships have always been difficult. I know God is doing for me what I can't do for myself because my angels reveal themselves when I'm ready. My sponsor and grand sponsor appeared when I needed them most. They are more than friends; they're my mentors, my surfing coach and my cheerleaders. They're passing on to me the knowledge and love they've received, teaching me how to live a sober life and how to be a sober friend. For that I am grateful. I pray that I'll continue this tradition when I'm ready.


Emotional sobriety is a gift we must work for. After writing down my resentments and my part in all of them, I could see the demons from my past causing difficulties in my daily life. Painful as it can be, writing a Fourth Step is a valuable tool that gives me a new pair of glasses.

I can see now that these defects of character, survival tactics that once served me, are causing fear, shame, self-hatred and loneliness. God wants me to feel happiness. Once I'm able to let go of these negative emotions, I begin to feel lighter. My shoulders are not pinned to my ears, my health is improving and my relationships are becoming closer - especially my connection to my higher power. Daily prayer has become an important part of my recovery and my life.

My life is so good now I can't imagine what else God has in store for me. If you're a newcomer - or an old-comer - please don't quit before the miracle. If you feel like picking up a drink, just give it 24 more hours. Pick up the phone. Go to a meeting. Ask God for help. God has a plan for us. Whatever happens is not up to me. God will build with me and do with me as God sees fit ... But I have a strong feeling something wonderful is going to happen.



**YES, THE SANTA CRUZ FELLOWSHIP
IS OPEN IN DOWNTOWN SANTA CRUZ
DURING CONSTRUCTION!**



REFRIGERATOR MAINTENANCE IN SOBRIETY

by Dan F. Aromas

One morning at 3 a.m. I popped out of a blackout. I was in the kitchen, wearing underwear. I was attempting to move the refrigerator.

The lights were on. Two of my housemates were present, watching. They were unconcerned.

I looked at them. They looked at me.

"We just wanted to see how this was gonna go," said one housemate.

I continued to grip the large, bulky appliance. I had the refrigerator situation under control.

"Why are you trying to move the refrigerator?" the other housemate asked.

I didn't know, I said. It just needed to be done, at 3 a.m., drunk, in my underwear.

My housemates didn't hold a grudge about the appliance episode. This type of behavior from me did not shock them.

Now, I can look back in gratitude at the incident of the refrigerator in the night. No condiments were harmed. No items in Tupperware were violated; mold was not separated from vegetable; no bottles were knocked over. Environmental hazard was averted.

Now I can be grateful I never killed or maimed anyone or myself. I walked drunk, rode bicycles drunk, rode motorcycles drunk, drove large American automobiles drunk. There were fights, crashes, arrests. There were hurt feelings, anger, and depression. I cheated at cards and other games.

Now, I have sponsorship in Alcoholics Anonymous to help me sort through disturbing behavior. I am grateful to have someone who advises me using the tools suggested by our literature. I try not to bother my sponsor with trivial matters or complaints.

I used to call him on a telephone that sat on a table, or from a glass box you would stand inside. One day in 1995 I called to tell him that in the last year I had watched "The Lion King"

film 3,374 times with my child, age 8, and was concerned about the effect it was having on me.

"This movie, it's killing me," I said. "People in meetings are bringing up 'the Circle of Life' thing."

"Did you drink today?" he asked. "You're spending time with your daughter in a way that she enjoys."

Through the years, I've evolved. People in A.A. help me through this process. I now email, text, or speak to A.A. friends from a device. The communication machines have changed, but some of my old thoughts and behaviors have not.

Last week, for instance, I was visited by another appliance episode. The Circle of Refrigeration is real. I popped awake at 2:15 a.m., convinced the Whirlpool was making abnormal sounds. I walked to the refrigerator and stood before it in my underwear. I listened. I asked the appliance what it was up to, if it was in danger of not refrigerating. I checked the ice cream; it was still good.

The next day I told an A.A. friend about this latest incident. I asked him if he was concerned.

"Did you have any beer in there?" he asked. "If not, you're probably in no danger."

No. I did not have beer there. Or anywhere. This means life is OK. With no alcohol, there are possibilities.

I am grateful for the gifts of AA sponsorship and fellowship, and refrigeration. Without them, there would be no ice cream for me. There would be no daughter, friends, or life at all.

This does not mean I'll consent to seeing "The Lion King" again. Not unless I'm forced.

It does mean I can recognize the gifts of sobriety, and that I can make amends to loved ones, groupings of people, dogs, and inanimate objects. Now that's evolution.

Me and My Shadow

by Anonymous, Santa Cruz



Dr. Carl Jung, the revered Swiss psychiatrist instrumental in the formation of A.A., said, “People will do anything, no matter how absurd, to keep from facing their own souls.” I can relate. I was willing to throw away my sobriety rather than face my fears.

Jung called the part of ourselves that we don’t want others to see our “shadow.” The more we suppress fear, the more likely it will show up unexpectedly, as in a road-rage incident or perhaps abusing a loved one. But we don’t have to live under our shadow if we don’t want to. Once exposed, the shadow becomes lighter and less powerful.

Jung also said “unfaced fear is the cause of our suffering.” If that is true – and it is for me – then it makes perfect sense that Alcoholics Anonymous could help me face my fears. After all, the Big Book lays out a program of recovery that can make us “happy, joyous, and free,” with a little bit of courage and willingness to work the steps with another A.A. member.

The Twelve Steps give us a way to live and grow in the light. They provide a path to face our fears, with a trusted confidant in a safe space. But for many of us it takes courage to admit our feelings. My parents submerged their feelings in the icy waters of Lake Be Polite No Matter What, and they taught their children to do the same. I hated stuffing my feelings. It’s unnatural. But I continued to shut them out, and alcohol provided an effective way to do it.

In early sobriety, my fear of Step Five – admitting to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs – haunted me throughout the first four steps. I honestly believed that I could not go through with it.

On the day I was scheduled to meet with my sponsor for that step, I sat in front of Pergolesi in downtown Santa Cruz, utterly terrified. I seriously considered throwing away my hard-earned sobriety and drinking, simply to avoid talking with her about my feelings. Eventually I found the willingness to pray for courage. It worked. I drove up to her house in Ben Lomond.

What I remember most was the relief I felt when she said, “Oh, I did that too!” or shared a shameful moment of her own. Feeling understood was invaluable: I was not the monster I had always believed myself to be! I had heard people say this in meetings, but didn’t think I ever could believe it of myself. Of course, I still have a shadow. But with a little courage to face my feelings, my shadow is not the monster I feared for much of my life. It’s just part of being human.

Today I value time with my friends and sponsor when I can share my feelings with them. I know from experience they benefit, too. Sharing our fears and vulnerabilities connects us. I believe this connection is the soul of Alcoholics Anonymous that makes it unique and wonderful. Dr. Jung would be proud.



Grace Through Service

By Amelia C, Santa Cruz

I sit on a blanket in the shade. Crystal blue Tahoe waters lap softly in front of me. The sky is almost blinding above me. Mountains etched with white stretch in the distance, remnants of the long winter. Its echoes send a shiver up my spine. I'm reminded of the beauty that comes from storms, the grace that can come from the most unforgiving circumstances. I'm reminded that I'm one of the lucky ones, blessed with grace in the depths of pain and despair.

From the outside, my life seemed that of a normal 35-year-old woman four years ago. I'd just returned from living abroad and secured a job as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker. I was building a life for myself in my college town of Santa Cruz, self-sufficient and independent. But inside I was tortured with "what ifs," "if onlys" and "should be's." I was drinking again after a year-and-a-half of sobriety, using the tool that had worked so often in the past to silence those thoughts. But the drinks weren't doing their job. The thoughts were louder now, and cut deeper. I felt empty and insufficient.

When I turned to Alcoholics Anonymous this time, I knew I'd be welcomed. I didn't hesitate to jump into a program that had worked for me the first time around. And it worked again, because I was willing, I was honest, I was open to anything that would change the Groundhog Day of pain and shame my life had become. What I couldn't predict were the blessings and challenges I found.

From the get-go, this time things were more difficult in sobriety. I had trouble with life on life's terms, letting go of what I couldn't control and staying centered in the present. I struggled with my conception of a higher power and my connection with it. I struggled balancing a full and busy life with a craving for solitude and, sometimes, stagnation.

But time and again, I keep coming back to the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous, and I've stayed sober four years. Blessings have followed: I rediscovered softball, I found love, I reconnected with family and built deeper connections with friends.

Of all the tools I've learned and used, service has been the most consistent and the one I believe has kept me sober. I have been of service on the days when I felt 110 percent and the days I've felt minus-110 percent. In both situations, I've felt a sense of grounding peace that I never encountered while drinking, despite consistently being of service in my drinking days. Why? The response I've felt can be explained only by a higher power I still cannot explain.

I found General Service in A.A. two years ago, but it wasn't until this year that I felt more of a calling to it. The Pacific Region of A.A. Service Assembly 2023 was one of those experiences that I can only explain as a "god-shot." I couldn't have planned or predicted how instrumental it would be in my sobriety. I found community and connection, service and advocacy, and a voice that has transformed my sobriety into something completely different from what I could have imagined when I returned in July 2019.

I'm unsure about many things, and I don't have to be. I've learned I don't have to morbidly reflect on the past or worry about the future. Service has grounded me in the present. Even if I'm unsure who my higher power is or whether to take this path or one less traveled, I do know that whatever comes my way, I don't have to do it alone.

The snow-kissed mountains blur in the background. As I bolt from my blanket and dive into the crisp, crystal water of Tahoe, I know I'm a product of grace, and I'm full of gratitude for another day sober.

From the General Service Chair

The presence of a GSR says the group cares.

When a GSR votes the groups voice is heard.

Those powerful statements were said at this past weekend's ACM (General Service Area Committee Meeting).

I'm sure all groups in Santa Cruz County care greatly. This is an invitation to all groups to share that caring and be heard, beginning at our monthly General Service meeting held via Zoom on the second Wednesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. There is an orientation for new GSRs that begins at 6:45 p.m.

Meeting ID: 898 9003 8938

Passcode: 121212

Gratefully yours in service,

Deb A.

DCMC (District Committee Member Chair)



CALIFORNIA NORTHERN COASTAL AREA 06 (CNCA 06) OF
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS PRESENTS

FALL ASSEMBLY 2023

"THE AREA INVENTORY"

SAVE THE DATE!

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 4

Monterey Moose Family Center
555 Canyon Del Rey Blvd. Del Rey Oaks, CA

Zoom ID: [632 553 607](https://zoom.us/j/632553607) | Password: 1935

REGISTRATION	9:00 – 10:00 AM
ORIENTATION	10:00 – 10:15 AM
AREA BUSINESS MEETING	10:15 AM - 12:00 PM
LUNCH	12:00 – 1:00 PM
AREA INVENTORY	1:00 – 5:15 PM
WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND?	5:15 – 5:30 PM



Attending online? Spanish-English interpretation and Closed Captioning will be provided on Zoom.

Attending in-person? Bring your FM RADIO for Spanish-English interpretation and Assisted Listening.



PI-CPC WORKSHOP

PUBLIC INFORMATION, COOPERATION WITH PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY



**SATURDAY
SEPTEMBER 16
2-5PM**

FRANCINE B. DISTRICT 04/40, SANTA CLARA
BRENT M. DISTRICT 05, SAN MATEO
FERNANDO R. DISTRICT 17, SPANISH SPEAKING
GENARO D. DISTRICT 16, SPANISH SPEAKING
NANCY R. DISTRICT 40, SPANISH SPEAKING
QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

**Zoom ID: 568 947 843
Password: 1935**

**Foothill Covenant Church (ARK Building)
1555 Oak Avenue Los Altos, CA 94022**

Translation available. Please bring your am/fm radio

**To be added to PI-CPC contact list send
name, phone & email to: susanclancy5@gmail.com or
text 650-515-0950**

SOBRIETY MILESTONES

August

Jackie M
Sam B
Bob H
Rick J
Mary M
Damien M
Nina M
Leslie F
Yolanda H
Shirley S
Steph P
Scott D
John B
Deb A
Katie L
Marty L
Mark B
Will M
Tom H
Margo L
Seth
Dale H
David C
Teresa W
Lester D
Justin R
Norm H
Kellyn B
Frank H
Heather
Viki
Jami J
Maura M
Alli Q

August 5, 1977
August 15, 1978
August 24, 1978
August 20, 1979
August 18, 1983
August 19, 1983
August 27, 1983
August 8, 1987
August 21, 1987
August 1, 1988
August 28, 1988
August 1, 1989
August 30, 1990
August 16, 1991
August 15, 1999
August 15, 1999
August 23, 1999
August 14, 2000
August 7, 2002
August 10, 2002
August 8, 2005
August 6, 2007
August 21, 2009
August 24, 2010
August 2, 2011
August 19, 2012
August 1, 2013
August 2, 2014
August 8, 2014
August 18, 2014
August 24, 2014
August 27, 2014
August 24, 2015
August 14, 2016

In Memoriam

Julie L - 59 years
Diane B - 20 years

August 11, 1947
August 25, 1983



Want to list your A.A. anniversary in the GrapeSCINN? Email your name and sobriety date to: grapesccin@gmail.com

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY INTERGROUP PRESENTS

THE BIRTHDAY SPEAKER MEETING

A black and white illustration of a vintage microphone on a stand, with radiating lines around it to suggest sound or energy.

SPEAKER: CORRINE B - HALF MOON BAY - 35 YEARS
HOSTED BY THUMPERS

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 2

7:00 PM - DOORS OPEN 5:30
MID-COUNTY SENIOR CENTER - 829 BAY AVE. CAPITOLA

SEPTEMBER EVENTS

For more information
about this month's events, visit
aasantacruz.org

September 2 @ 7:00 pm - 8:15 pm
Birthday Speaker Meeting
Mid-County Senior Center
829 Bay Ave., Capitola

September 3 @ 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm
CRUZYPAA Monthly Meeting
Harvey West Park 326 Evergreen St
Santa Cruz

September 4 @ 11:00 am - 4:00 pm
BLF Labor Day Picnic
Felton Covered Bridge Park
Graham Hill Rd. and Mt. Hermon Rd.
Felton

September 6 @ 7:30 pm - 8:30 pm
Intergroup Council Meeting
Meeting ID: 828 1508 0970
Passcode: 588309

September 9 @ 10:00 am - 12:00 pm
4th Step Workshop
Ben Lomond Fellowship
9496 Hwy 9, Ben Lomond

September 12 @ 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm
Joint Committee on Safety
Meeting ID: 892 3730 0658
Passcode: 857738

September 13 @ 7:30 pm - 9:30 pm
General Service District Meeting
Meeting ID: 898 9003 8938
Passcode: 121212

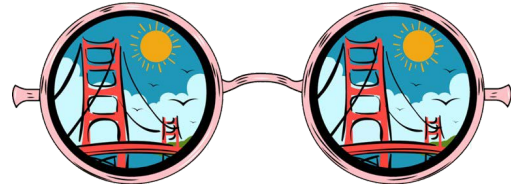
September 14 @ 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm
Web Committee Meeting
Meeting ID: 884 7009 1801
Passcode: 2272

September 17 @ 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm
CRUZYPAA Monthly Meeting
Harvey West Park 326 Evergreen St
Santa Cruz

September 20 @ 7:30 pm - 9:30 pm
Intergroup Steering Committee Meeting
Meeting ID: 861 8723 8980
Passcode: 723088

September 23 @ 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm
Santa Cruz Fellowship Birthday Speaker Meeting
Santa Cruz Fellowship
412 Front Street, Santa Cruz

Watch Loneliness Vanish



Ver Como Desaparece la Soledad

The 63rd ICYPAA

International Conference of Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous

with Al-Anon Participation

Labor Day Weekend, Friday - Monday

September 1 - 4, 2023

Marriott Marquis, 780 Mission Street, San Francisco

63^{ra} Conferencia Internacional de Jóvenes en Alcohólicos Anónimos

Fin de semana del Día del Trabajo, del viernes al lunes

del 1 al 4 de septiembre de 2023

Marriott Marquis, 780 Mission Street, San Francisco

Las principales reuniones de ponentes y algunos de los paneles/talleres contarán con interpretación al español

www.ICYPAA.org

Pre-reg and book your room now!



9AM ONLINE DAILY WOMAN'S MEETING OF A.A.
PRESENTS

12 Concepts: Women in Service

An introduction to the Twelve Concepts of A.A.
and how to apply them at every level of service.



2023 Workshops

3rd Saturdays July - Oct

2nd Saturdays Nov - Dec

10:30 am - 12:00 pm PST

JULY 15: Herstory of Service

AUG 19: Concepts I - III

SEP 16: Concepts IV - VI

OCT 21: Concepts VII - VIII

NOV 11: Concept IX - X

DEC 16: Concept XII

Zoom I.D: 718 349 933 Email Sign-in Required
More info at dailywomensmeeting.com



Santa Cruz County - Area 73 Hospitals and Institutions Committee

Help Wanted September 2023

Recovery Centers

Santa Cruz Residential - Needs Secretary for 3rd Sunday @7pm.....6 months sobriety, working the steps with a sponsor. Call or Text **Victoria** 818-804-1496 / viaha6181@gmail.com

Mental Health Facilities

Opal Cliff Residential - Needs Secretaries for each Saturday @1pm....6 months sobriety, working the steps with a sponsor. Call or Text **Victoria** 818-804-1496 / viaha6181@gmail.com

Correctional Facilities

Salinas Valley State Prison – Needs Visiting Sponsors.....Male, 5 years sobriety

Water Street Jail/Women – Needs Secretaries.....Female, 1 year sobriety.

Water Street Jail/Men – Needs Secretaries... Male, 1 year sobriety

Roundtree Facilities/Men - Needs Secretaries..... Male, 1 year sobriety.

Blaine St./Women- Needs Secretaries... Female, 1 year sobriety

Jail Facilities- Needs Coordinator.... Male and Female, 3 years sobriety.

Juvenile Hall – Needs Coordinator.....Male and Female, 1 year sobriety.

All Jail Facilities: One year sobriety, 5 years since last felony & 2 years since last misdemeanor required. Orientation and clearance required for service at both men's and women's county corrections facilities. Orientation is held at the Sheriff's offices at 5200 Soquel Ave. Santa Cruz. You must complete an application before orientation can be scheduled. Live Scan background check cost will be covered by H & I. Please advise, clearance will take 4-6 weeks.

All other H & I Facilities: Please visit fill out the volunteer form. We will be in touch with you to initiate your volunteering and assistance in placement into an open meeting.

If you are interested in any of the above service positions please email:
SantaCruzcountyHI@gmail.com

H&I holds their business meeting on the 4th Wednesday of each month in the Youth Room at Trinity Presbyterian Church, 420 Melrose Ave in Santa Cruz. Meeting begins at 7PM. All AA members are welcome.

PLEASE SEND CONTRIBUTIONS TO: H & I Committee, P.O. BOX 5131, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95063-5131

PLEASE PUT YOUR GROUP OR MEETING NAME ON THE CHECK

For more information and to volunteer please visit: HandISC.org
SantaCruzCountyHI@gmail.com