



# The Mid Southern California Area 9 Newsletter

The Monthly General Service Newsletter for Area 9 of the General Service Conference  
P.O.Box 51446, Irvine, CA 92619-1446 WWW.msca09aa.org

MSCA Area 9 includes all AA groups in the counties of Los Angeles (South of Rosecrans Ave.), San Bernardino, Riverside, and Orange.

December 2011

## A Story of the Third Tradition

Here is the story about Irma L. Each year around this time I try to tell this true story about what happened not just on Dec. 7th, 1941 (Pearl Harbor Day) but what happened to one of the few women who was in AA at that time and about a letter she received in the mail on Monday Dec. 8th, which virtually kicked her out of AA.

In Dec. of 1984, I had been sober for 2 1/2 years and working with my sponsors Bob and Sybil C. since Jan. of 84. Sybil had gotten sober in March of 1941 and at the time she was 43 yrs. sober. We were driving home from a meeting and she asked me the date (to her it was just Sunday). I told her it was Dec. 8th, and that yesterday (Dec 7th) was the anniversary of Pearl Harbor Day. She said 'Matt, have I ever told you about Irma L.?' 'Nope, who is she?'

She said, 'Well, when we get back to the house, come in for coffee and I will tell you a story about AA history and some of the reasons we have tradition 3. Oh, and by the way Matt, did you know that the literature specifically protests 'queers, plain crackpots and fallen women,' and since you and I are at least two out of those three, we should be especially grateful for tradition 3. I'll show you it when we get home.'

I laughed out loud, as Sybil had a great sense of humor, and she had been a taxi dancer, back before she got sober, you know one of those '10 cents a dance' ladies, and she was divorced twice, and was a single mom, as well as an alcoholic back then, so the term 'fallen woman' was something that hit close to home.

...continued on p.2, col. 1

## Delegate's Corner

*"At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us."* Albert Schweitzer

Dear A.A. Members of MSCA 09,

In my early years of sobriety I attended a Question and Answer meeting on Thursday nights. During the opening readings and announcements, members were asked to use small slips of paper scattered around the tables to write questions about A.A. or recovery in general. A basket was passed into which all the questions were placed. The leader selected a question from the basket at random and asked for sharing on the question. Up to three people could share on a question, then another question was selected and up to three more responses and so on.

Occasionally there were frivolous or intentionally funny questions, but most were honest and sincere. One evening this question was in the basket: *"What is A.A. really all about?"* Immediate laughter as the question was read, but the leader said, "Does anyone want to take a crack at it?"

One of the regulars, a rough edged, middle-aged man, sober about 15 years, who I will call Roger, said, *"Yes. Alcoholics Anonymous is all about learning how to be courteous."*

I've thought about that answer, that insight, that perspective many, many times since that evening in the early 1980s.

Continued on p.4, col. 2

**A Story of the Third Tradition ...** continued  
from p.1, col. 1

She had told me that it was very different back in the 30's and 40's for a woman to be an alcoholic. Sybil said it was a time when women wore hats and gloves, and 'respectable women' were not usually found in a bar or at 'whoopie parties.'

Our Thursday night step study had voted to not cover the traditions after we got to step 12, so I figured they must not be very important and thought I'd probably be bored with the conversation, but she got my attention telling me that 'queers, crackpots and fallen women' were mentioned, so I agreed to come in for coffee.

Besides Sybil had been sober longer than I had been alive. I didn't argue with her very much.

Sybil got down her copy of the big book. She said, I want you to find the traditions in there, and read me tradition 3. It was a 1st edition Big Book. Thicker than mine.

I said, 'Is this why they call it the Big Book?'

She said, 'exactly, Bill had it printed on big paper, with big margins around the type, so that people would think they were really getting something for their money.'

I looked in the back of the book, where I thought the traditions were, but couldn't find them. 'I can't find them, Sybil.'

'Exactly. That's because we didn't have any traditions back in 1941 when I came in, and Matt, AA was in mortal danger of destroying itself, which is why we have traditions now.' Then she had me find them in my 3rd edition and in my 12x12. I didn't read it all, just the caption heading, and then she started telling me the story of IRMA L..

Irma was a sponsee of Sybil's. She also became a member in 1941, just after Sybil. Sybil took her into her home. (Sybil told me that many people's bottoms were very low then, no home, no job, no watch, no car, nothing). Sybil said it was different then for a woman to be an alcoholic, That most of them had burned all their bridges with their families, and were looked down upon, even more so than male alcoholics. Sybil said she watched AA help Irma get sober, watched AA help Irma get cleaned up, watched AA help Irma get her first apartment in sobriety.

...continued top of next column

**A Story of the Third Tradition ...**  
continued from p.1, col. 1

Then she said that on Dec. 5th, 1941 a self-appointed group of the members signed a letter to Irma and mailed it 2 days before Pearl Harbor, on that Friday, Dec. 5th. Here is a copy of the letter.

**ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS**

*Post Office Box 607 Hollywood, California*

*December 5th, 1941*

*Dear Mrs. L.:*

*At a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Los Angeles Group of Alcoholics Anonymous, held Dec. 4th, 1941. It is decided that your attendance at group meetings was no longer desired until certain explanations and plans for the future were made to the satisfaction of this committee. This action has been taken for reasons which should be most apparent to yourself. It was decided that, should you so desire, you may appear before members of this committee and state your attitude.*

*This opportunity will be afforded you between now and Dec. 15th, 1941. You may communicate with us at the above address by that date.*

*In case you do not wish to appear, we shall consider the matter closed and that your membership is terminated.*

*Alcoholics Anonymous, Los Angeles Group*

*Mortimer, Frank, Edmund, Fay D., Pete, Al*

I was stunned. 'How could they do this Sybil?' Because we didn't have any guidelines, any traditions to protect us from good intentions. AA was very new, and people did all sorts of things, thinking they were protecting the fellowship'

...continued p.3, col. 1

## **A Story of the Third Tradition ...**

*continued from p.2, col. 2*

Sybil then said to close my eyes and imagine my being in the following setting. Sybil explained that Dec. 7th, 1941 was Pearl Harbor Day (a Sunday). She said that on that Sunday night everyone in LA was afraid that Los Angeles would also be attacked and bombed. There was a citywide blackout, people were so terrified. She said that on Monday Dec.8th President Roosevelt gave the speech that talked about 'the date that will live in infamy' and that we were now at war with Japan and Germany.

She said, that was the day that Irma received her letter. There was only one meeting in the entire state of California when Sybil came in, in 1941. By December there may have been 2 or 3, but Irma had nowhere else to go, no one else to turn to, no other group in California that she could ask for help.

Sybil said, 'Imagine only 1 or 2 meetings in your entire state, and being shunned by your family and by society and by the only group of people who were on your side, your AA group. Imagine them shutting the door on you and sending you such a letter.'

I shivered at the thought of it, it was Christmas time, the stores were decorated and now poor Irma was all alone, I thought about how it was in 1984 with 2000 meetings a week to choose from in Southern California, and then I imagined having no other help for a hopeless alcoholic.

Sybil told me that Irma never came back to another meeting, left AA and died of alcoholism. She wrote to Bill about the incident, and I cannot tell you that is the reason that the following is a part of the 3rd Tradition, but it certainly seems to apply.

From Tradition 3, page 141: that we would neither punish nor deprive any AA of membership, that we must never compel anyone to pay anything, believe anything, or conform to anything? The answer, now seen in Tradition 3, was simplicity itself. At last

*...continued top of next column*

## **A Story of the Third Tradition ... continued**

*from previous column*

experience taught us that to take away any alcoholics full chance was sometimes to pronounce his death sentence, and often to condemn him to endless misery. Who dared to be judge, jury and executioner of his own sick brother?'

I remember looking at those words again and again. They seemed to get larger and larger.

JUDGE JURY AND EXECUTIONER

JUDGE JURY AND EXECUTIONER

JUDGE JURY AND EXECUTIONER

I hadn't really noticed Executioner when I had read it the first time at my 12 & 12 study group. Again I felt so bad for this poor lady. Wow, those words really had a different meaning than when I had read the traditions before, So here it is , 23 years later, and each Dec. 7th & 8th I always think about Irma L., and how lucky I am, that we have traditions now, I also think of how lucky I was to have met Sybil and so lucky that she appointed herself my sponsor.

Years later I realized how everything she ever taught me was like gold, but in 1984 I had no idea who Sybil really was or how lucky I was to have her as my sponsor. She was like a piece of living history, but I really didn't realize how valuable that was in explaining WHY we do some of the things we do (like the story she told me about how they never said 'Hi Sybil' and no one said 'Hi my name is Matt and I'm an alcoholic' back then).

Besides being one of the first women in AA,. Sybil was the first woman west of the Mississippi. She also became the head of LA's central office for 1 2 years, and she became close friends with Bill and Lois. She and Bob even used to go on vacation with them. She used to tell me all sorts of stories about Bill Wilson and things he said to her.

He was very interested in how AA would work for women, as there were very few women worldwide in AA back in 1941. Marty M. came in before Sybil did, but very few stayed sober.

*...continued on p.4, col. 1*

**A Story of the Third Tradition ... continued**  
from p.1, col. 1

I learned that night that no one can get kicked out of AA. We can ask a disturbing wet drunk that he needs to settle down or we might have to ask him to step outside for that day, but we don't vote to kick anyone out forever. And we don't shun people because our guidelines, our traditions tell us that no one has to believe in anything (they don't have to like me) and they don't have to conform to anything, they don't have to dress a certain way, or have no facial hair, or pay anything .) Even if I get drunk again, I am still welcome at any AA meeting.

So that's the story about Irma L. Feel free to pass this along to anyone you know who might be interested in knowing a bit about how and why the traditions got started. I think it sort of puts a face on Tradition 3: the face of a woman I never knew, who got kicked out of AA. Who got drunk and died.

Thank God for Tradition 3 and thank God for all of you. I truly appreciate and cherish all the people in this group.

Best AA love to you all.

### Concept XII (Long Form)

General Warranties of the Conference: in all its proceedings, the General Service Conference shall observe the spirit of the A.A. Tradition, taking great care that the Conference never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds, plus an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principle; that none of the Conference Members shall ever be placed in a position of unqualified authority over any of the others; that all important decisions be reached by discussion, vote, and, whenever possible, by substantial unanimity; that no Conference action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy; that, though the Conference may act for the service of Alcoholics Anonymous, it shall never perform any acts of government; and that, like the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous which it serves, the Conference itself will always remain democratic in thought and action.

### Delegate's Corner ... continued from p.1, col. 2

Courtesy, of course, came from the custom of behaving well in medieval Court...at the manor house or palace. Having better manners, respect and consideration of others under certain conditions. People were called "courteous" particularly if they behaved well *outside* the court environment...even when it *wasn't* required by custom.

Courtesy is marked by consideration, cooperation and generosity toward others, even, sometimes, despite the facts or provocation.

And I agree with Jacques Maritain, a prominent drafter of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (and, I believe, one of the many who inspired Bill W. as he studied and explored philosophical and social models for A.A.), "*Gratitude is the most exquisite form of courtesy.*"

Gratitude is the inward feeling of kindness received. Courtesy is the impulse to express that feeling. Service is the following of that impulse.

As I end my two-year term of service as the Panel 60 Conference Delegate from Mid-Southern California Area 09, I am flooded with feelings of gratitude and privilege. You have treated me with kindness, love and, yes, courtesy. You have touched my heart and kept me sober. You have continued to light and re-light my candle, and I have done my best to serve with love and kindness. I have certainly not succeeded to meet my own or the standards of others, but the gifts I have received will continue to fill my heart for the rest of my life.

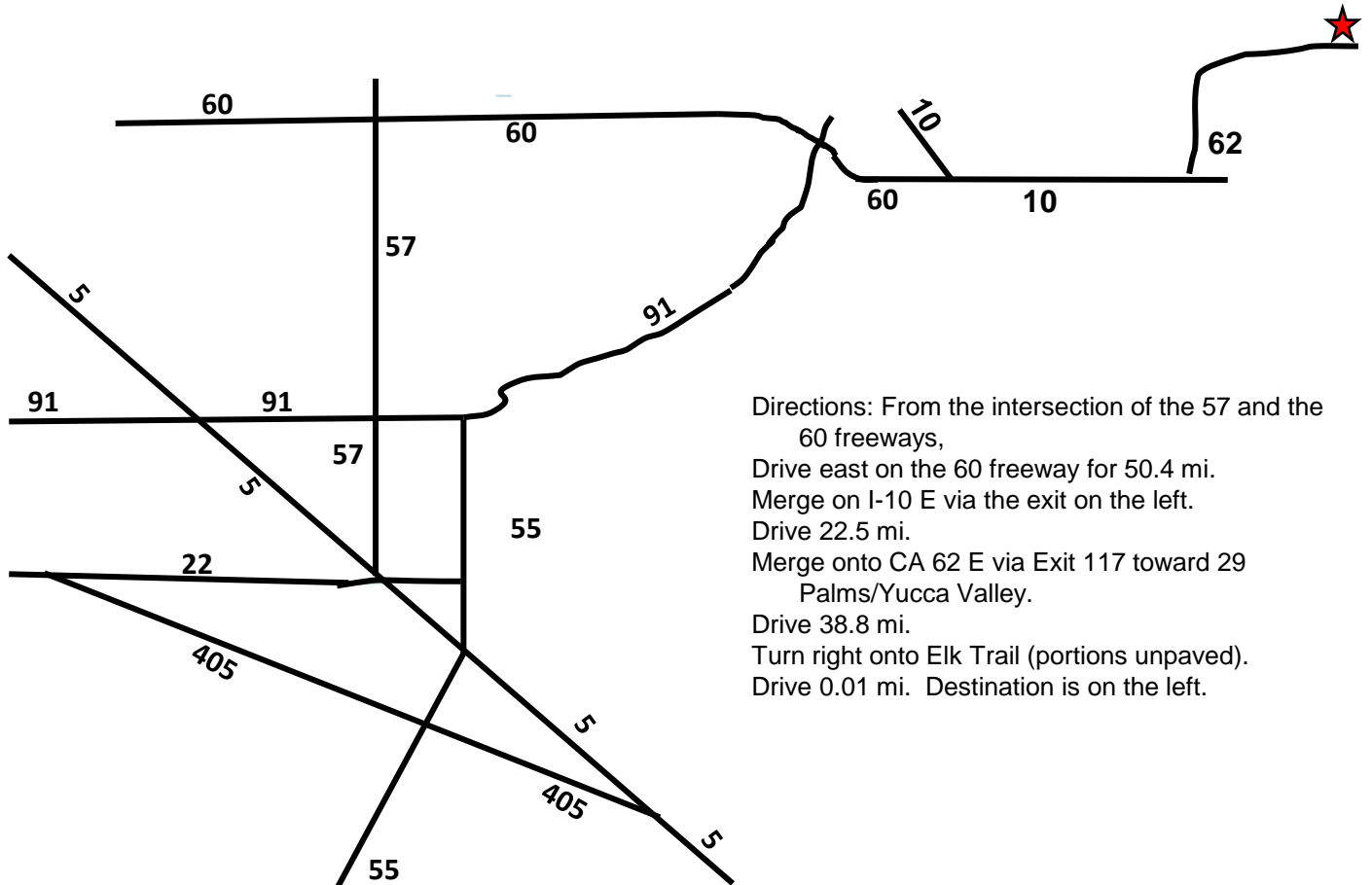
*Thank you,*  
Linda

*"Thousands of candles can be lit from a single candle, and the life of the candle will not be shortened. Happiness never decreases by being shared."* Buddha

### Tradition 12 (Long Form)

*Our A.A. experience has taught us that: .. And finally, we of Alcoholics Anonymous believe that the principle of anonymity has an immense spiritual significance. It reminds us that we are to place principles before personalities; that we are actually to practice a genuine humility. This to the end that our great blessings may never spoil us; that we shall forever live in thankful contemplation of Him who presides over us all.*

**Dec. 11, 2011 - Sunday - Area Service Committee (ASC) (The ASC will vote on which proposals to put onto the next Assembly Agenda), District 30, Elks Lodge, 6501 Elk Trail Dr., 29 Palms, Ca. 92227**



Directions: From the intersection of the 57 and the 60 freeways,  
 Drive east on the 60 freeway for 50.4 mi.  
 Merge on I-10 E via the exit on the left.  
 Drive 22.5 mi.  
 Merge onto CA 62 E via Exit 117 toward 29 Palms/Yucca Valley.  
 Drive 38.8 mi.  
 Turn right onto Elk Trail (portions unpaved).  
 Drive 0.01 mi. Destination is on the left.

**What is the difference between Assemblies and ASCs?**

Assemblies: GSRs vote  
 First ASC after each Assembly:  
*The ASC members will present proposals, but no vote will be taken on them.*  
 Second ASC after each Assembly:  
*ASC members will vote on which proposals to put on the agenda for the next Assembly (for GSRs to vote on)*

**What's the Purpose of an ASC?**

1. Identifying, defining, and discussing Area, District and Group problems and issues.
2. Obtaining the consensus of each District and its Groups.
3. Acting as an advisory Committee to the Assembly, Executive Committee and Delegate.
4. Establishing The agenda for the next assembly

**Who are the ASC Members?**

The MSCA ASC is made up of Area Officers, DCMC's, past Delegates, Alternate DCMC's, DCM's, other District Officer's, Standing and Coordinate Committee Chairs and Cochairs.

## Schedule for most MSCA Assemblies/ASCs

9:00 am....Delegate's Sharing\*  
 10:15 am..... GSR School, and  
 Committee Meetings  
 11:30 am... Lunch  
 12 noon ... ASC or Assembly meeting

\* Please note that The Delegate's Sharing now goes from 9:00 to 10:00 and the GSR School and committees start their meetings at 10:15

## Panel 60 Area Officers

Sharon K., Secretary	Linda C., Delegate
Joseph M., Treasurer	Cesar F., Alt. Delegate
Michael M., Registrar	Jeryl T., Chairperson

## Elected Panel 62 Area Officers:

Jeryl T.... Delegate  
 Sharon K.... Alt. Delegate  
 Cesar F .... Chair  
 Jesus O..... Secretary  
 Annie D ... Treasurer  
 Raul C..... Registrar

## Upcoming Events

### Date - Event:

Dec. 11, 2011 - Sunday - Area Service Committee (ASC) (*The ASC will vote on which proposals to put onto the next Assembly Agenda*), District 30, Elks Lodge, 6501 Elk Trail Dr., 29 Palms, Ca. 92227

Jan. 8, 2012 –Sunday–Assembly (GSRs vote), District 5

Feb. 12 – Sunday – ASC (*The ASC will present proposals, but no vote will be taken on them*), , District 23

Mar. 11 – Sunday – ASC (*The ASC will vote on which proposals to put onto the next Assembly Agenda*),, District 15

Apr. 15, Pre-Conference Workshop, District 24

May 20 – Sunday – Assembly (GSRs vote), District 1

June 10, ASC (*The ASC will present proposals, but no vote will be taken on them*), , District 22

July 8 – Foro, Districts 20 & 18

Aug. 12 – ASC (*The ASC will vote on which proposals to put onto the next Assembly Agenda*),, District 10

Sept. 9 – Assembly (GSRs vote), District 6

Oct. 14 – ASC (*The ASC will present proposals, but no vote will be taken on them*),, District 12

Nov. 11, Servathon, District 21

Dec. 9, ASC (*The ASC will vote on which proposals to put onto the next Assembly Agenda*),, District 7

The MSCA Assembly includes permanent committees responsible for conducting much of the AA business activity in the Area. We have Standing and Coordinate Committees. Chairs and Co-Chairs of the Standing committees are listed below.

## Panel 60 Area Standing Committee Chairs, Co-Chairs, et al.

Archives Chair... Joseph H	Finance Committee Chair... Jim B
CEC Chair... Doug W	Grapevine Chair... Doug M
Communications Committee Chair...Jesus O	La Viña Chair... Mauricio T
Newsletter Subcommittee Chair...Joe B	GSR School... David B
Layout Editor...Nancy R	GSR School, Spanish... Renaldo A
Electronic Media Sub-Committee Chair...Jim C	Literature Chair... Ernesto M
Web Coordinator...Rainer F	Literature Co-Chair, Spanish ... tbd
Equipment Subcommittee Chair... open	Public Information Chair... Keith S
Translation Subcommittee Chair...Santiago S	Public Info., Sp... .. Marcelo C
Convention Liaison... Bob D	Registration Chair... Devon F
Convention Liaison, Span... tbd	Special Needs Chair...Scott R
Corrections Chair... Alex O	Special Needs Co-Chair, Spanish...tbd
CPC Chair... Bill G	Treatment Facilities Chair... John O
CPC Co-Chair, Span... Martin G	Archivist... Pete B
DCM School... Terry S	Coffee person... Paco G
DCM School Spanish ... tbd	Sound Dudes...Leandro L & Raul C

Please send articles or information for the Area Newsletter to [communications@msca09aa.org](mailto:communications@msca09aa.org)