

Santa Barbara

NEW HOUSE



The First Fifty Years

1955 - 2005

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SANTA BARBARA
NEW HOUSE

The First 50 Years

1955 - 2005

by Victor W. Geraci (1995)

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*Founder Elmo Little (head of table)
and men of NewHouse, circa 1956*

On a May morning in 1955, the delirium tremens eased and the fog lifted for a Colorado contractor named Edward.

Three weeks earlier, an Alcoholics Anonymous member had found him on the streets of Santa Barbara. The contractor's nice quality clothes were dirty and slept in, his dentures were missing, and his body hung limp in the final stages of physical and spiritual sickness. Vague memories of Las Vegas and a bank account drained of \$20,000 were all that remained from the previous six months of an alcohol binge.

Unlike most of his peers, Edward would temporarily escape the horrors of the streets and the isolation of psychopathic wards and jails so common for most alcoholics of the time. He would become the first resident of Santa Barbara New House, a recovery program for alcoholic men.

Like many who would follow him, Edward left New House before long-term recovery could begin,¹ but New House itself would grow and flourish for the next half century, providing experience, strength, and hope to more than 17,000 men. It would also become a leader in residential sober living in California and in the nation.

During this same half century, significant changes would take place in scientific knowledge about alcoholism and other drug addictions, and an entire treatment industry and technology would be born, accompanied by radical shifts in public policy governing community responses to alcohol and other drug problems. Yet, a man entering New House in 1955 would experience essentially the same program as a man entering in 2005. New House would come to be based on a solid and simple foundation — the belief in the value of alcoholics helping other alcoholics, the importance of a safe and sober environment, and the importance to recovery of being self-supporting. The desire for sobriety, and a willingness to share daily living in an environment of other recovering men, have remained the sole requirements for admission to New House.

Upon this occasion of the fiftieth year of service to the community of Santa Barbara, New House reflects upon its history, celebrates the program's success, and honors the many individuals and organizations who contributed time and resources. Perhaps this story will serve as a guide and inspiration for other communities world-wide that wish to serve men and women in need of long-term recovery from alcoholism and other drug addictions.



Pioneers

Setting the Stage

For centuries, Americans have sought solutions to alcohol and other drug problems.² The notion that alcoholism is a disease rather than a moral failing was first suggested by the physician Benjamin Rush in 1784. The Nineteenth Century witnessed the development of numerous treatment strategies or “cures,” and of successful and popular recovery societies such as the Washingtonians and other fraternal temperance societies and “reform clubs.” The number of “inebriate homes” in America grew from six in 1870 to more than a hundred in 1902. These institutions — often called “asylums” — were staffed by professionals who specialized in the “treatment of inebriety.” In 1899, the Washingtonian Home in Boston claimed to have treated more than 10,000 alcoholics.

By the early 20th century, however, that entire network of recovery support had vanished.³ Punishment rather than rehabilitation for alcoholics was the rule of the day. Many addicted people were locked away for years in rural penal colonies. Others either languished in state psychiatric hospitals undergoing brain surgery or shock therapies, or died in the streets. Believing that addicts and alcoholics were a ‘bad seed’ that threatened the future of society, Americans passed laws providing for their mandatory sterilization. Religious and prohibitionist movements had framed the character of the alcoholic in the language of moral degeneracy.

The publication in 1939 of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* marked the beginning of a new era of rehabilitation — what some historians have called the “Modern Alcoholism Movement.”⁴ This movement found impetus six years later when Marty Mann — the first woman to find successful recovery in Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) — founded the National Council on Alcoholism (NCA) in New York.

The NCA mission was to bring the good news to the non-recovering world that alcoholism was not a moral failing but an illness from which people can and do recover. Mann’s claim that it was *alcoholism*, not *alcohol*, that should be regarded as the nation’s central alcohol-related

problem, made possible a conceptual shift that allowed the nation to break the grip of the temperance movement on public policy. Marty Mann began traveling around the country talking to recovering people about starting NCA affiliates.

On March 31, 1949, the National Council on Alcoholism (NCA) founder Marty Mann met with a small group of recovering alcoholics in Santa Barbara, California. The group incorporated in October of that year, calling themselves the Santa Barbara Committee on Alcoholism.

The initial members of this historic Committee included Henry Jackson, James Lamb Free, Sr., John B. Morse, Mildred “Millie” Pinheiro, and Elmo Little. These pioneers provided not only the leadership but much of the initial financial support for the fledgling NCA affiliate. They also brought a wide range of organizational and business skills — as well as their personal recovery experience.

James L. Free, Sr. — a former New York Advertising Agent and author of the book *Just One More* — had reached his alcoholic bottom on September 15, 1949 when his wife Julie recounted to him his actions from the previous day’s blackout. She told him how he had come home three hours late for a business meeting, hit an oak tree, ran into the hedge in their yard, urinated on the front lawn, embarrassed his business appointment, got sick during dinner,

Note: The unidentified photos included in this book are of New House residents, members of their families and friends, New House Board members, and others in the community who have lent their support over the years.



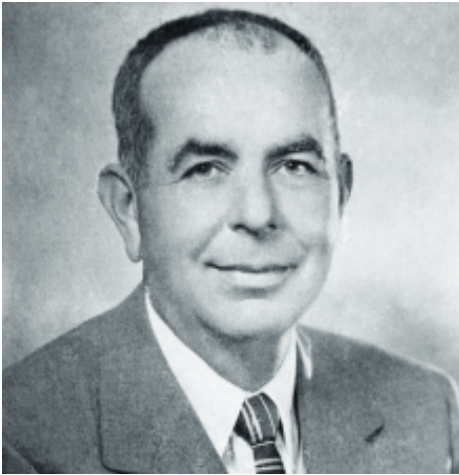
Bill Wilson (top) and Dr. Bob Smith (below) founded *Alcoholics Anonymous* in 1935, marking the beginning of the “Modern Alcoholism Movement.”



Marty Mann was the first woman to get sober in *Alcoholics Anonymous*. She formed the National Council on Alcoholism in New York in 1945, and four years later came to Santa Barbara and met with a small group of recovering alcoholics who started the Santa Barbara Committee on Alcoholism.

“...what many alcoholics need in Santa Barbara is a new house, on a new street, in a new city, for a new found recovery.”

Elmo Little



James Lamb Free, Senior

and had to be put to bed by his wife and 15 year old son. In Free's words, "I drank heavily for twenty years because of my business... I was a promoter, and I was in the advertising business, I was a huckster."⁵ He drank himself out of the presidency of his own company and only through the 12 steps was he able to bring sobriety to his life.

Free's recovery also brought a determination to help others. As was the case with most pioneer members of the Santa Barbara Committee, he attended E. M. Jellinek's Summer Institute on alcoholism at Yale University in order to expand his knowledge of alcoholism. He also drew on his own 12-step training to become a lay therapist in Santa Barbara. Utilizing the individual counseling methodology of Richard R. Peabody — a 1930's Boston and New York Lay Therapist — Free

took patient referrals from his personal psychologist Dr. Richard H. Lambert. Filled with enthusiastic zeal, he spent two years counseling court and medical referrals, but quit in frustration. He later recalled that "My percentage of success with these private patients was not very good."⁶ He had not given up on alcoholics, but on certain treatment methods—and on governmental and professional politics: "(Government agencies will) tell us what to do and they don't know what to do."⁷ Free came to embrace the principles of 12-Step recovery as the ultimate solution for alcoholics.

John B. Morse also came from the New York advertising world. He was a recovering alcoholic with the reputation of being a frank, straight-shooting proponent of AA. He was also willing to educate himself about all facets of alcoholism, and so attended Jellinek's Summer Institute on alcoholism.⁸ Mildred Pinheiro — also a recovering alcoholic — had lived in California since she was two years old. She believed that alcoholism was the "nation's largest health problem, regardless of what the heart and cancer people say."⁹ She attended the Yale University Summer Institute in 1956, and also the Columbia University Summer Institute on Alcoholism in 1958, but most of her knowledge came from her own personal experiences with successful recovery.

Elmo Little, an electrician from Knoxville, Tennessee, began his personal recovery from alcoholism after World War II and immediately set out to help others. In 1933 he had come to Santa Barbara to work on an oil well crew, and then switched to an engineer's job at the original Carrillo Hotel at Carrillo and Chapala Streets. In 1940, he accepted a job with the San Diego Power and Light Company. Four years later, during World War II, he returned to Santa Barbara to work as an electrician at the Marine Corps Air Station at the Santa Barbara Airport. After becoming sober he used his real life experiences as an alcoholic, gunshot victim, and prisoner to help down-and-out alcoholics. One person described Elmo (as he liked to be called) as "a positive man who could influence people and inspire confidence." James Free Jr. would later refer to Elmo as "the little round man with the hat," and spoke of his father's 12-step sponsor as a man "who loved his fellow alcoholics and devoted his life to their recovery."¹⁰ Elmo's philosophy was that alcoholics needed to be completely alcohol free, and that they needed structured guidance. Like his colleagues, Elmo distrusted government agencies and he fought fiercely for an independent program free of governmental influences and money. Little firmly believed that you "Don't compromise with Hell."¹¹



In their later years — Elmo Little and Peggy Scudelari, lifelong brother and sister 12-step team.

In the early 1950's — before New House — Peggy and Elmo often made three trips a week driving sick alcoholics from Santa Barbara to the nearest rehab — 6 hours away — in San Bernardino. They went on to inspire the sobriety of thousands of men and women through New House and its sister house, Casa Serena, which Peggy helped to found in 1959.

Under Pinhiero's leadership as Executive Director, the Santa Barbara Committee on Alcoholism realized their first significant accomplishment in January of 1950 by opening an "Alcoholism Information Center" at 914 Anacapa Street. By its second year of operation, the Drop-In Center was receiving over 1200 calls a month from people requesting help for alcohol problems.* Acting as a referral resource for alcoholics, the Drop-In Center quickly became aware that local facilities for alcoholism in Santa Barbara — like those elsewhere in the nation — were woefully inadequate and overstressed. Santa Barbara had the Mary Young Memorial Center, one of only three outpatient centers in California. Nationally there were only 97 facilities spread over 24 states.¹² The Superior Court of Santa Barbara County committed alcoholic men to

psychiatrist Dr. Donald S. Patterson's Psychiatric Ward at the County General Hospital. This resulted in an over-crowded hospital that mixed alcoholics and mental cases in what James Free, Sr. called an example of a bitter "snake pit".¹³

Elmo Little — along with his sister Peggy Scudelari — proved to be the Center's best personal referral for alcoholics. Tireless advocates for people wanting sobriety, Elmo and Peggy would drive people in Elmo's personal car from Santa Barbara to the Miller Alcoholic Foundation in San Bernardino, California — sometimes making the six hour, one-way trip two to three times a week.

Miller's program was the facility nearest to Santa Barbara that was adequate in its scope, and it would later influence the New House design. Founded by Lloyd Miller, it was a private, self-supporting residence — termed "a 12-step home" —

housing 65 men. Men admitted to the program paid 35 dollars for the first week and got room and board, a doctor's exam, and medication and vitamins as needed. Men could then stay as long as they liked, and paid 20 dollars per week for rent. In turn, they were expected to stay sober, do chores, and hold a job as soon as possible. In its first four years the program graduated over 1000 men.¹⁴

Elmo had told one of the many men he sponsored, William Donahue¹⁵, that what many alcoholics need in Santa Barbara was "a new house on a new street in a new city for a new found recovery." Elmo was convinced that the Miller model would work in Santa Barbara, and that he could run it.

* The Center is still operated today at 133 East Haley Street by the Santa Barbara Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse under a grant from United Way.



New House I

*"In the Beginning"—
Elmo Little and the
Original New House
1955*



The experience of the Drop-In Center convinced the Board of the Santa Barbara Committee on Alcoholism that local recovery resources were badly needed, and Elmo convinced them that the Miller model could be successful here. New House was opened in May, 1955.

The original New House was at 509 Chapala Street. Seventy years of previous owners had left the historic Victorian house equipped for immediate use as a small residential recovery home. Its history as a French restaurant had left a fully equipped commercial kitchen and ample dining space. Its four bedrooms and pleasant living room completed 2500 square feet of living space.

The house was based on the 12-step model of recovery, but the only affiliation with AA was that AA held weekly meetings at the facility. Residents were to come from all walks of life, race, creed, education, and financial status. No one would be turned down because of financial need, but all residents were expected to pay reasonable room and board as soon as they were able. All residents shared equally in chores, and were required to remain free of alcohol and other mood-altering drugs, to attend frequent AA meetings, and to find a job as soon as possible.

By 1957, over 320 men had become residents. Their initial experiences were testimony to the fact that recovery from alcoholism



Elmo Little insured that men were serious about their sobriety by sometimes seeking the opinion of his big black dog. Some said the dog could tell if a resident had been drinking and would growl to signal Elmo.

The acquisition and opening of New House was a demonstration of the networking skills and connections of the members of the Santa Barbara Committee on Alcoholism. W. W. Sears, a local real-estate agent, waived his commission and helped the group reach a favorable deal with the owner. Contributions from local institutions, businesses, and individuals helped ready the facility. Hillside House — a residential facility for severely disabled that had opened in 1939 — provided 12 beds and mattresses, and Mission Linen Supply — a commercial cleaning service catering to the local motel and hotel industry — donated 100 sheets, pillowcases, and bedspreads. John Morse donated money to buy blankets, and contractor Howard Graham moved furniture in and provided needed repair supplies. Dr. Michael J. Lemus donated his medical services, Elmo's sister Peggy Scudelari cleaned the house, and Ida Seaberg of the Signal Café cooked the housewarming dinner.¹⁶



*Elmo and Assistant
Ross Heninger,
Santa Barbara News Press
Photo
1957*

usually included many relapses. In the first two years, 135 men came back a second time. But Elmo could boast of 22 successes that included a student, a teacher, a contractor, a laboratory technician, a food store clerk, and a fisherman. The New House success translated into a financial boon for the community as well; the combined salary of the recovering men was computed at \$86,160 per year. New House itself, in its first two years of operation, turned a \$410 profit.¹⁷

Just as the founders believed that it was healthy for New House residents to become fully self-supporting as soon as possible, they were also determined to keep the New House program itself self-supporting — which included keeping the house private, and free of governmental tangles and restrictions. The key to making the house fully self supporting was expanding the number of

"The Annex" — purchased in 1958 to expand space beyond the eight-man dorm that was added to New House in 1957.





New House I Manager
J. Russel Brown, Sr.

beds. Since the house was also faced with a waiting list immediately upon opening its doors, plans were made to complete an 8-bed dormitory in the rear of the house.

Still there was an ever-growing waiting list, so the Santa Barbara Committee on Alcoholism explored other expansion possibilities. There was also keen interest among Committee members to open a home for alcoholic women. They selected a facility search committee under the direction of James H. Powers, Jr., that spent the year of 1957 combing the community looking for additional properties that would be appropriate. In 1958, the small house next door to

New House — at 505 Chapala — became available. The property was purchased.

At the same time, a real-estate deal to build the women's facility on land leased from the Family Service Agency at Garden and De la Guerra Streets had gotten bogged down in title transfer legalities. This caused the Committee to briefly consider using 505 Chapala as a temporary women's center. In the end, however, Powers and his committee decided that adding the 505 Chapala house to New House made more sense.*

The new annex and the dorms brought the New House capacity to 33 beds, which allowed New House to become financially self-supporting. With the increase in residents, New House hired J. Russel Brown to act as House Manager, freeing Little's time for the demands of the added residents. With no outside help, New House was paying its own way, had housed over 1000 men, and still maintained a 50 percent success rate.

By 1960, New House also had a local and national reputation for providing help for alcoholics. Personal testimonials grew. Dick W. spent eight months at New House. Twenty years before he had been a married payroll accountant with a good salary and rosy life. Within two years, his drinking increased and he lost two jobs, and his wife and three children. He then served between 50 or 60 jail sentences of 10 to 180 days each and somehow ended up in Santa Barbara. He called the local AA office and they in turn called Elmo Little at home. In the middle of the night he picked up Dick and brought him to New House for one of the 33 precious beds, a bath, new clothes, and a doctor's exam. Within weeks the well-rounded meals of ex-hotel cook Walter Harrison, a new job as a dishwasher, and re-learned daily routines placed him on the path to recovery.

* Shortly after that, the Committee purchased another beautiful Victorian home at 1515 Bath Street, where Casa Serena opened its doors to alcoholic women in 1959.

New House I

509 Chapala Street, Santa Barbara, California

Residential alcoholic recovery began in a historic Santa Barbara structure. Samuel Brinkerhoff, Santa Barbara's first physician and prominent entrepreneur owned the vacant block of land in 1876. Mrs. Samuel Levy (Wife of Samuel Levy, merchant with the Santa Barbara Company) purchased the property during the 1887 railroad boom and built the cube-shaped, two



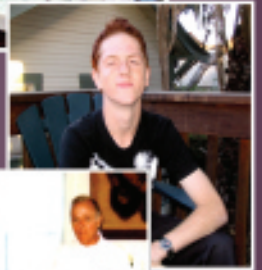
story, shiplap sided Italianate Victorian home. In 1889 the house transferred to E.H. Duncaster who in turn sold the premises to J.E. Penrod, engineer with Humphrey and Elliott, in 1895. Between 1895 and 1904, Leon Levy, who owned a liquor store at 510 State Street, rented the home. A.S. Hendry, local carpenter, became the fifth owner and lived in the structure from 1931 to 1944. The next two owners improved and expanded the structure making it perfect for a men's recovery home. Violet and George Betts purchased the property in 1944 and added the front living room and bay window. In 1951 the



Chanteclair Restaurant, owned by E.H. Whitaker, purchased the property and added a commercial kitchen in the rear of the building. New House I opened in May of 1955.

Residents, volunteers, and hired laborers then constructed a series of rooms that connected 509 Chapala and 505 Chapala, which came to be known as "the annex." The addition of the one and one-half story Victorian house with its high gable roof and wood shiplap siding doubled the capacity of the New House program.¹⁸

The two properties — known as the Levy and the Lancaster houses — would be designated as Santa Barbara City Landmarks in 1986.¹⁹



New House, Inc.

In 1974, while celebrating its 19th anniversary, New House also celebrated its independence.

The Santa Barbara Committee on Alcoholism had by then changed its name to the National Council on Alcoholism with which it was affiliated. The agency had begun to expand their programs well beyond the simple principles of recovery upon which New House had been based. In February of that year, under the leadership of James Free's son, James Free Jr., New House broke from the Council and established its own Board of Directors and by-laws as a California non-profit corporation. The first Board was composed of Free, along with W. W. (Bill) Dickerson, Jr., President, Alfred Visoni, Vice President, and John Ryan, Secretary and Treasurer. Other initial Board members were Sherman Asche, Nancy Chandler, Beauford Daggett, and George Flint.

By the time of New House independence in May of 1974, New House

records indicated a total of 5,982 men having been served, with 1,937 (about 1/3) of them being repeats. Alcoholism is a chronic, relapsing disease, and New House has always acknowledged this fact by welcoming back men who had made previous attempts at recovery. Indeed, many men with multiple admissions to New House went on to provide its best leadership.

Having established their independence, the new Board of Directors ironically began drifting toward a formal relationship with Santa Barbara County government. The County operated a General Hospital detoxification center at 250 North San Antonio Road. The center — a primary referral source for New



Second Generation of Leadership

*Jim Free, Jr.,
son of Santa Barbara
Committee on Alcoholism
Co-Founder: Jim Free, Sr.*

The recovery program was an unqualified success under New House operation.

*Lawrence Hart, M.D.,
Former Director of the County of
Santa Barbara Health Care Services*



Santa Barbara County Detox at 250 N. San Antonio Road—Destined to become “New House II” in 1978

House — was having grave difficulties, and was under Grand Jury investigation.²⁰ Santa Barbara Chief of Police A.W. Trembly told the Grand Jury members horror stories about 3,800 intoxicated persons being transported in one year by his officers to the Detox center at a total cost for the county of \$29,754. Most of the pickups were the same men over and over — one man had been taken to

detox 249 times during this period. The man would reportedly stay on the street all day and then at dinnertime would take off his shoe and throw it at a police car. The police in turn arrested him and brought him to detox.

Trembly argued for and convinced the County Supervisors to vote for closing the detox center. The political climate became even

more hectic as state funding for alcoholism dried up and detox centers statewide closed down. Proposition 13 cut property taxes statewide, and Senate Bill 204 failed to increase the tax on alcoholic beverages designed to fund alcoholic recovery.

At the same time, New House was seeking expansion. The numbers of qualified applicants at New House demonstrated a need for recovery services greater than the 33-bed capacity of the New House facility. And so in those first Board meetings, the discussions were dominated by prospects for acquiring a new facility, and Board members put out feelers to see if the County would provide a piece of land so that New House could construct another facility. In January of 1975, newly elected Board President Al Visioni created a Building Committee and a Finance Committee to acquire a new facility.

Interest was expressed on the part of County officials to have a New House facility operated on County grounds, but agreement was not reached.²¹ The discussion planted seeds, however, that would soon yield a very mutually beneficial relationship between New House and the County.

The "First" New House II

250 N. San Antonio Road, Santa Barbara, CA

In 1977, a deal was struck by which New House would take over the operation of what had been the County's detox center at 250 North San Antonio Road, adjacent to the old Santa Barbara General Hospital, for a token rent of \$1.00 per year. The 43-Bed facility proved that the "New House magic" could be duplicated. The house operated at that location until July, 1984.



*New House II Residents
build a patio for their
new residence—the old
County Detox at 250
North San Antonio Road*



Elmo's Retirement

The End of an Era



Elmo Little
New House Director
1955-1977

New House II

The Beginning of Expansion

Elmo Little retired as New House Executive Director in March of 1977, and leadership passed into the hands of William Donahue.

Donahue, who was handpicked by Elmo as his successor, had entered New House as a recovering alcoholic in 1973, and had worked himself through the ranks as a cook, assistant manager, manager and then Executive Director. Staffing of New House had always been "an inside job" by recruiting from the resident population, and the appointment of Donahue as Executive Director solidified this tradition — even though he was a former resident at the time of his being hired. New House would flourish for another thirty years without recruiting professional staff from outside the resident population — selecting even its executive leadership from among the residents.

In January of 1977, the financially strapped County of Santa Barbara had reconsidered the proposition of New House operating an alcohol recovery center on County property. Though the New House Board had declined to consider such a relationship two years earlier,²³ the Board now agreed to revisit that decision and appointed a committee to meet with the Director of County Alcoholism Services, Gil Mendoza.²⁴ The Board held a special meeting on March 1 to reach agreement on their proposal to County.

After more than a year of negotiating, a deal was struck by which New House would take over the operation

of what had been the County's detox center on San Antonio Road, adjacent to the Santa Barbara General Hospital, for a token rent of \$1.00 per year. The facility had cost the County over \$100,000 a year to run and maintain as a failed detox. New House hoped to run the 35-bed facility for under \$65,000 a year, and to make it self supporting based on the New House philosophy of self-sufficiency.



Bill Donahue

Jim Free, Jr. and the New House Board negotiated a deal with the County that allowed New House autonomous operation of the recovery services, and gave them the option to withdraw if the facility was not self-supporting in any 45-day period. Santa Barbara County Alcoholism Services was to have no role in operating the facility. New House residents and volunteers were to paint, clean, and landscape the structure.²⁵ New House would apply the exact program rules and methods that had been successful at 509 Chapala Street — which would now be called "New House I."

On the suggestion of Board member Bill Dickerson, it was decided that the New House Director Bill Donahue would be in charge of both houses, and would recruit a management staff to operate New House II that would duplicate the New House I staff.²⁶ On October 9, 1978 the first resident of New House II, Tony, age 25, accompanied by his mother, arrived seeking help for his dual addictions. The County Welfare department placed a second man the next week,



*Bill Donahue—
New House Executive Director
1977–1982*

One of Donahue's many legacies was to strengthen the Friends of New House. The organization began with his assistance as a former resident in 1975 with 20 men, and soon came to include wives. Friends of New House raised thousands of dollars over the years for the little extras that the men have needed. They provide Christmas presents, food for open houses, appliances, house repairs and the "bus-ticket" fund to help men to visit families in emergencies.²² Friends of New House continued to flourish under the leadership of Bill's wife, Eddy Donahue, who became the organization's director when Bill passed away. The Friends still provide support to the present day.

Another Donahue legacy was to facilitate AA establishing an "Old Timers" meeting at New House in 1979. The meeting became a discussion forum of men and women who had achieved 20 years of continuous sobriety. It also became a New House institution, serving as a beacon of hope for New House newcomers for over a quarter of a century.

*John Ryan—
A generation of service
on the New House
Board of Directors*



and by the end of the month, 28 men had been admitted.²⁷

Although New House II quickly became as successful as New House I, members of the Board were uneasy from the beginning about the relationship of dependency with the County government for the facility. There were fears that the County would intercede in house operations, or that politics would dictate some other use for the 42-bed facility, and that New House would be asked to leave. There were also concerns with the building itself with regard to earthquake safety.

The New House Board therefore began searching for other properties, and in March, 1979, veteran Board Member John Ryan met with Rose Borello, the owner of the Borello Home for Senior Citizens at 227 West Haley Street.²⁸ Terms of purchase of the property — called Haley Manor — were approved in June. New House had decided to continue to operate the facility as a retirement home temporarily. New House Director Bill Donahue would have



*227 W. Haley St.,
located about three blocks
from NewHouse I,
was purchased in 1979 from
the Borello family.*



Sam Lowry became New House Executive Director in 1982 when Bill Donahue retired. Sam retired in 1986

overall supervision, and John Ryan would represent the Board in management of the facility.²⁹ Under his leadership, and that of Director Donahue, with the help of grants from the Santa Barbara Foundation, the Doris Fay Palmer Trust, and the Alice Tweed Tuohy Foundation, the mortgage of \$350,000 was paid off by 1982.

Many Board members were eager that New House end their relationship with the County and move the New House II men to the Haley Manor property. From 1983 to early 1984, other housing was secured for the retiree residents. New House II Manager Alex Brumbaugh had the day-to-day responsibility for refurbishing the facility to accommodate the 42 New House II men who were living at the County facility. The job was completed — primarily by residents and volunteers



A Rare Photo of the first three Directors of New House together: (from L) Bill Donahue, Elmo Little, and Sam Lowry

Elmo Little's involvement with New House did not end with his retirement as Director. He was a daily presence at New House in the following years. He



was "quite the elder statesman," recalls Renee L., "and very down to earth. His humility was real, his gratitude huge, and his sense of humor constant. One time I remember Elmo saying, 'Everything is everything.' I am still

pondering that today." Elmo always sat at the head of the table at the regular Friday night AA participation

meeting. That meeting was a major center of New House activity in the community in those years, attended by New House residents, former residents and community members, and also by residents of the sister house, Casa Serena.



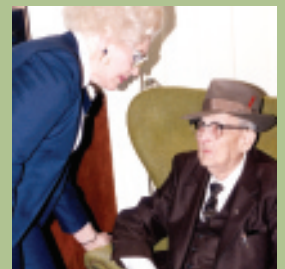
Renee L. recounts: "Many of us crowded into the main area (at the table), others sat in surrounding chairs, spilling into the rest of the house and some even had to stand in the hallway. It was exciting, fun, and there was genuine sharing from the heart. There were old



timers, newcomers and everyone else — we were there for the same purpose, the consciousness of sobriety. Occasionally there was dissension — after all, we are not saints - but mostly there was unity amongst us on those

Fridaynights. Afterward, someone would suggest coffee somewhere (usually Jean Schumpert, my former sponsor, would get us to go to Carrows

because it was close by and the prices were reasonable). Since she was an older woman with a good program, she could talk to the guys and be trusted. When she shared she always made us laugh yet tested our tolerance level because



she would tend to talk too long, but we loved her anyway. She has been deceased since 1996 and will forever be part of my recovery and the memory of New House I."



Sam Lowry

*Gardens win
City of Santa Barbara
Beautification Award
1983*



Sam Lowry loved horticulture, and believed in the therapeutic value of gardening, so the list of “house chores” assigned to residents expanded to include working in the garden. Due to the dedication and skill of New House I Manager Eddie Yanchunas, the two houses became show places in local residential landscaping, and won a City of Santa Barbara Beautification award in 1983.³¹ Yanchunas — who became Executive Director when Lowry retired — was best remembered for his caring and giving nature. A carpenter and landscape gardener who successfully ran a New House “Plant Factory,” Eddie’s legacies also include significant renovations and decorative additions to both New House properties.



*Eddie Yanchunas —
New House Executive
Director, 1986 — 1987*

— and moving day was July 4, 1984.³⁰

The refurbishing of Haley Manor and the move of House II to its new home came under the leadership of Sam Lowry, who had become Executive Director in 1982 when Donahue began suffering heart problems. The building was dedicated to Sherman Asche and John Ryan, Board members who had contributed significantly to securing the facility.

Sam Lowry — with a background in business administration — brought the principles of modern fiscal management and accountability to New House’s daily operations, and helped assure that New House maintain its goal of self-sufficiency.

In 1986, Lowry retired, and the Executive Directorship fell to Eddie Yanchunas. Like his predecessors, Yanchunas had worked his way up through the ranks. By this time, governmental restrictions and insurance requirements prohibited New House from allowing residents to undergo acute alcohol withdrawal.* Santa Barbara lacked any detox facilities, so many recovering alcoholics can recount stories of being personally chauffeured by

* Over the years, as State policies governing the licensure and certification of residential facilities for the treatment of alcohol and other drugs have changed, New House has had to make sure it did not drift toward providing formal treatment services such as detoxification, or group or individual education or therapy sessions. All therapeutic activities remain limited to residents’ voluntary participation in community 12-step or other recovery and treatment programs not formally affiliated with New House.

Yanchunas to the Ventura hospital and to the detox center in Ventura County.³²

Eddie resigned as Executive Director of New House in 1987 to return to his native New York and resume his career in the building trades.

The new Executive Director, William McCormack, would introduce a new style of professional leadership blended with the old themes of self-sufficiency and a belief in the power of one alcoholic/addict helping another. McCormack, a Chicago native and Santa Monica and Hawaii resident, entered New House II for the first time in 1983. His battle with drugs had started at the age of 15, and led to alcohol use by the age of 22. His young marriage failed, and he did a "geographic" that took him from Hawaii to Santa Barbara. McCormack left the house, relapsed, and then re-entered in June of 1985, subsequently joining the staff as assistant manager, and then as Manager of New House II.³⁴ He became Executive Director when Yanchunas left in 1987.



Bill McCormack—
New House Executive Director — 1987 - Present

New House II

227 W. Haley Street, Santa Barbara, CA

Located about three blocks from New House I, New House II was purchased in 1979 from the Borello family. In 1969 Lucille Borello and her family had demolished the old Borello rest home located on the property and had general contractor Daniel D'Alfonso and Son build the present day residential facility. New House operated the rebuilt rest home as "Haley Manor" until August of 1984, when the facility was officially opened as "New House II" under Executive Director Sam Lowry and Manager Alex Brumbaugh.





New House III

By 1990, the President of the New House Board, James Free, Jr., observed that New House was "turning enough people away each month to fill another house."³⁵ So on October 2, 1990, he urged the Board to purchase the old El Jardin Guest House near cottage hospital³⁶ — a property that New House had attempted to purchase on two previous occasions.³⁷



Del Brown, the first Manager of New House III

The 44-bed facility was officially opened in February, 1991 as New House III under the Executive leadership of McCormack and the day-to-day management of Delbert (Del) Brown. Del passed away in March of 1991. He was replaced by David Vartabedian with his personal philosophy of "I can't; We can."³⁸

The first residents and volunteers quickly cleaned, painted, added showers, placed heating in each room, added dropceilings, carpeted, replumbed, rewired, and remodeled the kitchen. Remodeling bills totaled over \$300,000, and Board members immediately launched a campaign to raise the capital funds to pay off the house. Free Jr. and Weight Watcher franchisee Fred Rifkin, along with local businessmen John Ryan and

Peter Jackson set out to raise 1.5 million dollars.³⁹ The campaign boasted that all three New Houses not only saved the county of Santa Barbara over \$5,000,000 a year in relief tax money, but produced citizens with jobs who became tax payers and supported the community's businesses. In the words of Jackson "I'm a businessman and I like that kind of switch from tax-takers to tax-payers."⁴⁰



Manager Del Brown (left) and Director Bill McCormack in the New House III kitchen.



El Jardin Guest House at Quinto and Bath Streets. New House attempted to purchase this property near Cottage Hospital twice. The third time, they succeeded. It opened as New House III in February, 1991 under Executive Director Bill McCormack and Manager Del Brown.



New House II manager, Alex Brumbaugh (left) and Executive Director, Sam Lowry, during the refurbishing of Haley Manor in the Summer of 1984.

Another success story is that of ex-resident, manager, and then board member Alex Brumbaugh.³³ Brumbaugh's bottom came in 1980 when he quit his successful teaching career, divorced, declared bankruptcy and went through a series of convenience store jobs. In 1983 he entered New House I and quickly became its assistant manager and later served as manager of New House II and then served on the Board. He went on to head the County's largest treatment program for alcoholism and drug addiction — Project Recovery — under the umbrella of the Santa Barbara Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse. He published a book and several articles on addiction treatment and recovery, and later became a recognized leader in the national recovery advocacy movement.



Brumbaugh (right) with retired director Bill Donabue

Dave Vartabedian— long time New House III Manager, went on to manage an addiction treatment program at the Santa Barbara County jail — one of the most successful in-custody treatment programs in the country.



Thanks to the generous support of countless individuals — including many New House alumni — and such donors as the Santa Barbara Foundation and the Wood-Claeysens Foundation, and to the fact that New House has been remembered in the wills of many former residents, the New House III mortgage was paid off in October of 2000.

A sad moment for New House came when 72 year-old resident Paul E. Dotter (Sarge) crashed his car while driving home from a Christmas Day AA meeting. The accident killed Dotter and injured the three New House men riding with him.⁴¹

In April of 1996, 5 years after New House III was open and fully functioning, New House Treasurer Gary Macker prepared a memo for the New House Board of Directors identifying a significant problem of declining income for the organization.⁴² Since New House III had opened, resident rent receipts by house had been steadily decreasing. The lowest occupancy rates were at New House I at 509 Chapala Street. According to the memo, the declining receipts were not only producing a financial problem, but a problem for the program as well, because New House Managers' admission policies were reflecting an attempt to simply fill beds rather than accepting the most qualified applicants.

Money had never been the most important factor in evaluating the suitability of New House applicants. In fact, throughout New House history, a consistent 80 percent of New House residents were not able to commence paying rent immediately upon admission. New House was always able to accommodate these men, giving them time to re-enter the work force, but the organization's ability to do that was based on reasonably full occupancy rates.

The Treasurer's memo documenting declining occupancy therefore signaled a significant threat to the New House philosophy. The memo outlined several options, but after lengthy deliberations, the option finally adopted by the Board of Directors was to retire New House I and sell the property. There had been discussions since 1979 of the need to replace the structure — which was by then one-hundred and ten years old.

New House III

Quinto & Bath Streets, Santa Barbara, CA

New House made three attempts to acquire the El Jardin Guest House near cottage hospital at Quinto and Bath Streets. The final effort was successful in October 1990, and the property became New House III in February, 1991. The facility was purchased from David Dahan. Built in 1947 by Harry Lasky, the two-story residential hotel originally housed ambulatory elderly. It has 20 bedrooms, a commercial kitchen, living room, dining room, patio and meeting area.





And Still More Expansion

Grad House and New House IV

On June 2, 2000, New House purchased this property at 2021 Castillo Street - a 4 bedroom, 3 bath home with 2 apartment units in back. The "Grad House" holds 8 men, and provides New House residents with a transitional housing opportunity before they re-enter the community.



The impact of selling New House I had definitely met the objective of filling New Houses II and III to capacity — frequently with admission waiting lists. The Board formed a committee to examine options for expanding capacity.

That Santa Barbara is a region with very high rents has always had an impact on New House policies. Having room and board rates set too low could cause people to seek New House residency just for the low cost of housing, while setting rates too high would make New House prohibitive for those most in need. The idea of a transition facility between New House and the community had been discussed by the New House Board of Directors as early as January of 1979. Such a facility would give residents who were ready to think about moving out an opportunity to save money for entry into Santa Barbara's rental market. It would also provide an opportunity for adjusting to less structured living before moving back into the community. New House's sister organization, Casa Serena, had for many years successfully operated a "grad house" — a facility designed to meet the needs of residents who had stabilized in their sobriety and were preparing to re-enter society. Now it



Grad House apartments, garden and patio.

seemed an idea whose time had come for New House.

On June 2, 2000, New House purchased a property at 2021 Castillo Street for \$799,000 — a 4-bedroom, 3-bath home with 2 apartment units in back. The new “Grad House” would hold 8 men, and would be open to residents with 6 months of continuous sobriety.

The expansion had an added benefit — of giving New House the opportunity to educate the community about how recovering alcoholics and addicts can be a neighborhood asset, and not a liability.

The grad house opened for residents on September 1, 2000.

Two years later, the New House Board of Directors was once again having conversations about possible expansion. New House II, New House III, and the Grad House were generally full, sometimes with waiting lists. And once again, New

House was courted by County Alcohol and Drug officials, this time in hopes that New House might consider expanding to the north county communities of Santa Maria or Lompoc.

But the Board concluded that those cities were too far away for effective management. In the summer of 2003, New House Board Member Yonie Harris — Dean of Students for the University of California in Santa Barbara — proposed that the Board form a committee to study the feasibility of operating a recovery home in Isla Vista for University students.

The committee began meeting in June, composed of Alex Brumbaugh, Donna Genera, Yonie Harris, Gary Macker, and Executive Director Bill McCormack. Following extensive research, the committee concluded that there was little precedent in the nation for operating a

recovery home such as New House to serve college or university students. Even with the absence of evidence that the New House model would be successful with men of college age with alcohol and other drug problems, the Board of Directors voted to direct Bill McCormack to seek property both for sale and for rent in Isla Vista.

In February, 2004, McCormack made a presentation to the Board concerning 6670 Sueno Road in Isla Vista. The two-house property in a quiet residential area would accommodate fifteen residents. The property was purchased on May 8, 2004. New House became landlord to the students residing in the homes, with plans to convert the residence to a recovery home for college and university students beginning Fall quarter, 2005.

The Grad House

2021 Castillo Street. Santa Barbara, CA

On June 2, 2000, New House purchased this property at 2021 Castillo Street—a 4 bedroom, 3 bath home with 2 apartment units in back. The “Grad House” holds 8 men, and provides New House residents with a transitional housing opportunity before they re-enter the community.





Maturity

When Bill McCormack became Executive Director in 1987, he brought a management style that rose to meet the needs of a new generation of people with alcohol and other drug problems, and he led New House to adapt to societal changes in drug use and community priorities in addressing these problems.

At the time that New House was founded, alcoholism and drug addiction were viewed as distinct maladies. Public Policy and the administration of public funds reflected this distinction, as did the organization of the 12-Step programs. The fact that Alcoholics Anonymous addressed the needs of people for whom alcohol was the primary problem resulted in a growth of popularity of Narcotics Anonymous in the 1970s, and of Cocaine Anonymous in the 1980s. During this period, hospital programs were burgeoning with people for whom drugs other than alcohol were a primary problem.

Then, with the growth of the “Drug Court” movement in the 1990s, criminal justice agencies and judges became proactive in referring criminal offenders with illicit drug problems to treatment and recovery support services. While alcoholics of the previous generation were typically “hitting bottom” and seeking help in their 40s and 50s, now people with alcohol and other drug problems were entering treatment and recovery programs at increasingly younger ages, and in ever increasing numbers. People for whom alcohol was the only problem — especially the older men who had characterized early residents of New House — were disappearing from the

recovery landscape.

Bill McCormack was finely tuned to these changes. While he acknowledged that many people exclusively addicted to drugs other than alcohol did not do well in the New House environment, he extended the welcoming hand of New House to men with multiple addictions, and even actively recruited these men through creative and innovative outreach initiatives to public and hospital-based treatment programs, and to the courts, probation, and the County jail.

Throughout its history, New House had struggled to maintain its independence and even sometimes its isolation from other community services and government agencies. McCormack brought the program into the 21st Century with the independent strength of maturity that allowed a free and open interaction with the rest of the community — both public and private. New House became a strong, vital, and equal participant in the total Santa Barbara



Bill McCormack (with his wife, Claire) brought leadership and vision for a new generation of men with alcohol and other drug problems, preparing New House for the 21st Century.

rehabilitation scene. Like men in recovery reaching their maturity as sober individuals, New House turned from its isolation and created a higher community profile while still maintaining the traditional autonomy and independence. There came a strengthening of referral relationships with probation and the courts. Formal protocols were adopted for interviewing potential residents at the County jail. McCormack educated himself thoroughly about all community resources, and began serving in a leadership capacity on the Boards and Advisory groups of other public and private agencies.

For New House residents, other

Ironically, a bid to purchase the New House I property in 1996 was made by the Santa Barbara Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse - the non-profit agency which, as the Santa Barbara Committee on Alcoholism, had started New House at that location in 1955. They eventually withdrew from the bidding, however, and New House I was sold to the son of one of the first New House residents. He did a total refurbishing inside and out, and opened an antique store.



Staff and friends — at the opening of NewHouse III

12-Step programs began staging meetings at New House. There were house-sponsored intramural sports teams and Super Bowl Parties. New House began hosting community meetings, treatment program alumni groups, and social gatherings for the sponsors of residents. In 1997, New House became the regular monthly meeting site for the 21-member Steering Committee of the Community Recovery Network, an organization of people in recovery and their family members who were influencing public policies concerning alcohol and other drug problems.

Elmo Little — who passed away in December, 1994 — would have recognized the day by day process of New House at the turn of the century, but would be quite surprised by the younger residents, dual dependency, and

the program's active role in the community. But it was the community activism of the pioneers of the Santa Barbara Committee on Alcoholism in 1955 who made New House a reality. They would be proud of the leaders who followed in their footsteps, bringing into the 21st Century the simple New House philosophy of "one alcoholic talking to another," and "getting a new structure in your life."⁴³



Team sports anyone?

NewHouse IV

6670 Sueno Road in Isla Vista, CA

In May, 2004, New House purchased the property at 6670 Sueno Road in Isla Vista to extend sober living opportunities to 15 college and university students.



In the summer of 2003, New House Board Member Yonie Harris (below left) — Dean of Students for the University of California in Santa Barbara — proposed that the Board form a committee to study the feasibility of operating a recovery home in Isla Vista for University students. Gary Macker and Donna Genera (also pictured) served on the committee, joined by Board member Alex Brumbaugh, Executive Director Bill McCormack, and Director of the UCSB Student Health Service's Alcohol and Drug Program Dr. Ian Kaminsky.





Sportsmanship



In the mid-80's — as the residents started to become younger — it became apparent that the men needed more than a job and 12-step meetings to achieve a full recovery. They needed something to release the tension and stress of learning a new way of life. New House started baseball teams at each house. Games were played among New House I, II and III. In 1992 a resident created the "Twisted Bat" award, which the winner had the privilege to hang in their house until another house could win it. This tradition still goes on today. The men also compete in Sober Softball Tournaments throughout the city and state.

Baseball was soon followed by Sports Fishing trips, Bowling nights, and Golf Tournaments. The men also receive membership discounts at local YMCA's. These sporting events promote a feeling of camaraderie and friendship among the residents. They also play in local golf charity events, which they have won on numerous occasions throughout the state.



Booze and drugs will grab you by the throat and shake the life out of you.

But not at New House.

I walked into New House recovery home the other day, but not to dry out. I was invited to lunch.

You might think I found a bunch of grizzled, unemployable old men shuffling around. Not so.

Reality has a way of grabbing us by the throat, too. The average age at the two New House homes in Santa Barbara has dropped from 47, when it was first opened in 1955, to about 35. And 90% of current residents (have used) drugs as well as alcohol. With drugs, you tend to hit bottom faster. Some are as young as 18. They have jobs, pay rent, play in soft ball tournaments and have a heck of a golf team.

The nonprofit group gets not a dime of tax money or United Way funds. New House is "99% self-supporting," according to executive director Bill McCormack. Donations from Santa Barbara foundations and individuals fill out the lean budget.

"Think of the money we save the government" by caring for alcoholics and helping them lead new, sober lives, one board member pointed out.

I looked around the lunch table. Half the board members are recovering alcoholics, most of them now successful businessmen or professionals.

Santa Barbara News Press,
August 20, 1997



12 Keys to New House Success

It is sometimes said in recovery circles that the key to success is finding something simple that works and then repeating it over and over again. The following began as traditions, and many have been adopted as formal policy by the Board of Directors of New House.

1. New House is a recovery house for alcoholic men. The primary requirement for admission is a sincere desire to stop drinking.
2. No one will be denied admission because of lack of money. However, since New House is self supporting, everyone who is able is expected to pay his own way. Room and board rates are historically established to be on a par with the bottom of the rental market.
3. New House is not a permanent residence. The role of New House is to help alcoholic men become sober, functioning members of society.
4. Admission is open only to males who are 18 years of age or older and able to take care of their personal needs. New House does not discriminate on the basis of religion, age, race, or national origin.
5. New House is a sober environment. Any resident in possession of or under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs is asked to leave. Previous recovery attempts at New House are never a barrier to readmission.
6. Residents without jobs who are able to work must seek employment as soon as they are able.
7. All residents must pay their own way and help maintain and operate the house as if it were their own home.
8. There is no fixed term of residence – the individual himself determines when it is time for him to leave New House.
9. All residents are strongly encouraged to fully participate in 12-Step Recovery programs; men being readmitted following relapse may be required to demonstrate 12-Step sponsorship for readmission.
10. Staff are non-professional. Managers, Assistant Managers, Cooks, and even the Executive Director positions have always been filled from among the resident population, and all staff (except the Executive Director) is required to be in residence. Staff may provide information about community resources, but they are not counselors. Staff salaries are enhanced by free room and board. To every extent possible, specialty house maintenance such as painting, electrical, plumbing, and refurbishing is also performed by residents in lieu of rent.
11. New House respects all referral sources and works cooperatively with all community programs, but has no formal opinion concerning the efficacy of other treatment or recovery programs in the community. Board members have included the Chief of Police, Judges, Attorneys, educators, and people active in community recovery, treatment, and prevention programs.
12. Other than on-site AA meetings, there are no therapy or treatment services offered, although many residents voluntarily participate in other community recovery and treatment programs.

Board of Directors

1974 — Present

The following are men and women who have volunteered as members of the New House Board of Directors. The Board — like the Board of Alcoholics Anonymous — has followed the tradition of maintaining a balance of non-recovering and recovering members.

Asche, Sherman	Forren, John	MacRae, John
Bailey, Joe	Free, James Jr.	Matthews, F. Leslie (“Skip”)
Baird, Brian	Genera, Donna	Plana, Victor
Benedict, Edward “Ted”	Gilligan, Frank	Price, George O.
Breza, Rick	Gowans, Arnold	Rickler, Martin
Brumbaugh, Alex	Harris, King	Redding, Peter
Buie, Bill	Harris, Yonie	Ryan, John
Califano, Lawrence	Jackson, Henry	Scanlon, Norman
Chandler, Nancy	Jones, Phil	Sears, Kenneth
Culmbach, Barrett	Kincaid, Tana	Smelser, Harold
DaFoe, John	Kinsell, C. Seybert, M.D.	Visioni, Alfred
Daggert, Beauford	LaBorde, Larry	Ward, Douglas
Dickerson, William	Lopez, Paula	Wilson, William Michael
Flint, George	Macker, Gary	

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Owen

And then there are the cats...

Men seeking sobriety have not been the only residents of New House. From the very beginning in every house, they have been joined by stray cats. Like many of the men, no one seems to know from where they came. This fellow (top right) moved into New House I in early 1983 and remained sober for the next several years. Tom was a long-time resident of New House II. Owen (top-left) belonged to Executive Director Bill McCormack, and passed away in 2002. The other four are current residents: Mama of New House II, Miata of New House II, Sketch of New House III, and S.M. Buddy of the Grad House.



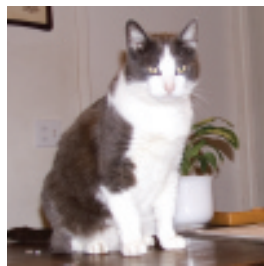
"Sober"



Mamma



Tom



Miata



Sketch



S. M. Buddy



When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help,
I want the hand of A.A. always to be there.
And for that: I am responsible.

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