

# the Point

*The point is, that we are willing  
to grow along spiritual lines.*

from Chapter Five of the book, Alcoholics Anonymous

2016  
2  
February

A publication of the Intercounty Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous

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## Developing a Healthy Mind



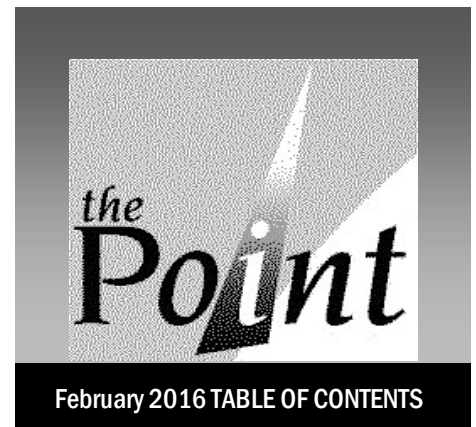
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The Point is published monthly to inform AA members about business and meeting affairs in the Intercounty Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous (San Francisco and Marin Counties). The Point's pages are open to participation by all AA members. Nothing published herein should be construed as a statement of AA, nor does publication constitute endorsement of AA as a whole, our Intergroup, the Central Office, or The Point Editorial Committee. Letters and articles to help carry the AA message are welcomed, subject to editorial review by The Point Committee.

# February 2016

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> <u>FIRST TUE</u> Access Committee Central Office 6pm	<b>3</b> <u>FIRST WED</u> Intergroup Meeting 101 Donahue St, Marin City Orientation 6:15pm Meeting 7pm
<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> <u>SECOND MON</u> SF Public Information / Cooperation with the Professional Community (PI/CPC) Committee Central Office Speaker Workshop 6pm Business Meeting 7pm	<b>9</b> <u>SECOND TUE</u> Marin H&I 1360 Lincoln Ave, San Rafael 6:15pm SF General Service 1111 O'Farrell St Orientation / Concept Study / BTG 7pm Business Meeting 8pm	<b>10</b> <u>SECOND WED</u> Marin Bridging the Gap 1360 Lincoln Ave, San Rafael Orientation 6pm Business Meeting 6:30pm
<b>14</b> Golden Gate Young People in AA Central Office 12pm	<b>15</b> <b>CENTRAL OFFICE CLOSED</b> <u>THIRD MON</u> SF Teleservice Central Office Business Meeting 6pm Orientation 6:30pm Marin General Service 9 Ross Valley Rd, San Rafael Orientation / Concept Study 6:45pm Business Meeting 7:30pm	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>21</b> <u>THIRD SUN</u> Archives Committee Central Office 2pm Business Meeting followed by Work Day	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> <u>FOURTH TUE</u> Marin Teleservice 1360 Lincoln Ave, San Rafael Orientation 7pm Business Meeting 7:30pm	<b>24</b>
<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> <p>Persons requiring reasonable accommodations at Intergroup meetings Intergroup committee meetings or service events sponsored by the preceding entities, including ASL interpreters, assistive listening devices or print materials in alternative formats, should contact Central Office at (415) 674-1821 no less than five business days prior to the event.</p> <div>     </div>		

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
4	5	6
11	12	13 <u>SECOND SAT</u> <i>The Point</i> Committee Central Office 1pm
18	19	20 <u>THIRD SAT</u> SF H&I 2900 24th St, SF Orientation 11am
25 <u>FOURTH THU</u> Marin Public Information / Cooperation with the Professional Community (PI/CPC) 1360 Lincoln Ave, San Rafael Business Meeting 7pm	26	27 <u>FOURTH SAT</u> CNCA Meeting 320 N McDowell Blvd, Petaluma 10am
		



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“...if we wished to grow  
we had to begin somewhere.”  
*Alcoholics Anonymous, pg. 47*

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## Meeting Changes

### New Meetings:

Thu	5:30pm	San Anselmo	FOURTH DIMENSION, 72 Kensington Rd / Mariposa (Meditation)
Fri	6:00pm	Tenderloin	FRIDAY STEPS AT CITY HOPE, 45 Olive St / Larkin (Step study, Wheelchair Accessible)

### Meeting Changes:

Mon	6:15pm	Hayes Valley	KOO KOO BIG BOOK, 1748 Market St / Octavia (was at 6pm)
Thu	6:30pm	Inner Sunset	SPEAKER DISCUSSION STEP STUDY, 1320 7th Ave / Irving (was called Beginner Big Book Step)
Fri	8:00pm	Pacific Heights	MARINA DISCUSSION, 2325 Union St / Steiner (was at 8:30pm)
Sat	12:00pm	Tenderloin	LIVING SOBER DISCUSSION, 842 Geary St / Hyde (was called Saturday Lunch with Bill)

### No Longer Meeting:

Sat	8:00pm	Castro	AS BILL SEES IT, St Francis Lutheran Church: 152 Church St / Duboce
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**PLEASE NOTE:** We occasionally receive reports that meetings listed in our schedule are missing or no longer active. Sometimes these reports turn out to be mistaken—and sometimes not. **If you know *anything* about a meeting that has relocated or disbanded — even if only temporarily — please call Central Office immediately: (415) 674-1821.** This helps us direct newcomers, visitors and sober, local alcoholics alike to actual meetings and not to rooms that housed a meeting once upon a time. ***Thank you for contributing to the accuracy of our schedule!***

Stonestown Group



43<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary Party

February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016

Monday

6:30 p.m. Potluck

8 p.m. Meeting

777 Brotherhood Way

San Francisco

## RECOVERY UNITY SERVICE

### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

**WHEN**  
April 8th, 9th & 10th 2016

**WHERE**  
**Marin Center**  
**Exhibit Hall**  
10 Avenue of the Flags San Rafael CA

"MY RECOVERY RELIES ON THE HANDS OF MANY PEOPLE BEING EXTENDED TO ME. THE WELCOME I RECEIVED WAS MORE THAN A WORD. IT WAS A WORD FOLLOWED BY ACTIONS." ANONYMOUS, SANTA ROSA CALIF. NOV 1999

**CONTACT: ALLAN S.**  
ags\_dds@me.com

**MARIN COUNTY  
DISTRICT 10  
IS HOSTING**

**CALIFORNIA  
NORTHERN  
COASTAL AREA**  
Pre-Conference  
Assembly 2016

**FRIDAY,  
APRIL 8**  
NOON to 5pm

**SATURDAY,  
APRIL 9**  
7am to 11pm

**SUNDAY,  
APRIL 10**  
7am to 3pm

### Volunteers Needed:

Parking  
Greeters  
Soda/Water Sales  
Coffee  
Decorations  
Food Service  
Dinner Wait Staff  
Friday Set-Up  
Clean-Up Sat & Sun  
Registration  
Smoking/Noise Monitors

From the Editor

## Developing a Healthy Mind

by Charley D.

Our cover this month aptly depicts our February focus: developing a healthy mind. The serenity the face expresses springs from the growth of fresh recovery thoughts, symbolized by the sprouting green fronds at the top (a “mind spring”). As alcoholics, we were all sick. The A.A. program helps us to “green” our minds and recover our sanity, whether we’re sad, joyful, or just muddling through.

Charley D. starts us off with a piece on Tradition Two that shows how A.A.’s disavowal of a power structure enables each group to maintain its own mental health. Jane B. weighs in with what she learned at Stateline Retreat 2015, including the insight that, to maintain our mental health, we need to uncover, discover, and discard old beliefs. In “Chuck’s Story,” Bree L. depicts a lawyer alcoholic who found his way to our program, and a healthier mental outlook, by the circuitous route of Al-Anon and a program for mentally ill attorneys.

Judy’s G.’s piece, “Came to Believe,” explains how a Higher Power can,

and in her case, did restore her sanity, despite tremendous challenges, including a bitter divorce. Claire A. changes the aphorism to “Keep It Simple, Sweetheart,” to remind herself to be gentle with herself and endeavors to keep her mental focus on what’s really important in her life. In “Great Reality Deep Within,” Bob S. explains how a Higher Power provides the only viable mental defense to the urge to drink. Rick R. shows in “Higher Power?” how fluid, flexible, and non-religious the concept of God is in A.A. Finally, Peter M. reports on the Second Annual Alcoholics Anonymous History Symposium that took place a year ago.

We all came to A.A. to get better, each in our own way. Sobriety unfolds differently for each of us. We do, nevertheless, draw on each other for the experience, strength and hope we need to develop sanity and sobriety. Our February authors put forth several different views of the way to become and stay sane and sober. We hope our offerings this month help you, at least in some small way, to develop a healthy mind for yourself.



### EDITORIAL POLICY

*The Point* is published monthly to inform A.A. members about business and meeting affairs of the Intercounty Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. In addition, *The Point* publishes original feature articles submitted by local A.A. members that reflect the full diversity of experience and opinion found within the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. No one viewpoint or philosophy dominates its pages, and in determining the editorial content, the editors rely on the principles of the Twelve Traditions.

(This is a summary; for the full editorial policy, please go to [www.aasf.org](http://www.aasf.org).)



## Faithful FIVERS!

Faithful Fivers are A.A. members who graciously pledge to contribute at least \$5.00 each month toward the support of Central Office. Faithful Fiver contributions go a long way in helping make our vital services possible. We thank the following members:

Aaron H.	Herman B.	Mary C.
Alejandro D.	Hilary M.	Mary D.
Ami H.	Jane B.	Mary L.
Amy Mc.	Jane K.	Maryellen O.
Barbara L.	Janet B.	Michael P.
Barbara M.	Janet M.	Michael W.
Becca M.	Jeanne C.	Michael Z.
Ben W.	Jeff B.	Michele F.
Beth N.	Jeffery K.	Michelle C.
Bette B.	Jim C.	Mike M.
Bharanidharan A.	Joanne S.	Niels R.
Blu F.	John C.	Pam K.
Bruce K.	John G.	Pamela D.
Bruce S.	John V.	Pat P.
Caroline A.	Karen C.	Peggy H.
Casey L.	Karen K.	Pene P.
Cathy P.	Kate R.	Penelope C.
Charley D.	Kathleen C.	Pete F.
Charlie S.	Kim D.	Rich G.
Chip G.	Kris H.	Robert C.
Chris L.	Kurt C.	Robert W.
Chris S.	Kurt P.	Ron H.
Chuck S.	Laura B.	Saida S.
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Erin S.	Mabel T.	Thomas M.
Fay K.	Mana F.	Tim Mc.
Frederick D.	Marit L.	Timothy F.
Gerald F.	Marc F.	Tony R.
Gilbert G.	Mark A.	Tripp Mc
Gregory G.	Mark O.	
Henry P.	Martha S.	You?

If you would like to become a Faithful Fiver, please download a pledge form from our website. You will receive a complimentary subscription to *The Point*. And remember, individual contributions are 100% tax deductible!



by Charley D.

*For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority — a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience . . . With Tradition One we've learned unity stands as "the most cherished quality our Society has," from Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (p. 129). To preserve that unity, don't we need someone in charge: A dictator, or at least a president, or maybe even a kind of pope? Tradition Two answers with an emphatic "No." No one runs A.A.*

No one runs an A.A. group. Rather each finds the answer to any question it faces by plumbing its group

### *No one runs an A.A. group.*

conscience. The Tradition says this group conscience is an expression of a loving God. I, for one, have great difficulty with that concept. As I look around the world and see wars being fought in the name of various religions, all of whom claim guidance from the hand of that God, I wonder, if God is so loving, how can He let that happen? I see innocent children die in natural and human-caused disasters and ask how a loving Deity could let that occur. I have a primitive grasp of my own Higher Power.

I know I couldn't get or stay sober myself. I acknowledge my Higher Power enables my sobriety one day at a time. That doesn't, however, make

## Tradition Two

***Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.***

my Higher Power loving, or, for that matter, all-knowing, omnipotent, or omnipresent. I know it keeps me sober. Beyond that, I just don't know.

Even so, I love Tradition Two because, by rejecting any power structure for A.A., it allows me to

*I acknowledge my  
Higher Power  
enables my sobriety  
one day at a time*

believe just what I do believe about my Higher Power and about anything else. I'm not buying the "loving God" Bill W. has tried to sell in Tradition Two. But I don't have to.

I won't say I'm rejecting Bill W.'s loving God. I'm skeptical. A.A. welcomes skeptics like me. No A.A. majordomo can tell me how to understand my Higher Power. I understand (or misunderstand) my Higher Power all by myself. This Tradition really doesn't mean to pick a fight with anyone's concept of a Higher Power. Step Three makes clear each A.A. member can choose a Higher Power of her own understanding. It doesn't require us to ascribe a "loving" nature to it. Tradition Two's objective? To ensure no one ever takes over and runs our fellowship.

But why not elect someone to rule A.A.? It wouldn't work for me. Had I found some A.A. oligarch could tell me what to believe and what to do, I'd likely have walked out of my first A.A. meeting. Like most alcoholics,

I'm ornery, independent, and won't let other people make decisions for me. Leadership remains a key commodity in virtually every organization. How can A.A. do without it? The short answer is it cannot. A.A. leaders, however, serve the group conscience of the members. They don't decide the direction of any A.A. group, organization, or entity. The members do that collectively. A.A. leaders serve to enact those group decisions.

*I try to keep in mind  
A.A.'s primary  
purpose: To help the  
suffering alcoholic*

What then is this "group conscience," and how does it work? I honestly don't know if it's the expression of a loving God, as Tradition Two says. When an issue arises in an A.A. group of which I'm a member, I try to keep in mind A.A.'s primary purpose: To help the suffering alcoholic. I ask myself which course of action or inaction fits with that objective. I support the choice that will, in my view, serve that purpose best.

Somewhere, if he's listening, Bill W. may be smiling and saying, "That's really just saying, in another way, you're seeking to find what a loving God would have you do." Maybe so. And in that wonderfully paradoxical way A.A. works, Tradition Two tells us to find what a loving God would want — even if we don't actually believe in that loving God.



# Meet

## THE MEETING

# Stateline Retreat 2015

***Don't confuse the mechanics with a spiritual experience.***

by Jane B.

Heralded as the “Original Woodstock of A.A.,” the Stateline Retreat met December 10 to 13 in Las Vegas for its weekend-long study of the Twelve Steps. I had heard how this event has helped my friend’s A.A. program and was anxious to experience it for myself. If you haven’t heard of this retreat before, you are not alone. The conference is an “intimate gathering” of 1000 of your friends in the program — some you know, and the others you just don’t know yet.

*I had heard how this event helped my friend’s program*

Stateline focuses on the Twelve Steps of the A.A. recovery process and the principles of the Twelve Traditions necessary to maintain this gift. Through the shared experience of some of our fellowship’s best communicators, the 15 speakers related their stories to a specific step or tradition. I’ll share a little of their wisdom:

- Be grateful, HP is always on your side sending grace; but you need a clear channel to receive it.
- The book is not the treasure but the map.
- Don’t confuse the mechanics with the spiritual experience that A.A.’s tools bring.
- Separate the emotion from the information of criticism.
- Successful long-term

relationships happen when you don’t say half of the things you think.

• Spirit is within me & all around me.

I related to Kathy H. of Al-Anon when she said she “fell in love with someone’s potential.” And Georgia B. cleans up her side of the street with the A.A. toolkit. Whenever she hopelessly tries to clean up your side instead, her sponsor tells her it is a wonderful opportunity to practice Step Ten.

Debbie D. spoke on unity: Bring 100% to service commitments, step up and be an example. If she sees someone in a meeting with a Starbucks coffee who puts only \$1.00 in the basket, it is her cue to say something. She reminded us that A.A. has unity through the Traditions, recovery through the Steps, and service through the “Ships” (fellowship, relationship, membership).

Billy N. from General Services NY asked, “Do you take A.A. for

***Bring 100% to service commitments***

granted?” It’s been 81 years since Bill W. took his last drink and A.A. has grown leaps and bounds. We have hundreds of meetings to choose from each week and are blessed with a book written in English we can understand. Time Life Books published an illustrated volume written by historians, *History’s Greatest Events, 100 Turning Points That Changed the World*.

Events such as the founding of A.A. on Mother’s Day in 1935 are there right along with Martin Luther King’s “I Have a Dream” speech.

Ever wonder where your money goes? Examples Billy gave were: Big Book translations into Hebrew &

***Separate the emotion from the information of criticism***

Navajo; public service announcements for Spanish-speaking women; intermediaries for letters to inmates; and books sent to people serving in the military. Billy was sitting on a flight from Asia next to a fellow from Doctors without Borders who was flabbergasted that our Seventh Tradition asks us to be fully self-supporting (the doctor told Billy that he spent 90% of his time fundraising).

Old-timer Howard P. spoke on the Eleventh Step. He referenced Chuck C.’s view that spirituality is comprised of more unlearning than learning. We need to uncover, discover & discard old beliefs. According to my new friends from Kansas who shared our table, Chuck Chamberlain’s book, “A New Pair of Glasses” is required reading for sponsors. My friend Howard quipped, “God needs very little input from me — but I need his input.” The Stateline workshop deepened my understanding of the tools our recovery program gives for living, along with refreshing my ability to have fun and laugh.





# Step Two – Came to Believe



by Judy G.

Yesterday I flew back to San Francisco after visiting my 91-year-old mother for 10 days. Due to a blunder on my part, I ended up flying Southwest Airlines with a four-hour layover in Phoenix. As you may know, Southwest does not have assigned seats, just A, B, C boarding groups.

A line from one of the movies I watched on the plane was, “Chance is a nickname for providence.” That definitely caught my attention, and I jotted it down. I later looked up the definition of providence: “The protective care of God or of nature as a spiritual power.”

First of all, the whole trip was a bit of providence. One of my rituals when I fly is to buy a copy of *The New Yorker* magazine, and yesterday I added a *People* magazine, only because there was a picture of Adele, the goddess, adorning the cover. To make a long story short;

- The plane to Phoenix, which was then headed for Seattle, arrived early.
- I left my magazines on the plane in

*I look for messages  
all the time from  
my higher power*

the seat pocket.

- I looked at the board in the terminal and there was a flight to SF in 40 minutes.
- I got on that plane and got the same seat I had on the prior flight, and due to an unscheduled change in

aircraft, it was the same plane that had come from Philadelphia.

- My magazines were still in the seat pocket on front of me!

Coincidence? Maybe, but it felt like providence to me. I look for messages all the time from my higher power, and when I pay attention, they show up.

Step 2 is about believing in providence, the care of God or a higher power of our own understanding, and that care can restore us to sanity. I love that the dictionary definition of providence is

*I love that the  
dictionary definition  
of providence is  
God or nature*

God or nature. One of the most basic tenets of A.A. is a *God of our own understanding*. No one needs to leave A.A. because they don't believe in God. I have heard many people say that their God is “Group of Drunks,” or the meeting.

I have always believed in a higher power, but when I came to A.A. and started working the steps, I had a hard time with Step 2. I could not quite embody the concept that my higher power could restore me to sanity. But what I could believe is that the meeting could help restore me to sanity.

When I came to A.A., I was in the middle of a very bitter divorce, and was quite literally insane. Aside from my garden-variety insanity that left me as a candidate for the 12-step

variety show, some of my behavior around this divorce was over-the-top crazy.

I did not want to have to come to the meeting and report that I had had contact with my ex, or that I was in an emotional hangover after a two-hour screaming match when neither

*I love the slogans and  
the one-liners that I  
hear in meetings*

of us could put down the receiver. The meeting was keeping me sane. The meeting was my higher power, and I had come to believe that it could restore me to sanity.

I love the slogans and the one-liners that I hear in meetings, and I will never forget a line that I heard in a meeting years ago. A man spoke, and he said, “I don't want to have to look at my daughter and tell her that I drank.” That line is forever etched into my memory. In that instance his daughter was his providence, and was restoring him to sanity.

This is why it is so important to go to meetings, to hear these messages of recovery, of salvation, of providence. A.A. is not a religious program, but it is a spiritual program. Do not let the fact that you don't believe in the traditional God stop you from reaping the gifts of recovery in A.A. With the full blessing of the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, nature can be your higher power. It's hard to dispute the existence of nature, or its ability to restore us to sanity.

**TP**





# Chuck's Story

***We all drank — that's what our family did.***

by Bree L.

My family drank. I drank, we all drank. That's what our family did. It changed when I was working in a small law firm, decided to change jobs, and ended up litigating against my former partners. I gave them two weeks' notice. During that period I awoke on my couch around three o'clock one morning to a moment of clarity. An interior voice said, "I can't drink anymore." So I quit cold turkey, transforming from daily drinking to complete abstinence. My wife and I had previously tried to "cut down" by not taking drinks to bed, or decreasing our cocktails with dinner. That never worked. When the moment of clarity arrived, I had no thought of cutting back or slowing down. I just quit, like that. My sobriety date is March 21, 1983.

I never saw myself as a drunk as I was never arrested, had no DUI's, no run-ins with the law or with lawyer disciplinary authorities. We had huge debts including unpaid taxes, but I didn't see them as a problem. My income was steadily rising, though not enough to keep up with our spending. I white-knuckled it through early recovery and stayed dry. Stressors were still present. I thought quitting drinking was the answer. I looked for changes because I quit drinking, but it never happened.

One night I found myself on the floor fighting my oldest son to teach him a lesson for "mouthing off" at his mother. At this stage I figured therapy for him was the answer. His therapist directed me to Al-Anon. I thought that since I had stopped drinking, I needed Al-Anon, but not

A.A. Yes, I could easily qualify for Al-Anon as my parents and wife were alcoholics after all. I joined Al-Anon, finally did the steps, took the suggestions and things improved considerably.

## *I never saw myself as a drunk*

Several years after stopping drinking, I was a partner at another much larger law firm and things were not going well. I fell behind on my projects, suffered a nervous breakdown and was hospitalized with major depression and generalized anxiety. I was still not in AA. Despite the fact that I had been diagnosed with stress and anxiety, when I asked for an accommodation with my workload, the firm refused and terminated me.

When I came home from the hospital I found a flyer soliciting participants for a support group for depressed lawyers. It was affiliated with the Minnesota Bar Association and functioned as a separate group to help drunk lawyers get sober. Another aspect of that task group gave the lawyer recovery group's added support for mental health issues. I began working with that expanded lawyers assistance program. Part of my mission was to make sure the lawyers with mental health issues were not "crowded out" by the recovering drunk lawyers. I saw myself as the token lawyer with mental health issues in the expanded

organization, sort of a "Mental Health Poster Child." I knew I was an alcoholic; I just didn't think I needed A.A. meetings since I was in Al-Anon.

The lawyers assistance program was supported monetarily by the Supreme Court. Salaries for social workers and a team of psychologists were funded by this grant. I joined the board of that group, named "Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers (LCL)." They had their own A.A.-like meetings for their members. I finally began to participate in other A.A. meetings after seeing what it was about and seeing that it enriched my practice.

In 2012, my wife and I moved from Minnesota to the Mission District in San Francisco. I stopped practicing law and this offered time to give service and sponsor folks in A.A. I'm an introvert, so stepping up to greet newcomers doesn't come naturally. However, I know newcomers are always looking for someone to talk to and I remember what I was like when I first came. Consequently, I don't wait for people to approach me. Sponsees never fail to teach me what I need to know.

Attending a daily meeting helps me get to know all the participants. I have been able to connect raw newcomers with appropriate sponsors closer to their age or sobriety date. The newcomer with two hours of sobriety can gain much insight from a fellow with 18 days. It pleases me to encourage some of these connections.





# A.A. Aphorisms

## *Keep It Simple, Sweetheart*

by Claire A.

There is a common saying: “Keep it Simple, Stupid,” but I prefer the gentle version: “Keep it Simple, Sweetheart,” because I’m mean enough to myself already.

I remember when I first got sober, and heard this saying. I found it incredibly irritating. I thought it was just one of those trite sayings people paint on a rock and put on the sill of their kitchen window. It turns out, though, that keeping things simple is hard for me.

While I was drinking, I thought that I *was* keeping things simple. But I was wrong. I was complicating things. I was trying to hide the truth about my drinking from everyone. I was constantly running from people

*Getting ahead of myself is a bit of a specialty of mine*

because I was too ashamed to look them in the eye. I couldn’t remember who knew what, or how I was supposed to act, or what I had said. I knew I was a fraud, and I was just waiting for everyone to find out. I didn’t want to admit that I was depressed, because I thought that would make my depression real. It was a very difficult way to live.

Nowadays, I still struggle with overcomplicating things. It’s perverse, because I really do wish for simplicity. It’s just that my methods for getting to simplicity are complicated. When I write a To Do

list for the day, it’s often 50 things long, and then I give up and have another cup of coffee or blow a

*I can say a simple prayer, such as “Thy will be done”*

bunch of time looking at cat videos. When I want to meet someone for tea, I’m already freaking out about not having the right outfit to wear before I have even reached them on the phone. My children are 8 and 11, and I spend way too much time worrying about what it will be like when they are in college. Getting ahead of myself is a bit of a specialty of mine, I guess. “KISS” is a good reminder to me.

Keeping it simple means picking one thing off the list and getting it done, rather than fretting all day about the whole list, and getting none of it done. It’s remembering that the point of meeting someone for tea is to find out how they are doing, not impress

*“Sweetheart” reminds me to be kind to myself always*

them with my wardrobe. It’s remembering to live the life I have now with my kids, to be present when they come home from school, rather than fretting about how I won’t see them when they are gone.

One of the tools I find really useful in trying to keep things simple is the “Just For Today” card. That card cuts to the heart of the matter for me, each day. I can get so off-track so easily, especially when some unexpected thing or a stressful event happens during the day. When I read that card, the unimportant things seem to fall away, and my direction becomes clearer.

Another very simple thing I can do is pray. I can say a simple prayer, such

*It turns out that keeping it simple is hard for me*

as “Thy will be done,” which helps me remember that I’m not running the show. Or, I can pray by saying “Thank you,” which reminds me to notice all of the great things going on around me everywhere. This also helps me have a better, more balanced outlook on life.

I like the “Sweetheart” part of this version of the saying, because it reminds me to be gentle to myself. I’ve heard others in the program say that if they talked to other people the way they talk to themselves, they wouldn’t have any friends. I feel the same way. The things I say to myself – “stupid!” “duh!” “Ugh, I am such a fool!” – I would never say to a friend. “Sweetheart” reminds me to be kind to myself always.



# A.A. History Symposium

## *A Look at our Fellowship's Past*

by Peter M.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Alcoholics Anonymous History Symposium took place February 27 to March 1, 2015 in Sedona, Arizona. This was an amazing opportunity to get together professional scholars of A.A. history with interested A.A. members, to share research and discoveries related to the origins of our fellowship. Please note that non-alcoholic scholars and authors did participate in this event, and this article will use full names where it is appropriate. Unfortunately, there is not space here to go into great detail about the presentations, but a general description will represent what took place.

Highlights for the 2015 symposium included an interview with Mel B. who helped write *Pass It On: The Story of Bill Wilson and How the A.A.*

### *Origins of the Serenity Prayer; 3<sup>rd</sup> A.A. History Symposium... March 4-6*

Message Reached the World. This book was a collaborative effort, but Mel B. was a major participant in the creation of the volume which is the official A.A. Conference-approved version of the biography of Bill W. It was great to hear Mel's candid recollections of meeting Bill W. when Mel was newly sober himself; and the process of creating this important work of A.A. history.

Another topic covered over the

weekend was the origins of the Serenity Prayer which is a mainstay of the recovery programs for many of our members. The origins of this prayer has been an eagerly debated topic over the years, and author, Elisabeth Sifton, presented her views in a presentation entitled, *Creating the Serenity Prayer*. Reinhold Niebuhr's Great Contribution to Spirituality.

### *The Serenity Prayer is a mainstay of recovery programs*

Reinhold Niebuhr is generally credited with authoring the prayer, and Elisabeth Sifton, as his daughter, is in a unique position to discuss the history of this prayer. While how the prayer came into being may never be definitively agreed upon, Sifton did present a fascinating picture of the role her father played in American politics and religion of the 1930s and 1940s.

There was also a great discussion of the rewriting of the Big Book and bringing the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the book, Alcoholics Anonymous, to press. Jim C., a past delegate from San Diego, was on the Literature Committee in the late 1990s when the process of creating the 4<sup>th</sup> edition took place. This revision was a process of choosing new stories for this edition – personal recovery stories that would better reflect the diversity and characteristics of the A.A. fellowship in the late 1990s.

Other presentations included a fascinating introduction to the history of Narcotics Anonymous which included a description of how N.A. developed and its early relationship to A.A.; a “virtual tour” of the homes of Bill W. and Dr. Bob and the Akron Archives, places where much of A.A.'s history is contained; and the influence of Rev. Sam Shoemaker on the beginnings of A.A. and the interplay between the early A.A. fellowship and the religious leaders and communities where A.A. was beginning.

Finally, preparations are taking place now for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual A.A. History Symposium over the weekend of March 4 – 6, 2016 also in Sedona, Arizona. Kevin Hanlon and Dan Carracino, the co-directors of the recent Bill W. documentary, will present their “unofficial” findings regarding Bill W. and our fellowship. While they are not members, their contribution to the research of A.A. history has been invaluable.

Highlights will also include an interview with Rev. Ward Ewing, who is the most recent past-Chair of the General Service Board, and a presentation from our local historian and author, Jackie B. who, along with Glenn C., will be discussing the history of the recovery of people of color, lesbians and gays in early Alcoholics Anonymous. This yearly event is a wonderful attempt to assure that our fellowship's history is accurate and that important lessons and links to our past are understood and honored.





# Great Reality Deep Within

***More powerful than the mental obsession***

by Bob S.

I had scooted through the holiday season one long-ago January without a drink for the first time in memory since my teenage years. Even though I had been sober five full months, my gratitude was overshadowed by fear - after enjoying a happy-happy parade on Hollywood Boulevard, I marched right into a bar on Cherokee Avenue and almost ordered a happy-happy gin and tonic. Thank God I didn't!

*I marched right into a  
bar on Cherokee  
Avenue and almost  
ordered a happy-happy  
gin and tonic*

It was definitely one of those strange mental blank spots mentioned on page 42 of the Big Book. Terrified, I rushed back to my Santa Monica apartment, fell to my knees, and asked God to save me from a seemingly impending drunken spree.

What was I doing wrong? I had been going to at least two meetings daily, and working the steps from the pull-down shades at the clubhouse. God's

answer came in the form of a new sponsor named Carl.

*God's answer came in  
the form of a new  
sponsor named Carl*

He informed me that the directions for A.A. recovery were in the Big Book, and nowhere else, and that meetings only were probably not sufficient for me to recover. . . that my mental obsession to drink would triumph over my willpower whether I was happy, depressed, or in-between. But then Carl took me through the 12-step process and I soon began to recover.

It was later explained that down deep within the alcoholic's mind there

*My mental obsession  
to drink would  
triumph over my  
willpower*

exists a quiet, undetectable, I-need-a-drink self, which may linger

surreptitiously for years before it attacks. Indeed, page 43 informs us that we have no effective mental defense. . . that our defense must come from a Higher Power. But then, Bill W. informs us that we also have a marvelous, often unknown protector;

*We have no effective  
mental defense. . . our  
defense must come  
from a Higher Power.*

he calls it a "Great Reality deep within" (p. 55).

Dr. Carl Jung called it a God Archetype. By whatever name, it is much more powerful than the mental obsession, and luckily for we alcoholics, this can be ours and it can last for a lifetime if we live the A.A. program of action. Many Januarys have passed since those days of yore, but the thought of drinking no longer appears in my emotional vocabulary.

Thank you, God!



## Contributors Wanted

*thePoint@aasf.org*



The Point is looking for articles, illustrations & poetry reflecting the experience, strength & hope of local members



# HIGHER POWER?

*It's our defense against mental blank spots*

by Rick R.

Alcoholics Anonymous came into existence in 1935 at a time when much of our society was centered around the churches in the communities where we lived. Much of the south and the Midwest are still like that to this day. As a child in my home town, on Sunday morning I could look out the window and see a great majority of my neighbors walking to church. That was the way it was in the early 1940's.

The book, *Alcoholics Anonymous* was published in 1939, and it seems that it was highly influenced by the many early members of the program at that time. A.A. could have very easily become a religious program. Fortunately, the elders of that time learned from the mistakes of the Oxford Group, and the Washingtonians, that they had to make it clear that a desire to stop drinking was the only requirement for membership; and that the individual members could choose their own concept of a power greater than themselves, i.e. God as we understand him.

## *Setting aside my religious bias*

When the word God is used in the remainder of the book, it isn't always followed by the "as we understand him" qualifier, and I believe that many members get the idea that somehow, A.A. is trying to

push religion on them. I think that's understandable.

When I was faced with that possibility, I personally found it easy enough to read the black part on the pages in the book and to not let myself become distracted by what I now recognized as a cultural norm at the time. I had no problem setting aside my religious bias and recognizing the parts of the Big Book and the 12x12 (Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions) that clearly state all of the options available when it comes finding a "power greater than myself," and I can name several right off the top:

## *Alcohol itself was my higher power*

- 1) Alcohol itself was my higher power for a long time and still would be if hadn't gotten into this program.
- 2) My EGO ran my life for quite awhile until I got serious about life issues.
- 3) The A.A. program itself (my choice.)

I found myself spiritually lost when I surrendered and entered the program of A.A. and when faced with the need to come to terms with the Higher Power issue, I now realize why it took such a long time to settle this subject. Years of drinking and an underdeveloped thinking process

that was hard to get up to speed right away. As I got more familiar with the Big Book, and the 12x12, I started to uncover all the evidence that debunked the idea that I had to conform to any religious doctrine.

In the 12x12 I read on page 26, "*Alcoholics Anonymous does not*

## *Step Two is the rallying point for all of us*

*demand that you believe anything.*" On belief, "*To acquire it, I had only to stop fighting and practice the rest of A.A.'s program as enthusiastically as I could.*" (pg. 27) Also in this chapter, we find the aphorism, "**Take it easy.** *The hoop you have to jump through is a lot wider than you think...a one-time vice-president of the American Atheist Society...got through with room to spare.*" (pg. 26)

"*Step Two is the rallying point for all of us. Whether agnostic, atheist, or former believer, we can stand together on this Step.*" (pg. 33) Today I am very comfortable with my own concept of a Higher Power and I use the word God only to put a name on a concept that has no physical form; and I might say that it expresses itself in the collective consciences of the world we live in.





# Intergroup Meeting Summary—January 2016

The following groups have registered Intergroup Representatives who attended the last Intergroup meeting. If your meeting was not represented, please elect an Intergroup Representative (IGR) and /or an alternate so your meeting is represented.

A Is For Alcohol	Cow Hollow Men's Group	Keep Coming Back	Queers, Crackpots & Fallen Women	They Stopped in Time
Any Lenghts	Each Day A New Beginning	Live & Let Live	Saturday Weekend Warrior	Thursday Night Speaker
Artists & Writers	First Place	Living Sober With HIV	Say Hey Group	Thursday Thumpers
Attitude Adjustment Hour	Friday Morning 12 Steppers	Marina Discussion	Sober Saturday	Tiburon Haven
Blue Book Special	Girls Night Out	Miracles (Way) Off 24th St.	Step Talk	Walk Of Shame
Boys Night Out	Haight Street Blues	Monday Night Stag Tiburon	Sunday Night Castro Speaker Disc	What It's Like Now
Came to Believe	High Noon Mon	Noon Smokeless	Sunday Rap	Women's Mtg There is a Solution
Come 'n Get It!	Join The Tribe	On Awakening Group	Sunset Speaker Step	San Mateo General Service

This is an unofficial summary of the Jan 2016 Intergroup meeting provided for convenience; it is not intended to be the completed approved minutes. For a complete copy of the minutes and full committee reports see "Intergroup" on our website [www.aasf.org](http://www.aasf.org).

Our intergroup exists to support the groups in their common purpose of carrying the A.A. message to the still suffering alcoholic by providing and coordinating services that are difficult for the individual groups to execute.

The Intercounty Fellowship has been organized by, and is responsible to, the member groups in San Francisco and Marin for the purpose of coordinating the services that individual groups cannot provide.

The meeting was held on Wed., Jan 6th, 2015 at 1187 Franklin St, SF CA.

The meeting was started with a call to order and the Serenity Prayer. Baskets for rent and dinner were passed. The Dec 2015 minutes and the Jan 2016 agenda were approved.

## Officer Reports

**Board Chair, Carolyn R.** Re-introduced Joanne, our new Treasurer, who was confirmed at the Board meeting and is a welcome addition. The Budget and Survey were the main topics of discussion at the Board meeting. The budget deficit is significant and will be discussed later on the agenda this evening. The ASL policy was also discussed and is now posted online. The Committee Chairs meeting is coming up also.

**Treasurer, Joanne H.** Budgeted a shortfall of \$5,000 in November, actual deficit

was \$1,488. The unrestricted cash balance was up \$2,300 and cash balance was up also though group contributions are down. The rating for this month is FAIR. Some ideas are being presented for more reliable sources of income; possibly asking for more Faithful Fivers or higher individual contributions at meetings.

**Central Office Manager, Maury** Central Office will be closed on Jan. 18th. Maury thanked Joanne for mentioning the ideas for encouraging higher contributions and reminded everyone that more than half of the 777 groups listed don't contribute to the Central Office. More will be discussed later on the agenda this evening.

## Intergroup Committee/Activity Reports

**Access, Virginia M.** Virginia reiterated her housekeeping issue from last month despite an objection that this is not a committee report. Virginia insisted that it is a committee report and she would like it back on the agenda for a group discussion.

**Orientation, Greg M.** If you are interested in helping, he is passing around a new Buddy sign up sheet for seasoned IGRs who are willing to mentor new members.

**Teleservice, Pete F.** Looking for a Monday coordinator position. There are 6 open volunteer shifts available.

## Liaison Reports

**SF H&I, Marc F.** There are many commitments available right now; please come to the monthly meeting or see Marc after the meeting.

**Marin General Service, Greg W.**

Four open DCM positions. Marin will be hosting the pre-conference assembly meeting in the Spring. There will be many service opportunities available for that meeting and groups are encouraged to volunteer to help out.

Marin Teleservice is also turning over commitments at their next business meeting.

## Old Business

### Web Survey Results / Budget Concerns

Chris said that the Board is stuck in a tough position. The current rent is \$4,458 per month. That is under market value due to a previous lease extension; the current market rent would be \$8,000 per month. The landlord has been open to listening to the Board's position, but is also reticent to make any long term decisions, or lease extensions. Matt gave a presentation, reminding us that the survey was created to get an idea for the functionality of the central office. Refer to the blue sheet in the handout package for details. He mentioned a few consistent responses were regarding misunderstanding what services are (and are not) provided by the Central Office. Marin, Presidio, Sunset and Western Addition were suggested as possible locations to relocate to, though most of those who took the survey want the office to stay at its present location. Access via public transportation is also important. Maury also mentioned some of the results that were most pertinent to what she experiences working in the office: Training and Communication.

The meeting was opened to questions and comments from the floor:

James wants to know if the survey results



# Individual Contributions

to Central Office were made through January 15, 2015  
honoring the following members:

## IN MEMORIAM

**Lee M., Flossie N.**

## ANNIVERSARIES

**John V. – 45 years, Mary E. – 35 years, David J. – 33 years,  
Lucy O. – 32 years, Mr. Teddy Bear JC – 31 years,  
Dan T. – 30 years, Jeffrey S. – 20 years, C.J.H. – 16 years**

are available online? Yes.

Margaret wanted to know if the results between newcomers (0-5 years) and those with longer sobriety were similar, or not. She feels the results from newcomers ought to be given preference over those with longer sobriety.

John said the GGYPA is understaffed, and could use support. He also wanted to know if the Central Office could be used as an AA meeting space. Maury responded by saying that the AAWS Guidelines recommend against that, though other central offices do allow meetings at the offices.

Tom wanted some clarification about the survey responses and felt it was difficult to make broad decisions based upon a limited response of only 400 individuals. Charles said that question 7 on the survey was automatically checked Yes and that caused problems for Marin groups that completed the survey. Pete said that the question we should ask is "How can we help Central Office?" Groups and Committees can step up their service.

Douglas thanked Matt and Maury for their help and acknowledged that the survey wasn't perfect, but it was a step in right direction; he wishes more people would have participated. Elizabeth said that as a Treasurer, the website could have better instructions to Treasurer's about how to submit contributions. Tom shared some insights on leasing and asked that we communicate better about what we tell people about the process as it is easy for misinformation to spread. Mary said that the more she shares about the Intergroup to her group, the more people take interest in what is happening.

## **Group Reports/What's On Your Mind**

Virginia reiterated her viewpoint that AA is a democratic process and that the Access committee housekeeping issue should have been brought to the Intergroup.

John mentioned that GGYPA still has service positions available. They recently had a dance with PNYPAA. The GGYPA business meeting is this Sunday at the Marin Alano Club.

James likes the meeting app that Michael P. shared about a few months ago and suggested that perhaps a similar sort of app could be developed to show the Accounting at the Central Office and make it easier for people to understand the money flow situation. What is AA doing to keep up with the process of collecting funds from apps, or other modern modes of making transactions?

Charles reminded that the Marin Central Services Committee is now called the Marin Exploratory Committee and is still meeting and welcomes all Marin IGRs to attend.

Tom likes the new, shortened meeting schedule. Margaret said that Website committee should start meeting again.

Carolyn said that we can all speak up during AA related announcements in meetings that are not represented at the Intergroup to raise awareness about what is happening when it comes to the Central Office deficit and service opportunities.

Dorothy mentioned that she did not think Virginia's housekeeping issue was addressed democratically.

*(Continued on page 19)*

# COMMITTEE CONTACTS

The following is a list of names and email addresses for our Intergroup Officers and many of the committees. Please email that committee at the address below if you are interested in doing service on a committee, or if you wish to receive more information.

## BOARD OFFICERS:

### **CHAIR**

Carolyn R. chair@aasf.org

### **VICE CHAIR**

Chris H. vicechair@aasf.org

### **TREASURER**

Joanne H. treasurer@aasf.org

### **RECORDING SECRETARY**

Sam W. secretary@aasf.org

## COMMITTEE CHAIRS:

### **ACCESS COMMITTEE**

Virginia M. access@aasf.org

### **ARCHIVES COMMITTEE**

Michael P. archives@aasf.org

### **FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE**

Michael P. fellowship@aasf.org

### **HOMEBOUND MARIN**

Frank T. homeboundmarin@aasf.org

### **ORIENTATION COMMITTEE**

Greg M. orientation@aasf.org

### **SF PI/CPC COMMITTEE**

Erin S. picpc@aasf.org

### **SF TELESERVICE COMMITTEE**

Pete F. sfteservice@aasf.org

### **SOS COMMITTEE**

Dorothy V. sos@aasf.org

### **SUNSHINE CLUB**

David C. & Carole P. sunshine@aasf.org

### **THE POINT**

Jane B. thepoint@aasf.org

# aa group contributions

Fellowship Contributions	Dec. 15	YTD
Biggs AA		\$ 37
Contribution Box	\$ 70	\$ 452
GGYPAA	\$ 17	\$ 640
Intergroup	\$ 128	\$ 1,210
Novato Fellowship Group		\$ 147
Unidentified Group		\$ 18
<b>Fellowship Total</b>	<b>\$ 215</b>	<b>\$ 2,504</b>

Marin Contributions	Dec. 15	YTD
12 & 12 Study Sa 815am	\$ 108	\$ 296
AA By The Bay Tu 730pm		\$ 209
Attitude Adjustment 7D 7am	\$ 500	\$ 4,175
Awakenings		\$ 32
Awareness/Acceptance M 1030am		\$ 264
Back to Basics Su 930am	\$ 48	\$ 516
Beginner's Help Th 8pm		\$ 60
Big Book Study & Meditation M 7p		\$ 30
Bounce Back M 6pm	\$ 250	\$ 250
By the Book Sa 10am		\$ 111
Candlelight Sun 830pm	\$ 235	\$ 235
Closed Women's SS Tu 330pm		\$ 166
Conscious Contact Sa 6pm		\$ 238
Cover to Cover W 730pm		\$ 250
Crossroads Sun 12pm	\$ 205	\$ 1,605
Day At A Time 7D 630am		\$ 240
Downtown Mill Valley F 830pm		\$ 490
Experience, Strength & Hope Sa 6pm	\$ 75	\$ 125
Fireside Fri 8pm Bolinas		\$ 30
Friday Night Book F 830pm		\$ 1,117
Gay Men & Women / All Welcome		\$ 100
Girls Night Out W 815pm		\$ 125
Glum Not! Su 9am		\$ 200
Gratitude Tu 8pm	\$ 150	\$ 250
Happy Destiny F 7pm		\$ 200
Happy Hour Th 6pm	\$ 75	\$ 125
Happy, Joyous & Free 5D 12pm		\$ 1,125
High & Dry W 12pm		\$ 282
Intimate Feelings Sa 10am		\$ 311
Inverness Sunday Serenity 10am	\$ 169	\$ 425
Just Can't Wait 'til 8 M 630pm		\$ 447
Keep It Simple Sister Thu 7pm	\$ 218	\$ 218
Last Stop Men's Step Study W 6pm		\$ 430
Living in the Solution F 6pm		\$ 400
Living Sober Mon 6pm		\$ 40
Marin Alano Club		\$ 40
Marin Teleservice		\$ 2,500
Marin Young People F 830pm		\$ 142
Meditation Wednesday 7pm		\$ 314
Mill Valley 7D 7am		\$ 2,100

Marin Contributions	Dec. 15	YTD
Mill Valley Discussion W 830pm		\$ 670
Mill Valley Orig Smokeless SS Th 8pm		\$ 526
Monday Blues M 645pm		\$ 626
Monday Night Madness M 6pm		\$ 250
Monday Night Stag Tiburon		\$ 1,000
Monday Night Women's M 8pm		\$ 586
Monday Nooners M 12pm	\$ 184	\$ 1,012
Morning After Sa 10am	\$ 200	\$ 600
Morning Attitude Adjustment M-Sa		\$ 538
Nativity Monday Night BB 8pm		\$ 67
Noon Tu 12pm		\$ 103
North Marin Speaker Sun 12pm		\$ 600
Not a Glum Lot Group Fr 800pm		\$ 152
Novato Spirit Discussion F 2pm	\$ 75	\$ 291
On Awakening 7D 530am	\$ 350	\$ 2,800
Pathfinders Tu 12pm		\$ 382
Primary Purpose M12pm		\$ 183
Primary Purpose W 830pm		\$ 40
Quitting Time M-F 530pm		\$ 1,338
Redwoods Mon 3pm		\$ 168
Refugee Th 12pm	\$ 50	\$ 270
Reveille 7D 7am		\$ 50
Rise N Shine Su 10am		\$ 810
San Geronimo Valley BS F 8pm	\$ 79	\$ 263
San Geronimo Valley M 8pm		\$ 779
Saturday Night Sa 8pm		\$ 747
Saturday Weekend Warrior Sa 830am		\$ 404
Saturday Women's Speaker Sa 6pm		\$ 561
Sausalito Sober Sisters Th 330pm		\$ 82
Sisters In Sobriety Th 730pm		\$ 26
Six O'Clock Sunset Th 6pm	\$ 500	\$ 500
Sober & Serene F 7pm	\$ 551	\$ 1,309
Sober Sisters Wed 12pm		\$ 152
Spiritual Testosterone Stag Su 830a		\$ 717
Steps to Freedom M 730pm		\$ 500
Steps To The Solution W 715pm		\$ 209
Sunday Express Su 6pm		\$ 109
Sunday Friendship Su 6pm	\$ 136	\$ 136
Survivors M 12pm		\$ 95
T.G.I. Tuesday 6pm	\$ 75	\$ 125
Terra Linda Group Th 830pm		\$ 150
Terra Linda Thursday Men's 8pm		\$ 314
The Barnyard Group Sa 4pm		\$ 300
The Broad Highway Th 730pm		\$ 100
There is a Solution Tu 6pm		\$ 232
Three Step Group Sa 530pm		\$ 483
Thursday Night Book Club Th 7pm		\$ 48
Thursday Night Speaker 830pm		\$ 1,236
Tiburon Women's Candlelight W 8pm	\$ 75	\$ 75

Marin Contributions	Dec. 15	YTD
Tuesday Big Book Tu 830pm		\$ 120
Tuesday Chip Meeting 830pm		\$ 1,000
We, Us and Ours M 650pm		\$ 674
Wednesday Mid-Week W 6pm	\$ 75	\$ 125
Wednesday Night Candlelight 8pm		\$ 62
Wednesday Night Speaker Disc 7pm		\$ 1,307
Wednesday Sundowners W 6pm		\$ 255
Weekend Warriors Sa 830am	\$ 142	\$ 142
Why It Works Sun 6pm		\$ 85
Women's Big Book Tu 1030am		\$ 1,743
Women's Lunch Bunch F 12pm		\$ 614
Women's Meeting Su 430pm		\$ 88
Women's Step Study M 12pm	\$ 113	\$ 113
Working Dogs W 12pm		\$ 400
Young People's BYOB Sat 7pm		\$ 90
<b>Marin Total</b>	<b>\$ 4,561</b>	<b>\$ 49,743</b>

San Francisco Contributions	Dec. 15	YTD
11th Step Power Power Power		\$ 434
20+ Sun 445pm (unlisted)		\$ 540
6am Dry Dock Mon	\$ 102	\$ 102
6am Dry Dock Sa		\$ 72
6am Dry Dock Su	\$ 7	\$ 56
6am Dry Dock Th	\$ 70	\$ 70
6am Dry Dock Tu		\$ 111
6am Dry Dock W	\$ 22	\$ 98
7 AM As Bill Sees It		\$ 48
7am Step Discussion Tu 7am		\$ 70
830am Smokeless Tu 830am		\$ 188
A is for Alcohol Tu 6pm		\$ 276
A New Start F 830pm		\$ 290
Afro American Beginners Sat 8pm		\$ 188
After Work M 6PM		\$ 60
Agnostics & Freethinkers Su 630pm		\$ 360
All Together Now Th 8pm	\$ 38	\$ 243
Alumni W 830pm		\$ 150
Amazing Grace M 7pm		\$ 60
Any Lengths Sat 930am		\$ 600
Artists & Writers F 630pm		\$ 1,966
As Bill Sees It Th 6pm		\$ 317
As Bill Sees It Th 830pm		\$ 125
As Bill Sees It Tu 1210pm		\$ 518
Ass in a Bag Th 830pm		\$ 195
Atheists, Agnostics & Others Sa 11am		\$ 50
Back to Basics Th 730pm		\$ 10
Be Still AA Su 12pm		\$ 400
Beginners 12 x 12 F 7pm		\$ 253
Beginners' Step Study Sat 7pm		\$ 213
Beginner's Warmup W 6pm		\$ 92

San Francisco Contributions	Dec. 15	YTD	San Francisco Contributions	Dec. 15	YTD	San Francisco Contributions	Dec. 15	YTD
Bernal Big Book Sat 5pm		\$ 594	Gratitude Center Fellowship		\$ 332	Pax West Literature Disc Tu 12pm	\$ 484	\$ 1,940
Bernal New Day 7D	\$ 435	\$ 2,017	H&I (SF)		\$ 30	Pax West Prayer and Meditation F 7am		\$ 420
Big Book Basics F 8pm		\$ 670	Haight Street Blues Tu 615pm		\$ 162	Pax West Speaker Disc M 12pm	\$ 1,129	\$ 1,129
Big Book Boot Camp 5D		\$ 57	Haight Street Explorers Th 630pm		\$ 190	Pocket Aces Sun 7pm		\$ 58
Big Book Study Su 1130am		\$ 567	High Noon Friday 1215pm	\$ 114	\$ 431	Potrero Hill 12 x 12 M 630pm		\$ 68
Blue Book Special Su 11am	\$ 45	\$ 399	High Noon Monday 1215pm	\$ 156	\$ 288	Progress Not Perfection Tu 830pm		\$ 147
Brothers in Arms M 8pm		\$ 189	High Noon Saturday 1215pm	\$ 360	\$ 668	Queers, Crackpots & Fallen Women		\$ 60
Buena Vista Breakfast Su 12pm		\$ 386	High Noon Sunday 1215p		\$ 78	Reality Farm Th 830pm		\$ 452
By the Book Sa 10am		\$ 44	High Noon Thursday 1215pm	\$ 356	\$ 356	Rebound W 830pm		\$ 95
BYOL W 1pm		\$ 100	High Noon Tuesday 1215pm	\$ 356	\$ 356	Rigorous Honesty Th 1205pm		\$ 90
Came to Park Sat 7pm		\$ 899	High Sobriety M 8pm		\$ 206	Saturday Afternoon Meditation Sa 5pm		\$ 171
Castro Discussion Th 730p		\$ 192	Hilldwellers M 8pm		\$ 474	Saturday Beginners Sat 6pm		\$ 1,770
Castro Monday Big Book M 830pm		\$ 155	Hoodlum Haven F 8pm		\$ 528	Saturday Easy Does It Sa 12pm		\$ 844
Castro Nooners F 12pm		\$ 88	Huntington Square W 630pm		\$ 839	Saturday Night Regroup Sa 730pm	\$ 200	\$ 699
Cocktail Hour Thu 10pm		\$ 56	Join the Tribe Tu 7pm		\$ 880	Serenity House	\$ 150	\$ 1,800
Cocoanuts Su 9am	\$ 136	\$ 136	Joys of Recovery Tu 8pm		\$ 332	Serenity Seekers M 730pm		\$ 1,470
Coit's Quitters		\$ 240	Keep Coming Back Sa 10am		\$ 330	Sex and Love in Sobriety M 3pm		\$ 55
Come 'n Get It! F 630pm		\$ 137	Ladies Who Lunch Thu 1210pm		\$ 105	Shamrocks & Serenity M 730pm		\$ 1,448
Cow Hollow Men's Group W 8pm	\$ 127	\$ 1,892	Let It Be Now F 6pm	\$ 80	\$ 132	Sinbar Su 8pm		\$ 12
Design For Living - Big Book Tu, Th 730am		\$ 184	Like A Prayer Su 4pm		\$ 60	Sisters Circle Su 6pm		\$ 78
Design for Living Sat 8am	\$ 185	\$ 1,147	Lincoln Park Sat 830pm		\$ 71	Six O'Clock Step Th 6pm		\$ 12
Dignitaries Sympathy W 815pm		\$ 419	Living Sober with HIV W 6pm		\$ 732	Sober Saturday Sa 830am		\$ 338
Each Day a New Beginning F 7am		\$ 2,219	Looney Toons Tu 10pm		\$ 145	Sobriety & Beyond W 730pm		\$ 553
Each Day a New Beginning M 7am		\$ 557	Lush Lounge Sa 2pm		\$ 236	Sobriety & Miracles S&M Sa 5pm		\$ 140
Each Day A New Beginning Su 8am		\$ 951	Meditation Wednesday 7pm		\$ 93	Some Are Sicker Than Others W 6pm		\$ 179
Each Day a New Beginning Th 7am	\$ 528	\$ 1,525	Meeting of the Moms		\$ 152	Sometimes Slowly Sa 11am	\$ 105	\$ 263
Each Day a New Beginning Tu 7am		\$ 1,085	Meeting Place Noon F 12pm	\$ 166	\$ 406	Steppin' Up Tu 630pm	\$ 86	\$ 418
Each Day a New Beginning W 7am		\$ 1,766	Meeting Place Noon W 12pm		\$ 410	Stonestown M 8pm	\$ 120	\$ 360
Early Start F 6pm		\$ 2,322	Mellow Mission Sunrise M 7am	\$ 64	\$ 124	Sunday Bookworms Su 730pm		\$ 153
Easy Does It Tu 6pm		\$ 174	Men's Gentle Touch M 7pm	\$ 73	\$ 416	Sunday Morning Gay Men's Stag 930am		\$ 88
Embarcadero Group 5D 1210pm		\$ 125	Mid-Morning Support Su 1030am		\$ 945	Sunday Night 3rd Step Group 5pm		\$ 408
Epiphany Group Th 7pm	\$ 176	\$ 386	Miracle (Way) Off 24th St W 730pm		\$ 453	Sunday Night Castro Speaker Disc 730pm		\$ 453
Eureka Step Tu 6pm		\$ 89	Monday Beginners M 8pm		\$ 512	Sunday Rap Su 8pm		\$ 420
Eureka Valley Topic M 6pm		\$ 1,503	Monday Coffee with Bill		\$ 14	Sunday Silence Su 730pm	\$ 151	\$ 466
Excelsior "Scent" Free for All Sa 7pm		\$ 300	Monday Men's Stag M 8pm		\$ 88	Sundown W 7pm		\$ 305
Extreme Makeover M 730pm	\$ 134	\$ 437	Monday Monday M 1215pm		\$ 329	Sunrise Sunset Women's Step Th 6pm		\$ 600
Federal Speaker Su 12pm		\$ 299	Monday Night BB Study 8pm		\$ 60	Sunset 11'ers F	\$ 68	\$ 158
Firefighters & Friends Tu 10am		\$ 166	New 9'ers Fri 9am	\$ 29	\$ 91	Sunset 11'ers M		\$ 200
Fireside Chat Group Th 8pm		\$ 78	New Friday Big Book F 12pm	\$ 81	\$ 568	Sunset 11'ers Sa		\$ 97
Fireside Chat Group Tu 8pm		\$ 122	Newcomers Tu 8pm		\$ 145	Sunset 11'ers Su		\$ 100
Friday All Groups F 830pm		\$ 75	No Regrets Tu 7am		\$ 150	Sunset 11'ers Th	\$ 37	\$ 116
Friday at Five F 5pm		\$ 170	No Reservations M 12pm		\$ 518	Sunset 11'ers W		\$ 50
Friday Lunch With Bill Fri 12pm		\$ 46	Nu Outlook		\$ 185	Sunset 9'ers F	\$ 94	\$ 143
Friday Smokeless F 8pm		\$ 1,046	NYX Sat 7pm		\$ 330	Sunset Reflections Th 1pm		\$ 66
Friday Women's Round Robin Disc F 6am		\$ 20	O.A.D.W. Mon 7pm		\$ 422	Sunset Speaker Step Su 730pm		\$ 774
Friendly Circle Beginners Su 715ppm		\$ 288	Park Presidio M 830pm		\$ 423	Surf Tu 8pm	\$ 158	\$ 660
Friendly Circle Su 830pm		\$ 180	Parkside Th 8pm	\$ 400	\$ 948	Ten Years After Su 6pm		\$ 1,121
Gold Mine Group M 8pm	\$ 173	\$ 887	Pax West Daily Reflections W 7am		\$ 352	The Drive Thru W 1215pm		\$ 190
Goodlands Su 2pm		\$ 113	Pax West Discussion Th 12pm		\$ 908			

Continued on p. 19

# Profit and Loss Statement: November 2015

	Nov 15	Budget	YTD	YTD Budget		Nov 15	Budget	YTD	YTD Budget
Ordinary Income/Expense					Payroll Fees	\$13	\$10	\$116	\$115
Income					Phone Book Listings	\$93	\$95	\$1,023	\$1,045
Gratitude Month	\$2,061	\$600	\$6,676	\$4,500	Postage	\$0	\$200	\$831	\$1,225
Group Contributions	\$6,279	\$10,000	\$125,941	\$144,300	Printing	\$0	\$950	\$0	\$950
Individual Contributions	\$7,129	\$3,725	\$30,523	\$27,138	Professional Fees	\$0	\$0	\$1,300	\$1,485
Newsletter Subscript.	\$0	\$11	\$143	\$187	Rent - Office	\$4,458	\$4,458	\$47,326	\$47,326
Sales - Bookstore	\$7,043	\$7,000	\$90,949	\$105,000	Rent - Other	\$75	\$75	\$840	\$840
Intergroup Event Income	\$0	\$0	\$3,252	\$2,300	Repair & Maintenance	\$240	\$240	\$2,877	\$2,860
Total Income	\$22,512	\$21,336	\$257,484	\$283,425	Security System	\$0	\$0	\$387	\$375
Cost of Goods Sold					Shipping	\$94	\$408	\$3,212	\$4,492
Cost of Books Sold	\$4,999	\$5,529	\$62,922	\$75,319	Software Purchased	\$0	\$0	\$519	\$550
COGS - Shipping	\$0	\$26	\$291	\$274	Telephone	\$205	\$230	\$1,909	\$2,530
Credit Card Processing	\$312	\$350	\$3,929	\$4,765	Training	\$0	\$0	\$524	\$405
Inventory Adjustments	\$86	\$0	\$629	\$0	Travel	\$0	\$0	\$3,297	\$1,200
Total COGS	\$5,398	\$5,905	\$67,771	\$80,358	Total Expense	\$18,651	\$20,840	\$225,289	\$227,362
Gross Profit	\$17,115	\$15,431	\$189,714	\$203,067	Net Ordinary Income	(\$1,536)	(\$5,409)	(\$35,576)	(\$24,295)
Expense					Other Income/Expense				
Committees	\$0	\$0	\$466	\$1,351	Other Income				
Bad Checks	\$0		\$12		Bag Fees	\$4	\$3	\$26	\$28
Employee Expenses	\$12,530	\$12,895	\$144,782	\$143,696	Customer Shipping	\$184	\$450	\$3,292	\$4,500
Equipment Lease	\$408	\$408	\$4,571	\$4,488	Interest Income	\$53	\$78	\$619	\$849
Filing/Fees	\$0	\$0	\$427	\$970	Miscellaneous Income	\$30	\$30	\$458	\$330
Insurance	\$0	\$0	\$2,471	\$2,760	Total Other Income	\$271	\$561	\$4,395	\$5,707
Intergroup Events	\$0	\$370	\$4,524	\$3,050	Other Expense				
Intergroup Literature	\$30	\$59	\$384	\$792	Depreciation Expense	\$223	\$205	\$2,453	\$2,249
Internet Expense	\$61	\$133	\$1,417	\$1,467	Total Other Expense	\$223	\$205	\$2,453	\$2,249
Office Supplies	\$228	\$204	\$982	\$2,246	Net Other Income	\$48	\$356	\$1,942	\$3,458
Paper Purchased	\$216	\$104	\$1,095	\$1,146	Net Income	(\$1,488)	(\$5,053)	(\$33,634)	(\$20,838)

## Treasurer's Report

For November, net income was under budget by \$3,159 due to a number of small events such non-budgeted travel expense (\$1,070) and lower than budgeted book sales. While we expected to have a negative variance for October, (i.e. we expected that our expenses would be greater than our income) we didn't expect that we would be in the red by as much as we were. We had a negative variance for the month of (\$4,024) compared to a budgeted negative variance of (\$865).

Unrestricted cash balance dropped to \$7,598 from \$10,649 which reflects less than half one month of our operating expenses.

**OVERALL RATING: Poor – because we are not meeting our budget and our unrestricted cash balance has dropped.**

### INTERGROUP FINANCE RATING SYSTEM

Every month we rate our monthly finances as “Excellent”, “Good”, “Fair” or “Poor”. Generally speaking, here are the definitions of those terms:

**EXCELLENT:** We exceeded our budget. Our income was greater than our expenses for the month and we have more than two months' worth of operating expenses in unrestricted cash balances. Operating expenses are

roughly \$19K/month, so we'd have over \$38K in unrestricted cash balances for the month. The last time we were “Excellent” was January 2013.

**GOOD:** We are meeting our budget. Our income for the month, or for the YTD, was slightly greater than our expenses and we'd have approximately 1.5 - 2 months of operating expenses in unrestricted cash balances. The last time we were “Good” was March 2015.

**FAIR:** We are not meeting our budget. Our expenses were greater than our income for the month and for the YTD - and our unrestricted cash balance would be somewhere between 1 and 1.5x our operating expenses.

# November 2015 Balance Sheet

	Nov 30, 15	Oct 31, 15	\$ Change	Nov 30, 14	\$ Change
<b>ASSETS</b>					
Current Assets					
Checking/Savings					
Restricted Cash	\$162,393	\$162,340	\$53	\$193,302	(\$30,908)
Unrestricted Cash	\$9,962	\$7,598	\$2,364	\$8,398	\$1,564
Total Checking/Savings	\$172,355	\$169,938	\$2,418	\$201,699	(\$29,344)
Accounts Receivable					
Accounts Receivable	\$62	\$240	(\$178)	(\$7)	\$70
Total Accounts Receivable	\$62	\$240	(\$178)	(\$7)	\$70
Other Current Assets					
Inventory - Bookstore	\$16,790	\$20,099	(\$3,309)	\$32,155	(\$15,365)
Prepaid Literature Orders	\$1,564	\$2,102	(\$537)	\$836	\$729
Undeposited Funds	\$425	\$176	\$249	\$0	\$425
Total Other Current Assets	\$18,779	\$22,376	(\$3,597)	\$32,991	(\$14,212)
Total Current Assets	\$191,197	\$192,554	(\$1,358)	\$234,682	(\$43,486)
Fixed Assets					
Comp. and Off. Equipment (Net)					
Computer and Office Equipment	\$6,823	\$6,823	\$0	\$6,823	\$0
Accum. Depr. Comp. and Off. Eq	(\$5,496)	(\$5,438)	(\$58)	(\$4,747)	(\$749)
Total Comp. and Off. Equipment (Net)	\$1,327	\$1,385	(\$58)	\$2,076	(\$749)
Leasehold Improvements (Net)					
Leasehold Improvements	\$32,709	\$32,709	\$0	\$32,709	\$0
Accum. Amort. - Leasehold Impr.	(\$16,640)	(\$16,475)	(\$165)	(\$14,666)	(\$1,974)
Total Leasehold Improvements (Net)	\$16,069	\$16,234	(\$165)	\$18,043	(\$1,974)
Total Fixed Assets	\$17,395	\$17,618	(\$223)	\$20,118	(\$2,723)
Other Assets					
Deposits	\$6,698	\$6,698	\$0	\$6,698	\$0
Total Other Assets	\$6,698	\$6,698	\$0	\$6,698	\$0
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$215,290</b>	<b>\$216,870</b>	<b>(\$1,581)</b>	<b>\$261,498</b>	<b>(\$46,209)</b>
<b>LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>					
Liabilities					
Current Liabilities					
Other Current Liabilities					
Payroll Liabilities	\$3,713	\$3,859	(\$146)	\$3,273	\$441
Sales Tax Payable	\$609	\$556	\$53	\$565	\$44
Total Other Current Liabilities	\$4,322	\$4,415	(\$93)	\$3,837	\$485
Total Current Liabilities	\$4,322	\$4,415	(\$93)	\$3,837	\$485
Long Term Liabilities					
Deferred Compensation	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$0	\$60,167	(\$30,167)
Total Long Term Liabilities	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$0	\$60,167	(\$30,167)
Total Liabilities	\$34,322	\$34,415	(\$93)	\$64,004	(\$29,682)
Equity					
Net Assets	\$214,601	\$214,601	\$0	\$216,250	(\$1,649)
Net Income	(\$33,634)	(\$32,146)	(\$1,488)	(\$18,756)	(\$14,878)
Total Equity	\$180,967	\$182,455	(\$1,488)	\$197,494	(\$16,527)
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>	<b>\$215,290</b>	<b>\$216,870</b>	<b>(\$1,581)</b>	<b>\$261,498</b>	<b>(\$46,209)</b>

San Francisco Contributions	Dec. 15	YTD
The Leaky Cauldron Su 930am	\$	508
The Original 8 O'clock	\$	451
The Parent Trap 2 Wed 4pm	\$	207
The Parent Trap M 1pm	\$	269
The Pepper Group F 12pm	\$	83
They Stopped In Time M 8pm	\$	195
Thursday Coffee With Bill 9am	\$	7
Thursday Night Women's Th 630pm	\$ 95	\$ 773
Thursday Thumpers Th 7pm	\$	80
Too Close For Comfort M 6pm	\$	320
Too Early Sa 8am	\$	1,179
Trudgers Discussion Su 7pm	\$	600
Tuesday Big Book Study Tu 6pm	\$	107
Tuesday Night Lasses Step Study	\$ 12	\$ 393
Twelve Steps to Happiness F 730pm	\$ 89	\$ 89
Unidentified Group	\$	122
Valencia Smokefree F 6pm	\$ 60	\$ 557
Wake Up On 3rd St Group	\$	401
Walk of Shame W 830pm	\$	210
We Care Tu 12pm	\$ 60	\$ 186
Wednesday Night Speaker Disc 7pm	\$ 464	\$ 464
Weekend Update Su 6pm	\$	89
Weekend Worker Sat 7am	\$	120
West Portal W 8pm	\$	376
Wharf Rats Th 815pm	\$	552
What It's Like Now M 6pm	\$	338
Wits End Step Study Tu 8pm	\$	39
Women's 10 Years Plus Th 615pm	\$	618
Women's Came to Believe Sa 10am	\$	360
Women's Kitchen Table Tu 630pm	\$	808
Women's Mtg There is a Solution W	\$	507
Women's Promises F 7pm	\$	327
Work In Progress Sat 7pm	\$	519
YAHOO Step Sa 1130am	\$	172
Young at Heart Sa 930am	\$	130
<b>San Francisco Total</b>	<b>\$ 7,975</b>	<b>\$ 86,445</b>

**YTD \$ 12,752 \$ 138,692**

(Continued from page 15)

Mike mentioned he will be absent next month and asked if anyone would be willing to take the minutes.

Chris asked for a show of hands for those that supported the new, shorter meeting format. There is a majority of support for the new format.

Meeting adjourned with the Responsibility Statement at 8:30pm

**Next Intergroup Meeting:** Wed. Feb 3, 2016, 7pm, 101 Donahue St. Marin City, CA. Orientation is at 6:15pm, dinner is served at 630pm.



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# February 2016

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