

the Point

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

from Chapter Five of the book, Alcoholics Anonymous

2016
4
April

A publication of the Intercounty Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous

Intercounty Fellowship
of Alcoholics Anonymous

1821 Sacramento Street

San Francisco, CA 94109-3528

San Francisco (415) 674-1821

Marin (415) 499-0400

Fax (415) 674-1801

www.aasf.org

thepoint@aasf.org





Extreme Liberty



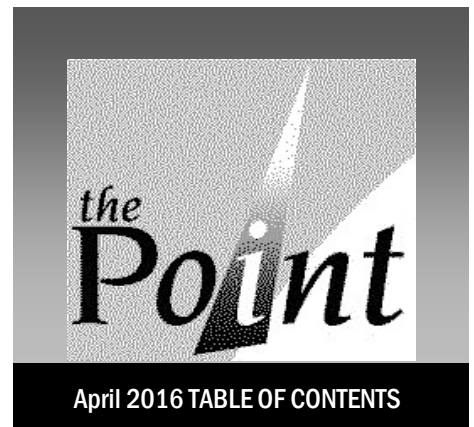
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The Point is published monthly to inform AA members about business and meeting affairs in the Intercounty Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous (San Francisco and Marin Counties). The Point's pages are open to participation by all AA members. Nothing 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.

April 2016

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
<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>			
3	4	5 FIRST TUE Access Committee Central Office 6pm	6 FIRST WED Intergroup Meeting 1187 Franklin St, SF Orientation 6:15pm Meeting 7pm
10 California Northern Coastal Area 06 Pre-Conference Assembly 10 Avenue of the Flags, San Rafael 8am - 1pm Golden Gate Young People in AA Central Office 12pm	11 SECOND MON SF Public Information / Cooperation with the Professional Community (PI/CPC) Committee Central Office Speaker Workshop 6pm Business Meeting 7pm	12 SECOND TUE 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	13 SECOND WED Marin Bridging the Gap 1360 Lincoln Ave, San Rafael 6pm
17 Sober Outside Services (SOS) 4058 18th St, SF Orientation 1pm THIRD SUN Archives Committee Central Office 2pm Business Meeting followed by Work Day	18 THIRD MON 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	19	20
24	25	26 FOURTH TUE Marin Teleservice 1360 Lincoln Ave, San Rafael Orientation 7pm Business Meeting 7:30pm	27

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2
7	8	9 California Northern Coastal Area 06 Pre-Conference Assembly 10 Avenue of the Flags, San Rafael 8am - 5:30pm
14	15	16 <u>THIRD SAT</u> SF H&I 2900 24th St, SF Orientation 11am
21 <u>FOURTH THU</u> Marin Public Information / Cooperation with the Professional Community (PI/CPC) 1360 Lincoln Ave, San Rafael Business Meeting 7pm	22	23 <u>FOURTH SAT</u> CNCA Meeting 320 N McDowell Blvd, Petaluma 10am
28 <u>FOURTH THU</u> Sober Outside Services (SOS) Central Office 6pm	29	30 



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“It will be seen that such extreme
liberty of thought and action applies
only *to the group's own affairs.*”

- Bill W.

The A.A. Grapevine, March, 1948



Meeting Changes

Meeting Changes:

Mon/Wed/Fri 1pm/2pm/2pm Cathedral Hill THE DAILY REPRIEVE, 1101 O'Farrell St / Franklin (Fireside Rm; Knock on door)

Meetings at Kaiser CDRP, 1201 Fillmore St / Turk have been temporarily suspended while the building undergoes remodeling. They are expected to resume sometime in May.

No Longer Meeting:

Mon	12:10pm	Financial	MONDAY NOON DAILY REFLECTIONS, 660 California St / Grant
Wed	7:30pm	McLaren Park	77% RECOVERED, Yale St / Wayland
Thu	8:00pm	Mill Valley	MILL VALLEY ORIGINAL SMOKELESS SS, 410 Sycamore Ave / Camino Alto

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!***

California Northern Coastal Area 06 of Alcoholics Anonymous Pre-Conference Assembly 2016

***“Our Spiritual Way of Life:
Steps, Traditions and Concepts”***

Saturday/Sunday April 9 & 10

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

Saturday 8am - 5:30pm

Sunday 8am - 1pm

Spring Fling Drag Thing and Dance Thing



Saturday, April 30

Harvey Milk Civil Rights Academy

4253 19th St @ Diamond St

AA/Al-Anon Meeting 6pm

Spring Fling Drag Show 8pm

Dance! 10pm

Suggested Donation

\$15 presale | \$20 door

Tickets: www.livingsober.org

From the Editor

Extreme Liberty

We open our April issue with one of Bill W.'s Tradition 4 quotes: "It will be seen that such extreme liberty of thought and action applies only *to the group's own affairs.*" Rick R. notes how the fourth tradition promotes such diversity for each group. San Francisco boasts meetings for crones, men or women, the LGBT community, Spanish-speaking and countless other groups (even Dr. Jekyll at Mr. Hyde Street in the Tenderloin). Some read the steps at the beginning, some don't. It's all good as long as they don't try telling *other* groups what to do.

On Page 8, Anonymous shows how inventories kept Hollywood gin and tonic away from his lips in ***Step Four and Spontaneous Writing.*** Then Bree L. regales us with Barbara M.'s recovery story. "Am I Really an Alcoholic?" asks Kathleen C. — because aren't potheads more spiritual? Claire A.'s frantic efforts at avoiding responsibility are soothed by her "litter-mates." She finds bringing suppressed fears to light in

good company neutralizes their grip.

Later, in our history feature, Bob S. describes when Ebby met our founder at Calvary Mission. In those days Bill was sure his gin would "last longer than anyone's preaching." The actual loving and inclusive message at the core of A.A. is elucidated by Duran M. on Page 13. On Page 14, another anonymous member reluctantly admits that she's not God.

Our Step Four article includes a sidebar from ***Lois Remembers*** that I found while looking up an author quotes from ***Pass It On.*** Lois considered herself a member of Alcoholics Anonymous because she was there from the start. Her dreams as a young girl were of "changing bad people into good ones" and she developed systems to make them come true. These days, when we finally reach the diverse and inclusive rooms of San Francisco A.A., we realize "we're not bad people trying to get good — we're just sick people trying to get well."

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.)



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.	Ed K.	Layne Z.
Alejandro D.	Eileen M.	Lelan & Rich H.
Alex L.	Emily C.	Leo G.
Alex R.	Erin S.	Leo H.
Allison M.	Fay K.	Linda Kay D.
Ami and Nick H.	Forrest P.	Linda L.
Amy Mc.	Frederick D.	Lisa M.
Anonymous	Gilbert G.	Lisa T.
Barbara L.	Gladys G.	Liz M.
Barbara M.	Henry P.	Lucy & Dennis O.
Becca M.	Herman B.	Lynn D.
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Dianne E.	Laura B.	Patrick S.
Don L.	Lauren H.	Paul K.
Don N.	Layne S.	Peggy H.

(Continued on p. 19)

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!

Step Four

Spontaneous Writing



by Anonymous

Immersion in the AA fellowship via daily meetings, telephone/clubhouse conversations, etc., kept my persistent obsession to drink at bay for my first six months of sobriety. Albeit generally happy, I remained plagued by fear of drink. I had been working the steps off the clubhouse wall which I have come to believe is infinitely less than a half measure. This perilous condition resulted in my standing in a Hollywood bar with “gin & tonic” on my lips—I was *that* close to drinking!

Straightaway I found a new sponsor, Carl, who had me praying the Third Step Prayer during the first visit; he then started me writing Step Four information **at once** (p. 64). Carl informed me that I was not capable of writing honest information because my mind was a liar—after all did it not almost allow me to order a

drink just two short weeks previously? He provided me with four sheets of paper with headings of Resentment, Fear, Guilt and Harms to others. I was to write spontaneously without thinking. I was to ask God to do the writing for me. I was to pray this mantra over and over: “*God please help me—I am doing my inventory!*” “*God please help me—I am doing my inventory!*”

This mantra repetition lasted for what seemed a long time, but all at once it was as though a dam had collapsed, spilling more truth onto that paperwork in ten minutes than weeks or months would have been derived from my dishonest and stubborn alcoholic mind. Once written, I couldn’t “forget” or “ignore” what God had written. The next Saturday I gleefully returned to my sponsor with an honest list of my grosser handicaps.

Carl a out, by following the clear-cut Step Four directions of the Big Book, many other of my character defects, but, more importantly, how to face and be rid of resentments (p. 67) and the same with irrational fear (p. 68). I also learned how selfish and dishonest I had been throughout my drunken life from the other Fourth Step direction pages.

I have become a great fan of spontaneous writing. I notice Bill W. —perhaps unwittingly—used this method when he changed the then six step program into Twelve Steps in thirty minutes (read page 198, *Pass It On*).

tP



Lois Remembers

Alcoholics Anonymous (yet to be formed at that time) owes a great debt to the Oxford Group. We learned from them what to do, but perhaps even more important, what not to do. The Oxford Group was an international evangelical movement started by an American, Frank Buchman, a Lutheran minister. His good friend Sam Shoemaker, an Episcopal minister and pastor of New York’s Calvary Church, was head of the Oxford Group in this country.

Frank (the use of first names was a

custom in the group), believed that only by changing the individual could the world be changed for the better. He did something more about it than just preaching from this pulpit. He gathered a team of “disciples” around him and descended on Princeton to reform the students.

At Princeton meetings the Buchman team stood up and “shared” their sins with the students, who in turn rose and shared theirs. This led to the exposure of so much “immorality” on the campus that the faculty ran Frank and his team off the grounds.

Frank then took his team to Oxford University in England, where they were better received than at Princeton. Later they left for South Africa, where they acquired the name “Oxford Group,” which stuck to them until sometime during 1938, when Oxford University demanded the name be changed. “Moral Rearmament” was chosen by the society, which by then had grown to be a real force for good throughout the world.

Lois Remembers, Page 92

tP

Group Autonomy

The wisdom of Tradition Four

by Rick R.

It's hard to fathom how well Alcoholics Anonymous has fared throughout its years of existence, which began in 1935. Navigating the waters in those early days was a lot more treacherous than the average member of today's A.A. population would know, since efforts of the founders have proven to have weathered each and every storm that appeared on the horizon. The A.A. members of that time did, however, have the experience of understanding the mistakes of their predecessors, The Oxford Group, which had recorded over 100,000 sober members before it got off the track and religion seemed to become more of an agenda than sobriety. Then there was the similar experience of the Washingtonians, which also let outside influences like politics and money issues take over the agenda. These mistakes did not go unnoticed by the early members of the A.A. program and may have been what set the tone for sticking to our singleness of purpose, and structuring Tradition Four in a way that gives individual groups as much leeway as possible, so as not to discourage diversity while upholding rules that welcome any alcoholic who wants to get sober.

Autonomy is simply a form of independence that gives each group the latitude to appeal to certain factions of the alcoholic community at large—as long as it doesn't cross over into making those painful mistakes that led to the dismantling of groups that came before A.A. Today, in A.A. we have meetings that cater to specific segments of the A.A. population, such as: men's meetings, women's meetings, closed meetings (alcoholics only), open meetings, gay and lesbian meetings, Step Study, Big Book, Spanish speaking, and so on. The common theme for all of these meetings is to carry the message to the alcoholic who still

suffers. Anyone who has a desire to quit drinking cannot be turned away if, indeed, that meeting wants to continue to be called an A.A. meeting.

I was serving in the U.S. Navy at the time when I got sober in late 1969, and shortly after my one-year sober celebration, I was on a plane heading to the Philippines to go

*Anyone who has a
desire to quit drinking
cannot be turned away.*

aboard a fuel tanker, on which I spent the next four months hauling fuel out to the Tonkin Gulf and refueling the convoys of ships out there during the Vietnam War. During that four-month period, I was unable to go to a single A.A. meeting. During that time when I was cut off from the daily news concerning the A.A. program, Bill W. passed away without my knowledge. This happened shortly after I left the country and by the time I returned home it was no longer the topic of conversation and I heard nothing about it.

Shortly after I returned home, my wife and I attended a convention in California and to my surprise, the main event at that convention was the Bill W. Memorial Meeting, and I had no idea when he had passed away—it could have been 10 years earlier for all I knew. On the stage at that meeting there were 10 chairs lined up, and seated in those chairs were 10 of the most prominent speakers of that time, and each of them told a five minute story of their own personal experience with Bill. The one story that I still remember from that meeting goes something like this:

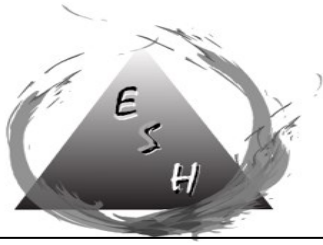
At the request of some of his A.A. friends on the west coast, Bill was on a train going

to California to speak at several well-planned meetings. The members of A.A. in a small Midwestern town heard that his train would be stopping in their area and asked if he would stop over for a day and speak at their meeting. He agreed, as he usually did in those days. When the train arrived, the town members expected Bill to arrive with an entourage of people assisting him, and they had arranged a welcoming with a band, a large crowd, and all the town's dignitaries. When the train stopped, the only one that got off was Bill, who walked down the ramp alone with one suitcase. He proceeded to the planned meeting place and as the meeting began, Bill was somewhat shocked when the members started the meeting with several church hymns. Nevertheless, he fulfilled his promise and gave his talk and was again disturbed when the meeting ended with several more hymns. After completing his stay, he boarded a train and continued on his way.

On the train, what kept bothering Bill was, "What are they doing to A.A. with the hymns?"—it didn't seem right. Then Bill started thinking about the size and population of that small town, and about the large number of alcoholics that attended that meeting, and he concluded that, per capita, that was probably the largest meeting in the country, and if they wanted to sing hymns, well that's their business.

I believe that Tradition Four leaves it up to the individual groups' discretion to consider the different cultural influences that affect the makeup and structure of the meeting format. I believe that Bill got it right, as long as it does not change the spirit of our primary purpose: to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers, and that no one with a desire to stop drinking can be turned away.

TP



Barbara M.'s Story

One of the first women of A.A. recounts her journey

by Bree L.

My husband Harry was a hunter. A bit into our marriage, I was extremely depressed. Of course, I was drinking a lot, which didn't help. I was having blackouts and, as they say, I was sick and tired of being sick and tired, and figured the best solution was to kill myself. My son found me sitting in a chair with the gun cocked and loaded, ready to pull the trigger. He rushed to prevent me from killing myself. My husband entered the fray and the bullet went through his hand and into his thigh. He ended up in surgery and then jail. I was up for a felony conviction, but he refused to press charges. I swore I would never drink again but I continued to drink.

Harry tied up my money so I couldn't buy liquor, but I had my neighborhood sources and continued to drink. There was a bar owner down the street who loved duck but couldn't get any. Well, we had a freezer full of mallards, sprigs, and teals from Harry's hunting. He never thought of eating the ducks, so I traded those frozen ducks for liquor. Harry just put them into the freezer and never knew they were gone.

I had a whole network of suppliers built up around our neighborhood in the Sunset.

We had cleaners down the street with an owner who liked to drink. When I'd take my clothes to the cleaner he'd give me a bottle that I could put in the stroller. I'd collect clean clothes and a bottle of vodka for my stroller.

Harry did the shopping. He didn't trust me with money, but I made out

the grocery list, so I'd put large high-priced items on the list. I'd have two to three pounds of coffee or four pounds of Crisco. Then I'd return those items for booze.

At the five-and-dime store I'd buy thread, but the owner was also a drinker and he'd give me a couple shots in the back room. We'd have to hide it from his wife who worked with him. I also shoplifted, gathering cans of beer into my coat and buying gum or small-priced items as my excuse for being in the store.

When I went to make amends to that storeowner he told me, "Your sobriety is enough." He wouldn't take any money.

Harry worked to curtail my drinking while I continued to drink. One day he smelled liquor on my breath and told me I had to shape up or ship out.

*I had three weeks
to quit. I waited
until the third week.*

His intervention consisted of sitting me down to watch *The Days of Wine and Roses*. He told me I had three weeks to quit. I waited until the third week.

The Park Presidio Group on 7th and Geary was my first meeting. They questioned why I'd go all the way over there when the Surf Group in Ocean Beach was right down the street from where I lived. It was upstairs and I walked up those stairs to find Jim and Eddie F. looking at me. "What do you want?" they asked, none too kindly.

I told them I wanted to stop drinking. There followed a short discussion about whether I'd be allowed. Their big question was whether I was an alcoholic or not. I almost had to fight my way in. They gave me a three-month test trial. One night, the speaker didn't show up and I volunteered to speak. After that, there was no question of my qualifications.

*I think I'm the
first woman member
in San Francisco.*

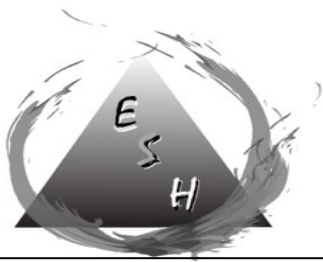
There were no women alcoholics at any of the meetings I went to and only one woman in the whole of A.A. That was Marty Mann in New York. I think I'm the first woman member in San Francisco.

That Surf group was started by two men, Eddie F. and Jim, who was married to Ruth, an Al Anon member. Jim died after a few years, but Ruth stayed and led the meeting for the next five years even though she was an Al Anon. She was like a sponsor and knew the program well.

Today I only have gratitude for the life that A.A. has given me. I've been a good example for my children. A.A. gave me courage to seek work, and then came the joy of working with autistic children, one of my life's benefits. Harry died many years ago but I still value the gift that he gave me when he insisted I stop drinking.

Barbara M's sobriety date is December 27, 1957.





Am I *Really* an Alcoholic?

I had my fingers crossed behind my back

by Kathleen C.

When I first started going to AA meetings I introduced myself thus: "I'm Kathleen, I'm an alcoholic." However, mentally I had my fingers crossed behind my back because I didn't think I was really an alcoholic; I was a pothead. I didn't want to be an alcoholic like my depressed, violent father. I preferred to be a pothead because that was more spiritual, more in tune with my New Age philosophy. Besides, I thought I drank like other people. My life looked pretty good on the outside. After I came to San Francisco from the East Coast, I met a good man, had kids, and went to graduate school. My husband mortgaged his house to pay my tuition. Somehow, without compromising my wine and marijuana routine, I got my degree, but had to pass an exam to practice my profession. I hit bottom when I failed. I wept tears of self-pity and decided, in my willful alcoholic way, that the darned marijuana had ruined my short-term memory and made me fail. My solution was to quit smoking marijuana. Sort of like substituting brandy for hard liquor or drinking only natural wines.

My younger sister had been Twelfth-Stepping me ever since she got sober in AA, just six months before. I had seen the dramatic changes in her life, and part of her program was dragging me to AA meetings whenever I visited her in Los Angeles. I called her and announced that I had quit smoking marijuana. There was a long silence on the other end of the phone line. Finally she asked, "And . . .?" "And what?" I answered. "What about alcohol?" She asked. I

sputtered, "Oh, I don't even like alcohol. It isn't my drug of choice. I don't drink that much." Then she asked me, "Why don't you try not drinking?"

On September 11, 1986 I tried not drinking. I got a home group and a sponsor and began working the program, reluctantly, since I still didn't think I was really an alcoholic. I went to one meeting a week, worked the steps minimally with my sponsor and didn't sponsor anybody myself. Not surprising. I wouldn't have wanted what I had either.

*"Most of us have been
unwilling to admit we
were real alcoholics."
Alcoholics Anonymous,
p. 30*

After I had been sober for a while, that pattern of "purposeful forgetting" that is described on page 79 in *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* began to be removed. I thought I didn't really have any consequences from my drinking. I never got so much as a speeding ticket, much less a DUI. I didn't hurt anybody, except maybe myself. When I began making my Eighth Step list of people I had harmed by my drinking, I started remembering: Driving drunk with my baby girls in the car, breaking promises to friends and family, showing up late to work or not at all. Because of my drinking. I

realized that drinking a whole bottle of cognac alone in my apartment is alcoholic drinking. Showing up for an evening class with a thermos of hot tea laced with brandy is alcoholic drinking. Having a few drinks before I went to a party is alcoholic drinking. I'm an alcoholic all right.

When I finally admitted my alcoholism to myself and my sponsor, I joined AA. I worked the steps, got commitments, went to lots of meetings, and worked with sponsees. Instead of being ashamed, I became grateful to be a sober alcoholic in the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. I am *really* an alcoholic!

tP





A.A. Aphorisms

FEAR: Frantic Efforts at Avoiding Responsibilities

by Claire A.

Ooh boy, does this ever describe me and my life at the moment. Phew! I have sunk to new lows of sloth; being lazy about being lazy. Thinking about exercising and saying to myself, "I'll do it later." Thinking about finishing up that short story, and saying to myself, "I need more time to let it percolate." Stressing out about making plans for my family and then thinking, "Oh well, I'll make it up as we go along" even though I know that that "strategy" was a disaster last time.

At the risk of analyzing my behavior rather than getting into action, I do think that I am simply running into a lot of unacknowledged fear. Fear that if I start exercising, I won't be able to continue, or I won't be as good as I was before (I am so out of shape, I don't need to fear it: I know it). Fear that I will finish the short story, and I won't know what to do with it after that, or that no one will publish it. Fear that my plans for my family will not be good enough. Here, the fact is that I know my children and my husband will complain no matter what I do, but it doesn't change the fact that the plans need to be made, and if I put it off, I will be stressed out, unhappy AND listening to complaints.

My ability to stay in fear and avoid responsibilities is well-developed. The longer I am sober, the more I realize this is a major character defect for me. Worry, fear, anxiety—I seem to drink a little milkshake with those ingredients daily. They creep into my head from every direction, and the only way for me to short-circuit the toxic thinking is to get into action.

On a good day, I get into action by praying and meditating first thing. If I don't do it first thing, I do it when I think of it! The best thing I can do for myself (and those around me) is to pray for, and listen for, guidance from my Higher Power. When I am tuned into my HP, I find that answers come to me all day long. Not only that, people around me are nicer. Imagine that!

Another thing that keeps me moving is talking to others in the program. If I'm lucky, I have sponsees, for they are the ones who remind me everyday how this program works, and how grateful I am to have this

My ability to stay in fear and avoid responsibilities is well-developed

program. As I talk to them about what has worked for me, it reminds me to just do the program. It works.

I also talk with my litter-mates (those with the same sobriety year); I talk with my sponsor, and with old-timers. If I am receptive enough they are a great source of experience, strength, and hope. Unfortunately, I am not always teachable. That's a nice way of saying that sometimes I think to myself, "What the hell does she know?" and then I go out and make the same stupid mistake over and over again until I become teachable. The old-timer watches this and gently nods. She knows the program works. And she knows that I am human, and that I have my own

HP. She recognizes "unteachability," and she doesn't let it worry her.

So what happens if I can't "get into action" or if I am fearful anyway?

I get off to a good start, and then I get off track

This happens to me quite a bit. I get off to a good start, and then I get off track. Well, this is when I have to restart. Go back to prayer. Find a quiet spot and tune back into my HP. Today, I was walking down a street, worrying about whether I measured up to the person in front of me. Realizing this, my "quiet spot" was simply closing my eyes and saying the Serenity Prayer and asking God for help and direction. I was walking in the middle of a busy street yet that simple moment stopped my worry. I could laugh kindly at myself, get some perspective, and get on with my life.

I'm so, so grateful to have this program which has saved my bacon so many times. I think I'll keep coming back!

iP



A.A. History

Ebby T. and Bill W.

by Bob S.

Ebby Thacher just couldn't seem to stay out of hot water; he and Bill Wilson had been involved in a disgraceful landing at the Manchester Vermont Airport in 1929, where they both drunkenly disembarked from the aircraft stumbling to the ground in front of a large crowd and the local high school band. Then during the summer of 1934, Ebby was arrested for disorderly conduct. On this bender, he had been shooting pigeons with a loud double barreled shotgun from the yard of his family's summer home in Manchester, Vermont. In this very prestigious neighborhood (Robert Todd Lincoln once lived across the street) these kinds of hi-jinx were just not done!

Ebby faced a six-month commitment at a nearby asylum; he was due in court the following Monday, but it was the hands-trembling sort of hangover weekend of which many of us know. Two friends, Oxford Group (OG) members Cebra (pronounced Seebra) Graves and Shep Cornell came to his rescue. As fate would have it, Cebra's father happened to be the judge. Judge Collin Graves released Ebby to the custody of millionaire, Rowland Hazard (mentioned on pages 26-27 of the BB). Together, they cleaned up the drunken household—as well as Ebby himself. Ebby spent a week at Rowland's cabin in nearby Shaftsbury before making another vital decision: He could go back to his home town of Albany, New York, and surely find a job. After all, his brother was the mayor. Or he could follow Rowland's advice to help other alcoholics at Calvary Mission.

We can all be thankful that he chose the dismal Calvary Mission. If not for Ebby's caring for other alcoholics, AA would not have started, because soon after he carried his sobriety program of action to Bill Wilson. Reverend Samuel Shoemaker was the leader of the Oxford Group in the United States. He was rector of nearby Calvary Church, which supported the Calvary Mission.

Reportedly, Ebby was a good listener with an exceptionally likeable personality. Ebby's Wall

*My gin will last
longer than his
preaching.*

Street friends had mentioned Bill Wilson's dire state as the result of John Barleycorn. Bill was living in Brooklyn Heights at the time. Ebby remembers: "While I was staying there and working with the Oxford Group . . . I phoned one day and got Lois, his wife . . . She invited me over for dinner a night or two later."

Ebby arrived at 182 Clinton Street on a bleak day late in November. He sat with Bill at the table. He refused a pineapple and gin drink which greatly surprised the boozy Bill Wilson, who asked, "What's this all about?" Bill assumed that Ebby's hard drinking had turned him into a religious crackpot and thought, "My gin will last longer than his preaching."

But Ebby had now been around the

OG "mulberry bush" long enough not to sermonize, he simply related what he had learned, and placed emphasis on these two tenets:

1. A simple religious idea (a vital spiritual experience).
2. A practical program of action (The Four Absolutes and the tenets of the Oxford Group—these became the basis of the AA program of action today).

Someone once said: "Do not defend the truth; it will take care of itself." This adage proved true for Bill, because the substance of Ebby's visit clung to him like a tick on a hound dog. A few days later, he visited Calvary Mission to see what all this program was about. However, he was

*We can all be thankful
Ebby chose the dismal
Calvary Mission.*

drunk and caused a bit of disturbance. But on the 11th day of December, he went back to Towns Hospital for treatment and never drank again—Ebby's truth had set him free. Ebby listened to Bill's "confession" (Fifth Step in AA) at Towns Hospital and brought the book, *Varieties of Spiritual Experience*, by William James, which convinced him that his spiritual experience was valid. Bill's enlightenment took place December 14, 1934. Ebby remained in service at the mission till he moved in with Bill and Lois Wilson the next year.



Spirit of Communication

“The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.”

by Duran

(First printed in 2011). Looking back from 11+ years of sobriety, I still feel awe and wonder at the power of the miracles created within A.A. communities. I’ve come to realize that practicing my alcoholism/addiction was nothing more than a desire to remove myself from this world. I wanted to die and only a miracle could have saved my life.

Wow, I didn't know. I didn't know how strongly I felt about it. I didn't even know what it really said. I've been sober six years and I have attended meetings regularly throughout my sobriety, so I've read it and heard it more than once before. But I'm not the kind of person who pays attention to the words. And that's not just in A.A. groups. I tend to feel for the spirit of the communication: I frequently don't know what you just said, and I may not be able to repeat words I've just read, but I do recognize and remember the spirit of the message. I know and can always tell you whether the intent of the message was to protect or to harm, nurture or discourage, include or exclude.

The spirit of Tradition Three is loving and inclusive, as is the core of A.A.'s message. But when I really focused on the words and took in the details of what was being communicated, I was profoundly moved—overwhelmed with the power of the Third Tradition and its ability to protect and carry the message in and of itself.

If you haven't paid attention or never heard the long form of this tradition, the words are: *“Our membership ought to include all who suffer from alcoholism. Hence we may refuse*

none who wish to recover. Nor ought A.A. membership ever depend upon money or conformity. Any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an A.A. group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation.”

Wherever two or more of you are gathered, there I am also. Anytime group members come together with a singular common purpose, the united power of their soul's force manifests a spirit that is the essence of that purpose. In the Third Tradition, the group is alcoholics and the purpose is sobriety. And just like the spirit of Christ, the essential spirit of sobriety carried by sober alcoholics has the ability to set fire to the heart of a newcomer.

*...we learn
to be more human.*

The virtues of grace and charity (shared by sober alcoholics who come together to provide space for healing the suffering hearts of lost and weary practicing alcoholics) wash away distinctions—social class, financial bracket, ethnic background, sexual orientation—tiny details that allow us to pretend that our brother is somehow different enough to be considered “other.”

Hearts flooded with the power of compassion can create miracles that change not only the lives of those receiving the message, but also the lives of those carrying the message. And the most incredible part is that the power of sobriety can't be held

on to, stored away, or selectively doled out to those we deem worthy to receive the gift we prize so highly. It can only be kept alive and experienced again and again by giving it away, freely, to all those who suffer from alcoholism.

One of the reasons A.A. is so very powerful in our world today is because in learning to become sober

*...we become
a healing force...*

alcoholics, and steadfastly overcoming the hurdles involved in carrying the message to other alcoholics, we learn to be more human. We learn to be a part of that greater society that is not just A.A. but all of humanity. We learn how to love others, how to participate in society, how to be a part of something greater than ourselves. And instead of just being worthy of joining the real world again (the world we failed and fell out of when we hit bottom), in healing ourselves we become a healing force for all of humanity. We don't just get to join the world again. We get to make it better by our participation in it.

TP





A.A. Aphorisms

“There is a God and I am not it.”

by Anonymous

I like this topic because it brings me back to right size. I am doing some projects right now that are new to me, and you might think that I would check in with some people who have done this sort of thing before, to find out how they did it, what worked for them, what helpful ideas they might have, and so on. That's not how I operate, though. My first thought is that I know how to do this, and if I ask someone, then they will get all the credit. (I love writing these articles, because I get to see just how completely screwed up and ugly my thinking is — yikes!)

I remember when I started out in my chosen field. I was still drinking at the time, drowning my sorrows at night because I felt like I wasn't good enough, and someone would figure out I was a fraud. I had a minor project to accomplish — a test of my abilities. I was in charge, and I was allowed to handle it however I wanted, but I did have to meet a certain budget and schedule. In my usual egotistic and fearful way, I knew I could handle the thing on my own. There would be such glory when the project was done! I basked in daydreams of the recognition I would receive for my work.

About half way through the project I finally realized I was in over my head completely. What was totally weird was that there were a lot of people around me who would have gladly helped me. I could have asked any of a number of people. To be fair, I did ask some people after a long time of struggling. However, I didn't want to ask the two people I really should have asked. They were the ones who

could have helped the most, but I was scared of them both. I didn't want them to know I was floundering. My ego kept me from asking the questions I needed to ask. I floundered for a long time. I made a ton of unnecessary mistakes. I was miserable the whole time. I could have been happy, joyous and free.

Asking for help is just one example where I need to turn my problems over to God. When I turn the problems over, I admit I don't have all the answers. I connect with others, and through them I get help, advice, support, even comfort. There are very, very few times I have regretted calling someone up to ask a question. I know when someone calls me for help, I am delighted to be of

It brings me back to right size.

service however I can, and I have to trust that others feel the same way.

The idea that I am not God goes beyond asking for help, though. That's just one example of how I can act as if I think I am God: I think I am so perfect that I should never need help, never need others, know everything, have all the answers to all of the problems ever.

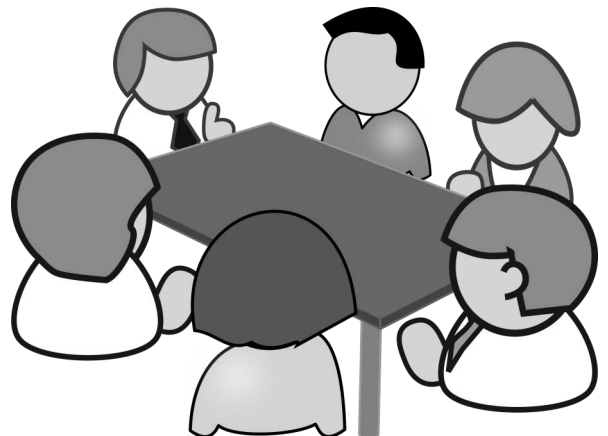
Confusing myself with God means that I think I am

perfect, really, and that I have no need for God. I often get stuck in this quagmire. It's not something I jump into, it's more like a fog that steals over me. Generally, if I let up on my program I start to think this way. For me, it's very important to repeat my prayers each day to understand God's will for me. I have to ask for the willingness to be humble. I have to ask for direction.

My ego kept me from asking questions.

Some days it feels totally weird to pray for direction. I feel as if I am supposed to know what is best for me. But I am not God. I can see only my tiny path in front of me. How am I supposed to see all of the endless possibilities when I have only this tiny moment? I'm not. That's God's job. When I put my trust in God, all of those possibilities — things I never thought I could do or even try — become possible. Faith makes them possible.

TP



Intergroup Meeting Summary—March 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.

Marin Groups		San Francisco Groups		
Blackie's Pasture	On Awakening	Alumni	Cow Hollow Young People	O.A.D.W.
Friday Night Book	Saturday Weekend Warrior	Any Lengths	Creative Alcoholics	Shamrocks and Serenity
Happy, Joyous and Free	Sunday Night Corte Madera	As Bill Sees It Th 6pm	Extreme Makeover: Women's SS	Weekend Update
Men's Two Plus	Thursday Night Speaker	Be Still AA	Friendly Circle	Women's Big Book
Mill Valley	Tuesday Newcomers	Beginners Warmup	Haight Street Blues	Women's Promises
Monday Night Stag Tiburon		Big Book Basics	High Noon F	
			Miracles (Way) Off 24th St.	

This is an unofficial summary of the March 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.

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., March 2, 2016 at 1111 O'Farrell St, SF CA.

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

Officer Reports

Board Chair, Carolyn R, The last Board meeting was focused on the 2016 budget, which will be discussed tonight. Carolyn sent out the dates for the 2016 quarterly Committee Chair meetings.

Treasurer, Joanne H, Contributions were consistent with previous years; Individual contributions were down from last month, but higher than Jan 2015. Expenses were up in January, as expected. Unrestricted cash was up, largely from group contributions. Overall, Gratitude month in 2015 was good and brought in \$20,000,

which was better than budget. No rating is available tonight since we do not yet have a budget.

Central Office Manager, Maury P, We need volunteers; let the groups know. Also spread awareness of the Faithful Fivers.

Intergroup Committee/Activity Reports

Access, Virginia M, Access committee provided a 990 form to show the budget amounts from previous years. This year's proposed amount is \$350 and Virginia would like people to consider that before taking a vote on the budget this evening.

Fellowship, Michael P, Founder's Day date has been set for June 18, 2016. Volunteer commitments will be available.

Orientation, Greg M, If you want to be a buddy/mentor to a new IGR, there is a new sign up sheet. Please sign up if you are interested.

Teleservice, Pete There are 7 plus open volunteer shifts available. Teleservice needs help; get the word out. A daily coordinator for Monday is also needed.

Liaison Reports

SF H&I, Marc F, There are many commitments available; please come to the monthly meeting or see Marc after the meeting. The next orientation is Saturday, 3/19.

Marin General Service, Greg W, Agenda topics are ready. The Pre-Conference Assembly will be April 9-10 at the Marin Civic Center. Any groups that want to be involved can see Greg after the meeting.

SF General Service, Virginia M, Agenda Topics discussion will be on March

12th, from 12:30-3:30pm.

Marin H&I, Karen G, Karen was not able to make her Intergroup report last month due to lack of participation at the Marin H&I meeting. H&I representatives need to attend the H&I meeting.

Old Business

2016 Intergroup Budget Joanne said that in order to present a balanced budget, we budgeted have \$20,000 more in income than was received in 2015, making projected revenue even with (not more than) last year. In order to meet this budget, we need to raise awareness. Matt said that there are 800 groups in the area; if each group added an additional \$20 per year, it would create \$16,000 out of the projected \$20,000. Maury acknowledged that rents and other costs do go up and it affects groups, and how they contribute, differently. The goal here is outreach and education. Joanne reminded us that we can always revisit the budget later, but that it should be passed tonight as we are not supposed to spend anything without a budget in place. There was motion to pass the budget; that was seconded. Chris proposed passing the budget by a simple majority. 43 hands were raised in favor; 2 opposed. A minority opinion was expressed; after it was expressed there was no need to reconsider the vote.

ASL Interpreter Policy Virginia has moved that we adopt a new policy rather than keep the policy from 2010. This was brought up last month; unfortunately we do not have enough time tonight to revisit the details of that discussion, though a slide with a summary of that it was shown. Chris gave a brief history on the policy and how the Board has been working with the

Individual Contributions

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

IN MEMORIAM

Flossie N., Ray M.

ANNIVERSARIES

Michael H.—40 years,

Yvonne D.—29 years, Karen C.—29 years, Sally F.—26 years

Sue L.—12 years

Access committee to try to resolve the Access committees concerns. The concern here is listing ASL meetings as AA meetings.

New Business

Self Support Chris said that the Board has called this topic as New Business to address the trend toward lower contributions. What can we do? Pat suggested that we included flyers when people come to pick up Literature orders. Thomas suggested that we 1) make announcements about the Faithful Fivers, and 2) that meeting secretaries be reminded to announce at meetings. Liz also said that raising awareness is important. Elaine asked that IGRs talk to her about something she says she cannot share at group level tonight. Nancy is not comfortable saying the same message at meetings every week. Lubov said that there is no shortage of generosity in meetings, but that people pay what they can, not what they are encouraged to pay. Fiona said that she is inspired by generous AA members and shared an experience about her grand-sponsor. Chris reminded us that this item on the agenda is meant to discuss new

methods of generating self-support, not general discussion. Maury said that she receives both criticism and positive feedback from AA members. She shared a supportive email and several experiences that remind us to be vigilant about reporting to our group about what services the Central Office offers and that group secretaries should be accountable for reporting information accurately. Tom suggested forming an ad hoc committee to continue this discussion of self-support and bring it back so that we do not have to continue this discussion at each meeting. A motion was made to form an ad hoc committee and seconded. A unanimous vote was taken and approved. Tom will lead the ad hoc committee. Matt asked that the meeting minutes reflect that this ad hoc committee will be focused on: 7th Tradition / Outreach/ Action/ Research.

Meeting adjourned with the Responsibility Statement at 8:30pm

Next Intergroup Meeting: Wed. April 6, 2016, 7pm, 1187 Franklin St. SF CA. Orientation is at 6:15pm, dinner is served at 7pm.

Sober Outside Services Volunteers Needed

Sober Outside Services (S.O.S.) is looking for volunteers to bring meetings to AA members who are unable to attend regularly scheduled meetings due to ongoing health circumstances. The only requirements for S.O.S. service are a year of sobriety and attendance at an orientation.

Orientation 1pm, Sunday, April 17, Castro Country Club, 4058 18th St / Hartford

For more information please call (415) 674-1821 or email sos@aasf.org

Reasonable Accommodations Policy: Person requiring reasonable accommodations, including sign language interpreters, assistive listening devices or print materials in alternate formats should contact Central Office (415) 674-1821 no later than five business days prior to event.

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. sfteleservice@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	Feb. 16	YTD
Contribution Box	\$ 140	\$ 228
Intergroup	\$ 75	\$ 184
Novato Fellowship Group		\$ 656
Fellowship Total	\$ 215	\$ 1,068

Marin Group Contributions	Feb. 16	YTD
AA By The Bay Tue 730pm		\$ 36
Attitude Adjustment 7D 7am	\$ 750	\$ 1,250
Awareness/Acceptance M 1030am		\$ 75
Back to Basics Su 930am	\$ 43	\$ 77
Big Book Study & Meditation M 7p		\$ 24
Closed Women's SS Tu 330pm		\$ 67
Corte Madera Sat Candlelight 8pm		\$ 168
Cover to Cover W 730pm	\$ 150	\$ 150
Crossroads Sun 12pm	\$ 96	\$ 323
Day At A Time 7D 630am	\$ 200	\$ 200
Fireside Fri 8pm Bolinas		\$ 24
Friday Night Book F 830pm		\$ 298
Happy, Joyous & Free 5D 12pm		\$ 145
Last Stop Men's SS W 6pm	\$ 250	\$ 250
Living in the Solution F 6pm		\$ 650
Marin Teleservice	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500
Marin Young People F 830pm	\$ 70	\$ 70
Men's 2 Plus M 7pm	\$ 111	\$ 111
Mill Valley 7D 7am	\$ 300	\$ 300
Mill Valley Disc W 830pm		\$ 179
Monday Blues M 645pm		\$ 157
Monday Night Madness 6pm		\$ 50
Monday Night Stag Tiburon	\$ 500	\$ 500
Novato Spirit Discussion F 2pm	\$ 50	\$ 50
On Awakening 7D 530am		\$ 350
Pathfinders Tu 12pm		\$ 79
Quitting Time M-F 530pm		\$ 697
Refugee Th 12pm		\$ 50
Reveille 7D 7am	\$ 350	\$ 350
Rise N Shine Su 10am		\$ 210
San Geronimo Valley M 8pm		\$ 44
Saturday Women's Speaker 6pm	\$ 209	\$ 209
Serendipity Sa 11am	\$ 650	\$ 650
Sober Sisters W 12pm		\$ 93
Stinson Beach Fellowship Th 8pm		\$ 200
Streetfighters Sa 9am	\$ 100	\$ 100
Sunday Express Su 6pm	\$ 322	\$ 322
Terra Linda Th Men's Stag 8pm	\$ 271	\$ 271
The Barnyard Group Sa 4pm		\$ 62
The Broad Highway Th 730pm		\$ 100
Three Step Group Sa 530pm		\$ 599
Thursday Night Speaker 830pm		\$ 447
Tiburon Women's Candlelight W 8pm	\$ 45	\$ 45

Marin Group Contributions	Feb. 16	YTD
We, Us and Ours M 650pm	\$ 32	\$ 102
What's It All About F 12pm	\$ 15	\$ 15
Why It Works Sun 6pm		\$ 289
Women's Big Book Tu 1030am		\$ 561
Working Dogs W 12pm		\$ 689
Young People's BYOB Sat 7pm		\$ 82
Young People's Chopsticks Sa 1030pm		\$ 88
Marin Total	\$ 6,014	\$ 13,356

San Francisco Group Contributions	Feb. 16	YTD
10am Daily Reflections Th		\$ 23
11th Step Power Power Power		\$ 113
6am Men's Literature Meeting M	\$ 135	\$ 135
7am Speaker Discussion Th 7am		\$ 60
A New Start F 830pm	\$ 297	\$ 297
AA As You Like It Tu 530pm	\$ 46	\$ 46
Agnostics & Freethinkers Su 630pm		\$ 100
Any Lengths Sat 930am	\$ 600	\$ 1,080
Artists & Writers F 630pm		\$ 535
As Bill Sees It Th 6pm		\$ 160
As Bill Sees It Th 830pm		\$ 167
Back to Basics Th 730pm		\$ 125
Be Still AA Su 12pm		\$ 500
Beginners Warm Up W 6pm		\$ 287
Bernal New Day 7D	\$ 339	\$ 503
Best Damn BB Disc Th 8pm		\$ 108
Big Book Boot Camp 5D	\$ 100	\$ 100
Blue Book Special Su 11am	\$ 82	\$ 120
Brothers in Arms M 8pm		\$ 135
Buena Vista Breakfast Su 12pm	\$ 150	\$ 150
BYOL W 1pm		\$ 29
Castro Mon Big Book 830pm	\$ 173	\$ 173
Coit's Quitters		\$ 135
Cow Hollow Men's Group W 8pm		\$ 356
Each Day a New Beginning M 7am		\$ 131
Each Day a New Beginning Tu 7am		\$ 317
Each Day a New Beginning W 7am		\$ 363
Easy Does It Tu 6pm		\$ 100
Eureka Step Tu 6pm		\$ 313
Excelsior "Scent" Free For All Sa 5pm		\$ 60
Experience, Strength & Hope Sa 9am		\$ 157
Federal Speaker Su 12pm	\$ 339	\$ 339
Firefighters & Friends Tu 10am		\$ 107
Fireside Chat Group Th 8pm		\$ 107
Fourth Dimension Solution Th 515pm		\$ 26
Friday Morning 12 Steppers 7am		\$ 75
Friendly Circle Beginners Su 715p		\$ 72
Girls Night Out W 815pm	\$ 120	\$ 120
Haight Street Blues Tu 615pm		\$ 152

San Francisco Group Contributions	Feb. 16	YTD
Haight Street Explorers Th 630pm		\$ 177
High Noon Sunday 1215p	\$ 167	\$ 250
High Sobriety M 8pm		\$ 92
High Steppers W 7pm		\$ 60
Like A Prayer Su 4pm	\$ 180	\$ 180
Men's Gentle Touch M 7pm	\$ 177	\$ 177
Mid-Morning Support Su 1030am		\$ 250
Miracle (Way) Off 24th St W 730pm	\$ 216	\$ 216
Mission Fellowship		\$ 254
Monday Beginners M 8pm		\$ 218
Monday Men's Stag M 8pm		\$ 82
Newcomers Tu 8pm		\$ 174
No Reservations M 12pm		\$ 88
O.A.D.W. Mon 7pm		\$ 42
One, Two, Three, Go! W 1pm		\$ 20
Pocket Aces Sun 7pm		\$ 291
Potrero Hill 12 x 12 M 630pm		\$ 44
Rebound W 830pm		\$ 55
Rigorous Honesty Th 1205pm		\$ 157
Saturday Afternoon Meditation 5pm	\$ 202	\$ 202
Saturday Easy Does It Sa 12pm		\$ 485
Saturday Matinee Sa 2pm	\$ 30	\$ 30
Serenity House	\$ 150	\$ 300
Serenity Seekers M 730pm	\$ 209	\$ 209
Sober Saturday Sa 830am		\$ 208
Sometimes Slowly Sa 11am	\$ 105	\$ 1,029
Steppin' Up Tu 630pm	\$ 139	\$ 139
Steps To The Solution W 715pm		\$ 377
Sun Morning Gay Men's Stag 930am	\$ 439	\$ 439
Sunday Night 3rd Step Group 5pm		\$ 360
Sunday Night Castro SD 730pm		\$ 271
Sunday Rap Su 8pm		\$ 224
Sundown W 7pm		\$ 614
Sunset 11'ers Tu	\$ 29	\$ 29
Sunset 9'ers M		\$ 63
Sunset Speaker Step Su 730pm	\$ 315	\$ 315
Ten Years After Su 6pm		\$ 256
The Drive Thru W 1215pm	\$ 561	\$ 561
The Leaky Cauldron Su 930am		\$ 127
The Parent Trap 2 W 4pm		\$ 60
They Stopped In Time M 8pm	\$ 121	\$ 121
Thursday Lunch With Bill 12p	\$ 21	\$ 21
Thursday Thumpers Th 7pm	\$ 150	\$ 150
Too Early Sa 8am	\$ 153	\$ 153
Tuesday Big Book Study Tu 6pm		\$ 164
Valencia Smokefree F 6pm		\$ 40
Walk of Shame W 830pm		\$ 125
We Care Tu 12pm		\$ 100

continued on p. 19



Fired Again

by Anonymous

I had to laugh when I read this story in *Experience, Strength & Hope*, about a man who never did things normally: I had just spent the day binge-watching *Downton Abbey*. Yes, I could understand. I could relate. I was the same way. I had to be the last to leave the party—unless I had already passed out in some corner. I had to be the most dramatic; I always wanted to stick out.

I also like this line, “I would always promise myself that the next time I would stop short of getting plastered. Somehow things seldom worked out that way though.” If you’re like me, an alcoholic, you read that line and perhaps chuckle or shake your head with recognition.

*IT SEEMS to me
that I never did
do things normally.*

The endless treadmill of promises made and broken is familiar. When the consequences of my broken promises finally caught up with me, I went to A.A.

In my case, it wasn’t so much the impact of drinking on my job (although I am sure my job was affected) or on other people (though I am sure it affected others), as it was on my own well-being. I kept saying I would do things to take care of myself—go running, see a therapist, get “a grip on myself” for once. I was really going to get my life together, make some changes. Really! But right

then I was just going to have a glass of wine. And then I would wake up the next morning with an empty wine bottle by my bed and a wine-soaked stomach and I would wonder how I had done it again.

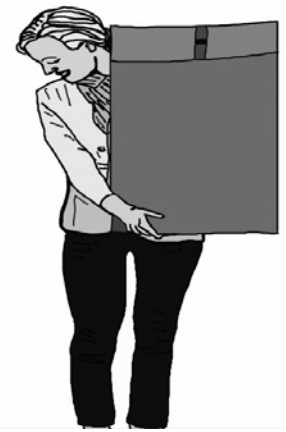
Finally, when I went in to A.A., this changed. I worked the steps with a sponsor. I turned over my life to a Higher Power. As I made amends, I started to see real progress, to feel so much better about my life. I started

The endless treadmill of promises.

to take responsibility for my actions (or inactions). I started to solve problems that had been plaguing me for years and to feel happy no matter what was going on. I started to be able to handle uncomfortable emotions, like fear, without having to escape.

This wasn’t easy. Making my first amends was probably one of the hardest things I have ever done. I shook with fear. My palms sweated. I wanted to make any excuse to get out of there, and there were several moments where I thought I might just leave without going through with it. I did go through with it, though, and I went through with others. Gradually I started to feel differently about myself, that I could change the course of my life by following this program.

In other words, I started to see the promises, (pages 83–84 Big Book), come true. That they are called promises is no mistake! These are not the promises we make casually to



a loved one (who promptly rolls their eyes, knowing we won’t come through), these are the promises of what will happen if, and only if, we work the program.

Sure, we may be able to get sober, but if we’re going to be truly happy, we need to stay on the ball by working Steps 10–12 for, well, ever. We may reach a point where we need, or want, to go back through the steps again, starting at number 1.

There are days when I get really frustrated with my “normal” life. Even when things are going smoothly I can get unnerved. I think it has to do with my propensity for the “abnormal.” There is something in me; I’m guessing its Alcoholism, that doesn’t want to be normal. It wants to be special, to stick out, to have others look. It’s the same character in me that compares others’ outsides to my own insides. When this character shows up, it’s time for me to double up on meetings, increase my service commitments, and call others in the program. It’s time for me to pray for the humility, the gift, of normalcy.



Profit and Loss Statement: January 2016

	Jan 2016	Jan 2015	\$ Change	% Change		Jan 2016	Jan 2015	\$ Change	% Change
Ordinary Income/Expense					Paper Purchased	\$ -	\$ 169	\$ (169)	-100.0%
Income					Payroll Fees	\$ 12	\$ 11	\$ 1	9.2%
Gratitude Month	\$ 2,416	\$ 2,827	\$ (412)	-14.56%	Phone Book Listings	\$ 93	\$ 93	\$ -	0.0%
Group Contributions	\$ 22,466	\$ 18,679	\$ 3,786	20.27%	Postage	\$ -	\$ 49	\$ (49)	-100.0%
Individual Contributions	\$ 7,235	\$ 1,514	\$ 5,721	377.87%	Professional Fees	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0.0%
Newsletter Subscript.	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0.0%	Rent - Office	\$ 4,458	\$ 4,287	\$ 171	4.0%
Sales - Bookstore	\$ 8,115	\$ 9,208	\$ (1,092)	-11.87%	Rent - Other	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0.0%
Total Income	\$ 40,231	\$ 32,228	\$ 8,003	24.83%	Repair & Maintenance	\$ 240	\$ 240	\$ -	0.0%
Cost of Goods Sold					Security System	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0.0%
Cost of Books Sold	\$ 5,861	\$ 6,048	\$ (187)	-3.09%	Shipping	\$ 221	\$ 265	\$ (44)	-16.59%
COGS - Shipping	\$ 31	\$ 18	\$ 13	70.89%	Telephone	\$ 173	\$ 230	\$ (56)	-24.56%
Credit Card Processing	\$ 453	\$ 465	\$ (12)	-2.52%	Total Expense	\$ 22,584	\$ 20,629	\$ 1,955	9.48%
Inventory Adjustments	\$ (41)	\$ -	\$ (41)	-100.0%	Net Ordinary Income	\$ 11,344	\$ 5,069	\$ 6,275	123.81%
Total COGS	\$ 6,303	\$ 6,530	\$ (227)	-3.48%	Other Income/Expense				
Gross Profit	\$ 33,928	\$ 25,698	\$ 8,230	32.03%	Other Income				
Expense					Bag Fees (SF ordinance)	\$ 3	\$ 3	\$ (0)	-3.23%
Committees	\$ 30	\$ 148	\$ (118)	-79.76%	Customer Shipping	\$ 471	\$ 204	\$ 266	130.35%
Reconciliation Discrepancies	\$ 64	\$ -	\$ 64	100.0%	Interest Income	\$ 47	\$ 66	\$ (18)	-27.87%
Bad Checks	\$ 12	\$ -	\$ 12	100.0%	Miscellaneous Income	\$ 30	\$ 90	\$ (60)	-66.67%
Employee Expenses	\$ 15,084	\$ 12,332	\$ 2,752	22.31%	Total Other Income	\$ 551	\$ 363	\$ 188	51.8%
Equipment Lease	\$ 408	\$ 816	\$ (408)	-50.0%	Other Expense				
Filing/Fees	\$ -	\$ 20	\$ (20)	-100.0%	Depreciation Expense	\$ 223	\$ 223	\$ -	0.0%
Insurance	\$ 1,650	\$ 1,626	\$ 24	1.48%	Total Other Expense	\$ 223	\$ 223	\$ -	0.0%
Intergroup Literature	\$ -	\$ 115	\$ (115)	-100.0%	Net Other Income	\$ 328	\$ 140	\$ 188	134.23%
Internet Expense	\$ 129	\$ 133	\$ (4)	-3.09%	Net Income	\$ 11,672	\$ 5,209	\$ 6,464	124.09%
Office Supplies	\$ 9	\$ 96	\$ (86)	-90.23%					

Treasurer's Report

Group contributions were consistent with prior years in that January is generally a month with higher contributions due to trusted servant rotation; we expect this in July as well. Individual contributions were down from Dec. but ahead of Jan 2015 which may be in response to information about the deficit.

While expenses were up in January, they were nothing we had not anticipated. Unrestricted cash was up largely due to group contributions.

Overall, Gratitude Month was good for 2015 bringing in over \$20,000 which was over budget.

Because we have not approved the budg-

et, I am unable to give the group a rating for January.

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.

(Continued on page 19)

January 2016 Balance Sheet

	Jan 31, 16	Dec 31, 15	\$ Change	Jan 31, 15	\$ Change
ASSETS					
Current Assets					
Checking/Savings					
Restricted Cash	\$ 132,551	\$ 162,504	\$ (29,953)	\$ 192,010	\$ (59,459)
Unrestricted Cash	\$ 52,530	\$ 21,733	\$ 30,797	\$ 41,054	\$ 11,476
Total Checking/Savings	\$ 185,081	\$ 184,237	\$ 844	\$ 233,064	\$ (47,983)
Accounts Receivable					
Accounts Receivable	\$ 89	\$ 23	\$ 66	\$ 81	\$ 8
Total Accounts Receivable	\$ 89	\$ 23	\$ 66	\$ 81	\$ 8
Other Current Assets					
Inventory - Bookstore	\$ 19,655	\$ 22,389	\$ (2,734)	\$ 24,192	\$ (4,537)
Prepaid Literature Orders	\$ 2,770	\$ 411	\$ 2,359	\$ 775	\$ 1,995
Undeposited Funds	\$ 445	\$ 3,192	\$ (2,747)	\$ 15	\$ 430
Total Other Current Assets	\$ 22,870	\$ 25,992	\$ (3,122)	\$ 24,982	\$ (2,112)
Total Current Assets	\$ 208,040	\$ 210,252	\$ (2,212)	\$ 258,127	\$ (50,087)
Fixed Assets					
Comp. and Off. Equipment (Net)	\$ 1,229	\$ 1,269	\$ (40)	\$ 1,907	\$ (678)
Leasehold Improvements (Net)	\$ 15,739	\$ 15,904	\$ (165)	\$ 17,719	\$ (1,980)
Total Fixed Assets	\$ 16,968	\$ 17,173	\$ (205)	\$ 19,626	\$ (2,658)
Other Assets					
Deposits	\$ 6,698	\$ 6,698	\$ -	\$ 6,698	\$ -
Total Other Assets	\$ 6,698	\$ 6,698	\$ -	\$ 6,698	\$ -
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 231,706	\$ 234,123	\$ (2,417)	\$ 284,451	\$ (52,745)
LIABILITIES & EQUITY					
Liabilities					
Current Liabilities					
Other Current Liabilities					
Payroll Liabilities	\$ 19,140	\$ 3,576	\$ 15,564	\$ 3,751	\$ 15,389
Sales Tax Payable	\$ 670	\$ 591	\$ 79	\$ 722	\$ (52)
Total Other Current Liabilities	\$ 19,810	\$ 4,167	\$ 15,643	\$ 4,473	\$ 15,337
Total Current Liabilities	\$ 19,810	\$ 4,167	\$ 15,643	\$ 4,473	\$ 15,337
Long Term Liabilities					
Deferred Compensation	\$ -	\$ 30,000	\$ (30,000)	\$ 60,167	\$ (60,167)
Total Long Term Liabilities	\$ -	\$ 30,000	\$ (30,000)	\$ 60,167	\$ (60,167)
Total Liabilities	\$ 19,810	\$ 34,167	\$ (14,357)	\$ 64,640	\$ (44,830)
Equity					
Net Assets	\$ 199,954	\$ 214,601	\$ (14,647)	\$ 214,601	\$ (14,647)
Net Income	\$ 11,940	\$ (14,647)	\$ 26,587	\$ 5,209	\$ 6,731
Total Equity	\$ 211,894	\$ 199,954	\$ 11,940	\$ 219,810	\$ (7,916)
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	\$ 231,704	\$ 234,121	\$ (2,417)	\$ 284,450	\$ (52,746)

(Treasurer's Report, continued from page 18)

POOR: We are not meeting our budget and our unrestricted cash balances fell below one month of operating expenses.

The last time were "poor" was last month, Dec 2015.



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:

(Continued from p. 5)

Pene P.	Steve A.	Tripp Mc
Penelope C.	Steve G.	
Pete F.	Steve F.	Your Name Here?!
Rachel G.	Susan C.	
Rich G.		Or here?!
Robert C.	Suzanne C.	
Robert W.	Tara S.	Or here?!
Ron H.	Teddy W.	
Saida S.	Theresa M.	Or here?!
Scott C.	Thomas H.	
Sean C.	Thomas M.	Or here?!
Sean M.	Tim Mc.	
Sheila H.	Timothy F.	Or here?!
Stephen N.	Tom S.	
Stephen S.	Tony R.	...

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!

San Francisco Group Contributions	Feb. 16	YTD
Wednesday Noon SS 12p		\$ 225
Weekend Update Su 615pm		\$ 175
West Portal W 8pm	\$ 189	\$ 189
Wharf Rats Th 815pm		\$ 52
What It's Like Now M 6pm		\$ 195
Wholly Together 11th Step Med W 7p		\$ 98
Women's 10 Years Plus Th 615pm		\$ 697
Women's Came to Believe Sa 10am		\$ 119
Women's Kitchen Table Tu 630pm	\$ 253	\$ 253
Women's Promises F 7pm		\$ 444
Work In Progress Sa 7pm	\$ 600	\$ 600
YAHOO Step Sa 1130am		\$ 138
San Francisco Total	\$ 6,785	\$ 21,056

YTD	\$ 13,014	\$ 35,480
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