

# the Point

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

from Chapter Five of the book, Alcoholics Anonymous

2018  
5  
May

A publication of the Intercounty Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous

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## Developing Integrity

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*Cover illustration by Marcus W.*

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.

# May 2018

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
		1	2 <b>FIRST WED</b> <b>Intergroup Meeting</b> St. Andrew Presbyterian Church 101 Donohue St., Marin City <b>Orientation</b> 6:15pm <b>Meeting</b> 7pm
6	7 <b>FIRST MON</b> <b>Technology Committee</b> Central Office, 1821 Sacramento St., San Francisco 6:00pm	8 <b>SECOND TUE</b> <b>Marin H&amp;I</b> Marin Alano Club, 1360 Lincoln Ave., San Rafael <b>Orientation</b> 6:15pm <b>Business Meeting</b> 7:00pm <b>SF General Service</b> 1111 O'Farrell St., San Francisco <b>New GSR Orientation / Concept Study</b> 6:30pm <b>Business Meeting</b> 7:30pm	9 <b>SECOND WED</b> <b>Marin Bridging the Gap</b> Marin Alano Club, 1360 Lincoln Ave., San Rafael <b>Orientation</b> 6:00pm <b>Business Meeting</b> 6:30pm
13 <b>SECOND SUN</b> <b>Golden Gate Young People in AA</b> Marin Alano Club, 1360 Lincoln Ave., San Rafael 12:00pm <i>(even months at Central Office; odd months at Marin Alano Club)</i>	14 <b>SECOND MON</b> <b>SF Public Information / Cooperation with the Professional Community (PI/CPC)</b> Central Office, 1821 Sacramento St., San Francisco <b>Speaker Workshop</b> 6:00pm <b>Business Meeting</b> 7:00pm	15	16
20 <b>THIRD SUN</b> <b>Archives Committee Meeting</b> Central Office, 1821 Sacramento St., San Francisco 12:00pm <i>Business meeting followed by work day</i> <b>Marin Teleservice Spaghetti Feed</b> Good Shepherd Lutheran, 1180 Lynwood, Novato <b>Dinner</b> 5:00pm; <b>Speaker Meeting</b> 6:00pm www.marintelesevice.com	21 <b>THIRD MON</b> <b>Marin General Service</b> 9 Ross Valley Rd., San Rafael <b>Orientation / Concept Study</b> 6:45pm <b>Business Meeting</b> 7:30pm <b>SF Teleservice</b> Central Office, 1821 Sacramento St., San Francisco <b>Orientation</b> 6pm	22 <b>FOURTH TUE</b> <b>Marin Teleservice</b> Marin Alano Club, 1360 Lincoln Ave., San Rafael <b>Orientation</b> 7:00pm <b>Business Meeting</b> 7:30pm	23
27	28	29	30

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
3	4	5
10	11	12 <u>SECOND SAT</u> <b>The Point Committee Meeting</b> Central Office, 1821 Sacramento St. San Francisco 12:30pm
17	18	19 <u>THIRD SAT</u> <b>SF H&amp;I</b> 2900 24th St., San Francisco <b>Orientation</b> 11:00am <b>Business Mtg</b> 12:00pm
24 <u>FOURTH THU</u> <b>Marin Public Information / Cooperation with the Professional Community (PI/CPC)</b> Marin Alano Club, 1360 Lincoln Ave., San Rafael 8:00pm	25	26 <u>FOURTH SAT</u> <b>The 12 Traditions Today</b> Central Office, 1821 Sacramento St. San Francisco 11:00am <b>CNCA Meeting</b> 320 N. McDowell Blvd., Petaluma 10:00am
31	<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>	



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“Just how and when we tell the truth—or keep silent—can often reveal the difference between genuine integrity and none at all.”  
~ Bill W., *Grapevine*, August 1961



## Meeting Changes

### Meeting Changes:

Mon	6:00pm	Parkside	<b>Sunrise Sunset Women's Step</b> , Pinehurst Lodge, 2685 30th Ave./Wawona (Was on Thu)
Wed	7:30pm	San Rafael	<b>Wholly Together 11th Step Meditation</b> , Church of the Redeemer, 123 Knight Dr./Rollingwood Dr. (Was at St. Paul's Episcopal @ 7:00pm)
Thu	6:00am	Inner Sunset	<b>6am Living Sober</b> , Gratitude Center, 1320 7th Ave./Irving (Was 11 at 6; no longer 11th Step meeting)

### No Longer Meeting:

Mon	7:00pm	Western Addition	<b>Sunlight of the Spirit</b> , Glad Tidings Church, 1280 Webster St./Eddy St.
Thu	7:00pm	Inner Richmond	<b>Pen and Paper</b> , 4301 Geary Blvd./7th Ave.

**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 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!*



Jane F. — Sometimes Slowly group  
Sobriety date: 12/17/2002

## MONTHLY TRADITIONS WORKSHOP

4<sup>th</sup> Saturday of each month  
San Francisco Central Office  
11:00AM - 12:30PM

Tradition 5 - May 26, 2018  
Tradition 6 - June 24, 2018  
Tradition 7 - July 28, 2018 ... and each following month

This we owe to AA's future; To place our common welfare first; To keep our Fellowship united. For on AA unity depend our lives, and the lives of those to come.

**Marin Teleservice**  
Our primary purpose: **Help** the still suffering alcoholic



*Spaghetti Feed*

**Sunday, May 20<sup>th</sup> 2018**

**Dinner - 5:00 PM**  
**Speaker Meeting - 6:00 PM**

**Good Shepherd Lutheran Church**  
**1180 Lynwood Drive**  
**Novato, CA**

All You Can Eat \$10.00 (Suggested Donation)

Dinner Includes:  
*Spaghetti with Meat Sauce*  
*Homemade Meatballs*  
*Salad*  
*Vegetarian Pasta*  
*Garlic Bread*  
*Dessert Table*

**Come join our Teleservice Team**  
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**is the Best Service you can do**

**Sign up for a service position at**  
**[www.marintelesevice.com](http://www.marintelesevice.com)**



From the Editor



## Preserving Unity

A.A. unity cannot automatically preserve itself. Like personal recovery, we shall always have to work to maintain it. Here, too, we surely need honesty, humility, openmindedness, unselfishness, and, above all—vigilance.

~Bill W., *A.A. Tradition: How It Developed* (New York, 1955)

Psychologist Carl Jung thought craving alcohol was really “the spiritual thirst of our being for wholeness.” Our Step Five article on Page 13 discusses wholeness and integrity. Alcoholics can get as serious about these ideas as Benjamin Franklin did with his classic snake cartoon (urging America’s original 13 colonies to “Join or Die”). But we’re not a glum lot. Claire A. gives lighter examples of how denial can fragment the self and what to do about it. Taking responsibility for one’s actions—even with small things like folding a tent properly before returning it—promotes stability and personal integrity.

Working Step Five makes questionable behavior more obvious and easier to avoid. Moving from microcosm to

macrocosm, Ken J.’s Concept Five piece shows how the fellowship’s democratic spirit respects minority voices. Our right of appeal ensures thorough debate, protects individual freedom and unifies our groups (Page 6).

Later in the issue, John W. remembers how he found his sponsor by listening to a salesman. Rick R. describes smashing the delusion he could drink like normal people. Yogi in Disneyland addresses insomnia with meditation and Gregory F. recounts how our fellowship addresses other medications.

On Page 11, Carla H. sets healthy boundaries, makes sponsor calls and connects with nature as part of a new routine for self-care. Kim G. finds her higher power in the Tao of Lao-Tzu and Bob S. sees truth as the path to the sunlight of the spirit. Each member finds a way to integrate spiritual principles into their life and achieve wholeness. To paraphrase Bill: When alcoholics apply the Twelve Steps of our recovery program to their personal lives, their disintegration stops and their unification begins.

### 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 statement is a summary; for the full editorial policy, please go to [www.aasf.org](http://www.aasf.org). To contact *The Point* committee directly, write to [thepoint@aasf.org](mailto:thepoint@aasf.org).



## Faithful FIVERS!

Faithful Fivers are A.A. members Who graciously pledge to contribute at least \$5 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:

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(Continued on Page 19)

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# Concept Five

## *Individual freedom is of enormous importance*

by Ken J.

“Throughout our world service structure, a traditional ‘Right of Appeal’ ought to prevail, thus assuring us that minority opinion will be heard and that petitions for the redress of personal grievances will be carefully considered.”

~*Twelve Concepts for World Service*

More than a century ago, a young French nobleman named Alexis de Tocqueville came to America to look at the new republic. De Tocqueville was a worshipful admirer of democracy. He speculated that the greatest danger to democracy would always be the tyranny of apathetic, self-seeking, uninformed or angry majorities. Only a truly dedicated citizenry, quite willing to protect and conserve minority rights and opinions, could guarantee the existence of a free and democratic society. In this light it is easy to understand the rights of appeal and petition which are an integral principle of our service structure.

### ***The right of appeal protects the minority voice***

In essence, the right of appeal is the protector of the minority voice. Through this traditional principle, it is recognized that minorities frequently can be right. Even when they are partly or wholly in error, they still perform a valuable service when, by asserting their right of appeal, they compel a thorough debate on important issues. The well-heard minority is therefore our chief protection against an uninformed, misinformed, hasty or angry majority.

Additionally, the right of appeal also permits any person in the A.A. service structure, whether paid or unpaid, to

petition for the redress of a personal grievance by carrying the complaint directly to the General Service Board (if desired). This should be possible to do without prejudice or fear of reprisal. Though seldom used, the existence of such a right will always tend to restrain those in authority from unjust uses of power. Both the rights of appeal and petition aim at the total problem of protecting and making the best possible use of minority feeling and opinion. In Alcoholics Anonymous, individual freedom is of enormous importance. Ours is a large charter of minority privileges and liberties.



In our world services literature under Tradition Two, the group conscience is the final authority; it will always remain so, respecting all the larger issues that confront us. However, the A.A. groups have recognized that for world service purposes the “group conscience of A.A.” as a totality has certain limitations. It cannot act directly

in many service matters, because it cannot be sufficiently informed about the problems in hand. It is also true that during a time of great disturbance, the group conscience is not always the best possible guide because such an upset may prevent it from functioning efficiently or wisely.

### ***Leaders are trusted servants***

This dilemma is answered in the second part of Tradition Two which describes A.A. leaders as trusted servants. These servants must always be ready to do for the groups what the groups cannot or should not do for themselves. This requires them to use their own information and judgment, sometimes to the point of disagreeing with the uninformed or biased group opinion. In our world service operations, A.A. often trusts a small but truly qualified minority—the hundred-odd members of the General Service Conference—to act as A.A.’s group conscience in most of our service affairs.

Alcoholics Anonymous’ concern for the freedom and protection of individual members and the whole membership’s willingness to trust able and conscientious servants to function in their capacities illustrates the spirit of democracy in our Fellowship and in our world structure. They insure that we will always survive, that minorities shall be respected and protected, that no tyranny of either the majority or the minority shall succeed, and that we shall exist in a spirit of unity and cooperation.

Summarized from *Twelve Concepts for World Service*.

## Alcoholism in the Simplest Terms

### *To them it's just a social lubricant*

by Rick R.

Many of us in Alcoholics Anonymous lost our families, our jobs, our friends and even our health before we were desperate enough to deal with our problem. Why, asks the normal person, would anybody put the bottle before family, health, career and just about everything else in their lives? Well, the alcoholics who have recovered from this malady, and been restored to a somewhat normal life, often understand how the practicing alcoholic could do such a thing in the face of everything they have to lose—mainly because they have all been through the same or similar ordeals to one degree or another. They also know that, until this person has reached his/her bottom, it's unlikely that anything will get in the way of their drinking. The delusion (faulty perception) is still there. To them the thought of living without alcohol is terrifying. Try to look at it this way:

### *The thought of living without alcohol is terrifying*

On an emotional positivity scale of 1—10 the normal person awakens each morning at an emotional level of 8. The alcoholic, on the other hand, awakens at a level of 2. Neither knows the emotional level of the other. The normal one doesn't understand why the alcoholic is so silent/depressed/disgruntled/unhappy—everything seems fine to them. What's the problem?

The alcoholic, on the other hand (being at a 2) can't understand why the

normal drinker is so upbeat—after all, the world is a cold and hostile place to them. There are politics, wars, the economy, sickness, responsibilities, financial problems, not much to look forward to. What's the use? They feel they are looking up from the bottom of a deep pit.

### *Looking up from the bottom of a deep pit*

When the alcoholic in that pit takes a drink, they go from a 2 to an 8½. Halfway through their second drink, they feel normal and everything is right with the world, no problem here! On the other hand, when normal drinkers take a drink, they go from an 8 to 8½, it's nice but they wouldn't give up their life for it. The next day, they are back to an 8. This is normal, and to them, alcohol is simply a social lubricant.



The emotional level of an alcoholic will always return to 2 and they continue to get progressively worse until they lose more than they were willing to lose. That is when they begin to realize that they will probably never be able to drink successfully. If they are ready to ask for help, they have a chance to salvage their lives.

The answers for me were in the A.A. program where I had a profound *change of perception*, or a spiritual awakening if you like. The delusion that I could drink like a normal person was smashed. I knew that if I neglected the evidence that I've experienced before and after I came to A.A., I risked doing irreparable damage to myself and others—worse than that, I risked wasting the only life I get to live.

### *The alcoholic...will get progressively worse until they lose more than they were willing to lose*

Why? Alcohol, a chemical that is closer to gasoline or lighter fluid than to the romantic way I used to perceive it—what a tragic thing that would be when the solution was laid at my feet—all I had to do was surrender.

As the result of following this path, I am at an 8 almost every day of my life. A bad day for me is 7. If I stop

growing spiritually, I start to go back down the scale again and as I approach a 5 or 4, a drink might start looking good to me and it might be only a matter of time before I'd be back at the old game again. Knowing this, I am vigilant about my priorities and I stay in the safe (spiritual) zone. That is so much better than the alternative.



# Finding My Higher Power

## The Way of Life, *the Tao of Lao-Tzu* and sobriety

by Kim G.

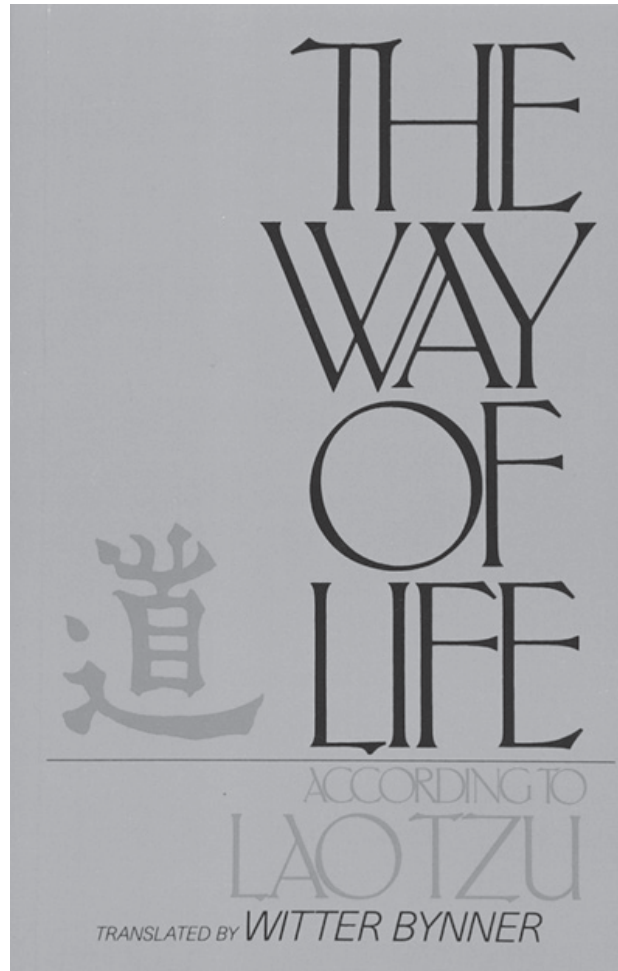
When I got sober six years ago, I became aware of my possibility for spiritual growth—God knows I needed it! More than one fellow traveler wondered if my anger wouldn't short-circuit my new-found sobriety—I was volatile, full of judgments and condemnations—but I kept coming back until the promises started to make sense and even become realities. I learned gratitude and the importance of service.

In my early days, I turned to a slim volume of poems my mother had given me some 40 years ago: *The Way of Life* by Lao-Tzu, in a wondrous translation by the poet Witter Bynner. In these pages I found much to inspire, even more to ponder, and, even more importantly, a confirmation of the universal truths of the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. I thirsted for truth, and here was water; I groped for direction, and here was a Promised Land whose challenges were sound, whose sureties were certain even in an unsure world.

***Yea, verily, this too  
shall pass, hothead!***

As a musician I know too well that we do not live by bread alone, and it was precisely the artful, earthy concision of Bynner's translation that made this work of art an important part of my recovery from alcoholism and drug abuse. Poem #15 evokes a long-lost age whose wisdom has only survived in seemingly disparate images:

"Alert as a winter-farer on an icy stream" powerfully expresses the caution early recovery demands, when old



haunts and troublesome camaraderie need to be put aside. The traveler's attention to the here-and-now as he treads lightly on "thin ice"—is this not an apt image for the still-delicate days of early sobriety? "Wary as a man in ambush" speaks for itself... "Considerate as a welcome guest" evokes the gratitude we express as newbies benefitting from the love and tolerance we come to recognize as the watchwords of the A.A. fellowship. "Selfless as melting ice" is another way of framing the natural passage to

humility, one that comes of itself, and is not to be forced or pretended. Yet another, "green as an uncut tree" could very well denote the situation of the newcomer as yet unable to sponsor others until her own issues are in order—or the oxygen mask is firmly in place. The poet ends the litany with one final image, "roiled as a torrent." Why roiled as a torrent? The answer is "because when a man is in turmoil how shall he find peace except by staying patient till the stream clears?"

***I thirsted for  
truth,  
and here was  
water***

I had good reason to turn this over in my mind: why did it speak so forcefully to me? For years and years I had sought to

make sense of my turmoil, to read it, so to speak, and find its justification. The A.A. program coupled with some simple breathing and meditative exercises gave me—many times—indisputable proof of the transience and unreliability of my resentments and clouded reasoning. Yea, verily, this too shall pass, hothead! I came to cherish the sobriety that made meditation and relief possible, that made a little more space in the world, that let me lay my burden down and for that, I am thankful.





# Meditation and Insomnia

## *Using the Eleventh Step to fall asleep and awaken*

by Yogi in Disneyland

**Q:** *I've been dealing with some insomnia/sleep anxiety recently and wanted to try meditation and was wondering if you had any suggestions.*

*I've been doing some guided meditations that are on Spotify, and going to yoga, but I figured I'd ask you since you've got experience.*

**A:** That is awesome! First rule in meditation is follow your intuition. If you are drawn to guided meditations on Spotify then I would certainly honor that. The voice of God, or your higher self, is heard through your thoughts and feelings. You'll know it's good because you like it and it's working. For me, any and all practices tend to work for a while and then I am drawn through a new door to another practice or variation of an old one.

Meditation as I practice it is about "waking up" spiritually and practically, not falling asleep. That said, relaxation is a natural result of meditation practice.

When it comes to insomnia, the first suggestion is to monitor your caffeine intake. Are there specific issues that are troubling you? Some unresolved "business" that needs to be addressed? Amends to be made? Perhaps someone you need to forgive (it could be you). A secret you need to tell someone, or something that needs to be communicated? The good news is all of these things should come to light when you get quiet and begin to witness your interior world. I suggest keeping a journal of your insights as they arise from your practice.

**Practice** (I do this first thing in the morning, before coffee):

- 10-30 minutes of reading of spiritual literature, followed by
- 20 minutes of sitting silent meditation. Get a nice tall cushion and a mat for your knees, feet and ankles.
- Any amount of time writing your insights, fears, resentments, gratitude list, unfinished business that needs to be addressed today (or I suppose tomorrow if done in the evening).

**Practice Technique** (I like to do one or a combination of the following):

- Breath awareness: follow breath in, follow breath out; count breaths to 10 and start over. If you can get to 10 without losing count you are an advanced meditator.
- Mala beads: count one bead for each breath until you get through 108 beads (it takes 20-30 minutes).
- Mantra/prayer: choose a phrase or a group of phrases and say them with or between breaths. Gratitude, surrender, forgiveness, love or set prayers. These are all great to employ.

That pretty much covers it for me.

Remember: there is no "right or wrong" way to meditate. Listen to your intuition.

**Spoiler Alert: Love wins.**

*Know that when thou learnest to lose thyself*

*Thou wilt reach the Beloved.*

*There is no other secret to be revealed, And more than this is not known to me.*

~Ansari of Herat

*Seek ye first the Kingdom of Heaven, and all else shall be added unto you.*  
~The Gospel According to St. Matthew

*Open your heart.*

~Panda Express fortune cookie

***Relaxation is a natural result of meditation practice***

**Insomnia**

1. Try savasana (the corpse pose) AKA "lying on your back meditation." Place your arms to your sides. Engage breath awareness (follow breath in, follow breath out). Count breaths backwards from 100.
2. Get up and write in a journal or watch a movie. Losing a night of sleep won't kill you. Just laying in bed is not a solution. Once I feel I can't sleep, I just get up and do something else. This is a great opportunity to catch up on amazing movies and TV shows.
3. Avoid napping during the day.
4. Don't go to bed until you plan to go to sleep.
5. Read a book for a few minutes in bed until you start to doze off. That works for me.

The main thing for me is to clean my slate interpersonally on a daily basis, cut down on caffeine, have a daily meditation practice, and love the shit out of God.

Sleep well, my sweet prince. There is a bright shining day waiting for you on the morrow.



# He Was Only “Selling” Sobriety

*Always looking for the angle*

by John W.

My initiation had been tough. The “invitations” the Court had extended to me resulted only in my getting signatures on court cards. Nothing else had sunk in. Another decade of alcoholic behavior brought me to my bottom, but following the suggestions being made just wasn’t for me. I was “different.” So the hard days that followed were ugly.

It made things no easier when I heard this one guy who was always so upbeat talking about how his life had changed since coming to A.A. some 15 years before. He said he owed it all to AA. He caught my attention when he described how suspicious he had been at his first meeting. Being a salesman, he said he was always looking for the angle. He figured the A.A.s who were being so nice to him—extending hands in greeting, offering business cards, sharing coffee after meetings—were looking for something too. He was surprised to find they wanted nothing from him. They only wanted to help him get sober and hoped their efforts would help them stay sober, too.

## *They wanted nothing from him*

After that share, I listened to that guy more closely. He was a salesman, but he was only “selling” sobriety. The more I heard him, the more I realized how funny he was. He was always wearing a smile; I was in the throes of it. My marriage was over, business on the rocks, three young kids wanted nothing to do with dad—you know the drill.

I was attending meetings daily but had no sponsor and wasn’t working the steps. At wit’s end one morning, I asked old-timer Jim D. (who spoke few words but said an awful lot) what he would do in my shoes. He suggested getting a sponsor and working the steps, so I asked him how one went about getting a sponsor. He said just ask the Big Guy for help, and when the time is right, that I would know who to ask.



So I did that, I asked my Big Guy for guidance. The next day I was looking for an apartment to rent. As I drove to my next viewing, there was the salesman. He was helping one of his two

daughters learn to ride a bike with no training wheels. Talk about deciding I “want what you have.” I did right then and there and here was my guy.

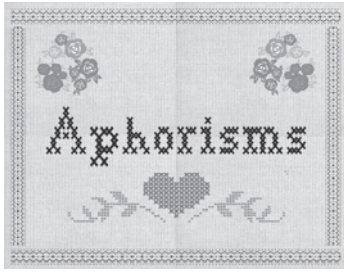
## *He said “Ask the Big Guy for help.”*

When I asked him a few days later if he would be my sponsor, he agreed, but said it would be “temporary” until he could see if I had what it would take

to stick with the program, through good times and bad. I replied I would go to any lengths, but asked what that meant. He said whatever it took to stay sober, no matter the tragedy or success that would come my way, nothing more, but surely nothing less.

I bought into his pitch with “complete abandon.” Over a dozen years have passed and he is still

only “selling” sobriety, his, to help me keep mine. I now say: “My sponsor sold me one idea, and that was sobriety. At the time, I couldn’t have bought anything else.”



# Self-Care Comes First

*Be in shape to be of service*

by Carla H.

In the immortal words of my sponsor, “Self-care comes first. You have to be in shape to be of service to someone else. Your only job is to be of service.” When I asked if that was my only job in A.A., she answered, “And in life.”

## *I wanted to leave a meeting that I loved*

She also said, “Cleaning the house, doing laundry, washing the dishes—those things are not self-care. Those things easily turn into obsessive behaviors. Self-care is making doctor’s appointments and keeping them; getting regular exercise; getting enough rest; eating right; getting a massage; and paying your bills on time.”

One example of self-care is having healthy boundaries. I once wanted to leave a meeting that I loved because a few straight, white men were hugging me too long, too tightly, and saying things outside our primary purpose. My sponsor showed me how to put up my hands with my palms facing out, in the “stop” position, and say, “No hugs. I’m working on boundaries.” I practiced that immediately

with women and men in the very next meeting I went to.

People honored my request, even if they let me know they weren’t crazy about it. And what other people think of me is none of my business, according to my sponsor again. After practicing this new behavior I felt safe in mixed meetings in a whole new way.

Today my self-care includes:

- Exercise regularly, which I’ve learned to love.
- Eating more vegetables.
- Reserving a car in advance instead of the day of.
- Listening to my body—what is it asking for?
- Getting somewhere early, which means getting enough sleep the night before so I can actually wake up refreshed instead of hitting the snooze button nine times.
- Making my bed. I rarely feel like doing it, but the reward is that it actually looks better to me.

- Showering and putting real clothes on to be ready for the day, instead of staying in pajamas as long as possible.
- Walking to a community garden, sitting awhile and enjoying the songs of the birds, the smell of the earth and the hum of the bees in the flowers, as well as seeing vegetables in their natural state.
- Saying no. “No.” is a complete sentence, according to my sponsor.

I leave a daily voicemail for my sponsor that includes telling her I’m sober today. I also list one thing I’m grateful for; one way I took care of myself; whether I prayed and meditated today; a 10th Step consisting of how much of the day I spent in faith, in service and in honesty (or if I was in fear, self-seeking and telling myself stories). I end by saying what my next A.A. meeting will be.

I’ve been making those check-in calls to her every night, missing only a handful in seven years. They remind me to stay in the moment—because today is all I have to get through. I can find one thing to be grateful for on even the worst days, so it’s a

reminder to have an attitude of gratitude at least once a day.

Sobriety is self-care. As is the occasional slab of dark chocolate.







# Now that Marijuana is Legal in California...

## *Other medications and pot*

by Gregory F.

Drug addiction affects alcoholics now more than ever. I am one of those who found sobriety from both alcohol and addiction solely through A.A. in 1985. It was common to hear the phrase “Drugs (cocaine/crank/speed) sped up my hitting bottom” then and still sometimes today.

Alcohol was always my true love. I tried many ways to get high; always with alcohol, rarely without.

### *It is our duty to welcome folks into A.A.*

In researching A.A. pamphlets for this piece, I found two: “Problems Other than Alcohol” (1958) and “The A.A. Member—Medications & Other Drugs” (1984, revised 2011). The ’58 pamphlet seemed extreme regarding singleness of purpose. I thought the more recent guide reflected our need to keep up with the ever-changing shifts in our society: “Some A.A. members must take prescribed medications... “misuse can threaten sobriety. “Active participation in the A.A. program is a major safeguard against alcoholic relapse.” The word “alcoholic” is specifically used. This sums up having any opinion about prescribed drugs.

The introduction goes on to suggest, be “honest with your doctor and yourself... if you skip doses, take more medication (than prescribed) or if you have any side effects that make you feel worse.”

A.A. members describe “sobriety-threatening episodes” which can “be

related to the misuse of medication or other drugs.”

Our only litmus test is, “A desire to stop drinking.” I’ve yet to meet someone who comes to A.A. and keeps drinking because they feel they’re only a drug addict. Without exception, every person I’ve met stops drinking. They inevitably “catch Alcoholism.” or at least realize “When I drank, I broke out in drugs.”

It is our duty to welcome folks into A.A. We need to be kind, loving, supportive and tolerant. We offer acceptance and membership to all who self-identify and join our ranks.



I was taught to “listen for the similarities not the differences.” This allowed me to identify with any addict who shared at meetings. Each time they stated their addiction, I heard alcohol in my mind.

The 1958 pamphlet references special interest groups within A.A. and outside of A.A. Addicts were given options. If some folks have a problem with pain

meds or pot being discussed in A.A. meetings, then I challenge them to start their own special interest groups, not the other way around.

### *When I drank, I broke out in drugs*

Because A.A. has been inclusive (since 1958) addicts get the opportunity to recover and save their lives.

This archaic pamphlet also states we “can’t give A.A. membership to non-alcoholic narcotics addicts.” Not true! We self-identify period.

Much has happened with medication science since I got sober: Prozac’s been mass marketed and F.D.A. approved in 1987. I’ve seen all classes of anti-depressants come into existence. I’ve seen meds for Dyslexia, A.D.D., A.D.H.D.,

P.T.S.D., etc. All these conditions now have various forms of prescribed treatment, most include pills.

I suspect A.A. was less tolerant 30 or more years ago because the folks in A.A. in the ’80s, were most likely only two or three sponsorship generations removed from our original 100 members.

*Continued on Page 19*





# Step Five and Integrity

## *Causes and conditions*

by Claire A.

What is integrity? One definition is “the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles.” A second definition is “the state of being whole and undivided.”

When I came into A.A. I was confused. I thought I was honest, doing the right thing, generally a good person. Looking back, however, I realize that what’s true is that I was really, really good at self-justification. That person I yelled at? He needed to be taught a lesson. That other driver deserved to be flipped the bird; did you see how she was driving? Little white lies don’t hurt anyone, do they? If my dad didn’t have such stupid opinions, I wouldn’t have to scoff at him that way.

### *My sponsor kept coming back to my part*

Writing an honest 4th step helped me to see what was going on with me. My behavior wasn’t just damaging to others—it was eating away at me. On some level, I really disliked how I was behaving, and the justification only dug the hole deeper. I couldn’t understand why I felt bad until I looked squarely at the causes and conditions.

Step Four showed me that while other people can certainly be annoying, it’s not my job to judge them or change them. I’m not the police of the annoying people. (I’m sure I’m among the people who are annoying, for Pete’s sake.) My job is to accept reality, whatever that looks like, and do what I can to help the suffering alcoholic. When I try to police people by “showing them” I only make matters worse,



at least form myself, if not for those around me.

When I did my first 5th Step, my sponsor kept coming back to my part. As much as I wanted to point out what others had done, she continued to gently tell me that I couldn’t change other people. Did I want to be right or be happy? As much as I hated that expression, I did see what she meant. If I’m going to be comfortably sober, I need to recognize that I can only change myself.

### *Be right or be happy?*

A big piece of changing myself is taking responsibility all the time for my part. I think that every time I use some justification for my behavior, I

lose some integrity, become less whole. And, conversely, when I am truly honest, I feel less fragmented.

A.A. has given me sobriety. Now, can I be rigorously honest? Can I admit mistakes I’ve made, every mistake, no matter how much I don’t want to, and right those mistakes humbly? I am bound to continue making mistakes—I am human even though my alcoholism wants me to think otherwise. Will I be able to admit them every time?

The other day I made a trivial mistake: not following the directions for folding up a tent. When the owner of the tent wondered how it had gotten all messed up, I so did not want to say it was my fault. The shame of it! A.A. has taught me to be honest, though. I did ’fess up, and guess what? No one really cared except me. I helped to straighten the thing out and all was fine. Most importantly, my integrity was intact. I was honest, and even though it was a small thing, I felt good about it.

The more I am rigorously honest, the better I feel. When I take responsibility for my actions, I am more whole. Steps Four and Five, and a nightly Step Ten, help me to get there.

# Intergroup Meeting Summary: April 2018

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.

<b>Marin Groups</b>	Mill Valley LGBTQ All Are Welcome	Be Still	Embarcadero Group	Pocket Aces
Cover to Cover	Thursday Night Chip	Beginners Warmup	Experience, Strength & Hope	Reality Farm
Friday Night Book	Tuesday Beginners	Blue Book Special	Girls Gone Mild	Saturday Beginners
Last Stop Men's Step Study	Weekend Warriors	Cocktail Hour	High Noon Sat	Serenity Seekers
Men's Two Plus	<b>San Francisco Groups</b>	Cow Hollow Men's	Join the Tribe	Sun Night Castro Discussion
Mill Valley 7am	A is for Alcohol	Cow Hollow Young People	Kool Fresh Kids Club	Sundown
Monday Blues	Any Lengths	Creative Alcoholics	Lunch with Bill	Sunset Speaker Step
Monday Night Stag Tiburon	Anything is Possible	Design for Living	Monday Beginners	Too Early
Rise N Shine	As Bill Sees It Th 6pm	Each Day a New Beginning	NYX	Valencia Smokefree

This is an unofficial summary of the April 2018 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" at [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 Wednesday, April 4, 2018, at First Unitarian Universalist Center, 1187 Franklin Street in San Francisco. The meeting was started with a call to order and the Serenity Prayer. Basket for dinner was passed. The March 2018 minutes and the April 2018 agenda were approved.

## Standing Reports

**Board Chair, Liz M.** Board Elections are coming up. There are statements of interest forms in the meeting packets. The Quarterly Committee

Chair meeting will be on April 21 at 9:00am.

**Treasurer, Alix F.** The current rating for February 2018 is "Excellent." Group contributions and individual contributions were under budget for February, but mainly due to January contributions being significantly over budget.

**Central Office Manager, Maury P.** Reviewed categories of calls that Central Office receives. Most are looking for a meeting (31.2%). Call rate is pretty steady around 250 calls per month.

## Intergroup Committee/Activity Reports

**The Point, John B.** We are still looking for a permanent chair to lead the committee. We meet the 2nd Saturday of each month at Central Office at 12:30pm. Also, we're looking for someone with graphic design skills to lay out the newsletter on a monthly basis. We are proposing a search function for archives and information. We still need a distribution person for Marin.

**Technology, James O.** Currently getting a better process in place for the Intergroup Facebook group and creating a "profile" that will be the proxy for friending and joining the group.

**Fellowship, Michael P.** Flyers are now available for Smith-Wilson Founders' Day Picnic on Saturday, June 9. Tickets in advance are \$13 and at door will be \$15. Groups can volunteer together at the picnic. There will be a Family Feud game at the picnic, so committee members are in the process of collecting audience responses.

**The Buzz, Anne Marie C.** Shared a success story about the service round-up. San Francisco Teleservice saw a 3x increase in the number of people who showed up because of the call out in *The Buzz*.

**Orientation, Trevor J.** Encouraged IGRs to have an alternate and have that person go through Intergroup Orientation.

**SF Teleservice, Layne Z.** Committee still has an Information Chair and two Daily Coordinator positions open. Monthly orientations are the 3rd Monday at 6:00pm at Central Office. There are lots of open shifts and there is a one-year sobriety requirement.

## Liaison Reports

**Dist. 6 San Francisco, Steve R.** The annual General Service Conference is coming up and has interesting topics, including changes to the Big Book. There are about 90 items being considered.

# Individual Contributions

to Central Office were made through April 15, 2018

honoring the following members:

## IN MEMORIAM

Bob C. — Hilldwellers, Marin PI/CPC

Joe Y. — Tuesday Beginners

## ANNIVERSARIES

Susan C. — 10 years

Charles M. — 36 years

### **Dist. 10 Marin, PI/CPC, Cathy P.**

Committee member made contact with Marin Free Library Services in Corte Madera who are interested in making Big Books/A.A. literature available. Marin PI/CPC's annual budget is \$400 via Marin General Service. The A.A. YouTube channel will be discussed at the pre-Conference Assembly. Marin PI/CPC meets on the 4th Thursday at 8:00pm at the San Rafael Alano Club.

**Marin Teleservice, Adam** The annual Spaghetti Feed will be Sunday, May 20. Flyers available. The committee did a group inventory and will discuss details at the next meeting. There are phone shifts open at [marintelesevice.com](http://marintelesevice.com).

**San Francisco H&I, Robert B.** There are about 70 H&I positions open, so we need more reps. Orientation is the 3rd Saturday at Mission Fellowship, 2900 24th Street at 11am. Additional Orientations at Central Office will be on select Thursday nights (April 26, July 26, October 25). There are some group members who all go through H&I orientation and together take meetings to places in need. We want other groups to discuss this idea and do the same.

### **Technology Committee**

**Help Chat, Fiona B.** The purpose is to open the doors of A.A. to alcoholics who are still suffering by reducing barriers of communication and enables someone to chat immediately with an A.A. member. Help Chat includes a group of volunteers with at least one year of sobriety.

How it works: an automated message pops up in a chat window. If someone sends a message, a volunteer will respond within moments. The aim is to provide instantaneous and live chat service for anyone new to A.A. or an existing member.

Are we fulfilling our primary purpose?

- While still in the test phase, the majority of messages are newcomers looking for help or people searching for a meeting
- Looking to add three to five more volunteers to get oriented
- Hoping Central Office phone volunteers will also get orientated
- Continue to collect/share feedback while Help Chat is in the test phase
- Able to route messages to the correct place at the correct time
- Currently no "set" shifts; the volunteers are in communication with each other about availability
- Volunteers are able to respond via mobile or desktop to allow for quick responses
- Trying to find a work-around for the automated blue Help Chat message box that continues to pop up after a user has "X'd" out of it.

*Continued on Page 17*

## 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

Liz M. [chair@aasf.org](mailto:chair@aasf.org)

#### VICE CHAIR

John R. [vicechair@aasf.org](mailto:vicechair@aasf.org)

#### TREASURER

Alix F. [treasurer@aasf.org](mailto:treasurer@aasf.org)

#### RECORDING SECRETARY

Carolyn R. [secretary@aasf.org](mailto:secretary@aasf.org)

### COMMITTEE CHAIRS:

#### ARCHIVES COMMITTEE

Kim S. [archives@aasf.org](mailto:archives@aasf.org)

#### FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE

Michael P. [fellowship@aasf.org](mailto:fellowship@aasf.org)

#### ORIENTATION COMMITTEE

Greg M. [orientation@aasf.org](mailto:orientation@aasf.org)

#### SF PI/CPC COMMITTEE

[open] [picpc@aasf.org](mailto:picpc@aasf.org)

#### SF TELESERVICE COMMITTEE

Layne Z. [sfteleservice@aasf.org](mailto:sfteleservice@aasf.org)

#### SUNSHINE CLUB COMMITTEE

Carole P. [sunshine@aasf.org](mailto:sunshine@aasf.org)

#### TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

James O. [tech@aasf.org](mailto:tech@aasf.org)

#### THE BUZZ COMMITTEE

Anne Marie C. [thebuzz@aasf.org](mailto:thebuzz@aasf.org)

#### THE POINT COMMITTEE

John B. [thepoint@aasf.org](mailto:thepoint@aasf.org)

# aa group contributions

Fellowship Contributions	Mar. 18	YTD	Marin Contributions	Mar. 18	YTD	San Francisco Contributions	Mar. 18	YTD
Contribution Box	\$52.00	\$247.56	What's It All About F 12pm	\$243.00	\$243.00	Lincoln Park Sat 830pm		\$33.87
GGYPAA		\$12.00	Wholly Together 11th Step Med. W 7p		\$94.00	Living Sober with HIV W 6pm	\$190.80	\$190.80
Sobriety By The Bay		\$2,000.00	Women's 12 x 12 Fri 1030am	\$495.18	\$495.18	Meditation, Prayer & Share Tue 730pm	\$37.00	\$86.00
<b>Fellowship Total</b>	<b>\$52.00</b>	<b>\$2,259.56</b>	Women's Big Book Tu 1030am		\$571.58	Meeting Place Noon F 12pm		\$128.00
			Women's Meeting Su 430pm	\$150.00	\$150.00	Mid-Morning Support Su 1030am		\$156.00
			Working Dogs W 12pm		\$1,120.33	Monday Beginners M 8pm	\$520.00	\$520.00
<b>Marin Contributions</b>	<b>Mar. 18</b>	<b>YTD</b>	<b>Marin Total</b>	<b>\$6,069.90</b>	<b>\$20,706.84</b>	Monday Men's Stag (SF) M 8pm		\$72.97
12 & 12 Study Sa 815am		\$80.00				Monday Monday M 1215pm		\$102.40
7AM Group 7D 7am	\$197.64	\$197.64	<b>San Francisco Contributions</b>	<b>Mar. 18</b>	<b>YTD</b>	Monday Night Big Book Study M 8pm		\$79.57
A Vision for You (Fairfax) Su 730pm	\$143.27	\$335.59	11th Step Power Power Power		\$68.23	No Reservations M 12pm		\$166.88
Attitude Adjustment 7D 7am	\$564.67	\$2,007.58	6am Dry Dock Tu		\$240.00	NYX Sat 7pm		\$322.63
Awakenings Sat 830a	\$139.54	\$139.54	A is for Alcohol Tu 6pm	\$30.00	\$180.00	Ocean of Sobriety W 830p	\$32.00	\$232.00
Awareness/Acceptance M 1030am	\$220.00	\$220.00	A New Start F 830pm		\$717.86	One, Two, Three, Go! W 1pm	\$11.00	\$11.00
Back to Basics Su 930am	\$85.00	\$203.00	AA As You Like It Tu 530pm		\$88.80	Raising the Bottom W 8pm		\$56.80
Big Book Study & Meditation M 7p		\$23.31	Afro American Beginners Sat 8pm		\$253.20	Reality Farm Th 830pm		\$817.20
Caledonia Sun 8pm		\$1,000.00	Agnostics & Freethinkers Su 630pm	\$200.00	\$462.00	Rebound W 830pm	\$136.80	\$265.92
Closed Women's Step Study Tu 330pm		\$56.84	Artists & Writers F 630pm		\$880.79	Road to Freedom Mon 12pm		\$72.00
Conscious Contact Sa 6pm		\$280.00	As Bill Sees It Tu 1210pm		\$57.46	Safe and Sound Family Support		\$77.00
Corte Madera Sat Candlelight 8pm		\$398.08	Be Still AA Su 12pm		\$705.82	Saturday Beginners Sat 6pm		\$482.71
Crossroads Sun 12pm		\$125.23	Bernal Big Book Sat 5pm		\$461.71	Saturday Easy Does It Sa 12pm		\$306.45
Fireside Fri 8pm Bolinas		\$41.49	Bernal New Day 7D	\$420.00	\$696.00	Saturday Night Regroup Sa 730pm		\$180.00
Friday Night Book F 830pm		\$270.89	Big Book Basics F 8pm		\$86.11	Serenity House	\$150.00	\$450.00
Gratitude Tu 8pm		\$250.00	Big Book Beginners F 105pm		\$100.00	Serenity Now Tue 830p		\$177.77
Intimate Feelings Sa 10am		\$37.79	Big Book Study Su 1130am		\$174.00	Sinbar Su 8pm	\$127.08	\$127.08
Keep It Simple Sister Thu 7pm		\$427.50	Blue Book Special Su 11am		\$74.48	Sisters Circle Su 6pm	\$204.11	\$204.11
Larkspur Haven Su 12p		\$352.00	Came to Believe Su 8am		\$33.90	Sober Saturday Sa 830am		\$96.00
Living Sober Ladies Thu 10am	\$287.30	\$287.30	Came to Park Sat 7pm	\$394.00	\$394.00	Sobriety & Miracles Group Sa 5pm		\$131.40
Los Ranchitos W 830pm	\$87.00	\$87.00	Castro Disc (Show Of Shows) Th 730p		\$31.77	Sun Morn. Gay Men's Stag 930am		\$867.64
Marin Teleservice	\$1,750.00	\$1,750.00	Castro Monday Big Book M 830pm	\$125.80	\$125.80	Sunday Night 3rd Step Group 5pm		\$377.28
Mill Valley 11th Step Mtg Tu 730pm		\$646.00	Cocanuts Su 9am	\$205.00	\$205.00	Sun Night Castro Speak/Disc 730pm		\$423.60
Mill Valley 7D 7am		\$600.00	Compass Group Sun 10am		\$312.00	Sunrise Sunset Women's Step Th 6pm		\$135.22
Mill Valley Discussion W 830pm		\$185.00	Cow Hollow Men's Group W 8pm		\$1,189.96	Sunset 11'ers F		\$78.75
Monday Miracles M 630pm		\$130.00	Design For Living BB Th 730am		\$115.50	Sunset 11'ers Su		\$120.00
Monday Night Stag Tiburon		\$500.00	Design For Living BB Tu/Th 730am		\$130.32	Sunset 11'ers Th		\$34.26
Monday Night Women's M 8pm		\$251.31	Design for Living Sat 8am		\$344.65	Sunset 11'ers Tu		\$114.00
Monday Nooners M 12pm		\$443.61	Dignitaries Sympathy W 815pm	\$161.00	\$161.00	Sunset Speaker Step Su 730pm		\$72.87
Morning After Sa 10am		\$500.00	Each Day a New Beginning F 7am		\$684.84	Ten Years After Su 6pm	\$1,060.04	\$1,060.04
Noon Discussion Thu 12pm		\$22.00	Each Day a New Beginning M 7am		\$97.12	The Drive Thru W 1215pm		\$667.25
Noon Hope		\$77.50	Each Day A New Beginning Su 8am		\$224.07	They Don't Know Who We Are Sat 7pm		\$18.76
Noon Reveille Su 12pm		\$16.00	Each Day a New Beginning Th 7am		\$362.01	Too Early Sa 8am	\$871.71	\$871.71
North Marin Speaker Sun 12pm	\$179.00	\$179.00	Each Day a New Beginning Tu 7am		\$382.17	Twelve Steps to Happiness F 730pm		\$62.00
Novato Spirit Discussion F 2pm		\$165.00	Each Day a New Beginning W 7am		\$218.70	Valencia Smokefree F 6pm	\$235.02	\$802.27
On Awakening 7D 530am	\$1,200.00	\$1,200.00	Early Joyous & Free Th 7am		\$60.00	Wake Up On 3rd St Group		\$152.25
Quitting Time M-F 530pm		\$900.72	Early Start F 6pm		\$1,133.92	Walk of Shame W 830pm	\$114.31	\$114.31
Serendipity Sa 11am		\$80.00	Eureka Valley Topic M 6pm	\$907.16	\$907.16	We Care Tu 12pm		\$72.00
Sober Sisters W 12pm		\$96.00	Excelsior "Scent" Free For All Sa 5pm	\$60.00	\$120.00	Wednesday Sunrise Smokefree 7am	\$55.00	\$55.00
Steps to Freedom M 730pm		\$250.00	Experience, Strength & Hope Sat 9am		\$439.00	Weekend Worker Sat 7am		\$168.00
Stinson Beach Fellowship Th 8pm		\$255.50	Extreme Makeover M 730pm		\$75.96	West Portal W 8pm		\$454.78
Sunday Express Su 6pm		\$191.00	Federal Speaker Su 12pm	\$146.27	\$213.84	Wharf Rats Th 815pm	\$100.00	\$290.08
Sunday Friendship Su 6pm		\$205.00	Firefighters & Friends Tu 10am		\$160.24	Women's 10 Years Plus Th 615pm		\$431.40
The Barnyard Group Sa 4pm		\$115.73	Fireside Chat Group Sa 9pm		\$138.00	Women's Came to Believe Sa 10am		\$109.70
There is a Solution Tu 6pm		\$50.00	Friday All Groups F 830pm		\$144.00	Women's Kitchen Table Tu 630pm		\$48.60
Three Step Group Sa 530pm		\$396.00	Friday Smokeless F 8pm		\$260.08	Women's There is a Solution W 6pm	\$205.41	\$205.41
Thursday Night Speaker 830pm		\$300.00	Friendly Circle Beginners Su 715p		\$363.10	Women's Promises F 7pm		\$378.60
Tiburon Women's Candlelight W 8pm	\$48.80	\$48.80	Gold Mine Group M 8pm		\$344.88	Work In Progress Sa 7pm	\$600.00	\$600.00
Tuesday Beginners' Meeting	\$279.50	\$582.95	Haight Street Explorers Th 630pm		\$172.00	YAHOO Step Sa 1130am		\$328.37
Tuesday Chip Meeting Tu 830pm		\$400.00	Huntington Square W 630pm	\$195.28	\$195.28	<b>San Francisco Total</b>	<b>\$7,494.79</b>	<b>\$30,121.44</b>
We, Us and Ours M 650pm		\$108.32	Join the Tribe Tu 7pm		\$354.00			
Wednesday Night Candlelight W 8pm		\$135.00	Like A Prayer Su 4pm		\$120.00	<b>YTD</b>	<b>\$13,616.69</b>	<b>\$53,087.84</b>
Wed Night Speak/Discuss 7pm		\$431.53						





# Fifth Step Revelations

## *Truth as a path to the sunlight*

by Bob S.

In Step Five, my sponsor focused the light of truth onto the unrealized driving forces of *selfishness, dishonesty, resentment* and *fear*. Step Four had provided tools to “face and be rid of” these grosser handicaps . . . but still, countless other destructive little demons, lurked in some dark dank space deep inside. They freely frolicked in this invisible environment, happily protected from the sunlight of the Spirit. It was as though they were protected under a very opaque umbrella, weaved with the fabric of the grosser handicaps of *selfishness, dishonesty, resentment* and *fear*.

### *The sunlight of the Spirit was about to shine on those little fiends*

My sponsor informed me that Step Five was to include a detailed revelation of these grosser defects of character and shortcomings. Those little demons and devils of conceit, jealousy, carelessness, intolerance, ill temper, and all the rest of it were



about to be exposed—not only to my sponsor, but to GOD! Although my sponsor had not the power to close that umbrella, the Big Book tells me that God could and would if he were sought. (Those little fiends must have been trembling down there.) The sunlight of the Spirit was about to shine on those little fiends—they cannot survive in the sunlight of God’s Truth, because *an alcoholic cannot drink on the truth*.

The Fifth Step promises (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, p. 75) tell us that we now begin to have a spiritual experience. Well, the realization that God is soon to remove the very things that blocked me from seeing and acting on the truth-in-drink indeed speaks to a radical inner transformation. I believe the main goal of this vital step is to allow us (me) to realize exactly what dominant inner forces have blocking the truth-in-drink; only then will I know exactly what imperfections to ask God to remove in Steps Six and Seven.

It was very important that I acted before my mind decided to remember only what it wanted to remember. I believe that the Big Book timetable is very important here. We are told to do Step Four “at once,” Step Five “at first opportunity,” review for a short period and then (not later), do Step Six. Next, engage Step Seven “when ready.” Steps Five, Six and Seven are often referred to as the “same-day steps.”

I am very happy that my sponsor, Carl, helped me close that umbrella via the Big Book directions. I haven’t had a drink of booze since!

*Continued from Page 15*

### **New Business**

James O. was approved to complete the rest of existing open term.

**San Francisco Meeting Schedule:** The number of schedule booklets sold have decreased by 50% since 2012. There were 35 meeting changes since our last print in June 2017. A prototype booklet would be significantly cheaper versus the existing schedule (no staples for copies going to

H&I). Maury clarified that we are voting on moving to this prototype format so we can print in-house and more frequently to accommodate ongoing meeting changes. She said we could possibly change the format to accommodate the small font size but not sure what the cost implications might be. The group voted to move forward on an interim basis.

### **Old Business**

**Dog Policy:** clarified that this is just for Intergroup meetings and Intergroup-

sponsored events. Group pushed this to discuss next month.

**Meeting Designations:** Group pushed this to discuss next month.

### **Adjourn with Responsibility Statement**

#### **Next Intergroup Meeting:**

Wednesday, May 2, 2018, 7:00pm, at St. Andrew Presbyterian Church, 101 Donahue Street in Marin City. Orientation is at 6:15pm; dinner is served at 6:30pm.

# Revenue and Expense Statement: February 2018

	TOTAL					TOTAL			
	Feb 2018	Budget	YTD	Budget		Feb 2018	Budget	YTD	Budget
<b>Revenue</b>									
Contributions from Groups	\$9,366	\$25,232	\$15,647	\$40,879	Postage	\$0	\$48	\$50	\$98
Contributions from Individuals	\$3,472	\$4,414	\$2,445	\$6,859	Rent - Office	\$4,592	\$4,615	\$4,615	\$9,230
Gratitude Month	\$499	\$3,529	\$603	\$4,132	Rent - Other	\$100	\$335	\$70	\$405
Intergroup Event Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	Filing/Fees	\$188	\$26	\$0	\$26
Other Revenue	\$85	\$29	\$0	\$29	Insurance	\$0	\$1,005	\$0	\$1,005
					Internet Expense	\$144	\$148	\$148	\$296
Sales - Bookstore	\$7,768	\$8,977	\$7,624	\$16,601	IT Services	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Cost of Bookstore Sales	-\$5,877	-\$7,163	-\$6,254	-\$13,417	IT Hardware	\$52	\$0	\$0	\$0
Gross Margin - Bookstore	<u>\$1,892</u>	<u>\$1,814</u>	<u>\$1,370</u>	<u>\$3,184</u>	IT Software	\$466	\$0	\$209	\$209
					Office Supplies	\$278	\$5	\$176	\$181
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<u>\$15,314</u>	<u>\$35,018</u>	<u>\$20,065</u>	<u>\$55,083</u>	Paper Purchased	\$0	\$0	\$68	\$68
					Printing	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Expense</b>					Equipment Lease	\$407	\$440	\$440	\$880
Employee Expenses	\$13,925	\$13,328	\$12,554	\$25,882	Repair & Maintenance	\$364	\$206	\$139	\$345
					Security System	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Committees</b>					Payroll Expenses	\$4	\$10	\$10	\$20
PI/CPC	\$0	\$165	\$165	\$330	Telephone	\$178	\$226	\$146	\$372
Access Committee	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	Travel	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Sunshine Club	\$0	\$17	\$17	\$34	Training	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Archives Committee	\$0	\$298	\$298	\$596	Bad Checks	-\$12	\$0	\$0	\$0
Committees - Other	\$0	\$4	\$4	\$8	<b>Total Expense</b>	<u>\$21,073</u>	<u>\$21,050</u>	<u>\$19,992</u>	<u>\$39,985</u>
The Point Committee	\$69	\$174	\$174	\$0	<b>Net Operating Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	<u>-\$5,759</u>	<u>\$13,968</u>	<u>\$73</u>	<u>\$15,098</u>
<b>Total Committees</b>	<u>\$69</u>	<u>\$658</u>	<u>\$658</u>	<u>\$968</u>	Interest Income	\$78	\$47	\$41	\$88
					Miscellaneous Income	\$0	\$35	\$35	\$0
Intergroup Sponsored Events	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	Depreciation/Amortization Expense	-\$348	-\$340	-\$339	-\$679
Contribution CC Processing Fees	\$318	\$0	\$709	\$0	<b>Net Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	<u><b>-\$6,029</b></u>	<u><b>\$13,710</b></u>	<u><b>-\$190</b></u>	<u><b>\$14,507</b></u>
Professional Fees	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0					

## Treasurer's Report: February 2018

For February 2018, Total Revenue was \$15,314, under budget by \$19,704. This was mainly due to January contributions being significantly over budget and, as such, frontloading our year with a surplus. Total Operating Expense for February was \$21,073, over budget by \$24. The result is a Net Operating Deficit of \$6,029.

Group Contributions for February were \$9,366, under budget by \$15,866. Individual Contributions were \$3,472, under budget by \$941.

Total Unrestricted Cash for February 2018 was \$98,521, a decrease of \$8,423 from January 2017. Unrestricted Cash is over 4 months of operating expenses.

The rating for February 2018 is "Excellent."

**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 \$22K/month, so we'd have over \$44K in unrestricted cash balances for the month. The Intergroup rating has been "excellent" since December 2016.

**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.

**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.

**POOR:** We are not meeting our budget and our unrestricted cash balances fell below one month of operating expenses. The last time we were "poor" was in September 2016.



# Balance Sheet: February 2018

	28-Feb-18	31-Jan-18	\$ Change	31-Jan-17	\$ Change
<b>ASSETS</b>					
Current Assets					
Cash					
Unrestricted Cash	\$98,521	\$106,944	(\$8,423)	\$78,880	\$19,641
Restricted Cash	\$125,232	\$125,232	\$0	\$125,232	\$0
<b>Total Cash</b>	<b>\$223,753</b>	<b>\$232,176</b>	<b>(\$8,423)</b>	<b>\$204,112</b>	<b>\$19,641</b>
Accounts Receivable	\$420	\$451	(\$31)	\$17	\$403
Inventory - Bookstore	\$18,848	\$21,962	(\$3,114)	\$24,171	(\$5,323)
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>\$243,021</b>	<b>\$254,589</b>	<b>(\$11,568)</b>	<b>\$228,300</b>	<b>\$14,721</b>
Fixed Assets	\$10,166	\$10,514	(\$348)	\$14,342	(\$4,176)
Deposits	\$6,698	\$6,698	\$0	\$6,698	\$0
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$259,885</b>	<b>\$271,801</b>	<b>(\$11,916)</b>	<b>\$249,340</b>	<b>\$10,545</b>
<b>LIABILITIES &amp; NET ASSETS</b>					
Liabilities					
Current Liabilities					
Accounts Payable	\$3,858	\$9,113	(\$5,255)	\$0	\$3,858
Payroll Tax Liabilities	\$2,598	\$3,599	(\$1,001)	\$4,059	(\$1,461)
Sales Tax Payable	\$571	\$550	\$21	\$560	\$11
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>\$7,027</b>	<b>\$13,261</b>	<b>(\$6,234)</b>	<b>\$4,619</b>	<b>\$2,408</b>
Supplemental Compensation	\$2,431	\$2,083	\$347		
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$9,458</b>	<b>\$15,344</b>	<b>(\$5,887)</b>	<b>\$4,619</b>	<b>\$4,839</b>
Net Assets					
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	\$236,886	\$236,886	\$0	\$228,376	\$8,510
Net Surplus/(Deficit), YTD	\$12,793	\$18,823	(\$6,030)	\$16,343	(\$3,550)
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>\$249,679</b>	<b>\$255,709</b>	<b>(\$6,030)</b>	<b>\$244,719</b>	<b>\$4,960</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$259,137</b>	<b>\$271,053</b>	<b>(\$11,917)</b>	<b>\$249,338</b>	<b>\$9,799</b>

*Continued from Page 12*

Chapter Three of the Big Book on page 31 states, "Science may one day accomplish this, but it hasn't done so yet." Indeed, it has!

When people get cancer or AIDS, they acquire wasting syndrome. First Marinol, then Megace, eventually medical marijuana has been prescribed. Pot seems the best remedy for appetite stimulation and pain. If you haven't witnessed this, don't judge it.

## *A.A. must continue its tradition of acceptance*

I've illustrated how things have evolved and changed. This includes how science utilizes pot for the treatment of sick people. Now that marijuana is legal in California, I suspect we're going to see new members joining A.A. that use it in various forms. We must

accept the use of pot as we do now if a doctor prescribes it for medical reasons. It's none of our business. It's plain proven science.

We each define our own sobriety. Some take prescription pain meds and are OK; others do not. If an A.A. sponsor doesn't feel comfortable with something a sponsee needs to take, then suggest they get another sponsor.

A.A. must continue its tradition of acceptance. We don't judge. We don't police nor question. Everyone's sobriety is their own.

The pamphlet ends with a Unity Declaration:

*This we owe to A.A.'s future:  
To place our common welfare first;  
To keep our fellowship united.  
For on A.A. unity depend our lives,  
And the lives of those to come.*



Faithful Fivers are A.A. members Who graciously pledge to contribute at least \$5 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 Page 5)*

Maryellen O'C.	Penelope C. & Robert S. Jr.	Sheila H.
Matt S.	Penelope P.	Stephen S.
Michael M.	Peter F.	Stephen S.
Michael M.	Phyllis S.	Steve F.
Michael W.	Rachel G.	Steven G.
Michael Z.	Robert J.	Susan C.
Nancy N.	Robert S.	Suzanne C.
Naomi L.	Robert T.	Ted R.
Nicholas P.	Ron H.	Teddy W.
Niels R.	Roseanna H.	Theresa M.
Pamela K.	Ryan D.	Thomas H.
Pat P.	Sara H.	Thomas M.
Patrick R.	Scott C.	Timothy Mc.
Patrick S.	Sean B.	Tom S.
Paul K.	Sean C.	Tomas L.
Peggy H.	Sean M.	Tony R.
		Tripp Mc.

*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!*



The Birthday Plan has been an A.A. tradition since 1955. Contributions to express gratitude for sobriety can be made in any amount. Some send a dollar per year; others, a penny a day. We would like to list in *The Point* your first name and last initial with number of years sober.



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