

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

From Chapter Five of the book, "Alcoholics Anonymous."

# The Point

September 2002

A publication  
of the Intercounty Fellowship  
of Alcoholics Anonymous

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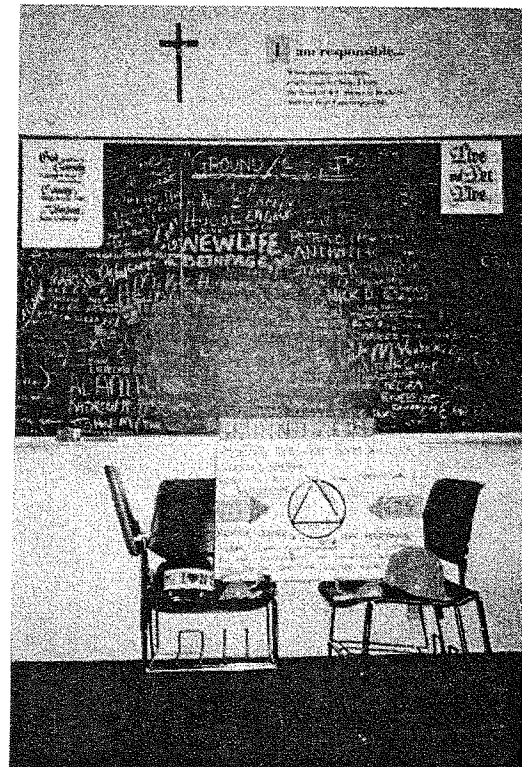
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**The Point**  
is published monthly to  
inform A.A. members about  
business and  
meeting affairs in the  
Intercounty Fellowship  
of Alcoholics Anonymous  
(San Francisco and Marin).  
**The Point's** pages are open to  
participation by all A.A.  
members. Nothing  
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**The Point** Editorial Committee.  
Letters and articles to  
help carry the A.A. message  
are welcomed, subject to  
editorial review by  
**The Point** Committee.

50 cents

## Recovery at Ground Zero Group

The following was sent to us by Queens, NY Intergroup in response to a card sent by our Central Office. Meetings were held to replace the meetings that were displaced in the area and for A.A. members working at Ground Zero.



Thanks for keeping us in your thoughts and prayers. We are sending you some pictures of the Ground Zero Group. Meetings were held 24 hours, 7 days a week in one location. Queens Intergroup covered the midnight to 6 a.m. shift 7 days a week. Second location held meetings 6 a.m. till 12 midnight. There was a sign in the lobby at both locations stating "Friends of Bill".

Please keep in touch with us—send us your e-mail address. Sorry it took so long to get back to you, we were moving locations

Love,

Queens A.A.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>September 2002... In the Fellowship</b> <b>Secretaries: Please make these announcements to your groups</b>						
1	2	3	<b>FIRST WED 4</b> * <b>Intercounty Fellowship Board (IFB):</b> 1187 Franklin, SF, 7:00 pm * <b>Spirit of SF Committee</b> 415 566-3845 or www.spirit-sf.org	5	6	7
8	<b>SECOND MON 9</b> * <b>SF Public Information Committee:</b> 1821 Sacramento, SF; 7:00p	<b>SECOND TUE 10</b> * <b>Bridging the Gap:</b> 1101 O'Farrell, SF; 6:30pm * <b>General Service:</b> 1101 O'Farrell, SF Orientation: 7:00p Reg. Meeting: 7:45p * <b>Marin H&amp;I:</b> Lagunitas & Shady Lane, Ross 7 pm	<b>SECOND WED 11</b> * <b>Marin Bridging the Gap</b> 1360 Lincoln, (Alano Club) San Rafael, 7:15p	12	13	14
15	<b>THIRD MON 16</b> * <b>SF Teleservice</b> 1821 Sacramento, SF; 6:30pm * <b>Marin General Service</b> 9 Ross Valley Rd. San Rafael 7:00pm GSR Sharing; 8:00pm District Mtg.	<b>THIRD TUE 17</b> * <b>San Mateo General Service:</b> St. Andrews Ch. 15th & El Camino, San Mateo; 7:30p	18	19	20	21
22	23	<b>FOURTH TUE 24</b> <b>Marin Teleservice</b> 1360 Lincoln (Alano Club), San Rafael: 7:30p	25	<b>FOURTH THU 26</b> * <b>Marin PI:</b> 1360 Lincoln, (Alano Club) San Rafael, 7:15pm <b>LAST THU</b> * <b>SF H&amp;I</b> Old First Church, Sacramento/Van Ness Orientation: 7:15p Regular Meeting: 8pm	27	<b>FOURTH SAT 28</b> <b>General Service:</b> <b>CNCA Bus. Mtg:</b> 320 N. McDowell Petaluma; <b>DCMCs:</b> 10:30am <b>Main Meeting:</b> 12noon
<b>LAST SUN 29</b> * <b>Living Sober</b> 1668 Bush, 5:30pm * <b>2900 Steering Committee:</b> 2900 24th St., SF 12:15 pm <b>Archives Open!</b> 193 Mayhew Way Walnut Creek, CA: Noon—4pm	30	This calendar lists local AA service and conference planning <i>meetings</i> , as well as any local AA related <i>events</i> of which the Central Office has been notified. Please call Maury at the Central Office (674-1821) by the 19th of the previous month if you would like your event listed. Coming Events are listed on next page, flyers are on pages 5 and 6.				

# COMING EVENTS

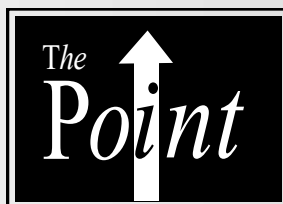
**2002**

Call or visit the Central Office for copies of any flyers of interest to you or your group.  
Local events are shaded; flyers of current local events, if available, are printed on pages 5 & 6.

Aug. 30– Sep. 1	10th AA Convention of The Spirit of San Francisco, Ramada Plaza Hotel, San Francisco	<a href="http://www.spirit-sf.org">www.spirit-sf.org</a>
Aug. 30– Sep. 1	Labor Day Alcolthon 2002 at the Mission Fellowship, 2900 24th St. ( at Florida)	
Aug. 30 - Sept. 1	Reno-Sparks 25th Annual A.A. Sierra Nevada Roundup, A New Way of Life, John Ascuagas Nugget, Sparks, NV	
September 13-15	2002 Colorado State Convention, Pueblo Convention Ctr./Marriott Hotel, Pueblo, CO	
September 19-22	17th Northern California Big Book Seminar, Doubletree Hotel, Sacramento, CA	
September 20-22	51st So. California AA Convention, Town & Country Convention Ctr., San Diego, CA	<a href="http://www.aasocal.com">www.aasocal.com</a>
September 20-22	2nd Northern Maine & N. B. Round Up, Limestone, ME	
September 22	35th Anniversary of Brisbane Breakfast Bunch, 250 Visitacion (Library Community Ctr.), Brisbane, CA	
September 26	Sobriety on the Bay - Spiritual Bar-B-Q & AA Meeting, Oyster Point Disc. Group, 911 Marina Bl., So. San Francisco CA	
September 26-29	12th National/International Native American Indian AA Convention, Hilton Burbank, CA	<a href="http://www.nai-aa.org">www.nai-aa.org</a>
September 26-29	7th National Archives Workshop, San Bernardino, CA	<a href="http://www.aahistory.com/workshop">www.aahistory.com/workshop</a>
September 27-29	17th Central Office/Intergroup Seminar, Holiday Inn Greentree, Pittsburgh, PA	
Thu. October 4	San Francisco PI/CPC Speaker Workshop, Central Office, 1821 Sacramento St. (Nr. Van Ness), San Francisco, CA	
October 4-6	Lake Tahoe 2002 Fall Festival, Horizon Casino Resort, So. Lake Tahoe, CA	<a href="http://www.laketahoeallfestival.com">www.laketahoeallfestival.com</a>
October 11-13	16th Annual Gold Country Roundup, Amador Co. Fairgrounds, Plymouth, CA	<a href="http://www.goldcountryroundup.org">www.goldcountryroundup.org</a>
October 11-13	The Monte Carlo Miracle AA Convention, Le Metroplie Palace, Monte Carlo, Monaco	
October 25-27	16th Caribbean Convention, Renaissance Grand Beach Resort, St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands	
November 2	31st Anniversary Galt Fellowship Dinner & Speaker Meeting, Littleton Civic Center, Galt, CA	
November 14-17	41st Hawaii Convention, Hawaii Convention Center, Honolulu, HI	<a href="http://www.lava.net/~hconv">www.lava.net/~hconv</a>

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# MEETING CHANGES

## NEW MEETINGS

Daily 1:30 pm	San Rafael	<b>1:30 RELEASE TENSION</b> - Marin Alano Club, 1360 Lincoln Ave/Maple (Di)
Mon 6:00 pm	SOMA	<b>MOSCONE CENTER BYOB (Bring Your Own Book)</b> - 88 Perry St. (3rd & Harrison), 4th floor (SS wh)
Fri 7:00 pm	Western Addition	<b>SOBER &amp; CENTERED</b> - 1800 Market/Octavia (Literature Discussion Gy Ls)
Sun 5:00 pm	Noe Valley	<b>SUNDAY NIGHT 3RD STEP GROUP</b> - 221 Valley (29th & Church) (CI SD)

## MEETING CHANGES

Sun 8:15 am	Larkspur	<b>SPIRITUAL TESTOSTERONE SUNDAY MEN'S STAG</b> - (Was Sunday Morning Men's Stag) now meeting at 101 Casa Buena Ave. (Upstairs, Rm. E)
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## NO LONGER MEETING

Thu 7:00 pm	Tenderloin	<b>MARLTON MANOR</b> - 240 Jones/Eddy
Thu 7:55 pm	Bayview	<b>STAYING SOBER</b> - 1601 McKinnon/Mendell
Fri 6:00 pm	Bayview	<b>STAYING SOBER</b> - 1218 Mendell
Fri 7:55 pm	Bayview	<b>STAYING SOBER</b> - 1601 McKinnon/Mendell



**REPORTED  
MISSING**

**Please Note:** The Central Office occasionally receives reports that meetings listed in our schedules are actually not there. Sometimes these reports turn out to be mistaken—and sometimes they are not. The office relies primarily on information that is given to us by AA groups, but when a group disbands, informing the Central Office is a common omission.

**If you know *anything* about a meeting that is reported missing, please call the Central Office immediately (674-1821).** If we hear no objections during the month following publication here, the meeting will be assumed disbanded, and removed from the schedule. **Thank You!**

## DO YOU GET *The Point*?

*The Point* is your newsletter. It is the means of communicating the A.A. program among the members in Marin and San Francisco Counties. The information is all about what goes on in your groups, in Central Office, in the IFB and all around A.A. It includes "business" information, meeting changes, coming events, and anything else *you* think is important.

You are eligible to receive a complimentary issue if you are a registered Secretary or Treasurer, serve on the Teleservice Committee, or serve on the Intercounty Fellowship Board as an Intergroup Representative. Additionally, we trade copies with other Fellowships around the state and country and keep a library of their newsletters here at Central Office.

Finally, we send *The Point* to those who subscribe. It is published monthly and a 12-month subscription is \$6.00. (Individual copies can be purchased for \$.50 at Central Office.) *If you are receiving this publication and do not have a paid subscription or are not currently serving in one of the capacities listed above, we would appreciate your letting us know.* Additionally, we invite you to subscribe; there is a subscription form on p. 15

Each issue of *The Point* cost approximately \$.32 to print and an average of \$.15 to mail. Furthermore, the way bulk mail works, every time an issue comes back as undeliverable, it costs an additional \$.75 (on average). As you can see, it is not an inexpensive process. In fact, the volunteer efforts that go into publication are invaluable. *So please help us maintain an accurate database by letting us know if and when you move, or if you should be receiving The Point and are not, and finally, if you are receiving it and should not be. We thank you in advance for your cooperation.*

*Come celebrate our  
35th Anniversary!!*

## **The Breakfast Bunch**

**Sunday, Sept. 22, 2002  
11 a.m. - 1 p.m.**

**Honoring our anniversary are:**

**Connie B., from Sonoma  
Sam B., from San Francisco  
Steve D., from Myrtle Dale**

**Join us as we joyfully kick off the event  
with experience, strength, and hope!  
(and brunch!)**

**Library Community Center  
250 Visitation - Brisbane, CA**

## **Group Speakers for Sept. 2002**

### **FRIDAY ALL GROUPS**

**1101 O'Farrell, St. Mark's (basement), San Francisco  
Friday, 8:30 pm**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signed for the hearing-impaired

<b>DATE</b>	<b>HOST GROUP</b>	<b>SPEAKER</b>	<b>HOME GROUP</b>
Sept. 6	Friday High Noon	Moshe	Oakland Fellowship
Sept. 13	Lush Lounge	Murphy	Half Moon Bay
Sept. 20	Sesame Step	Paul P.	Too Early
Sept. 27	I.F.B.	Li L.	No Reservation

### **TUESDAY DOWNTOWN**

**St. Mary's Cathedral, Geary & Gough, San Francisco  
Tuesday, 8:30 pm**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signed for the hearing-impaired

<b>DATE</b>	<b>SPEAKER</b>	<b>HOME GROUP</b>	<b>Sobriety</b>
Sept. 3.	Patty M.	All Together Now, SF	2/17/92
Sept. 10	Tom W.	Oakland Tuesday Night	8/18/76
Sept. 17	Karen R.	Any Lengths Group, SF	2/7/92
Sept. 24	Norman W.	Street Fighters, San Rafael	5/24/89

## **SPEAKERS WANTED!!**

**Carry the message to schools, professional  
organizations, the medical community,  
drunk driving classes, and  
into jails and prisons.**

### **PI/CPC SPEAKER WORKSHOP**

**(Requirement: two years of  
continuous sobriety in A.A.)**

***Thursday, October 4, 7 p.m.***

**SF Central Office, 1821 Sacramento St.**

**For further information, call the  
Central Office: 674-1821**

### **BRISBANE BREAKFAST BUNCH**

**250 Visitation Way  
(Community Center under the Library),  
Brisbane, Sunday, 11:00 am**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>SPEAKER</b>	<b>HOME GROUP</b>
Sept. 1	Lisa K.	San Carlos
Sept. 8	Mark P.	San Francisco
Sept. 15	Mary W.	San Francisco
Sept. 22	<b>ANNIVERSARY MEETING!!!!!!!</b>	
Sept. 29	Marian W.	So. San Francisco

**All open speaker (or speaker/discussion) meetings are welcome to publish their month's listing in The Point. The deadline for submission of the information is the 19th of the month preceding publication. Please call Maury at Central Office, 674-1821.**

**AA FEVER - CATCH IT!** By Bill S.

I'm seven years sober now, but I'll never forget the baseball game I attended at one year of sobriety down in Los Angeles at Dodger Stadium with five other guys in the program. The Dodgers were hosting the Chicago Cubs that particular day. As soon as we arrived we stocked up on Dodger Dogs with copious condiments, cheese nachos, chips, fries, the usual healthy fare, and paraded to our seats in the first row of level three high up behind home plate.

As the game got underway for the crowd of 32,500, I ate my Dodger Dogs, drank my Coke, and ate a quarter pound of peanuts (a few days before the game my sober buddy Andy made a special trek into downtown L.A. to buy several pounds of jumbo monster unsalted peanuts—nothing but the best for an alcoholic!).

During the fifth inning I was telling the guy next to me, who had 18 years in the program at the time, how much I was enjoying myself—how just a little over a year before I never would have left my room to do anything like this. In fact, before I entered the unit and sobered up at St. John's Hospital (May 5th '95), the only two places I made excursions to were my job and the liquor store. I had quit shopping for food. My sole meals were supplied compliments of Domino's Pizza in less than thirty minutes. Domino's was the only phone number I had on my speed dialer and the pizza delivery boys fought to bring me pizzas because when I was drunk I over tipped. I had long since stopped going out to movies, the beach, book and music stores, etc. And dating? Forget it. The last thing I wanted was somebody criticizing my drinking. Socializing was the last thing on my mind. I lived like a hermit in my bedroom, watching TV while single-handedly trying to keep the third shift working overtime at the Miller Brewing Company. Pathetic? You betcha!

Anyway, I was explaining to my new A.A. buddy how grateful I was to be at the ball game and sober when suddenly—a loud WHACK caught everybody's attention (except for mine, since I was engaged in "serious" alcoholic conversation).

There was a mad scramble and fans converged all around me as a pop fly came hurtling right where we were sitting. The baseball bounced off the empty seat over to my right between Jack and Jim, who skir-

mished for the ball along with a dozen other guys. Jim thought it went into Andy's bag of peanuts and dived inside. Jumbo unsalted nuts exploded into the air.

That's when I glanced down at my feet. The ball had rolled right to me! I merely reached down, grabbed it and stood up. Grinning victoriously I held the ball aloft for all to see amid mucho envious cursing.

I tried to give the ball to Jack E. since he's such a great Cubs fan but he would have no part of it. "This ball was meant for you!" insisted Jack, who had over three decades in the program and once actually met co-founder Bill W. Jack continued by explaining that maybe this was God's way of telling me that as long as I was sober and willing to leave my room (and take Domino's off my speed-dialer), every once in a while my Higher Power would toss me a ball. In fact, God had probably wanted to toss me a lot of balls in the past but I had been holed up in my room drinking, afraid to go out into the world—I had taken myself out of the game.

Bottom line: I can't catch pop flies if I don't show up for the baseball game. And if I don't continue to stay sober and venture out into the world I'll be blind to untold opportunities. Drinking will only rob me of the good things my Higher Power wants to send my way.

As we left the stadium, one of the guys asked me how many baseball games I had been to. I told him that baseball wasn't my sport and this was the first time I had actually gone to a game. He sighed mightily and shook his head in exasperation, "I've been to hundreds of games and never once caught a ball! You show up to see your first game and out of 32,000 fans you get it!"

Is it odd or is it God? Frankly, I quit asking myself that question when I got sober.

All of my A.A. baseball cohorts signed the ball that day and it rests today in a prominent space on the shelf above my computer as I write this to remind me to acquire more balls in sobriety.

By the way, the Dodgers lost to the Cubbies 6-4

## ON PUBLIC SPEAKING IN SOBRIETY: ADVENTURES WITH THE "PI" COMMITTEE

When I first came through the doors of Alcoholics Anonymous, I had no intention of joining the Public Information/Cooperation with the Professional Community (PI/CPC) Committee. In fact, when I was new, PI was the furthest thing from my mind. This Committee provides speakers to non-A.A. groups who are interested in learning about Alcoholics Anonymous. They regularly send volunteers to "drunk driving" classes and public school classes to talk about A.A. I never received a DUI, and I do not have any children. In addition, I am scared to death of public speaking. Nevertheless, a number of years ago, I found myself signing up with PI in order to carry the A.A. message to non-alcoholics. Clearly, my Higher Power had something in mind for me that I could never have envisioned for myself.

Since "telling your story" is part of the A.A. program, when I put together some time in the rooms, I realized that I was not exempt from this suggestion. When asked, in absolute terror, I attempted to share the story of my experience, strength, and hope. The result was always the same. I was miserable from the moment I agreed to speak, until the day I had to share. On that dreaded day, I would babble incoherently, and watch with horror, as half the people in the room got up and left "for coffee." Those who remained would be staring at the ceiling or at their watches, and the poor newcomers attending the meeting would gaze at me with glazed over eyes. It was a totally humiliating experience every time I told my story.

I attempted to "turn it over" and make "conscious contact" with my Higher Power, but public speaking made me nearly unconscious with fright. Over time, it became clear that I had absolutely no tools for making a coherent presentation before an audience. Left to my own devices, I would probably wind up in an institution, or dead from stage fright. I finally hit a bottom around public speaking, and once again I realized that I was powerless, truly powerless over my own fear.

I started asking my Higher Power for help to carry the message. That help came to me in the form of a young woman named Patricia who told me about PI. She said PI was helping her overcome her fear of public speaking. I learned that the Committee holds "speaker workshops" several times a year; and that they offer tips for effective speaking. There is an opportunity for new members to observe other, more seasoned volunteers to see how they make presentations. When you are actually scheduled to speak, you are teamed up with an experienced speaker,

so you don't have to do it alone. I wanted what they had. And so I did what they did.

And what I learned was much more than just how to be an effective speaker. I learned through my commitment with this Committee, that I could face my fears in order to grow. PI/CPC gave me an opportunity, each time I spoke, to practice letting go and letting G-d. It has brought me closer to my Higher Power.

As my program became more about service and less about self, I began to understand that standing in front of a group of people was not really about me at all, but rather about carrying the message of A.A. to an audience. It became clear that what I was talking about was far more important than what people thought about me. The "fear of people" began to leave me. As my anxiety about public speaking lessened, my gratefulness to the program continued to grow. And my commitment in PI/CPC, has become a way to show my gratitude to Alcoholics Anonymous by carrying the A.A. message.

Participation in committee work also gave me an opportunity to meet members of the Fellowship that I might not have gotten to know by only attending regularly scheduled meetings. The people that have been my partners at various PI "gigs" have always shown me kindness and respect. Sometimes, when you "click" with your partner as a team, there can be a spirit of great playfulness between you, which the audience can feel and appreciate.

You also get to know the people who take on additional service work in order to keep the Committee functioning. Besides the usual "trusted servants," there are also volunteers who serve as Workshop Coordinators, and Speaker Schedulers. There is a Media Liaison who works with members of the press and radio. Their work behind the scenes enables PI/CPC to continue to provide the vital work of carrying the message to non-Alcoholics Anonymous groups.

And finally, by being a member of PI, I also got an insider look at some of the organizational aspects of A.A. Watching how the Committee functions internally offers important information about how A.A. business gets done at the group level. The practical application of the Traditions in every day affairs makes the words in the 12&12 come alive in a new way. Especially during these difficult economic times, when people have lost confidence in dealing with large corporations, A.A. is an

*(Continued on page 13)*

## THIS IS HOW IT HAPPENED! How the Message of A.A. Arrived in Cuba in January, 1993

*Between 1993 and 2001, a small but dedicated group of A.A. members, most of them from San Francisco and the Bay area, traveled to Cuba, the former USSR and the Peoples' Republic of China to carry the A.A. message to still suffering alcoholics in places where A.A. had not reached.*

*This letter is "the history of A.A. in Cuba" written by the woman who was instrumental in contacting and organizing the group of A.A. members and arranging their trip. As you can see, the seeds the little group planted have grown and thrived.*

*Over the next several months, we will try to print articles detailing the intrepid groups other travels on the Happy Road of Destiny.*

You asked me to tell you the story of how the message of A.A. arrived in Cuba in January, 1993. I learned about the program of A.A. through a friend about 10 years prior to this date in Syracuse, NY. I remember we were eating donuts and drinking coffee after the Service at Unity Church in Syracuse, and timidly I came over to say hello. As I spoke, the first question I was asked by Marti R. was, where was my English accent from, to which even more timidly I responded: from Cuba. I was surprised to see the brightness in her eyes when she said: from Cuba? How wonderful! From there on I felt very comfortable as if I were home. I could speak about Cuba with someone from the bottom of my heart. I had found a friend.

From Marti R. I learned that A.A. was her spiritual path. What I heard sounded good. As she explained to me the program I learned to accept the Twelve Steps as a way of life, without ever asking myself the reason why it was so important for her to pass on the message. I never thought to relate the program of recovery with alcohol, primarily because I never saw alcohol anywhere in the ten years that later on we shared an apartment in Miami FL, and secondly because I became fascinated with the Twelve Steps. The Twelve Steps of A.A. appeared to me to be logical, rational, well thought, with universal characteristics, good for every body.

I never felt the need to join an Al-Anon group. I went to the A.A. open meetings because I liked the people. The idea of bringing the message of A.A. to Cuba happened on a very hot day of the month of July in one of my trips to Cuba to visit my family. I was walking by a park on Linea Street and saw a man apparently asleep on a steamily hot sidewalk. I wondered what was the matter, and people passing by did not help when realizing the man was drunk. I had never seen before the effects of alcohol so closely. I came back home to Miami with the determination to make the program of recovery of A.A. to be known in Cuba.

With the assurance of having by my side the support of a

well-seasoned, experienced member of A.A., I started talking to my friends from Cuba in transit in Miami about A.A. I sent books with them, and encouraged them to open the doors of their hearts and their churches to meetings for people with problems with alcohol to get together to study the books. By doing this, the idea did not go too far. I thought I should go farther with it.

With the help of my friend and spiritual mentor, Dr. Adolfo Ham, I was able to get an interview with Dr. Silvio Platero, a member of the Office of Religious Affairs of the PCC. I don't remember the date. I left with Dr. Platero the blue book of A.A. and others. I told him that I wanted to invite a pastor from Cuba to spend 30 days in Miami to go to as many A.A. meetings as possible in Spanish. The person I was directed to was the Rev. Juan Francisco Naranjo. The Rev. Naranjo and his wife, the Rev. Estela Hernandez, were very active in community services. I talked to them, and pastor Naranjo accepted my invitation to come to Miami in spite of telling him that I did not have any money to pay for his airfare and expenses. I wrote a letter of invitation to him, and with that he was able to obtain a visa to travel from Cuba to the U.S.

When pastor Naranjo returned to Cuba, he brought with him several books and started A.A. group meetings at his church. Even with this, the idea did not make any progress. Pastor Naranjo was not an alcoholic. The program of recovery only works among alcoholics, sharing, as you say their strengths, hopes and experiences. The Cubans in Miami did not take up the challenge, thinking that they had to wait for the revolution to be over before they could bring the message of A.A. to Cuba.

One day, commenting about my project of bringing the message of A.A. to Cuba with friends from Peacenet, someone sent me an e-mail from South Africa, I don't remember her name, who gave me the phone number and the address of the organization based in San Francisco, CA, USA, "Creating A Sober World". Without waiting long, Bruce K., their coordinator, and I started planning a trip to Cuba with members of this organization. Bruce K. called the Department of State, and there was no need to apply for a special license for the initial group of six people to travel to Cuba. We were received by the Rev. Juan Francisco Naranjo and Estela Hernandez at the Havana airport with free visas. We stayed with them, they provided us with a meeting room, took care of the details of a marvelous program of activities in Cuba that included visits to hospitals and places of treatment for alcoholism. Thus, this is how the first A.A. group "Sueño" started in Cuba at the "William Carey" Baptist Church in January, 1993. I remember bringing Julio to the

*(Continued on page 13)*



## Pacific Regional Forum

My name is Don K. I'm an alcoholic. My home group is Old St. Mary's. I serve on the California Northern Coastal Area of General Service as a District Committee Member for the San Francisco district. I traveled to Phoenix to attend the Pacific Regional Forum. This biennial event represents General Service Areas in Arizona, California, Nevada, Utah, Idaho, Oregon, Washington, Alaska, and Hawaii. A Forum does not conduct business. I arrived on Wednesday July 10<sup>th</sup> and checked in at the Metcalf House, an international hostel, at which I have a life membership. The following day I went to the Arid Club, just six blocks away. There were a few visitors at the meeting who were attending the Forum. As this was not a group conscience-mandated activity I paid my own way. The temperature was 108°.

Forum participants registered on Friday with a final count of 724. All members of the fellowship were welcome. New York General Service Office staff were there to answer questions and explain what they do. Pacific Regional Trustees, both past and present, were also in attendance.

The outgoing Pacific Regional Trustee, Jim C., handed over the gavel to the incoming Trustee, Phyllis H. Elaine McDowell, Class A Trustee and Chair of the General Service Board gave the welcome and opening remarks. Trustees spoke on the Role of the Class B Trustee, the Role of the Trustee-At-Large, and the Role of the Class A Trustee. GSO staffers Valerie O'N., Eva S., and Adrienne B. made the following presentations: *General Service Staff Assignments*; *What About Group Services?*; and *How Regional Forums Came About—the Inside Story*. GSO Archivist Judith S. presented on A.A. Archives.

The floor microphones were then opened general sharing and "Ask-it Basket" slips were read. Questions ranging from why San Diego gave money back from the International Convention in 1995 to why we can't order literature directly from GSO over the Internet.

On Saturday morning, one of the members of the fellowship I met at the Arid Club gave me a ride to the Forum; I checked into the Holiday Inn. The day began at 9:00 AM with continental breakfast. Presentations on *The A.A. Grapevine/La Vina* were made by a director and editors of the magazines.

The next presentations, made by delegates and alternate delegates, were *Selection of Conference Theme Topics*; *How and Why are Archives Important?* *The ABCs of Service*; and

*Rotation—Rotating On*. Jo T. from Alaska spoke on *Overcoming Geographic Challenges*. Later A.A. World Service Director John K. and GSO General Manager Greg M. gave financial presentations.

Workshops opened with Mike G. and Mary T. chairing on *Diversity in A.A.* Greg M. chaired another open mike/ask-it-basket followed by the video, *Markings on the Journey*. With that the workshops broke into other rooms.

I attended two workshops, *The A.A. Grapevine: A Valuable Tool* chaired by Raymond M., Grapevine Director and *The Importance of a Home Group: What Defines It and How It Works* chaired by Kathy C. Other concurrent workshops included *Spanish Workshop*; *Growth of a New Area*; *Serving Alcoholics with Special Needs*; *Our Third Legacy*; *Carrying the Message Behind the Walls*; *La Vina: A Valuable Tool*; *A.A. Archives*; *Remote Communities: A Part of or Apart From*; *Our Relationships with Our Friends: Cooperation or Affiliation?*; and *Sponsorship: I am Responsible*.

Sunday morning's session began with Pacific Regional Trustee Phyllis H. answering Ask-It-Basket questions as well as introducing past Pacific Regional Trustees, who shared briefly. The closing remarks by Elaine McDowell, were warm and trusting. The next Pacific Regional Forum will be in Portland, Oregon in 2004.

### AA Slogan of the Month:

I am responding to your August newsletter's slogan of the month: HALT.

# HALT

When I first came into the rooms I heard someone talk about taking a HALT and had no idea what he was talking about. I had to ask my sponsor and he told me that many times when the desire to have a drink surfaces it is because you are Hungry, Angry, Lonely or Tired. Well, the skeptic in me thought, "Sure, right" After that I thought about what was going on with me when I felt like drinking. Well, wouldn't you know, it always came up when I was, you guessed it, Hungry, Angry, Lonely or Tired! Sometimes more than one of those feelings are going on. Today, I catch myself and take a HALT when needed. It sure keeps me from drinking!

—Anonymous

*Next month's slogan is: **EASY DOES IT.**  
Please submit your thoughts, insight and experiences regarding this slogan to The Point by September 19th.*

# AA Group Contributions

Intercounty Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous - San Francisco and Marin Counties

# Focus on the 12 Concepts

Hello, everyone... summer's almost gone and autumn is on its way. It's September, time for our discussion of Concept Nine:

"Good service leaders, together with sound and appropriate methods of choosing them, are at all levels indispensable for our future functioning and safety. The primary world service leadership once exercised by the founders of A.A. must necessarily be assumed by the Trustees of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous."

This concept discusses leadership in A.A. Where does leadership begin? It begins at the group level. The group has the right, as well as the responsibility, to elect its leaders. And, since we're going to apply this to our Marin/San Francisco area, we'll discuss the Intergroup Representative.

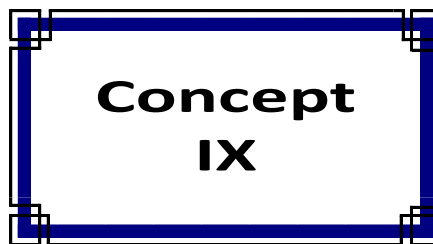
The Intergroup Representative is the group's link to and voice in what happens in the Intercounty Fellowship or Intergroup. Each representative, duly elected by his or her group, becomes a member of the IFB, the board of directors for the Intercounty Fellowship. This is important, as the IFB determines the "direction" we take in such significant matters as operation of the Central Office, Bookstore, Website, Teleservice and other functions vital to our fellowship.

Therefore, the Intergroup Representative is a vital position. The more groups that carefully select and send reps to the Board, the better our fellowship will function. The reps the groups elect should be people well-grounded in The Traditions and who are willing and able to perform sometimes difficult and controversial, but always important, service.

An interesting aspect of the discussion regarding this concept in the A.A. Service Manual concerns the responsibility of the elected Trusted Servant in the face of majority opposition. The discussion states in part:

"A 'politico' is an individual who is forever trying to 'get the people what they want'. A statesman is an individual who can carefully discriminate when and *when not* (emphasis in the original) to do this. He recognizes that even large majorities, when badly disturbed or uninformed, can, once in a while, be dead wrong. When such an occasional situation arises, and something very vital is at stake, it is always the duty of leadership, even when in a small minority, to take a stand against the storm, using its every ability of authority and persuasion to effect a change."

This is powerful stuff! It flies in the face of our A.A. sense of "majority always rules." In 22 years in A.A. service work, I have only had one personal experience wherein I felt I had to "take a



stand against the storm" in a vital issue. It was the most stressful, difficult thing I've ever had to do in all my A.A. service. And, I hope I am never in such a position again. I suppose the fact I've only "been there" once indicates that the situations rarely arise. That is good, both for A.A. and for the trusted servants in leadership positions.

Another interesting passage: "Leadership is often called upon to face heavy and sometimes long-continued criticism. This is an acid test. There are always constructive critics... Then there are those whom we like to call our 'destructive' critics. They power-drive, they are 'politickers', they make accusations. Maybe they are violent, malicious. They pitch gobs of rumors, gossip, and general scuttle-butt to gain their ends—all for the good of A.A., of course! But in A.A. we have at last learned that these folks, who may be a trifle sicker than the rest of us, need not be destructive at all, depending very much on how we relate ourselves to them."

In my experience, there are some of those folks around. And some of them have "influential" positions in A.A. and have an audience for their comments. All I can do is listen and learn, take any valid suggestions, but try to handle the situation with love and tolerance. Sometimes I am better at this than at other times.

Lastly I'll mention "vision," which the Service Manual refers to as "that all-important attribute." The discussion goes on to say the idea of vision in service is not in conflict with our motto of "one day at a time" but, rather, is a necessary element in maintaining a healthy Fellowship.

My personal, relevant experience in this arena has to do with the future of the IFB and its relationship to the Fellowship in Marin and San Francisco Counties. When I became IFB chair, I was well aware that there is much to be done to bring all of us together and encourage widespread participation by the Groups and the individual members. I can't do that alone, but I can hope to share that vision with others, work hard and leave the results in the hands of my Higher Power.

As always, I will close by saying I am *not* an expert on The Concepts. I invite and encourage your input, whether by way of questions, comments or articles of your own. We will happily print them in *The Point*. If you would like to contact me with your comments or for any other reason, I am at 415-239-0947 or, email XANADUTOO@earthlink.net. Or, you can contact me through Central Office.

Thank you for allowing me to be of service.

Ben N.

# IFB Meeting Minutes

The IFB is the Board of Directors for our local AA Central Office (San Francisco and Marin Counties)

Regular Monthly Meeting  
Intercounty Fellowship Board  
Unitarian Center, 1187 Franklin Street  
San Francisco, California

July 3, 2002

## Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Ben N. followed by the Serenity Prayer.

Anna I.	Native Amer. Healing	P	Julia D.	Castro Discussion	P
Ben N.	Sunset Speaker Step	P	Julie H.	Terra Linda	P
Bill R.	Early Start	P	Kenny Y.	As Bill -Wed	P
Charles M.	Federal Speaker	P	Larry F.	Mid-Morning Support	P
Clay K.	Cocoanuts	P	Leslie F.	How It Works-Sat	P
Dan C.	Tiburon Haven	P	Li L.	Work in Progress	P
Dan L.	Artists & Writers	P	Lisa M.	Friday All Groups	P
Danny F.	Each Day....	P	Mark C.	Sun Night Candlelight	P
Dave F.	Sunset 9'ers Tuesday	P	Pat M.	Sat As Bill Sees It	P
David C.	Sunday Friendship	P	Paul C.	Waterfront	P
Doug F.	No Reservation	P	Ray M.	Sunday Rap	P
Doug S.	As Bill - Thurs	P	Rich R.	Marina Dock 6am	P
Ellen C.	Big Book Basics	P	Sam W.	Monday Night Stag	P
Frank B.	Ea Day... - Sunday	A	Samuel S.	Too Early	P
J. E.	Friendly Circle Beg.	P	Silke T.	Wed. High Noon	P
Jacob M.	Home Group	P	Smithy B.	Ten Years After	P
Janet B.	Thurs Night Women's	P	Steven S.	Tuesday Downtown	P
Jason S.	Sesame Step	P	Timothy G.	7AM As Bill Sees It	P
Jay H.	Gay Beginners	P	Tom K.	Common Welfare	P
Jim D.	Happy Joyous & Free	A	Tony P.	Amazing Grace	P
Joe G.	Wed Beginners	P			

A. REVIEW OF MINUTES: The minutes for the June meeting were approved.

B. ELECTION OF THE 2002 – 2003 OFFICERS: Ben N. was elected chair. Bill R. was elected vice chair. Joe G. was elected secretary. The following members were elected to Central Office Committee: David C., Danny F., J. E, and Charles M.

### C. OTHER BUSINESS

1. New members were asked to talk to Ellie C. regarding orientation.
2. Members of the Spirit of San Francisco committee were present and provided information about their conference to be held over Labor Day weekend. They asked to be allowed to send a liaison to future IFB meetings
3. The Board voted to host Friday All Groups in September.
4. Marin Teleservice announced their annual picnic.
5. Pat announced that contributions were down in May and June. She asked members to contribute at least two dollars

D. SEVENTH TRADITION: \$90.85

August's meeting will be held at the Star of the Sea Church, 180 Harrison Street in Sausalito.

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Jeff T., Secretary

## Public Speaking In Sobriety

*(Continued from page 7)*

example of how an organization can function effectively, while maintaining respect and dignity for its individual members.

Recently, I had an opportunity to witness first-hand, the vital service PI/PCP provides to the community. The Committee was contacted by a group of ministers from an in-patient facility who were involved in counseling alcoholics. These men and women were religious people, who wanted very much to help their patients. Yet they found themselves frustrated by an inability to effectively communicate with the alcoholics in their care. They wanted speakers from PI/CPC to help them understand the steps and the program of A.A. so that they could use this information to be of service at the facility.

It was difficult to explain to these nice people that they were "powerless" to gain the confidence of an alcoholic. No matter how much they learned about Alcoholics Anonymous, they lacked one essential ingredient in gaining the trust of the patients in their care. Because they were not alcoholic themselves, they did not have the ability to relate their own story to the people they wanted to help.

We advised the ministers that they could best be of service to the suffering alcoholic by contacting Central Office and arranging to have someone from the fellowship come to the facility to talk with the patient. After all, sharing our story, one-on-one and at the group level, is what we learn to do in A.A. It's what helps to keep us sober.

Carole P.  
San Francisco, CA

## How It Happened

*(Continued from page 8)*

meeting twice by the hand, and twice he was asked to come back sober. There was another person in the meeting telling his best friend how bad was his drinking habits, and with that person the first group of Al-Anon started in Cuba. The rest of the story has been written in a report by Bruce K., which remains in the archives of the organization "Creating a Sober World." I am sure a copy could be made available to you through Arkie K. or Bruce K.

I visited the Office of General Services of A.A. in Havana last December, 2001. Almost ten years after our first visit in 1993, there are almost 100 A.A. groups across the Island of Cuba. I am mystified over the dedication that the offices of general services of A.A. offer to the world and the role every one of its members play locally to make the program work. My message to my friends who still don't know about A.A., or those who perhaps know about it, but are still in doubt, is that they may open the doors of their hearts, their churches and meeting places to the groups of A.A. in Cuba.

With a fraternal embrace,

Hulda Lorente  
P.O. Box 56032  
St. Petersburg, FL 33732  
Tel. (727) 528-3149

*The San Francisco members of the team were Arkie K., his wife Ruth, Linda H., Bruce K., Kevin D. and Arch B., from Tracy. The other member was Bert W. from*



**DESIGNATED DRIVER IN THE OLD WEST**

## CONTRIBUTIONS

To the Central Office were made

**July 18 - August 19**

***Honoring the following  
members***

### ONGOING MEMORIALS

*Bob  
R. W.*

### ANNIVERSARIES

*Jennifer L. — 2 Years  
Arthur P. — 3 Years  
Brian F. — 5 Years  
Kurt C. — 5 Years  
Douglas C. — 7 Years  
Linda B. — 10 Years  
Anne M. — 11 Years  
James D. — 19 Years  
Ginny P. — 28 Years  
Frances L. — 40 Years  
Wade D. — 52 Years*

#### Endless Summer Group:

*Bron — 1 Year  
Cheryl — 1 Year  
Kat — 1 Year  
Kate — 1 Year  
Pete — 1 Year  
Shane — 1 Year  
Shawn — 1 Year  
Tedra — 1 Year  
Eric — 2 Years  
Heather — 2 Years  
Rachel — 3 Years  
Leanne — 4 Years  
Arron — 6 Years  
Sheida — 7 Years  
Paulie — 10 Years  
Erik M. — 11 Years  
Gioto — 15 Years  
Jeb — 15 Years*

Thanks to all who  
honor their sobriety  
through giving!



### Recent Deaths

*Bonnie R. - 31 Years  
(Garden Variety)  
Ralph M.*

## SUMMARY

### August 2002 IFB Meeting

The following is an unofficial summary of actions, information, upcoming business, and service opportunities discussed at the August 2002 IFB meeting. It is provided for your convenience and is not intended to be the complete **or approved** minutes.

#### A. Business Conducted

1. Announcement of election of Central Office Committee Chair Smithy B. and Recording Secretary Danny F. Smithy B. then reported for the Central Office Committee, that a recommendation has been made on literature pricing. After discussion, a motion was made which passed 28 to 0, with 4 abstentions.
2. Pat provided a Treasurer's Report with written statements showing that Central Office is presently not self-supporting. Suggestions were discussed on how to increase monthly revenue to Central Office.

#### B. Information

1. Bylaws Review Committee: Ben reported that the bylaws are ready for review by our attorney, after which they will be available for review to the IFB.
2. Lora O., acting as proxy for Ken C., from Marin General Service, discussed the ad-hoc committee questionnaire on Marin membership needs and concerns.
3. Spirit of San Francisco: Mary gave report on upcoming convention in San Francisco from August 30<sup>th</sup> to September 1<sup>st</sup>. They need help in distribution of sign-up forms.
4. Central Office Manager's Report: Maury reported that the 12 Step List has been updated and distributed to Teleservice volunteers. Presently all phone shifts are filled, but we could add to our substitute list.

**Next IFB Meeting is scheduled for  
Wednesday, September 4, 2002 at the Unitarian Church,  
1187 Franklin Street/Geary, San Francisco.  
Call the Central Office at (415) 674-1821 if you need  
further information.**

# Financial Statement

June 2002 - Intercounty Fellowship of AA

## **The Point** **Subscription Form / Change of Address**

\$6 for one year - 12 issues

*(Please circle one)*

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A.A. Central Office 1821 Sacramento St.  
San Francisco CA 94109-3528 ☎ (415) 674-1821



# September 2002

**Moving? Please Give Us Your New Address and Phone Number!!**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

New Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Old Address: \_\_\_\_\_

You Can Also E-mail or Phone Us With Your New Contact Information  
Addresses Are on the Front Cover