

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

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

The Point

February 2004

A publication
of the Intercounty Fellowship
of Alcoholics Anonymous

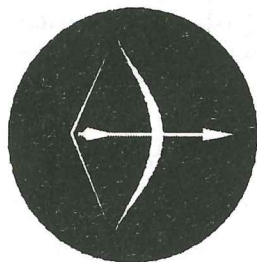
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The Point

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

Burning Desires— Can True Love Survive Sobriety

by Kathleen C.



The young doctor had a strict rule: he never, ever dated anyone from the hospital where he worked—no nurses, nobody. So why was he asking me, a secretary at the same hospital, to go out with him? I didn't care. His rebel attitude, his earring, and his motorcycle intrigued me. James Dean with an M.D. degree.

He picked me up at my flat in the Mission. I climbed on behind him, wrapped my arms around his waist and we roared off to Washington Square Park to see the San Francisco Mime Troupe.

It was summer of 1974 and they were performing *Curse of the Dragon Lady*, about Madame Nhu. He pulled a tablecloth from the saddlebag and spread it on the grass. We nibbled pita bread, hummus and cherry tomatoes, and drank a bottle of wine. We discovered similarities— we'd both been tear-gassed, fought the police in marches for civil rights and protested against the war in Viet Nam. Solidarity! Our romance began.

Those weren't the *Days of Wine and Roses*. Wine and coke maybe. I drank every day and had friends with a cocaine connection. I wanted to be thin and smart and drink as much as I wanted without passing out. I was laid off at the hospital when a grant ran out. For two years, I worked sporadically and he supported me. I showed my appreciation by cheating on him, so he returned the compliment. Paranoid, I spent days alone in the house, peering through the kitchen blinds at every passing car, convinced the FBI was watching me. He finally told me to get clean or get out. I kicked the coke, but continued drinking.

He encouraged me when I decided to apply to law school. He even re-financed his house to pay tuition. We got married and were surprised by twin daughters. We had planned to have kids in our spare time but twins made us sit up and take notice. We hired a babysitter and between the three of us, we coped somehow. To all of our surprise I graduated from law school, even though I was drinking and smoking marijuana. I studied for the Bar exam with a joint in one hand and a glass of white wine in the other. Of course, I failed it. When I received the skinny envelope, I tearfully resolved to quit smoking dope. My sister, six months sober, suggested I quit drinking too. I did. That was September 11, 1986.

At ninety days sober, I passed the Bar and got a job. Eventually I found a home group in AA. For a while, I was a two-Step maniac— One and Twelve. My husband told me

(Continued on page 6)

February 2004....

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2 FIRST MON Spirit of San Francisco Committee Central Office, 1821 Sacramento San Francisco 7 pm	3 FIRST TUE Special Events Committee: Central Office, 1821 Sacramento San Francisco 7:30 pm	4 FIRST WED Special Needs Committee: Café Triest 1000 Bridgeway, Sausalito, CA 6 pm Intercounty Fellowship Board Orientation 6 pm Meeting 7 pm 180 Harrison Ave. Sausalito, CA 7 pm	5	6	7
8	9 SECOND MON SF Public Information Committee Central Office, 1821 Sacramento San Francisco 7 pm	10 SECOND TUE Bridging The Gap 1111 O'Farrell, 6:30 pm SF General Service 1111 O'Farrell, SF Orientation: 7 pm Meeting: 8 pm Marin H&I Lagunitas & Shady Ln Ross 7 pm	11 SECOND WED 12th Step Committee Central Office, 1821 Sacramento San Francisco 6:30 pm	12		
15 THIRD SUN Mission Fellowship Steering Committee 2900 24th / Florida San Francisco 1 pm	16 CENTRAL OFFICE CLOSED THIRD MON SF Teleservice Central Office, 1821 Sacramento San Francisco 6:30 pm Marin General Service 9 Ross Valley Rd San Rafael GSR Sharing: 7 pm District Meeting: 8 pm	17 THIRD TUE San Mateo General Service St. Andrews Church 15th & El Camino Real San Mateo 7:30 pm	18 THIRD WED Literature Review Committee Central Office, 1821 Sacramento San Francisco 6:30 pm	19		
22	23	24 FOURTH TUE Marin Teleservice 1360 Lincoln / Maple (Alano Club) San Rafael 7:30 pm	25	26 FOURTH THU WEBSITE COMMITTEE Central Office, 1821 Sacramento San Francisco 6:15 pm Marin PI Committee 1360 Lincoln Ave (Alano Club) San Rafael 7:15 pm LAST THU SF H&I Old First Church, 1751 Sacramento San Francisco Orientation: 7:15 pm Regular Meeting: 8 pm	27	28 FOURTH SAT General Service CNCA Meeting 320 N. McDowell Petaluma DCMCs: 10:30 am Main Meeting: Noon
29 LAST SUN Living Sober Convention Committee 1668 Bush SF 5:30 pm						

COMING EVENTS

2004	Call or visit the Central Office for copies of any flyers of interest to you or your group. Local events are in bold ; flyers of <u>current</u> local events, if available, are printed as space allows.
February 1	Broads Without Booze III, 1:30 p.m., United Irish Cultural Center, San Francisco, CA
February 13-15	ACYPAA Round-up, Oakland Marriott City Center, Oakland, CA www.acypaa.org
February 19-22	40th Annual International AA Women's Conference, Buffalo Convention Center, Buffalo, NY
February 27-29	Spring Fling, Memorial Auditorium, Sacramento, CA www.sacspringfling.org
April 9-11	North Shore Round-Up, Hyatt Regency Hotel, Vancouver, BC, CANADA www.northshorroundup.com
April 16-18	17th International AA Men's Conference, Marriott Oak Brook Hotel, Chicago, IL
June 4-6	Sunset Round-Up 2004, Holiday Inn Beachside, Key West, FL www.sunsetroundup.com

Secretaries: Please make these announcements:

Pages two and three list local AA service and conference planning *meetings*, as well as any local AA related *events* of which the Central Office has been notified. Please call Maury at the Central Office (674-1821) by the 15th of the previous month if you would like your event listed.



February
2004

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This Month in A.A. Trivia February

1. In the early days of AA, what did the members use as measures of progress before the 12 Steps?
2. Why are the objects that mark our progress in recovery called "chips"?
3. From where did the Serenity Prayer come, as we use it in AA?
4. Who wrote the "first" version of the Serenity Prayer?

See p. 11 for answers!!



MEETING CHANGES

New Meetings

5D 7:00am Financial
 Wed 12:15pm Financial
 Sat 8:00am Financial
 Tue 8:00am Financial
 Tue 1:30pm Financial

7AM BIG BOOK STUDY 215 Leidesdorff (BB, Cl, 45 min.)
 THE DRIVE THRU 660 California/Grant, Hecker Hall, enter through bookstore (SS, 1/2 hour)
 BOB S. MD AND THE GOOD OLDTIMERS 215 Leidesdorff (Bk)
 AM READING LIVING SOBER 215 Leidesdorff (Bk, 45 min.)
 AFTERNOON CAME TO BELIEVE 215 Leidesdorff (Bk)

Meeting Changes

Sat 10:00am Novato
 Mon&Thu 12:00pm Financial
 Wed 8:15pm San Rafael
 Mon 8:00am Financial
 Wed 8:00am Financial
 Thu 8:00am Financial
 Fri 8:00am Financial
 Mon 7:00pm Financial
 Mon 3:30pm Financial
 Fri 3:30pm Financial
 Wed 1:30pm Financial
 Tue 1:30pm Financial
 Wed 12:00pm Financial

INTIMATE FEELINGS 1905 Novato Blvd. (was 1907 Novato Blvd.)
 PAX WEST 660 California/Grant (was 215 Leidesdorff)
 TOOL TIME STEP STUDY 1360 Lincoln/Maple (was Wednesday Night Meeting at 8pm)
 AM PASS IT ON 215 Leidesdorff (was Pass It On for 1 hour, now 45 min.)
 JUST TRADITIONS 215 Leidesdorff (was 7:45am, now 45 min.)
 AM CAME TO BELIEVE 215 Leidesdorff (was 7:45am, now 45 min.)
 10 MINUTE STEP SPEAKER 215 Leidesdorff (was 7:45am, now 45 min.)
 PM PASS IT ON 215 Leidesdorff (was Language of the Heart)
 PM LANGUAGE OF THE HEART 215 Leidesdorff (was PM Reading Came to Believe)
 BEST OF THE GRAPEVINE, VOL. II 215 Leidesdorff (was Early Weekend)
 NEW HIGHS 660 California/Grant (was 215 Leidesdorff)
 BROKERS OPEN BOOK 660 California/Grant (was 215 Leidesdorff)
 WEDNESDAY FELLOWSHIP OF THE SPIRIT 756 Mission St./4th St., McKenna Hall
 (was New Century Brown Baggers at 261 Fell St./Gough)
 VETERAN'S COFFEE BREAK 1060 Howard St. (was 1063 Market St.)
 SUTTER STREET BEGINNERS 2135 Sutter St. (removed wh)

Thu 10:30am South of Market
 Sat 6:00pm Western Addition

No Longer Meeting

Thu 7:30pm Financial
 Thu 6:00pm Tenderloin
 Thu 6:00pm Laurel Heights
 Fri 12:00pm Civic Center

DOWNTOWN MEN'S GROUP 555 California St.
 MILLIONAIRES CLUB 480 Ellis St.
 THUS WE GROW 3700 California St.
 CIVIC CENTER STEPS 261 Fell St.

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES !!

Intergroup Representative:
 Intercounty Fellowship Board (I.F.B.)

The San Francisco and Marin County Intercounty Fellowship (our Intergroup) has the mission of supporting the AA fellowship within the two county area. The Intergroup provides essential services that might not otherwise be available, such as operation of a bookstore, professional staffing, maintaining an updated meeting schedule and website, publishing *The Point*, answering inquiries from those seeking help, and acting as an information exchange for all the meetings in San Francisco and Marin.

Every AA Group in the area is allowed to have one Intergroup Rep, elected by the Group, to represent that Group's group conscience at the Intergroup level and see

to it that the group has a voice in everything that is done and that all information is carried back to the Group. In addition, the Intergroup Rep may serve on various committees that are necessary to the smooth, efficient, and effective operation of our Intergroup so that the message of AA is carried to alcoholics. (A list of these committees is on p. 8 of this newsletter)

In order to become an Intergroup Rep, find out which one of the Groups you attend does not have a current rep or, alternatively one whose term is about to expire. Make yourself available to the group for the service and, if they see fit, you can take your seat at the next Intergroup meeting. ↑

Group Speakers for February 2004

TUESDAY DOWNTOWN

1101 O'Farrell, Urban Life Center, San Francisco
Tuesday, 8:00 pm

DATE	SPEAKER	HOME GROUP	DOS
2/03/04	Gary Ann J.	Friday Smokefree	6/16/82
2/10/04	Pat Mc T.	Regroup Saturday	9/01/96
2/17/04	Tim V.	Primary Purpose	8/09/96
	Sioux City, Iowa		
2/24/04	Bob A.	Friday Smokefree	2/20/82

SATURDAY NIGHT SPEAKER MEETING

215 Leidesdorff & Commercial
Saturday, 8:00 pm

DATE	SPEAKER	HOME GROUP	DOS
2/07/04	John C.	Cocoanuts	Feb. 1985
2/14/04	Bill C.	Gold Mine Group	Aug. 1982
2/21/04	Dale H.	Lennox Group,	Jan.
	Manhattan		
2/28/04	Jeff T.	Second Tradition	Dec. 1990

FOUR FORTY NINERS

Slovenian Hall, Vermont & Mariposa
Friday, 8:00 pm

January Speaker Chair:
Ed K.

DATE	SPEAKER	HOME GROUP
2/6	Pete F.	7am Marina Dock
2/18	Harry M.	Any Lengths
2/20	Karen R.	Any Lengths
2/27	Paul S.	Any Lengths

FRIDAY ALL GROUPS

1101 O'Farrell, Urban Life Center, San Francisco
Friday, 8:30 pm
Signed for the hearing impaired

DATE	HOST GROUP	SPEAKER
2.6.04	Gay Men's Stag	Marya T.
2.13.04	Cow Hollow Young People's	Si P.
2.20.04	Friendly Circle Beginners	Philo H.
2.27.04	They Stopped in Time	Leslie C.

FIRESIDE

1011 Garfield & Junipero Serra
Friday, 8:30 pm

Last Friday, 2/27/04 speaker/chip meeting with Bruce K.

BRISBANE BREAKFAST BUNCH

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

DATE	SPEAKER	HOME GROUP
Feb. 1st	Jim A., 10 yrs.	San Jose
Feb. 8th	Kathy P., 6 yrs.	So. San Francisco
Feb 15th	Fred B., 19 yrs.	San Bruno
Feb. 22nd	Sheila B, 14 yrs.	Daly City
Feb. 29th	Dave P., 15 yrs.	Martinez

All open speaker (or speaker / discussion) meetings are welcome to publish their month's listing in The Point as space allows. The deadline for submission of the information is the 15th of the month preceding publication. Please email submission to: thepoint@aasf.org

CONTRIBUTIONS

to the Central Office were made through January 20, 2004 honoring the following members

ONGOING MEMORIALS

Bob
R. W.

ANNIVERSARIES

Marvin R. - 8 Years
Barbara B. - 15 Years
Barbara W. - 24 Years
Lyle W. - 29 Years
Lucille McQ. - 31 Years
John V. - 33 Years
Dixon F. - 44 Years

Endless Summer
Matt - 1 Year
Jane - 1 Year
Tim - 1 Year
Jolie - 2 Years
Lisa - 2 Years
Jill P. - 3 Years

Robin - 3 Years
Coleman - 3 Years
Haven - 4 Years
Matt - 5 Years
Jenny M. - 6 Years
Kaylen - 10 Years
Gunn - 15 Years

(Burning Desires, continued from page 1)

to quit calling everyone alcoholics just because they drank—including him. Eventually I found a sponsor and worked the Steps. After that, I gave up trying to Twelfth Step everybody.

Just because I was sober, stuff didn't stop happening. One winter I had a sinus infection that wouldn't go away. My husband sent me to one of his doctor friends who diagnosed cancer. Surgery and radiation left me so exhausted I could barely crawl out of bed in the morning. Somehow, we stumbled through those months; he drove the girls to kindergarten in the morning, picked them up after school and read them stories at bedtime.


Life went on. We had the usual issues of couples in the sandwich generation, raising our kids and helping our parents. But life wasn't all work and no play. He cajoled me into traveling—to England, Scotland, Canada and Mexico. He got me to try other feats, skiing at Tahoe, sailing off Point Reyes, snorkeling in Hawaii, and even flying in a hot air balloon over Napa Valley.

I don't always go along with what he wants me to do. We have strong personalities and we bicker. (When he read this, he said, "Bicker? We fight like cats and dogs!" Whatever.) There have been times when I wanted to leave him and probably more times when he wanted to leave me. I went to a women's conference in Marin one year. The discussion leader on "Relationships" revealed how she had stayed married to the same man through twenty-eight years and four children. "My philosophy is that, if you

aren't with Jack the Ripper, work with what you have."

On our good days, we work our relationship like a program. We thank each other for the little things like taking out the trash and emptying the dishwasher. Neither of us is a perfect roommate. He still flushes the toilet upstairs when I am taking a shower downstairs, and I plot how I can scald him for revenge. To keep from killing each other, we set aside one night a week as Date Night. When the girls were toddlers, our date often consisted of leaving them with the babysitter, walking out of the house by the front door and sneaking back in through the garage to watch a movie video and munch microwave popcorn. Woo-hoo!

Now our daughters are twenty years old, juniors in college who are venturing out into the world on their own. We are just the two of us again. We find ourselves enjoying many of the same things we did when we first lived together—hiking at Point Reyes, plays, art exhibits, traveling. We even roar around town on a new motorcycle. Moto Man and Biker Babe. Right.

Today my husband is ready to give up the 60-hour workweeks at the hospital. He dreams of retiring and working half time. It looks as if next year his dream will come true. Poor me, I still have to work full-time for a few years. No problem; we will figure it out. I don't regret the past; it led us to where we are today. Being together for twenty-nine years is a gift; a gift I might have lost if I hadn't been sober. 

I'm Sober Now— Can I Have a Boyfriend?

by Anonymous

I admitted I was powerless over alcohol and that my life had become unmanageable. That is not an easy step to take, but I did it. I realized that I had medicated most, if not all of my problems by the bottle; that I'd used any and everything else to avoid feeling. I didn't know how to feel anything except pain and self-loathing, and I was sick of it...so I drank to avoid that all-too-familiar place. As I gathered more 24-hour periods in sobriety, I learned of my basic "inability to form a true partnership with another human being."

Well, all that was a few years ago. I am still powerless over alcohol. I'm experiencing feelings a lot more than I ever have, and am now trying to have relationships with human beings as never before.

So, can I have a boyfriend now?

One thing is for sure: I suddenly feel very frightened as I consider that question. During my drinking days, I never had a true relationship. Of course, I didn't have that rev-

elation until I "kept coming back" for a while. I have since been building relationships in ways that are unfamiliar to me, and it seems very real and honest. It feels good when someone listens to me, and I can listen back and sincerely care. It's great to build a relationship in which conversations aren't limited to bar gossip or where to meet for cocktails.

The challenge at this stage in my sobriety is to examine my motives when attempting to build new relationships. I am desperately afraid of people I'm attracted to. I'm unsure whether I want to approach a man for a platonic friendship, or for a date. How do I start a conversation with someone I'm attracted to? What do I say? Do I let him know right away that I am attracted to him, or pretend that I am not, then make a fool of myself by flirting? The questions go on and on....

I guess I just answered my own question—I can't have a boyfriend right now!

(Continued on page 11)

Dear Alky

This is only one drunk's opinion. For a more in depth discussion, CALL YOUR SPONSOR!

Dear Alky,

When I first quit drinking, my partner was very supportive. Now that I have a little over a year, he complains that I go to too many meetings, I neglect him, and I'm "no fun" anymore. I don't want to go with him to the bars or to parties because everybody is always drinking and smoking pot. I don't think he is going to change his lifestyle for me. I try not to nag him, but I wonder if I am going to have to give up either my boyfriend or my program. Do I have to choose?

Hurting Hunk

Dear Hunk,

Congratulations, you have just won a free membership in Al-Anon! Seriously, you might want to check out a meeting of AA's partner program. You can still love an alcoholic and stay sober yourself. It's all about boundaries: you can't get him sober, and he can't make you drink. You can still go to bars or parties if you have a good reason to—and if you're confident the situation won't jeopardize your sobriety. Read "The Family Afterward" in *Alcoholics Anonymous*. It is normal for the family of a recovering alcoholic to feel neglected and to resent the time he spends at meetings and helping other drunks get sober. You have to balance your boyfriend and your program. Let him know how important he is to you, but also how crucial it is for you to stay sober. Take care of yourself, go to lots of meetings and work the Steps. Don't let resentment spoil your life with your boyfriend. If he can't support your sobriety, you may have to choose, but take your time before you make a decision. Take care!

Yours, Alky

Dear Alky,

Since I got sober three years ago, my younger sister, who is also sober in AA with a couple years more than me, seems to think she is my sponsor or something. She calls and e-mails with advice that I never even asked for. Her latest thing is telling me what I should do for our elderly mother, who is starting to lose her memory and needs more and more attention. I don't think just because my sister has more time than me she is entitled to tell me what to do. What do you think?

Big Brother

Dear Big Brother,

Your sister is stepping out of line if she is trying to be your sponsor or tell you what your responsibilities are to your mother. Even a sponsor with a bazillion years of sobriety can only offer suggestions. Probably your sister is anxious about your mother, and is turning to you for help. Look to another family member or friend who can mediate where your mother is concerned. Pray for your Sis and you may feel better.

Take care, Alky



Dear Alky,

Here's another take on the "13th Stepper" question that Distressed Diva asked you about:

A number of years ago, I was new in Alcoholics Anonymous, but had already been active for several years in another 12-step program. My sponsor in the other program was a man who was also in AA. After we worked together for a while, I realized that I was attracted to him. Oh no, I thought. This is terrible; I can't date my sponsor! But I found a solution: I fired him and got another sponsor. Before long, my former sponsor and I were going to the same AA meetings, then moving in together, and a few years ago we were married. Just so you know—what looks from the outside like "13th stepping" may really be two people finding each other and living happily ever after in AA.

Sober Lovebird

Dear Lovebird,

You and your husband are living proof that we never really know what is going on with other people, so we might as well mind our own business. Good for you for getting yourself another sponsor so you could have a life with your newfound love. May you both have many happy sober years together.

Fondly, Alky

Dear Alky,

I have another problem in addition to alcohol. When I go to AA meetings I want to share about myself openly and honestly, but sometimes people in the meetings put me down if I talk about drugs. How am I supposed to stay sober? I thought most alcoholics also used drugs, but some (the old timers especially) tell me to "confine your share to your problems with alcohol." Can they do that?

Druggie

Dear Druggie,

Every meeting can take its own group conscience on topics of discussion. Some closed meetings limit shares to alcoholism only. Try to find meetings with a little more openness to members who also have problems with drugs. For many younger AAs, drugs were easier to get when they were teenagers, and then they graduated to alcohol. You might find more kindred spirits at meetings with young people. Take what you like and leave the rest—that goes for meetings too. Find the ones that work for you. And remember, Bill and Dr. Bob also used drugs, so you are in very good company.

Yours in sobriety, Alky 

If you have a question for Alky, please send it to:
Alky C/O Central Office
1821 Sacramento St., San Francisco, CA 94109-3528
OR E-Mail it to: ThePoint@aasf.org

Following is a list of the names and contact information for the IFB Officers and Chairpersons of most of the service committees.

If you are interested in doing service on a committee, or, if you wish to receive more information about a committee, please contact these committee chairs.

INTERGROUP OFFICERS:

CHAIR—

Danny F. dannyfl12@earthlink.net

VICE CHAIR—

Marc D. 415.999-0290

TREASURER—

Patrick M. patrick_m30075@yahoo.com

RECORDING SECRETARY—

Janet B. 415.396-6125

COMMITTEE CHAIRS:

CENTRAL OFFICE COMMITTEE—

Joe G. 415.350-0373

ORIENTATION COMMITTEE—

Bill R. 415.861-7355

LITERATURE COMMITTEE—

Doug F. 415.821-4049

SPECIAL EVENTS—

David B. David@turnershouse.net

SPECIAL NEEDS COMMITTEE—

David P. 415.606-6932

WEBSITE COMMITTEE—

Michael R. 415.392-0458

ARCHIVES COMMITTEE—

Ray M. ramus@prodigy.net

SF TELESERVICE COMMITTEE—

Peter M. sfteservice@aasf.org

SF PI/CPC COMMITTEE—

Deborah D. zorrah@well.com

12th STEP COMMITTEE—

Lisa K. 415.242-1004

General Service—Baffling, Yet Powerful

by Michael F.

I managed to stay sober without doing service above the group level for more than two decades. Then, a year and a half ago, I got corralled into being the GSR for my home group, a small group with an attendance of 5 to 15 people. The job needed to be done, and it was my turn to give it a try.

I must admit that I didn't see the importance of higher level service. I only vaguely understood that this GSR and Intergroup stuff kept A.A. going. I also knew Intergroup kept the local A.A. office open and provided meeting schedules, books, and pamphlets to local groups. However, GSR and national level business were altogether mysterious to me.

I'm now halfway through my term as GSR. I'm also the District Committee Member (DCM) for District 255, Haight-Ashbury. DCM is a level up from GSR. I get a lot of laughs when I talk about rising in the ranks of power and authority of Alcoholics Anonymous, however it is a lot more responsibility. Two monthly meetings, a quarterly meeting and the monthly planning meeting have been a little hard to schedule. It took three months before we voted on anything (That first vote was about getting a new coffee pot. It passed, by the way.)

The decision process seems really slow and arduous. There has not been a lot of voting going on. There have been lots of reports. There have been lots of meetings. There has been a lot of confusion. I started wondering why I was doing this, just what the purpose was, but I approached the position with the same spirit I used when asked to be secretary or treasurer. I have actually reaped the same rewards. Service takes me out of my own problems, and I learn something new. Group level service helped me understand how the group maintains itself in order to carry the message to suffering alcoholics, while committee level service showed me how group conscience is carried from GSRs to the national level, allowing groups to be the final decision-makers for our organization. I have acquired a new faith in AA's ability to sustain itself.

The rules and mechanics of the GSR meetings are complicated, but the purpose is simple – to bring group conscience to the National Convention. The purpose of GSR, District, and Area meetings is to prepare our representative to carry group conscience to the National Convention. Doug G. is our Area Delegate and Representative to the National Assembly. GSRs gather the conscience on agenda topics from our groups, and he carries it to the convention. The decisions made will affect A.A. as a whole. This is how groups remain the ultimate authority for A.A.

A.A. has many members. There are fewer GSRs than members. There are fewer Delegates to the national convention than GSRs. There are even fewer members working in the office in New York. It takes lots of meetings at every level to carry the group conscience to the General Service Office of AA. All the business meetings are necessary to keep the channel flowing from groups to the national level. That is the price of keeping the groups in charge of AA. ↑

Treasures of the Twelve & Twelve

by Ben N.

When I got to AA, I was pretty much beaten into submission by alcohol and was just about ready to surrender. Well, okay, I *was* ready to surrender, but it was, more or less, a conditional surrender.

Yes, I definitely wanted to stop drinking. That wasn't up for argument. However, a lifetime of defiance, contrariness and self-will run riot had left its mark on me. Old habits die hard. I still had a lot of that "yeah, but I'm different...you don't understand" left in me from years and years of seeing myself as unique.

By the time I came to AA, I was a died-in-the-wool agnostic. I had gone through the years of being a fervent Catholic, then a flaming atheist and finally, had mellowed into an indifferent agnostic. The point is, I wanted no part of that "God business." I was too smart for that and was more than happy to prove it to anyone who was interested.

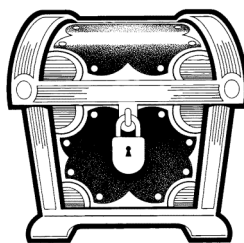
Not long after I got sober, I met a man with whom I became friends. I enjoyed his company and spent a lot of time sitting around talking with him before and after meetings. He had been in AA a bit longer than I had, which was not long.

My new friend was constantly complaining about the "God business" and was always saying

I discovered that I was far from unique in AA, particularly with regard to my egotistical pride in my "intellect" and my resistance to accept anything about a "Higher Power."

how he couldn't really work the Steps; he just couldn't get past the Second Step because of the God thing. He would go on and on about how it had him "bogged down." I would commiserate with him endlessly and we would shake our heads in dismay as we pondered our plight. Of course, anyone who wished to comment to us on our dilemma and offer an opinion contrary to ours was in store for a firestorm of browbeating and philosophical nonsense spewing from our just-dry, tinderbox mouths and empty heads.

My friend and I were ready with quick wit and slow reasoning to explain why people who believed in God and spirituality and all that sort of "nonsense" were just plain stupid. We would sit and argue endlessly with anyone who had the patience to engage with us. Of course, most people began cutting a wide swath to avoid us, and willing debating opponents became fewer and fewer. Finally, our circle had narrowed down to a handful of regulars, some who had been "around" AA for quite a long time.



Most of these conversations took place in the coffee shop of an "alano club" near where I lived. This club had two good-sized meeting rooms and the coffee shop. Meetings went on in the meeting rooms just about all the time and from the beginning, I had attended them with regularity. But that soon began to change, as we intellectuals seemed to find more stimulation and help in the coffee shop, jacking our jaws about the meaning of life. I was spending more and more time in the coffee shop arguing than I was in meetings getting sober.

Prior to becoming an AA intellectual, I had acquired a sponsor. He had told me that the secret to staying sober was to not drink, go to meetings, do service work, read the Big Book and do what it says. Anyway, one day as I was sitting there in the coffee shop waxing eloquent, my sponsor walked in, having just attended a meeting in the

room next door. He stood there for a minute or two listening to us go on and then finally, cleared his throat and said, "Come with me." We walked outside and he asked me why I hadn't been in the meeting. I explained to him that I was sitting there talking AA with my friends, and that I found that as helpful or more helpful than sitting in meetings.

He said, "Oh, you do, do you?" He remained silent a moment. Finally he told me that unfortunately, I had joined the AA Debating Society and that I had done so to the detriment of my program and my sobriety. He told me that he had watched me slowly but surely cut back on meetings and increase the amount of time I spent sitting around in the coffee shop. He asked me why.

I explained to him that I was trying to figure out all this stuff about God, insanity...that sort of thing. I told him how I was having trouble coming to terms with a "Higher Power" since I didn't believe in God. I explained that I had to "reason" things out because I was an intellectual sort of guy. He laughed. (I'm not sure why.)

Finally he asked me why I had come to AA. I told him I had come to stop drinking, of course. He asked why I didn't stop on my own, and I said I couldn't. He asked if AA had helped me stop, and I said, "Yes, it did." He said, "Well, if

(Continued on page 10)



A.A. On the Road: Sober Resorts

By Carolyn C.

Please Note: The Intercounty Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous does not endorse any commercial enterprise, including sober travel packages. The following article appears in The Point as one member's experience.

When I was out there drinking, geographics were my specialty. I love to travel but my past journeys across the U.S., jaunts through Europe and a lost weekend in North Africa are today only foggy memories. What I treasure most about sober living is remembering in vivid detail all the sights and sounds of my travels. One highlight at five years' sobriety was a trip organized specifically for sober folks. I am now in my eighteenth year and still enjoy traveling with my AA buddies to clean and sober environments.

My friend Steve A. and his brother Guy are the founders and owners of the company that organizes the trips. When they were drinking, they could never get it together to go on vacation. After they got sober, they started enjoying vacations, and in 1987 came up with the idea of sober vacations for groups of people in recovery. People raved about the previous year's trip to Ixtapa, so I signed up.

Back in 1992, a weeks' sober adventure in Ixtapa for double occupancy in an air-conditioned adobe bungalow, three sumptuous meals a day, and airfare from Los Angeles cost about \$1,400. (The cost now from San Francisco is \$1,690 per person.) It was a winning combo for me. The real selling point was the stellar list of speakers, marathon meetings and topic groups, in addition to a myriad of land and water sports. Five hundred sober folks taking over a resort on a secluded stretch of sand between Acapulco and Puerto

Vallarta is my idea of being rocketed into the fourth dimension. The flight out was great fun and the bus ride from the Guadalajara airport was classic school-kid adventure. The resort was breathtaking. Tucked away off a dusty country road, this charming seaside village feels like an authentic adobe hacienda; lushly landscaped with flowery cobblestone paths, it captures the heart and soul of old Mexico. The resort offers something for everyone, and is a great trip for singles, couples or families. Some of my friends with kids were thrilled about the day care service; youngsters were whisked away for daylong activities, leaving sober moms and dads free to loll about at poolside or catch a few back-to-back meetings.



In my experience, when you mix sun, sand and sapphire blue water with skimpily clad alcoholics, relationships begin sprouting up left and right. On this trip, after only two days, people were swapping hotel rooms! There are some who, having met on one of these trips, are married today, thus creating great "boy meets girl on AA campus" shares for their sponsees!

Like an AA convention, when you get this many sober folks in one place, the joy and gratitude is palpable. One day, after a great morning meeting, a group of us rented horses. The sea breeze whispered a Higher Power's presence as we galloped along the ocean's edge. Later we took a trip into the main town of Zihuatenejo for some shopping.

It's been over a decade now, and my trip to the resort is still vivid in my mind. I thank my Higher Power for the friends I met on that trip and for the fond sober memories. ↑

(Treasures...Continued from page 9)

you can't stop on your own but you can stop with AA's help, doesn't that mean AA is a power greater than you are?"

I thought about it. He was right. He directed me to the Twelve and Twelve, Step Two. In there, it talks about the "hoop we have to jump through" being much larger than we might think. It also said that it wasn't necessary to believe anything in particular to stay sober. He told me to read the entire section on Step Two.

In reading it, I discovered that I was far from unique in AA, particularly with regard to my egotistical pride in my "intellect" and my resistance to accept anything about a

"Higher Power." I discovered that I could accept AA as my Higher Power. That was an amazing concept to me because it was so simple. In all my mental meandering, that thought had never occurred to me. I had to complicate the entire thing and turn it into a cosmological goat-roping circus.

Once I read and absorbed the black parts in Step Two, I could see that I had to resign my membership in the AA Debating Society, keep coming back and "keep it simple." There was nothing to "figure out." If I worked the program like those who had come before me, I would "come to believe." So, that's what I did and that is, indeed, what happened. That was definitely a "Treasure" in the Twelve and Twelve I found then, and I have valued it ever since. ↑



What Happened to Joe

By Lauren H.

Who hasn't—at least one time in their life—asked, "What ever happened to Joe?" Well, we here at AA have the answer to that question. Not only do we provide the story of his life in full color cartoon images, we satisfy your curiosity with a blow-by-blow drunk-a-log into recovery! If you haven't known a "Joe" in your lifetime, you have at least known someone just like him. It could be the story of YOUR life.

When the story begins, Joe has all the trappings of a successful life...good job, pretty wife, and lots of friends. But all that merry-making gets out of hand and before you know it, Joe's drinking is getting him in trouble. There are vivid, colorful images of Joe drunk driving, his wife cowering in fear of him, his boss reprimanding him. He doesn't understand that his drinking may be causing all these troubles. The cartoon depicts lots of thought bubbles of Joe's rationalizations. At the urging of his wife, he talks to a family friend about AA. He doesn't believe he is an alcoholic yet, so he thanks the man anyway. The seed is planted. He thinks he can stay off the wagon on his own and he does pretty well for a little while, until one day walking home from work he decides that a few drinks won't hurt. Well, you know what happens after that. Drinking, drinking, and

then dead drunk. The images begin to look more like Superman fighting the evil villains, but it is really Joe battling the disease of alcoholism. Then when his wife threatens to leave him, the interminable finger of God points to the inevitable...an AA meeting!

He can't deny it any longer. He finds himself in a colorful room full of happy, sober people. He listens intently to the speaker and is impressed with his honesty. He hears how these people drank like him and how they are happy today. He loves AA! From a cast of caricature headshots out of an old movie, he is taught anonymity, the seventh tradition, and open-mindedness. Joe looks happy again. He goes to AA every day. His family loves him; his job thinks he's great. He even starts talking to his old friends about his drinking, helping them get sober. Joe learns the most valuable lesson of AA...that one alcoholic helps another.

This pamphlet is a colorful and humorous depiction (like many of our own stories) of the road we follow to get into AA. It is simplified and streamlined, without all the trials and tribulations of getting sober (definitely not the AA version of *Ulysses*.) *What Happened to Joe?* is a useful tool to help us remember not to take ourselves so seriously. Sobriety can be a blast! †

(I'm Sober Now...Continued from page 6)

I am an addict who goes from one extreme to another. Must I have a boyfriend, or can I just have a date? Maybe I could have a friendship that doesn't have a hidden motive...that sounds too recovered! I know that I have a lot to offer someone, that I can be a great person to hang out with... don't all those guys I am attracted to know that? What's their problem, anyway?

As with most things in my recovery, I need to start slow, learn first how to form a true partnership with another human being, and then how to have honesty, trust and intimacy in that partnership. When I think about it, I need to have this type of relationship with *myself* first before I power-drive my way to having a boyfriend. I hate this soul-searching, and having my Higher Power show me a path that I don't like! I am an alcoholic, "self-centered in the extreme." I know that my HP has a plan for me already and that I just need to get out of His (and my) way.

So, I don't think a boyfriend is in my HP's plan today. Maybe I need to take *myself* out for the time being, and realize that the relationship I seek, with honesty, trust and intimacy, is with my God, "as I understand Him."

A.A. Trivia Answers

1. The Oxford Group's "four absolutes": "Almost always, if I measure my decision carefully by the yardsticks of absolute honesty, absolute unselfishness, absolute purity, and absolute love, and it checks up pretty well with those four, then my answer can't be very far out of the way."—Dr. Bob, on using the Absolutes for testing motives and choices in sobriety (1948).
2. Early drunks played a lot of poker in the sober clubs. Plain and colored "chips" are still given out today by many groups around the country to signify a desire to stop drinking and to represent different lengths of sobriety.
3. A New York member named Jack found it in a 1942 New York Herald Tribune obituary and brought it to the Vesey Street Office. It was printed on wallet cards and included in outgoing mail.
4. Evidence points to Boethius, the Roman philosopher (480-524 A.D.) The prayer's thoughts were used from then on by "religious-like people who had to suffer first by the English, later the Prussian puritans . . . then the Pietists from southwest Germany . . . then A.A.s...." — GSO Beth K., (1979)

AA Group Contributions - November 2003

Intercounty Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous - San Francisco and Marin Counties

Group	Nov. '03	YTD	Group	Nov. '03	YTD
FELLOWSHIP CONTRIBUTIONS			Marin City M-F 6:30pm		\$340.00
Brisbane Breakfast Bunch	\$40.76	\$304.66	Marin Newcomers M 8:30pm		\$206.00
Central Office Donation Box		\$617.95	Marin Sober Group F 8pm		\$122.50
Deer Park Discovery Group F 8pm		\$34.80	Marin Young People Fri. 8:30pm		\$145.66
IFB Meeting	\$94.90	\$1,020.51	Mill Valley 7AM Daily 7am	\$600.00	\$3,146.09
Marin General Service Unity Day		\$98.09	Mill Valley Discussion Wed 8:30pm		\$87.00
Marin Teleservice		\$2,200.00	Mission Fireside Group W 8:30pm		\$40.00
Marin Teleservice Spaghetti Feed		\$95.00	M. V. Original Smokeless Th 8pm		\$100.00
MCYPAA		\$9.18	Monday Blues M 6:30pm		\$121.88
Mendocino AA		\$20.00	Monday Night Meeting M 8pm		\$50.00
Mission Fellowship X-mas Potluck		\$30.00	Monday Night Stag M 8pm	\$563.97	\$2,419.97
Serenity Group - Alameda		\$44.13	Morning After Sa 10am		\$1,343.28
Spirit of SF NYE Event		\$191.06	Nativity Monday Night Big Book M 8pm		\$120.00
Stinson Beach Fellowship		\$223.00	Newcomers Step M 7:30pm		\$483.60
Sunday Step Study Su 4pm Pacifica		\$150.00	Noon Discussion Th 12pm	\$216.00	\$372.50
Unidentified Groups	\$191.95	\$981.29	Noon Hope F 12pm		\$288.18
We Are Not St. Francis		\$15.00	Noon Tu 12pm		\$538.58
Western Round-Up		\$2,231.51	Novato Basics Tu 8pm		\$143.00
TOTAL FELLOWSHIP CONTRIBUTIONS	\$327.61	\$8,266.18	Novato Big Book Tu 12pm		\$196.00
MARIN CONTRIBUTIONS			Novato Spirit Discussion Fr 12pm		\$353.90
11th Step Meeting M 8pm		\$276.91	On Awakening Daily 5:30am		\$560.00
12 & 12 Study Sa 8:15am		\$100.00	Primary Purpose W 8:30pm		\$413.00
7am Urgent Care Daily 7am		\$1,160.00	Rise N Shine Su 10am		\$219.22
Awakenings Sa. 8:30pm		\$280.00	Ross-San Anselmo M 8:30pm	\$60.00	\$142.88
Attitude Adjustment Hour Daily 7am		\$2,415.00	San Anselmo Fireside Meeting Su 8pm		\$81.12
Awareness/Acceptance M 10:30am		\$198.40	San Geronimo Valley Mon. 8pm		\$85.99
Back to Basics Sun. 9:30am		\$176.30	Saturday Serenity Sa 8pm		\$571.15
Blackie's Pasture Sa 8:30pm		\$1,177.66	Saturday Women's Speaker Sa 6pm		\$75.00
Caledonia Su 8pm		\$580.67	Serendipity Sa 11am		\$560.00
Candlelight Meditation Mon. 7:30pm		\$110.00	Sisters in Sobriety Th 7:30pm		\$175.00
Crescent New Growth Su 7pm		\$85.00	Six O'Clock Sunset Th 6pm		\$423.93
Crossroads Su 12pm	\$227.50	\$1,617.50	Sober & Serene Fri. 7pm		\$400.00
Day At At Time Daily 6:30am		\$600.00	Sober Mom's F 11:30am		\$74.73
Experience, Strength & Hope Sa 6pm		\$212.50	Spiritual Testosterone Su 8:30am		\$200.00
Freedom Finders F 8:30pm		\$425.24	Steps to Freedom M 8:30pm		\$563.79
Friday Night Book Fr 8:30pm		\$162.50	Steps to the Solution Wed. 7:15pm		\$90.00
Friday Night Unmanageables 8:30pm		\$144.00	Streetfighters Sa 9am		\$103.27
Gratitude M 12pm		\$480.67	Sunday Express 6pm		\$140.00
Greenfield Newcomers Sun. 7pm		\$160.00	Sunday Friendship 7pm		\$68.90
Happy Hour Th 6pm		\$212.50	Sunday Night Mill Valley Su 7:30pm		\$10.00
Happy, Joyous, and Free M-F 12pm		\$250.00	Survivors M 12pm	\$91.20	\$566.12
High & Dry Wed. 12pm	\$50.00	\$50.00	Terra Linda Th. 8:30pm	\$300.00	\$800.00
Intimate Feelings Sa 10am	\$75.00	\$175.00	Terra Linda Night Stag Th. 8pm		\$500.00
Inverness Sunday Serenity 10am		\$60.00	Terra Linda Th 8:30pm		\$700.00
Island Group Th 8pm		\$111.00	T.G. I'm Sober M 6pm		\$182.41
Keep It Simple Mon. 8:30pm		\$100.00	T.G.I. Tuesday Tu 6pm	\$23.20	\$154.60
Living in the Solution F 6pm		\$622.92	T.G.I.F. F 6pm		\$42.60

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Group	Nov. '03	YTD	Group	Nov. '03	YTD
The Extra Support Group F 8:30pm		\$292.17	Boy's Night Out Tues. 7:30pm		\$180.00
Three Step Group Sa 5:30pm		\$643.60	Brokers Open Book Tu 1:30pm		\$153.44
Thursday Night Speaker Th 8:30pm		\$2,387.00	Buena Vista Breakfast Su 12pm		\$333.54
Tiburon Beginners Tu 7:10pm		\$814.50	Bushwackers Sat. 9am		\$60.00
Tiburon Haven Su 12pm		\$400.00	BYOL Wed. 12:30pm		\$30.00
Tiburon Tuesday Beginners & Closed		\$763.00	CLAADAAGH Sa 8:15pm		\$120.00
Tiburon Women's Candlelight W 8pm		\$33.51	Castro Discussion W 8pm		\$792.66
To Thine Own Self Be True Tues. 12pm	\$40.50	\$40.50	Castro Monday Big Book M 8pm		\$355.03
Tuesday Smokeless Tu 8:30pm		\$1.28	Civic Center Nooners M 12pm		\$134.00
Tuesday Twelve Step 6:30pm		\$20.00	Cocoanuts Su 9am	\$174.00	\$492.00
Wednesday Mid-Week W 6pm		\$224.69	Come N Get It F 6:30pm		\$119.63
Wednesday Night Candlelight W 8pm		\$77.00	Common Welfare Th 8pm		\$198.18
Wednesday Night Speaker Discusion W 7pm		\$36.00	Compass Group W 9pm	\$171.00	\$377.00
Wednesday Noon W 12pm		\$236.00	Creative Alcoholics M 6pm		\$260.14
Wednesday Sundowners 6pm		\$56.00	Design For Living Sa 8am		\$884.36
Women for Women Wed. 12pm	\$120.00	\$120.00	Each Day A New Beginning F 7am		\$1,018.58
Women On Monday M 7pm		\$105.61	Each Day A New Beginning M 7am		\$1,285.17
Women on Wednesdays 7pm		\$65.27	Each Day A New Beginning Su 8am		\$225.89
Women's Big Book Tu 10:30am		\$302.50	Each Day A New Beginning Th 7am		\$409.59
Women's Step Study Group M 12pm		\$272.54	Each Day A New Beginning Tu 7am	\$203.63	\$1,148.94
Working Dogs W 12:05pm		\$200.00	Each Day A New Beginning W 7am		\$786.58
TOTAL MARIN CONTRIBUTIONS	\$513.00	\$19,034.94	Early Start F 6pm		\$526.70
SAN FRANCISCO CONTRIBUTIONS			Early, Joyous & Free Th. 7am		\$60.00
7am As Bill Sees It Fri.		\$150.00	Easy Does It Tu 6pm		\$110.00
7AM Grab Bag M 7am	\$20.91	\$119.07	Eleventh Hour Tu 1pm		\$100.00
7am Open Discussion Tu 7am	\$20.91	\$20.91	Embarcadero Group We 12:10pm		\$70.35
AA As You Like It Tu 5:30pm		\$259.95	Endless Summer F 8:30pm	\$31.64	\$582.67
AA Step Study Su 6pm		\$327.99	Eureka Step Tu 6pm		\$221.94
A New Start F 8:30pm		\$371.52	Eureka Valley Topic M 6pm		\$878.29
A is for Alcohol Tu 6pm	\$31.98	\$243.94	Experience, Strength & Hope Wed. 7:15pm	\$125.52	\$125.52
A Vision For You Su 6:30pm		\$26.11	Faith, Hope & Charity F 12pm		\$120.00
A Vision For You II Tu 7:15pm		\$66.00	Federal Speaker Su 12pm		\$475.34
Acceptance Group M 5:30pm		\$155.00	Fell Street F 8:30pm		\$105.23
Afro Ameican Fr 8pm	\$74.15	\$315.04	Fell Street Step Su 8pm		\$13.70
After Work Mon. 6pm		\$23.65	Firefighters & Friends Tues. 10am	\$149.40	\$149.40
Alamo Square Su 7pm		\$120.00	Fellowship of the Spirit Su 1:30pm		\$186.00
All Groups (raffle) Fri. 8:30pm	\$65.25	\$90.50	Fireside Chat Sa 9pm		\$284.17
All Together Now Th 8pm		\$535.66	Fireside Chat Th 8pm		\$352.43
Alumni Group W 8:30pm	\$60.00	\$134.75	Friday Big Book F 12pm		\$99.44
Amazing Grace M 7pm		\$548.20	Friday At Five F 5pm		\$195.27
Any Lengths Sat. 9:30am		\$329.23	Friday Knights		\$150.31
As Bill Sees It Sa 11am		\$147.60	Friday Lunchtime Step F 12pm	\$134.20	\$414.20
As Bill Sees It Th. 6pm		\$123.85	Friday Morning 12 Steppers 7am		\$60.00
Back to Basics W 8pm	\$60.00	\$202.57	Friday Night Womens Mtg. F 7:15pm		\$25.47
Beginners Step Study Sa 6:30pm		\$81.86	Friday Smokeless F 8:30pm		\$198.52
Beginners Warm Up W 6pm		\$120.00	Friendly Circle Su 7:15pm & 8:30pm		\$1,565.78
Bernal Big Book Sa 5pm	\$255.85	\$1,498.77	Friendship Group W 8pm		\$324.24
Big Book Basics F 8pm		\$566.69	Garden Variety Sa 8pm		\$23.50
Big Book Study Sun 11am		\$131.67	Gay Beginners Q&A F 7pm		\$108.00
Birthday Party Sharing Our Sobriety Sat. 7pm		\$36.40	Greenhouse Meditation Sa 5pm		\$200.00
Blue Book Special Su 11am		\$121.30	Gold Mine Group M 8pm	\$156.78	\$288.78

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Group	Nov. '03	YTD	Group	Nov. '03	YTD
Golden Gate for Seniors Tu 1:30pm		\$205.10	No Reservation M 12pm		\$252.27
Goodlands Su 2pm		\$45.76	Noon Smokeless Th 12pm		\$133.45
Haight Street Blues Tu 6:15pm		\$474.35	One Liners Th 8:30	\$326.05	\$765.55
Haight Street Explorers Th 6:30pm		\$120.00	Parkside Th 8:30pm		\$180.00
Happy Hour F 6:30pm		\$164.18	Pax West M 12pm		\$423.81
Happy Hour Ladies Night Fri. 5:30pm		\$417.60	Pax West Th. 12pm		\$144.06
High Noon Friday F 12:15pm		\$1,003.61	Pinehurst Tues. 7:30pm		\$138.65
High Noon Thursday Th 12:15pm	\$86.35	\$942.82	Potrero Hill Sunday Night 8pm		\$141.00
High Noon Tuesday Tu 12:15pm		\$1,129.48	Pure & Simple Group Su 6pm		\$92.66
High Noon Wednesday W 12:15pm	\$73.45	\$935.42	Richmond Big Book Study Th 7:30pm		\$200.36
Higher Power Lunch Group Th 12:10pm		\$51.46	Rose Garden Big Book Th. 12pm		\$233.15
High Sobriety M 8pm		\$298.35	Rule 62 Wed. 10pm		\$129.96
High Steppers W 7pm		\$374.67	Saturday Afternoon Meditation Sa 5pm	\$133.21	\$233.21
Hilldwellers M 8pm	\$220.00	\$640.00	Saturday Easy Does It 12pm		\$565.32
Home Group		\$127.20	Saturday Matinee Sa 2pm		\$300.00
Hoodlum Haven F 8pm	\$300.00	\$720.00	Saturday Night Regroup Sa 7:30pm		\$488.16
Hot Java F 11pm		\$150.60	Seacliff Th 8:30pm		\$179.06
How It Works Sa 2pm	\$85.51	\$319.57	Second Chance Th. 2:15pm		\$70.17
Huntington Square W 6:30pm	\$320.00	\$675.29	Serenity House Groups		\$900.00
Join the Tribe Tu 7pm		\$341.01	Serenity Seekers M 7:30pm		\$1,185.20
Joys of Recovery Tu 8pm		\$554.40	Sesame Step Tu 7:30pm		\$581.59
Keepin' It Real Th 6pm		\$423.50	Seven Seas Groups		\$60.00
Keep Coming Back Sat. 11am		\$805.70	Seven Seas Su 3pm		\$36.00
Keep It Simple Sa 8:30pm		\$124.36	Sinbar Sun. 8pm	\$88.12	\$409.17
Light Brigade Discussion Su 7pm		\$79.47	Sister's Circle Sun. 6pm		\$166.91
Light Steppers Su 7pm		\$180.00	Sober 5150's W 8pm		\$150.00
Like A Prayer Su 4pm	\$55.20	\$75.20	Sober & Centered F 7pm		\$140.43
Lincoln Park Sat. 8:30pm		\$279.00	Sobriety and Beyond W 7pm		\$159.87
Live & Let Live Sun. 8pm		\$50.87	Sometimes Slowly Sa 11am	\$94.38	\$314.73
Living Sober with HIV W 6pm		\$311.34	South Park		\$83.05
Luke's Group W 8pm		\$236.03	Step Talk Sun. 8:30am		\$113.18
Marina Discussion F 8:30pm		\$479.00	Stepping Out Sa 6pm	\$60.00	\$240.00
Marina Dock Daily 7am		\$15.00	St. Francis Men's Group	\$37.80	\$99.29
Meeting Place Noon F 12pm	\$120.00	\$225.30	Stonestown Group M 8pm		\$223.31
Mid-Morning Support Su 10:30am	\$157.96	\$3,635.14	Sunday Bookworms Su 7:30pm		\$217.62
Midnight Meditation Sa 12pm		\$33.90	Sunday Morning Gay Men's Stag Su 10:30am		\$1,243.90
Miracles Off 24th St.		\$50.00	Sunday Night 3rd Step Group Su 5pm		\$219.45
Mission Terrace W 8pm		\$128.22	Sunday Night Castro SD Su 7:30pm		\$688.84
Mocha Group Th 12:10pm		\$108.01	Sunday Rap Su 8pm		\$57.00
Monday at a Time Mon. 12:30pm	\$30.52	\$125.52	Sunday Sober Sunday 11:30am		\$42.35
Monday Beginners M 8pm		\$416.55	Sunday Sunrise 7am	\$60.00	\$60.00
Monday Men's Stag M 8pm		\$51.12	Sunday Wawona Su 8pm		\$320.00
Monday Monday 12:15pm		\$471.14	Sundown W 7pm		\$450.00
Monday Night Big Book 9pm		\$483.07	Sunrise Sunset Women's Step Th 5:45		\$120.00
Monday Steps & Traditions M 12:10pm		\$55.20	Sunset 9'ers Mon.		\$493.51
Moscone Center After Work W 6pm		\$97.00	Sunset 9'ers F 9am	\$134.42	\$363.42
New Big Book Study Sa 11am		\$250.00	Sunset 9'ers Sa 9am	\$748.20	\$1,976.86
New Highs W 1:30pm		\$75.57	Sunset 9'ers Sun.		\$90.00
New Hope Big Book M 6:30pm		\$196.37	Sunset 9'ers Th 9am		\$709.64
Newcomers Tu 8pm		\$200.51	Sunset 9'ers Tu 9am		\$369.57
New Life W 7pm		\$30.73	Sunset 9'ers Wed.		\$138.00
New Wednesday High Noon		\$889.26			

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IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT!!!

The San Francisco Meeting Schedule will be updated in early February. Please make sure that the location information for the meetings you attend is accurate. While you're at it, double check the designations – is your meeting space wheelchair accessible? If so, let us know. Remember, the information in the schedule (and on the website!) is only as good as the information we are given. Group Information Forms are available on our website: www.aasf.org. Thank you for your help!!

Group	Nov. '03	YTD	Group	Nov. '03	YTD
Sunset Il'ers		\$20.00	Unidentified Group		\$162.98
Sunset Il'ers Fri.		\$75.00	Unidentified - Starbucks		\$21.00
Sunset Il'ers Su 11am		\$60.00	Valencia Smokefree F 6pm		\$556.12
Sunset Il'ers Mon 11am		\$155.00	Walk Of Shame W 7:30pm		\$99.51
Sunset Il'ers Tu 11am		\$52.35	Waterfront Group Su 8pm		\$636.60
Sunset Il'ers Th.		\$75.00	We Care Tu 12pm		\$464.66
Sunset Sobriety Th. 7:30pm		\$222.00	Wednesday Sunrise Smokefree Wed. 7am		\$60.00
Sunset Speaker Step Su 7:30pm	\$36.70	\$334.21	We Really Do Meditate Sa 10:30am		\$96.00
Surf Tu 8pm		\$128.40	Weekend Worker Sa 7am		\$54.00
Sutter Street Beginners Sa 6pm		\$1,587.08	West Portal W 8:30pm		\$155.15
Ten Years After Su 6pm		\$269.61	Wits End Step Study T 8pm		\$32.19
Thursday Afternoon Step Study Th 1:30pm		\$233.31	Women's AA W12:05pm		\$51.00
Thursday Beginners Th 8pm		\$90.49	Women's Kitchen Table Tu 6:30pm		\$621.08
Thursday Night Women's Th 6:30pm		\$248.15	Women's 10 Years Plus Th. 6:15pm	\$180.00	\$435.00
Too Early Sa 8am		\$1,413.40	Women Who Drank Too Much Tues. 6pm		\$88.68
Trudgers Discussion Sun. 7pm		\$280.00	Work in Progress Sa 7pm		\$213.59
Tuesday Night Step 7pm		\$54.00	TOTAL SF CONTRIBUTIONS	\$5,083.09	\$71,132.57
Tuesday's Daily Reflections		\$106.12			
Tuesday Downtown 8pm		\$300.00	TOTAL ALL CONTRIBUTIONS	\$7,778.07	\$116,955.54
Twelve Steps to Happiness Fri. 7:30pm		\$66.00			

Gratitude Contributions 2003

MARIN - GROUP GRATITUDE	
Newcomers Step M 7:30pm	\$35.00
Total MARIN - GROUP GRATITUDE	\$35.00
SF - GROUP GRATITUDE	
Each Day A New Beginning M 7am	\$103.50
Hilldwellers M 8pm	\$100.00
Meeting Place Noon W 12pm	\$24.00
Monday Men's Meeting M 8pm	\$32.00
No Reservation M 12pm	\$81.00
Sunday Sunrise 7am	\$10.51
Total SF - GROUP GRATITUDE	\$351.01
TOTAL	\$386.01

Individual Contributions Nov. 2003

Individual	42.00
Unrestricted	1,000.00
Contributions	10.00
	18.16
	1,000.00
TOTAL	2,070.16

Thank you
for your
contributions!

We appreciate it!!

"We cannot skimp"

With the realization that A.A. must steer clear of outside contributions in order to maintain its autonomy and independence came the understanding that the money necessary for A.A.'s survival would have to come from individual A.A. members and groups."

Reprinted from "Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix", p.5 with permission of A.A. World Services, Inc.

IFB Meeting Summary

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

Regular Monthly Meeting—Intercounty Fellowship Board 1187 Franklin St. Wednesday, January 7, 2004

The following groups have registered Intergroup Representatives. Those marked "P" attended the most recent IFB meeting. If your group was not represented, consider electing an Intergroup Representative (IFB) and /or an alternate so your group's voice is heard.

Intergroup Rep	Group		Intergroup Rep	Group		Intergroup Rep	Group	
Ben N.	Past Chair	A	Janet B.	As Bill Sees It, Saturday	P	Monika H.	Back 2 Basics	P
Bill R.	Early Start	A	Jean C.	First Place Fellowship	A**	Nathan M.	Too Early	X
Carol W.	Miracles Off 24 th St.	P	Jeremiah P.	All Together Now	P	Norma W.	Afro-American Group	A**
Chris P.	Dignitaries Sympathy	A	Jen B.	Midnight Meditation	P	Patrick M.	Treasurer	P
Dan C.	Tiburon Haven	A**	Joe G.	Beginners	P	Paul C.	Waterfront	P
Danny F.	Each Day A New Beginning	P	Johnny G.	High Noon Tuesday	P	Penelope P.	Amazing Grace	P
Dan P.	Second Chance	P	Judi C.	Tuesday's Daily Reflections	P	Randall J.	High Sobriety	P
Dan Z.	Sunday Morning Gay Men's Stag	P	Julie H.	Terra Linda	P	Ray M.	Sunday Rap	P
David A.	Living Sober	P	Kim O.	Easy Does It	P	Russell G.	Regroup	P
David B.	Beginner's Warmup	A**	Kristine F.	Castro Discussion	P	Sam W.	Monday Night Stag	P
David B.	Federal Speaker	P	Leslie F.	Cocoanuts	P	Scott C.	New Hope Big Book	P
David K.	Haight St. Blues	Alt.	Lisa M.	Friday All Groups	A	Steve R.	Valencia Smokefree	P
Dick T.	Attitude Adjustment Hour	P	Lou H.	Mill Valley 7AM	P	Steven S.	Tuesday Downtown	Alt.
Don B.	Friday Fell Street	P	Lynnore G.	Walk Of Shame	P	Tedra M.	Sisters Circle	A
Doug F.	No Reservation	P	Marc D.	Bernal Big Book	P	Tim McC.	Join the Tribe	P
Doug S.	As Bill Sees It - Thursday	P	Mary Ellen D.	A is for Alcohol	P	Todd M.	Mission Terrace	P
Gary D.	Work In Progress	A	Maury P.	Office Manager	P	Tom K.	Common Welfare	P
Grant D.	Ten Years After	P	Michael R.	Huntington Square	P	Zoe B.	Mill Valley 7am - Daily	P
Greg S.	Keep Coming Back	Alt.	Michelle C.	Big Book Basics	P			

New IFB Reps Present		Non-IFB Liaisons Present	
Georgia L.	Friendly Circle Beginners	Omar C.	Marin Teleservice Liaison
Haven K.	High Noon Friday	Shannon L.	Marin General Service Liaison
Jeff A.	Eureka Valley Topic	Russ R.	SF Teleservice
Rebekah D.	Fell Street Step	Georgia L.	H&I
Robert D.	Gay Beginners Q&A		

P = Present; A = Absent; R = Resigned; X = Proxy. The * above indicates an absence; more than one indicates the number of consecutive absences. A Board member who has three consecutive absences from IFB meetings is no longer a member of the Board, as stated in the Bylaws.

A. IFB Reports

Chair's Report: No report.

Central Office Manager's Report: Maury P. announced that the holiday party was a lot of fun and thanked all who attended and contributed. Lauren is leaving her "Special Worker" position on February 13. Please let your groups know about the opening; application information is available on www.aasf.org. Maury has begun to send a personalized note, which may include a piece of literature, to the treasurers along with the receipts. She will send a letter each month with the goal to inform and educate. A few more phone volunteer subs with a lot of flexibility would be helpful. The office will be closed January 19 in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. Please let your groups know.

Central Office Committee: Joe G., Chair, informed the board that Li L. needed to resign from the COC. A poll of the IFB will be taken for his replacement. The COC will meet in

mid-January to review resumes for the Central Office vacancy. After discussion, the COC voted to bring two recommendations to the IFB: 1) That the regular monthly Orientation meeting be held before the IFB monthly meeting at 6pm 2) That attendance at an orientation meeting for new IFB representatives be mandatory. The next COC meeting is Jan. 26.

Treasurer's Report: Patrick M. submitted a written report of the balance sheet and profit and loss budget vs. actuals through November. As of November, year to date total is over budget. November "Gratitude Month" contributions look very good and will be included in next month's financial report.

C. Special Orders of Business (Action Items)

1. Add a member to and activate the Nominating Committee:

(Continued on page 17)

(IFB Summary—Continued from page 16)

Michael R. joined the committee which includes Bill R., chair; Ray M.; Janet B.; Jeremiah P. The following IFB members made themselves available to serve on the COC: Kim O.; Jeff A.; Michelle C.; David B.; Don B.; Melanie L.

2. *Proposal to move orientation to an hour before the IFB meeting and make it mandatory:* After discussion, the motion passed. Note: The Orientation Committee will meet at 6:30pm on January 28 at Central Office and then resume its new schedule Wednesday, February 4, at 6pm

D. Ad Hoc Committee Reports

Literature Review Committee: Doug F., Chair, reported that the committee received a request to produce again the wallet card "Why We Were Chosen." Please review with your group to determine if they feel it is appropriate that we produce a wallet card with this text. We shall take a group conscience at the March IFB meeting. The next committee meeting is Wed., Jan. 21, at Central Office at 6:30pm

The Point Committee: No report. The committee meets the second and fourth Tuesdays at 5:00 PM at Central Office.

Orientation Committee: No report.

Website Committee: Michael R. reported that the committee didn't meet in December. The next meeting will be Thursday, Jan. 22, at 6:15pm at Central Office.

Schedule Committee: No report.

12th Step Committee: Lesley F. reported that the next 12th Step Workshop will be Wed., Jan. 14, at 6:30pm at Central Office. About half of the 12th Step pilot program evening shifts from 6pm to 9pm are filled. There is no sobriety requirement for the 12th Step Pilot program but attending a 12thStep workshop is required.

Special Events Committee: Georgia L. announced that their first special event, "A Bingo Extravaganza!", is scheduled for Sat., Jan.31, at Old First Church (Sacramento & Van Ness): an AA speaker meeting at 7pm (Danny F.) followed by bingo at 8pm. Costumes are encouraged. They want IFB members to volunteer for various commitments at the event. Contact the committee to volunteer. The next committee meeting is February 3 at 7:30pm at Central Office.

Special Needs Committee: Dan P. reported that the committee has an article in *The Point* outlining special needs in the community. A letter from the Hearing Society of the Bay Area, Inc. was included noting some guidelines for accessibility to AA meetings for "Hard-of-Hearing" and the "Deaf." The committee is considering creating a hearing impaired awareness month. The next meeting is Wed., Feb. 4, at 6pm at Café Triste on Bridgeway in Sausalito.

E. IFB Standing Committee Reports

1. SF Teleservice: Russ R., Information Chair, gave the report and informed us that Teleservice is in need of new volunteers with 20 open Teleservice shifts that do not have volunteers. IFB members should announce this at meetings. The e-mail address is sfteleservice@aasf.org. The next meeting is Monday, Jan. 19, with orientation at 6:30pm and the monthly meeting at 7pm

2. PI/CPC: A written report was submitted. Highlights: The PI/CPC Annual Business Meeting and Speaker Workshop is scheduled for Sunday, January 18, at 1pm at Fort Mason, Building C in Room 370. The workshop will start at 1pm, with the annual meeting to follow. Officers and coordinators will be available to talk about their positions in preparation for the elections. The next regular committee meeting is the second Monday, Feb. 9, at 7pm, at Central Office. Elections will be held.

F. Non -IFB Liaison Reports

1. General Service, SF: Todd M. reported that the 54th General Service Conference theme will be "Singleness of Purpose - The Cornerstone of AA." A preliminary list of conference agenda topics was distributed. The District 06 meeting included a special presentation - Responsibilities of the GSR.

2. General Service, Marin: Shannon L. announced that a new DCMC, Terese, was elected, plus they added a few new meetings to their schedule. They elected a new Grapevine Chair with a goal to increase Grapevine subscriptions.


3. Teleservice, Marin: Omar C. announced that new steering committee members were elected.

4. PI/CPC, Marin: No report.

5. Bridging the Gap: No report.

6. H & I: Georgia L. reported that H & I has 75 meetings per week and needs help to get new H & I meetings started. Volunteers must attend an Orientation. Their next meeting is at Old First Church on January 29, with the Orientation at 7:15pm and the regular meeting at 8pm.

8. Spirit of San Francisco: Russell G. reported that the Spirit of San Francisco New Year's Eve 2003 was a success with about 150 attending. There are 15 service positions for the committee with about half filled. The committee will next meet January 18. Contact Peter at sfteleservice@aasf.org for meeting location.

The next IFB meeting will be held Wednesday, February 4, 2004, at Star of the Sea Church, 180 Harrison Avenue, Sausalito, at 7pm. 

Sexual Inventory!

by Suzi K.

Turn to page 68 in your Big Book—it's time to begin the sex inventory portion of your fourth step! The discussion begins by cautioning us against the danger of getting "off track" (engaging in extreme thinking.) The first danger is the all-the-sex-you've-ever-had-was-bad camp. For some of us this can make for a terrifying and voluminous list, one ridden with confused first names and forgotten identities (along with the usual suspects) without ever revealing the true nature of our sexual misdeeds. The second danger is the all-sex-is-natural-and-good-and-therefore-harmed-no-one camp. This is a convenient way to shorten the fourth step inventory process, but likely woefully inaccurate.

Rather than arbitrate the sexual morality of its members, the Big Book advises us to examine our sexual histories for specific things: "We reviewed our own conduct over the years past. Where had we been selfish, dishonest, or inconsiderate? Whom had we hurt? Did we unjustifiably arouse jealousy, suspicion or bitterness? Where were we at fault, what should we have done instead?"

In this post *Sex and the City* era, it is especially easy to approach the sexual inventory as if recounting a heroic adventure. We want to place the blame for the failure of our relationships on the times, or on the other person. The book directs us back to the items listed in the quote above. I don't know about you, but I have difficulty having a relationship with my *plants* that does not involve me being selfish and inconsiderate. I have long avoided orchids and African violets as being too high-maintenance. I lean toward the rhododendron, which I am always assured even I can sustain. Through my selfish disregard for its simple needs, and my inconsiderate failure to meet even its most basic life-sustaining requirements, I promptly go about killing it. (I am on the botanist's 10 most wanted list.) If I can't be thoughtful and considerate of a poor defenseless plant even when I am sober, what are the odds that I was not selfish and inconsiderate towards at least some of my sexual partners?

As I consider my sexual history, I realize that I not only aroused unjustifiable jealousy, suspicion and bitterness in my partners, but also in mere acquaintances. How often did drunken flirting cause as much trouble in the mind and heart of someone as anything worse I could do? And it is not just "drunken" flirting that causes harm. A strange and magical thing happens when we enter the rooms of AA and become sober members of the fellowship. Camaraderie often turns to romance, and friendliness often has a sexual tone. Take away alcohol and drugs, and keep some of us from smoking while we are inside the meeting, and what is left: caffeine, too much sugar, and an edgy interest in each

other—often to the detriment of our loved ones and recovery.

In "Step Four," the Twelve and Twelve states, "...it is from our twisted relations with family, friends, and society at large that many of us have suffered the most. We have been especially stupid and stubborn about them. The primary fact that we fail to recognize is our total inability to form a true partnership with another human being." (*Twelve Steps and Traditions*, p. 53.)

Once we have gotten our list down on paper and measured our behavior against the qualities that have been problematic, we determine whether we need to make amends. In sex relations, it is very possible that making amends may cause yet more harm to the person; we must carefully weigh this fact before embarking on any course of action. Perhaps your last six ex-girlfriends would rather not know that you slept with all their best friends, and your ex-husband does not need to know you were with him only for the money. These scenarios require living amends: we change our behavior by practicing principles. For instance, we practice honesty and faithfulness in our relationships by not sleeping with others, and we act lovingly rather than selfishly by choosing people for their real qualities, not by what they can do for us. The Big Book is clear on these two points: (1) "We must be willing to make amends where we have done harm, provided that we do not bring about still more harm in so doing." (2) Our sexual behaviors are to ultimately be measured by one standard—"Was it selfish or not?"

The Big Book asks us to form a new ideal, to look back on our old behavior with genuine regret, and to have an "honest desire to let God take us to better things." It admonishes, "...if we are not sorry, and our conduct continues to harm others, we are quite sure to drink." It has been my experience that sometimes, a long time before we get to that drink, we spend a great deal of time in a lot of pain, miserable and hating ourselves. This is quite unpleasant when there is an alternative available. The Big Book provides a solution if one just cannot seem to get past this problem. "If sex is very troublesome, we throw ourselves the harder into helping others. We think of their needs and work for them. This takes us out of ourselves. It quiets the imperious urge, when to yield would mean heartache."

Now that I've been of service, I'm going back to snuggling my husband, who I met at an AA meeting, just like a good alcoholic.

(All quotes from the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, appear on pages 68–70.) 

Financial Statement

NOVEMBER 2003 - Intercounty Fellowship of AA

	Nov 03	Jan - Nov 03		Nov 03	Jan - Nov 03
Ordinary Income/Expense					
Income			Rent - Office	0.00	38,171.25
Group Contributions	7,813.07	117,108.12	Rent - Other	75.00	855.00
Individual Contributions			Repair & Maintenance	150.00	2,150.37
Honorary Contributions	313.00	2,558.00	Security System	33.50	368.50
Individual -Unrestricted	2,070.16	9,860.76	Special Events	0.00	91.14
Individual Contributions - Other	0.00	59.48	Telephone	535.16	5,927.47
Total Individual Contributions	2,383.16	12,478.24	Travel	0.00	670.03
Gratitude Month			Training	0.00	60.00
Gratitude Month -Individual	0.00	20.00	Utilities	0.00	2,126.90
Gratitude Month-Groups	351.01	2,574.64	Uncategorized Expense	0.00	0.00
Gratitude Month - Other	85.23	85.23	Total Expense	11,266.68	156,701.69
Total Gratitude Month	436.24	2,679.87	Net Ordinary Income	796.35	-3,411.50
Newsletter Subscript.	36.00	1,168.00	Other Income/Expense		
Sales - Bookstore	5,429.25	73,673.19	Other Income		
Total Income	16,097.72	207,107.42	Interest Income	319.42	876.56
Cost of Goods Sold			Total Other Income	319.42	876.56
Cost of Books Sold	4,034.69	53,817.23	Other Expense		
Total COGS	4,034.69	53,817.23	Depreciation Expense	105.42	1,357.06
Gross Profit	12,063.03	153,290.19	Total Other Expense	105.42	1,357.06
Expense			Net Other Income	214.00	-480.50
Bad Checks	0.00	0.00	Net Income	1,010.35	-3,892.00
Employee Expenses					
Wages & Salaries	6,923.97	72,205.43			
Employer Tax Expenses	562.17	7,089.30			
Benefits/Pension	664.00	7,131.00			
Retirement/Annuity Expense	0.00	0.00			
Workers Comp Ins.	0.00	661.42			
Total Employee Expenses	8,150.14	87,087.15			
ASL Expense					
ASL- Net- Fri All Grps	250.50	1,335.90			
Total ASL Expense	250.50	1,335.90			
Bank Charges					
Cr Card Fees	0.00	806.56			
Bank Charges - Other	22.50	229.20			
Total Bank Charges	22.50	1,035.76			
Equipment Lease	565.10	6,342.56			
Filing/Fees	0.00	316.14			
Insurance	100.55	1,116.17			
Internet Expense	0.00	248.30			
Miscellaneous Expense	0.00	245.94			
Office Supplies	0.00	3,901.03			
Postage					
Bulk Mail	350.00	1,255.15			
Postage - Other	94.72	773.88			
Total Postage	444.72	2,029.03			
Shipping	39.51	192.28			
Printing	0.00	1,280.77			
Professional Fees					
Accounting	900.00	900.00			
Computer Consulting	0.00	250.00			
Total Professional Fees	900.00	1,150.00			

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February 2004

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