

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

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

# The Point

September 2004

A publication  
of the Intercounty Fellowship  
of Alcoholics Anonymous

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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 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.

## Step Fifteen: Becoming a Sober Scholar

By Kira Y.



I became willing and eager to do the fifteenth step shortly after completing the first twelve. "Fifteen?" Everyone knows about the thirteenth step. (If you don't, ask your sponsor and refer to pages 69 and 70 in the book Alcoholics Anonymous.) The fourteenth step is going to the dentist. The fifteenth step, my sponsor explained to me, is going back to school.

I began drinking in high school and my dedication to my extracurricular activity was reflected in the grades I earned and in those teacher comments, "She does so well, when she applies herself." Or the loathsome, "She has such potential." I went from As and Bs to Ds and Fs in a semester.

I drank my way out of college freshman year. The freedom I had to drink, in a big city that rarely "carded," away from my somewhat watchful parents was too much responsibility for an alcoholic like me. Late nights at after-hours clubs were not conducive to attending 9 a.m. classes. The classes interfered with my drinking, so I quit going to class. I also quickly found myself in "pitifully and incomprehensibly demoralizing" social situations. I had to drink to forget those. I did three dorm-room "geographics" in two semesters, and I dropped out of school before they kicked me out.

The next nine years were fraught with false starts and changing majors at community colleges. I did well in the classes I liked and maintained a high grade point average. A friend told me the secret to getting good grades, "If you're wasted when you study for a test, you should take the test wasted." I stayed "wasted" and managed to earn an "Occupational Certificate" for my major, which is basically an Associate in Arts degree without the math requirement. Of course, I never actually completed the paperwork to get the certificate mailed to me.

After I got sober and worked the steps, I began to learn who I really was, to uncover my interests, passions and dreams. I decided to do what my sponsor referred to as "an estimable act," in this case, earning a Bachelor's Degree in a field I was going to pursue. I found a school that would accept all of my previously earned credits and allow me to create my own path to earn my degree. I filled out the financial-aid paperwork and received a grant that covered my tuition.

I took a theory of mathematics class that required four textbooks; including one entitled Does God Play Dice? The Mathematics of Chaos. I broke down crying

(Continued on page 6)

# September 2004....

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			<b>1 <u>FIRST WED</u></b> Intercounty Fellowship Board Orientation 6 pm Meeting 7 pm 1187 Franklin St. at Geary, SF	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>6 Labor Day</b> Central Office Closed	<b>7 <u>FIRST TUE</u></b> Special Events Committee: Central Office, 7:30 pm	<b>8 <u>SECOND WED</u></b> 12th Step Committee Central Office, 6:30 pm  Marin Bridging the Gap 1411 Lincoln Ave., San Rafael 6:45 pm	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>13 <u>SECOND MON</u></b> SF Public Information Committee Central Office, 7 pm	<b>14 <u>SECOND TUE</u></b> SF Bridging The Gap 1111 O'Farrell, San Francisco 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	<b>15 <u>THIRD WED</u></b> Literature Review Committee Central Office, 6:30 pm	<b>16 <u>THIRD THU</u></b> Outreach Committee Central Office, 6:30pm	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>19 <u>THIRD SUN</u></b> Mission Fellowship Steering Committee 2900 24th / Florida SF 1 pm	<b>20 <u>THIRD MON</u></b> Archives Committee Central Office, 3pm  SF Teleservice Central Office, 6:30 pm  Marin General Service 9 Ross Valley Rd San Rafael GSR Sharing: 7 pm District Meeting: 8 pm	<b>21 <u>THIRD TUE</u></b> San Mateo General Service St. Andrews Church 15th & El Camino Real San Mateo, 7:30 pm	<b>22</b>	<b>23 <u>FOURTH THU</u></b> Marin PI Committee 1360 Lincoln Ave (Alano Club) San Rafael 7:15 pm	<b>24</b>	<b>25 <u>FOURTH SAT</u></b> General Service CNCA Meeting 320 N. McDowell Petaluma DCMCs: 11 am Business Meeting: 12:30pm
<b>26 <u>LAST SUN</u></b> Living Sober Convention Committee 1668 Bush, SF 5:30 pm	<b>27</b>	<b>28 <u>FOURTH TUE</u></b> Marin Teleservice 1360 Lincoln / Maple (Alano Club) San Rafael 7:30 pm	<b>29</b>	<b>30 <u>LAST THU</u></b> SF H&I Old First Church, 1751 Sacramento St. SF Orientation: 7:15 pm Regular Meeting: 8 pm		

# COMING EVENTS

<b>2004</b>	Call or visit the Central Office for copies of any flyers of interest to you or your group. Local events are in <b>bold</b> ; flyers of <i>current</i> local events, if available, are printed as space allows.
<b>Sept. 3-6</b>	<b>Labor Day Weekend Alcothon; Mission Fellowship, 2900 24th St./ Florida. More info. on p. 5</b>
<b>Sept. 3-5</b>	<b>12th Annual Spirit of San Francisco Convention, Ramada Plaza Hotel, S.F., More info: <a href="http://www.spirit-sf.org/">www.spirit-sf.org/</a></b>
Sept. 10-12	17th Annual GLBT AA Roundup, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada; More info: <a href="http://www.rationallunacy.com/edmontonroundup/">http://www.rationallunacy.com/edmontonroundup/</a>
Sept. 16-19	19th Annual Northern California Big Book Seminar (Joe & Charlie), Sacramento, CA; 916-456-8836, BBSeminar@yahoo
Sept. 17-19	12th Annual Retreat to Serenity, Mendocino, CA; Camping, hiking, Speaker Meetings; E-mail to Tom B: tbecker@mcn.org
<b>Sept. 18</b>	<b>Marin County Unity Day, 498 Tamalpais Dr., Corte Madera 2pm—11:30pm More info. on p. 5</b>
Sept. 23-26	9th Annual National Archives Workshop; Murfreesboro, Tennessee; <a href="http://area64tnarchives.org/9thworkshop/9thindex.html">http://area64tnarchives.org/9thworkshop/9thindex.html</a>
Sept. 24-26	30th Annual Woman to Woman Conference, San Diego, CA; More info: <a href="http://www.womantowomansandiego.com">www.womantowomansandiego.com</a>
Sept. 24-26	Soberfest '04, Kern River Valley, Sequoia National Forest; More info: e-mail to dean_w_l@hotmail.com
<b>Sept. 25</b>	<b>Earlene &amp; Pearlene's Bingo, Urban Life Center, 1111 O'Farrell, Speaker Meeting: 7pm; Bingo: 8:30pm</b>
<b>Sept. 25</b>	<b>Fall Follies, Fundraiser for Living Sober, More info: <a href="http://www.livingsober.org">www.livingsober.org</a> or call 415-978-2478</b>
Oct. 22-24	8th Annual Women's Retreat, Loma Mar, CA, More info: <a href="mailto:laurel_castellanos@rsconst.com">laurel_castellanos@rsconst.com</a> or phone: 650-879-0320
Nov. 11-14	43rd Annual Hawaii Convention, Honolulu, HI; Online Registration & Information: <a href="http://www.lava.net/~hconv/">http://www.lava.net/~hconv/</a>



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## This Month in AA Trivia September

1. What word is used most frequently in the Appendix entitled *Spiritual Experience*?
2. In that same appendix, Herbert Spence states that the principle that will keep a man in everlasting ignorance is:
3. A doctor states in the Appendix entitled *The Medical View of AA* that the two greatest reservoirs of power known to man are:
4. According to the Big Book, the alcoholic is:?
5. When working Step 2 (according to the Big Book) and you are having doubts about faith, the best thing to do is:



1. Change
2. Contempt prior to investigation
3. religion and the "herd instinct"
4. a very sick person
5. Lay aside prejudice



## MEETING CHANGES

### Meeting Changes

3rd Sun 1:00 pm	Novato	MCYPAA (Marin Young People) Presbyterian Church, 710 Wilson Ave., Novato.
Tue 12:00 pm	Mission	ELEVENTH HOUR, Mission Fellowship, 2900 24th St. (was 1:00 pm)
Tue 7:00 pm	Mission	ESTUDIO Y TRABAJO DE PASOS, 3215 Cesar Chavez (was Wed. 7:00 pm).
Tue 8:30 pm	Mill Valley	Tuesday Smokeless, Church of Savior, 10 Old Mill at Lovell (was 285 Miller Ave., Miller Avenue Church).
Wed 6:00 pm	So. of Market	RED ROAD HEALING CIRCLE, 390 4th St./ Harrison, 1st Floor, ring buzzer (was Native American Healing Circle, Fri.-7:00 pm.)
Sat 10:30 am	Parkside	WOMEN LIVING SOBER, 2685 30th Ave. (10:30 to 11:30, was 1.5 hrs.)

### No Longer Meeting

Tue 8:00 pm	Cathedral Hill	LANGUAGE OF THE HEART, 930 Gough/ Turk.
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### 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!**

## SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES: *From our General Service Office...*

The 2004 General Service Conference approved the recommendation that a draft Spanish-language Third Edition Big Book, *Alcoholicos Anonimos*, be developed by the trustees' Literature Committee and that a progress report be brought back to the 2005 Conference Literature Committee.

The Preface to our English-language Big Book (page xii) clearly states the criteria for changes in the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, "All changes made over the years in the Big Book (A.A. members' fond nickname for this volume) have had the same purpose: to represent the current membership of Alcoholics Anonymous more accurately, and thereby reach more alcoholics."

In an effort to gather new Spanish-language stories for possible inclusion in the Spanish-language Third Edition, the committee will use all possible A.A. Fellowship resources. *Box 4-5-9, La Vina* and the *AA Grapevine* will be including notification that we are reviewing stories from Spanish-speaking A.A. members for possible inclusion in the Spanish Third Edition. The emphasis will be on stories of alcoholics which reflect a broad range of experience and diversity. The most important thing is to find good A.A. stories and then, among those, to identify some stories that

reflect the experiences of folks not now well represented in the Big Book.

### Please Note:

The committee will review all Spanish-language submissions using these guidelines:

- ⇒ The committee will look at documents of up to 3500 words, double spaced.
- ⇒ The **deadline** for receipt of manuscripts is **September 1, 2005.**
- ⇒ The words Spanish "Third Edition" should appear on the outside of the envelope and at the top of the first page.
- ⇒ Member's full name and mailing address should appear on the first page of the manuscript.

The General Service Office will protect anonymity of all A.A. members who submit their story. The member should keep a copy for their own files.

### Please Mail to:

Literature Coordinator, General Service Office  
Box 459 Grand Central Station  
New York, NY 10163

Thank you to all who are participating in this process! 

## Group Speakers for Sept. 2004

### FRIDAY ALL GROUPS

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

DATE	HOST GROUP	SPEAKER
09/03/04	Goodlands	Wendy Mc.
09/10/04	Huntington Square	Liz H.
09/17/04	West Portal	Clark
09/24/04	Home Group	Tom J.

### BRISBANE BREAKFAST BUNCH

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

DATE	SPEAKER	FROM
09/05/04	Greg W.	Sun. Colma Eye Opener
09/12/04	Prudence	SF
09/19/04	Jose G.	SF
09/26/04	37th Anniversary Meeting!!!	



## Labor Day Alcothon

2900 - 24<sup>th</sup> Street  
San Francisco, CA

**Begins Friday, Sept. 3 at 6pm**

**Last meeting Monday Sept. 6 at 8pm.**

**AA Meetings from 6 am to 10 pm  
every 2 hours on the even hour.**

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**Potluck**

**Sunday, Sept. 5th @ 4:00 pm**

**For more info or to do service contact  
alcothon@sbcglobal.net**

## FALL INTO MARIN COUNTY UNITY DAY 2004 SEPT. 18TH, 2004 CORTE MADERA REC CENTER 498 TAMALPAIS DRIVE, CORTE MADERA, CA

WE INVITE YOU TO CELEBRATE CARRYING THE MESSAGE THROUGH UNITY AND SERVICE. THE DAY IS ABOUT FUN, FOOD, AND INFORMATION! "THIS IS AN EXPERIENCE YOU WILL NOT WANT TO MISS".

- 2PM REGISTRATION, FELLOWSHIP, FUN, CARNIVAL BOOTHS, & COFFEE (\$7.00 SUGGESTED DONATION)
- 2:30 WORKSHOP: 12 STEP WORKERS
- 3:30 PANEL: AA'S IMPACTED BY SERVICE COMMITTEES
- 4:45 SKIT!! LAUGH, LAUGH, LAUGH
- 5:00 BBQ AND POTLUCK-COME HUNGRY
- 6:30 SOBRIETY COUNTDOWN AND SPEAKER MEETING: GEORGE D. FROM NEW YORK CITY
- 8PM DANCE, DANCE, DANCE WOO-HOO! GUEST DJ! (\$7.00 SUGGESTED DONATION)

UNITY DAY IS SPONSORED BY MARIN'S SERVICE COMMITTEES:  
H & I, BRIDGING THE GAP, PI/CPC, GENERAL SERVICE, TELESERVICE, CENTRAL OFFICE, AND MCYPAAA

Would you like to work the steps with the support of a group?

If so please join us for a  
**Women's 12 Step Workshop**  
(called AAWOL back East)

Fridays, 7-8:30pm  
September 10 thru February 4

Pinehurst Women's Home  
30th Avenue @ Wawona  
in San Francisco's Sunset District

We will work from the Big Book and the 12X12.

To register or find out more please call Renee M. at 415-672-4992

# Letting Go of Workaholism

By Cami W.

When I was a kid, I loved spending the day at my dad's drug store. My sister and I would go to work with him and play in the dingy basement with our two next-door neighbors, whose mother worked at the store. My favorite game was Magazine, with me as the Editor. How I knew at age 8 what an editor was, I have no idea. I'd assign the other kids stories and then we'd use the left over stock of magazines and newspapers and cut and paste together our own publication. I don't think it's a huge coincidence that I ended up studying journalism in college. Or that I spent most of the last eight years working in advertising, as a writer, editor and creative director.

I loved advertising. Or I loved the adrenaline rush I'd get from the job on a daily basis. The fast pace. The insane deadlines. The ego trips that allowed me to feel like some kind of hero when I stayed up for 48 hours

straight to finish a project. That was the crazy side of the job that fed right into the addict in me.

Drinking and drugging is pretty normal in the advertising world, so I was often able to convince myself and others that I was using alcohol and drugs to help "fuel my creativity" or to "handle the stress of my job." But at some point the drugs and the alcohol took over and I became extremely incompetent. I started behaving unprofessionally at work and often couldn't even show up. Looking back, I don't know how I kept my job.

When I got sober (again) about 20 months ago, I came back to work with gusto. Suddenly I was clear headed again and able to focus on doing good work. I was transferred into a different department upon my return to the office and I attacked the new position

*(Continued on page 18)*

## *Sober Scholar (Continued from page 1)*


during my first week's homework assignment. I read and read, literally, over one hundred pages of mathematical theory and terminology I couldn't begin to understand. I was terrified by what I didn't know, then it dawned on me that *I was in school to learn* and that I didn't have to do it perfectly, all I had to do was my best. I had quit so many things in the past because I wasn't instantly good at them. I quit because they required hard work and effort on my part.

My math teacher said some things on our first day of class that were familiar and helpful to me:

- Don't suffer the drama of making mistakes! (EGO!) We make mistakes because we are inexperienced. Every time we make a mistake we have an opportunity to learn. How do we react to our mistakes?
- We have the opportunity to develop a new attitude.
- Be mindful and meditative. Take time. Intimacy is a good base for knowledge and intimacy takes time. Practice, practice, practice.
- Ask for help.
- We don't have to do this alone.

- Transcend the given - be hopeful.
- Be outgoing, vulnerable and have fun.

I got to do school differently sober. I had a tool kit to pack with my school supplies and was able to apply the principles I learned in AA to my schoolwork. Just "suiting up and showing up" for class put me ahead of the game. Being present physically and mentally allowed me to hear what I needed to in order to learn. I learned to question and to think for myself instead of just regurgitating the material I read in textbooks. I didn't have to agree with everything I learned. I got to experiment with new concepts and to blast through old ideas I had about myself and about my skills in different areas, like math.

When I would get totally overwhelmed by huge loads of work, I could take a break and clear my head with a meeting. Then, I could get back to work with my priorities straight and I could do the next right thing. I could take it one class at a time. I asked for help and prayed a lot. I got to walk through my fears, face my character defects, and change with my Higher Power's help. It also helped to remember that the only reason I was back in school, challenging myself to grow, was because I have a Higher Power that I found in AA. I earned my Bachelor of Arts in Humanities (in the 16 year plan) and amazingly, graduating from college didn't fix me. What a relief we don't graduate from AA. 

# Dear Alky

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

Dear Alky,

**I have been sober for some years now. When I first came into AA I got the first step right away. In fact, it summarized so succinctly the way I felt that I truly knew AA was the place for me. However, the second step stumped me for a long time. My parents have a lot of contempt for organized religion and do not believe in spirituality. I picked up on that as I grew up. On the one hand, this left me a clean slate upon which I could build my understanding of a higher power when I got sober. On the other, I was clueless.**

**I finally came to believe that AA and my group was a power greater than me and that worked for a while. And then I was around long enough that I absorbed what I heard other people say and began to parrot them when I'd share. From time to time I pick up the Big Book and re-read "We Agnostics" and I can admit "the possible existence of a Creative Intelligence".**

**However, I've never felt right when I've prayed - it seems contrived and brings me no relief or comfort. I have finally accepted this, but still feel awkward when I am in a meeting and join hands, but don't say the prayer. My current struggle is that I am OK with my relationship with a higher power - or rather lack thereof, but I am afraid other people won't be. And I've got enough experience to know that what other people think of me is not my business. Nevertheless, the eleventh step runs through my head - "prayer and meditation, prayer and meditation..." and I am left with this discomfort and a voice that says, "If you don't pray, can you work the steps?" Any suggestions?**

Sincerely,

**Out on a limb**

Dear Out on a Limb,

You can work the steps, including Two and Eleven, even if you don't think that you pray or meditate. There is no right or wrong way to do either one. You may already be praying and meditating. Many AAs have found comfort in a conscious contact with a higher power, as they understand it. You can too, however you want to.

You have probably rejected the ideas your parents taught you when you were growing up. You are free also to reject their contempt for spirituality and to keep an open mind. Talk to your sponsor and other AAs who seem to have that peace and comfort that you seek. Read about spirituality. Give yourself a chance to experience it for yourself. For a start, try *Daily Reflections*, a book by AA members, for AA members.



In the dictionary, to pray means to ask. The Twelve and Twelve describes it as "a petition to God." *A God of your understanding*. Your understanding may mean G.O.D. – Group of Drunks. In AA we ask for help because we can't stay sober on our own. Our Higher Power acts through others. When we ask for help staying sober, we are praying. A phone call is a prayer. Going to a meeting is a prayer. Talking to a

newcomer or a sponsor is a prayer.

The Twelve and Twelve compares meditation to lying on a beach, warmed by the sunlight of the spirit. Why deprive yourself of that comforting feeling? You can have a spiritual connection with a power greater than yourself in whatever way works for you. Be in the moment, mindful of the gifts of life. Smile. Breathe. Say the Serenity Prayer to yourself while you walk your dog, wash your hair, ride your bicycle, or lie on the beach.

Meditation is usually private, but prayer is often public and sometimes prayer at AA meetings makes us uncomfortable. We change the words to suit ourselves or stay silent. When you stand in a circle at the close of a meeting, holding hands with your brother and sister AAs, try saying whatever prayer they are saying, even if you don't mean it. In the interests of civility in our society we say many things we don't really mean, like "please," "thank you" and "no problem." These words smooth the rough edges of life. If you participate with your fellows, you may eventually share their feeling, even if you don't share their belief. Everybody's beliefs are different anyway. No two AAs believe in the same concept of a Higher Power. It doesn't matter. As long as you believe in something outside yourself.

I believe in you,

Alky

*The Point* Committee is:  
Cami W., Kathleen C., Kurt C.,  
Maury P., Mike L., Stephen R.  
and Steve S.

Thanks to these members and all the others who contribute time and energy in creating our newsletter!

If you are interested in helping , give us a call!! 415.674-1821

## COMMITTEE CONTACTS

The 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—**

Joe G. 415.350-0373

#### **VICE CHAIR—**

Steve R. calmont1@aol.com

#### **TREASURER—**

Patrick M. patrick\_m30075@yahoo.com

#### **RECORDING SECRETARY—**

Don B. 415.777-9374

### **COMMITTEE CHAIRS:**

#### **CENTRAL OFFICE COMMITTEE—**

Danny F. dannyfl12@earthlink.net

#### **ORIENTATION COMMITTEE—**

Tim M. gryffindor-house@earthlink.net

#### **LITERATURE COMMITTEE—**

Gary D. 415.922-1341

#### **SPECIAL EVENTS—**

David B. dbelectric@turnershouse.net

#### **SPECIAL NEEDS COMMITTEE—**

TBA

#### **WEBSITE COMMITTEE—**

Michael R. michaelr@aasf.org

#### **ARCHIVES COMMITTEE—**

Lynnore G. lynnorel@aol.com

#### **SF TELESERVICE COMMITTEE—**

Peter M. sfteservice@aasf.org

#### **SF PI/CPC COMMITTEE—**

Laura N. 415.931-2567

#### **12th STEP COMMITTEE—**

Scott C. 415.614-0249

## One Member's Experience: A Sense for Service

By Stephen R.

I remember the day vividly. Things were going great with five months dry, a home group and all, but I felt instructed to head back to my tavern and try a little experiment. Thus began my descent into my true bottom. Halfway through it was my good fortune to have a life-changing conversation with my higher power.

“Steve, about this relapse of yours? What kind of a service commitment did you have when you felt compelled to take that drink?”

“Well, I, uh, didn’t actually have a commitment. But I did sit in the front row and...”


“Not good enough, Steve. Now, get back to that meeting and get involved – get really involved – and leave your little compulsion to me.”

And so it was that I came to service in AA as the cornerstone of my sobriety. My emphasis on service started with the understanding that “my little compulsion” could return out of the blue without warning. I returned to my home group knowing that through the various group positions my isolation would be gone. With more than fifty regular members I learned to be quick on the draw when positions opened up. While working my way through these, I began to explore the larger Fellowship.

“You needn’t go out of your way looking for commitments,” my higher power told me. “Hold yourself in readiness and they’ll find you.”

Indeed they have found me over the years, inside and outside the Fellowship, starting with being drafted by my alma mater rehab to facilitate groups to presently sitting on an advisory board related to my medical problem. Along the way, I’m especially fond of a night long ago in Buffalo, where I was at my mother’s side as she lay comatose on life support. I’d mentioned to a local AA that I would miss the monthly H&I business meeting back home. He invited me to the regular rehab meeting he carried into my mother’s hospital. I had only to walk to a different wing, in essence, to honor my commitment.

Around this time yet another serendipitous transition occurred when I was recruited by the chairwoman of the management committee of a meeting room in the Mission. While we sat together one night at a General Service meeting, she spontaneously made the connection that my construction experience met the need for the open position. It turned out to be a four-year run.

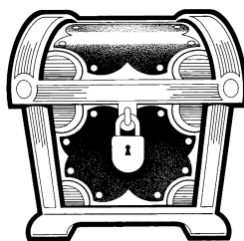
Finally, following a group inventory, my home group last year called for an IFB Rep. The silent pause was deafening so I was quick to volunteer. So here I am, once again wrapped in that blanket of spiritual, charitable condition – giving of one’s time to the Fellowship. 



# Treasures of the Twelve & Twelve: Step Nine

By Steve S.

In Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, only four and a half pages are devoted to Step Nine. Surprising, considering how rich A.A. members' experiences are in the practice of this Step. Perhaps Step Nine is so well-understood and practiced in the fellowship that no more "explicit view" (Foreword, page 15) was deemed necessary.



Perhaps. But here at *The Point*, our crack team of investigative journalists refuses to accept such a facile and flimsy dismissal in our unending search for the Treasures of the Twelve and Twelve.

Opening the Twelve and Twelve there is a haunting familiarity as one looks for page 83. Why does that number seem so familiar? Waitaminnit! Yes, by strange numerological coincidence, the chapter on Step Nine begins on the same page in the Twelve and Twelve as the oft-read Ninth Step Promises in the Big Book.

And my sponsor says there are no coincidences in A.A.

Almost immediately we are presented with practical parameters for the actions we are to take in Step Nine. The second paragraph sifts out those we can jump into immediately from those that require careful consideration and those which we may not be able to do directly at all.

So many of us are confused by these distinctions. With an alcoholic desire for control pushing us to overzealousness combined with an equally alcoholic tendency to evade responsibility, it's no wonder.

Let's note here that the thought of making amends did in fact occur to us while we were out drinking. Many alcoholics tell stories of the terrible guilt that wracked us even while we drank. Some even have amusing and embarrassing stories of trying to repair wreckage while still living for the bottle. So what's revolutionary here is not that we attempt to right the wrongs we've done; it's that we have some guidance and direction for how to do that rightly. Without that guidance, most of us founder and fail or make things worse.

And why? Because (at least in my own case) earlier attempts at amends making were not characterized by that balance described in the second paragraph. It comes back to the challenge of the Serenity Prayer. What are the things we can or cannot change? Too often I have

thrown up my hands in surrender at some task that required only a little effort while at the very same time pushing all my will to make headway at an impossible task.

Which brings us to the real gem of our treasure-hunt in Chapter Nine:

On Page 85, in one single line: "Let's not talk prudence while practicing evasion."


That's so clear! It relies on only a small bit of honesty with ourselves, and nicely complements the earlier guidelines. This reminds us that it is our responsibility faithfully to determine which persons we can immediately make amends to, and those to whom amends ought be deferred or made indirectly.

Further, the reminder not to "talk prudence while practicing evasion" highlights the nature of Step Nine.

*...perhaps our relationship with God is seen most visibly in our relationships with other people.*

Of all our Twelve Steps, it's the Ninth which epitomizes action over acceptance. The acceptance comes in the preparation for the Ninth Step and of course to some degree in the practice, but most of all, the Ninth Step insists we do something and not just in the privacy of our homes, not just with our sponsors, not just in introspection or in relation to an unseen God, but out in the world with other people.

If God works through other people, as I've heard in A.A. meetings since the first I attended, then perhaps we do our work for God through other people as well, and perhaps our relationship with God is seen most visibly in our relationships with other people. If this is true, then the Ninth Step, where we get into right relationship with the people (and places and institutions) in our lives, is where we have the best opportunity to get into right relationship with God.

With stakes like that, it's no wonder that Bill seems to be telling us, with "let's not talk prudence while practicing evasion," that the risks associated with under doing the Ninth Step are greater than the risks of overdoing it. Or, as summed up nicely in an oft-repeated variation on one of our common slogans: easy does it, but do it. 

Excerpts reprinted from Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions with permission of A.A. World Services, Inc.



## A.A. On the Road: Lithuania

by Joannie S.

I was excited to visit Lithuania, my Father's birthplace and where my Mother lived from ages five to eighteen. I grew up listening to many Lithuanian stories. I spoke Lithuanian until I began kindergarten then stopped speaking it until I was thirteen. When I went to a Lithuanian boarding school. There I was immersed in the Lithuanian culture and heard many stories about life under Communist rule in Lithuania. The doors were closed to outsiders. Visiting was impossible.

With independence in 1989, Lithuania became freer. My sister, brother-in-law and I planned a trip since it was now safe. We arranged to meet in Vilnius, Lithuania's capital. Arriving alone, I hopped into a waiting taxicab automatically conversing in beginning Lithuanian. Despite the language's evolution, I was understood. I felt comfortable and safe.

I didn't plan on attending an AA meeting on the trip, nor did I intend to lose the AA medallion that I carried with me daily. One morning my medallion fell out of my pocket in a cab. The loss felt like a bad omen. The next night I had a drinking dream. I awoke with uneasiness in the pit of my stomach. The loss and dream propelled me to find an AA meeting.

It wasn't easy to find one. I looked unsuccessfully in the telephone book and a tourist guidebook and even called the American Consulate. I needed help. I was willing "to go to any length to stay sober." My next move was to check if there was a message on the bulletin board of the B&B from someone looking for another "friend of Bill W." Rats!!! Nothing.

The office managers asked if they could help me. They suggested calling a psychiatric hospital. Another wild goose chase with phone calls by the manager. Listening to her conversation, I realized that AA was reversed in Lithuanian. I'd been looking backwards. Once I knew how to search, I found AA. I'd just missed the English language meeting. I decided to attend a meeting in Lithuanian that night. The women I spoke with took me to the meeting. We arrived early so I could speak with some of the regulars. I told someone that I lost my medallion of 22 years. They offered me one from Lithuania, although the maximum was fifteen years. I was thrilled.

I noticed people putting flowers in the vase up front. I asked why and was told the flowers marked both the celebration of AA's beginning in Lithuania 15 years ago and someone's anniversary.

I felt privileged being part of the celebration. The meeting began with the usual "How It Works," The Steps and The Traditions. I felt right at home. I shared in my poorly spoken Lithuanian. As I was speaking, they passed around the medallion with a honeycomb pattern, gaining the support and good wishes of the group. I was touched.

It was time for the celebrant, Romas, to give his share. I empathized with his story of despair and sobriety attempts. After a stay in a psychiatric hospital, he did not drink for six months. Searching the depth of his being, he felt he'd die unless he stayed sober. During this six-month period, through correspondence with someone in the United States, he learned he needed "the group" to stay sober.

Romas felt despondent about starting a group. Eventually the correspondent with four others brought an AA meeting to him. At this meeting, Romas felt hopeful about staying sober. Ten days later he started the first AA meeting. This was his 15<sup>th</sup> year of sobriety anniversary and of AA's founding in Lithuania.

I sat there with my heart swelling up with feelings and tears running down my cheeks. What I had taken to be a bad omen had now materialized into a divinely orchestrated series of events leading me to one of the most memorable and joyous moments of my life. I left there sober with a new medallion endowed with the energy of everyone and the significance of the power of the group. How much better could this be? 📌

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\*\*\* If ASL is needed for any event, please give 72 hour advance notice.

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## Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix By Peter M.

As a new member of Alcoholics Anonymous, I had no idea how things worked for A.A. groups and meetings. The secretary of the meeting I was going to could have been the president of A.A. for all I knew. I saw the basket going around, but where the money went didn't really matter to me. I didn't have much to contribute anyway. As I kept coming back, I learned that time, effort, and money are needed for the meetings that are necessary for our recovery. My A.A. home group needs the services of Central Office to provide meeting schedules and literature as well as the other things vital to helping the alcoholic who still suffers, such as helping to organize service committees like the 12th Step Committee, Teleservice and Public Information.

This leads to the pamphlet, "Self - Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix," and as the title implies a discussion of what part money and finances play in our recovery and the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. Page 4 of the pamphlet poses the question: "Why in the world are (we) always talking about money when this is a spiritual program?" The pamphlet discusses Tradition Seven and the need for self-support through our own contributions, but the answer to me also would include Step Twelve and the importance of practicing "these principles in all our affairs." This includes an honest examination of what I can contribute financially to Alcoholics Anonymous. The pamphlet provides valuable information about A.A.'s finances and how A.A. groups and A.A. members need to meet the financial responsibilities of insuring A.A.'s future.

Perhaps, the best things about recovery are "free". It used to

amaze me that my sponsor would meet with me to practice the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous and not expect payment. At the same time, it costs money to print schedules, provide pamphlets and books, rent meeting facilities and keep the phone lines going. For a long time, I didn't contribute very much to the 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition at my home group; I thought to myself, "Let somebody else take care of it". Now, because I care about the future of Alcoholics Anonymous, I believe it is essential to pay attention to the financial condition of my home group, our Central Office, and General Service.

The pamphlet states, "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. As Bill W. put it in 1957, "Our spiritual way of life is safe for future generations if, as a Society, we resist the temptation to receive money from the outside world. But this leaves us with a responsibility — one that every member ought to understand. We cannot skimp when the treasurer of our group passes the hat. Our groups, our areas, and A.A. as a whole will not function unless our services are sufficient and their bills are paid." If—or rather when—I am feeling chintzy when the basket comes around, I remind myself that it is not all about me... I want the resources that were available to me when I came in to be available to the next newcomer. My contribution helps assure that. Practicing A.A. principles in all my affairs means that money and spirituality must mix in order to provide the vital services needed for the alcoholic who still suffers. ↑

## News from the Central Office Bookstore: Price Increases

Recently our Intergroup Representatives, known as the Inter-county Fellowship Board, voted to increase the prices of some items in our bookstore. The price increase is due to a shortfall in anticipated revenue. As you can see on our Financial Statement (p. 19), through June of this year our expenses have exceeded our income by \$9,020.69 – or approximately \$1,500.00 per month. Much thought went into how, and which, items would be increased. The following is an excerpt of what was handed out, and voted on, at the August IFB meeting:

"We are concerned with addressing our current revenue shortfall as well as anticipating the reality that our expenses will increase at the beginning of next year... We are recommending a price increase on all books... Since meetings typically sell books at their cost, we thought the increases would have no impact on AA group expenses. In terms of impact on members – any member could still buy a soft cover Big Book for \$6.25 and a pocket edition of the 12x12 for \$4.20...

"We are recommending no increase in the prices of the pamphlets— since the groups usually give the pamphlets away—

(or) on items such as window shades, audio and video cassettes, etc.

"We are recommending raising the prices of meeting schedules. We feel the new prices are still very reasonable and the whole schedule is available on our website for free.

"Finally, we are recommending a small increase in the price of the wallet cards, and an increase in the price of anniversary medallions."

The Central Office has also recently begun two other ways to encourage member contributions. Anyone making financial contributions for their AA anniversary may have their name, anniversary, and home group listed in *The Point*. We have also started a "Faithful Fivers" program in which A.A. members pledge to contribute at least five dollars each month in support of Central Office. Both of these methods of encouraging contributions are long-standing traditions in many A.A. fellowships around the United States. Inserts detailing both of these methods of supporting the services provided by Central Office are included in this issue of *The Point*. ↑

# AA Group Contributions - June 2004

Intercounty Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous - San Francisco and Marin Counties

Name	Meets	June '04	YTD	Name	Meets	June '04	YTD
<b>Fellowship Contributions</b>				Monday Blues	M 6:30pm	264.50	264.50
Annual Christmas Meeting	Christmas 2004		25.00	Monday Night Stag (Tiburon)	M 8pm	184.84	797.52
Bingo Extravaganza	7th Tradition		115.00	Monday Night Women's	M 8pm	52.35	52.35
Brisbane Breakfast	Su 11am	29.00	174.60	Nativity Monday Night Big Book	M 8pm		100.00
Contribution Box	March 2004		325.43	Newcomers Step	M 7:30pm		300.00
Deer Park Discovery Group			4.67	Noon	Tu 12pm	140.50	140.50
IFB	June Meeting	121.00	605.22	Noon Discussion	Th 12pm	135.00	135.00
Marin Teleservice		200.00	1,482.00	Novato Spirit Discussion	F 12pm		142.18
Spirit of San Francisco	2003 Convention		577.56	On Awakening	7D 5:30am		350.00
Sunday Step Study	Su 4pm		126.00	Pathfinders	Tu 12pm		85.89
Unidentified		62.42	311.45	Rise N Shine	Su 10am		102.73
<b>Total Fellowship</b>		<b>\$412.42</b>	<b>\$3,746.93</b>	Ross San Anselmo Group	M 8:30pm		54.00
<b>Honors</b>				San Anselmo Fireside Meeting	Su 8pm		45.49
Endless Summer	F 8:30pm	20.00	218.22	San Geronimo Valley	M 8pm		58.99
High Noon	6D 12:15pm		36.00	Saturday Serenity	Sa 8pm		125.00
Sesame Step	Tu 7:30pm		6.00	Saturday Women's Speaker	Sa 6pm		105.00
<b>Total Honors</b>		<b>\$20.00</b>	<b>\$260.22</b>	Serendipity Sa 11am	Sa 11am	485.00	485.00
<b>Marin Group Contributions</b>				Sisters In Sobriety	Th 7:30pm		36.00
11th Step Meeting	M 8pm		100.00	Six O'Clock Sunset	Th 6pm		245.20
12 & 12 Study	Sa 8:15am		106.50	Sober & Serene	F 7pm		250.00
7am Urgent Care Group	7D 7am		400.00	Sober Moms	Fr 11:30am		18.00
A Vision For You	Su 7:30pm		68.25	Steps to Freedom	M 8:30pm		474.85
Attitude Adjustment Fairfax	7D 7am	462.83	3,407.75	Steps To The Solution	W 7:15pm		50.00
Awareness/Acceptance	M 10:30am		120.00	Stinson Beach Fellowship	Th 8pm		220.60
Back to Basics	Su 9:30am	103.45	190.95	Streetfighters	Sa 9am		22.10
Beginners	W 7pm		500.00	Sunday Express	Su 6pm		223.84
Bounce Back	M 6pm		200.00	Sunday Night Corte Madera	Su 8pm		400.00
Caledonia	Su 8pm		432.08	Survivors	M 12pm	335.50	335.50
Candlelight	Su 8:30pm		79.23	T. G. I'm Sober	M 6pm		26.00
Candlelight Meditation	M 7:30pm		60.00	Terra Linda Group	Th 8:30pm	350.00	871.00
Creekside New Growth	Su 7pm		165.00	TGI Tuesday	Tu 6pm		53.20
Crossroads	Su 12pm		497.00	The Fearless Searchers	F 8pm		245.00
Day At A Time	7D 6:30am		180.00	The Novato Group Fri. Night Discussion	F 8:30pm		112.05
Experience, Strength & Hope	Sa 6pm		111.00	Three Step Group	Sa 5:30pm		400.00
Fairfax Friday Night	F 8:30pm		46.18	Thurs. Night Speaker, MV	Th 8:30pm		1,390.70
Fireside	F 8pm		35.50	Thursday Night Miracles	Th 8:30pm		39.00
Freedom Finders	F 8:30pm		763.08	Tiburon Beginners	Tu 7:10pm	362.27	660.58
Greenfield Newcomers	Su 7pm	80.00	80.00	Tiburon Haven	Su 12pm	600.00	720.00
Happy Hour	Th 6pm		233.49	Tiburon Women's Candlelight	W 8pm		39.76
High & Dry	W 12pm		125.00	Tuesday Twelve Step	Tu 6:30pm	34.60	34.60
Hope Step Group	Tu 7:30pm		150.00	Wednesday Mid-Week	W 6pm	69.68	125.41
Island Group	Th 8pm		72.50	Wednesday Night Candlelight	W 8pm		152.00
Living in the Solution	F 6pm		233.00	Wednesday Night Speaker Discussion	W 7pm		69.52
Marin City Groups	M-F 6:30pm		200.00	Women For Women	W 12pm		30.00
Marin Sober Group	F 8pm		39.50	Women on Monday	M 7pm		69.67
Mill Valley 7am	7D 7am	500.00	1,000.00	Women on Wednesday	W 7pm		64.86
Mill Valley Original Smokeless SS	Th 8pm		50.00	Women's Big Book	Tu 10:30am		152.50
				Working Dogs	W 12:05pm		313.25
				<b>Total Marin Contributions</b>		<b>\$4,160.52</b>	<b>\$20,835.35</b>

Name	Meets	June '04	YTD	Name	Meets	June '04	YTD
<b>SF Group Contributions</b>				Friendly Circle Beginners	Su 7:15pm	80.34	80.34
7AM As Bill Sees It	F 7am		20.50	Friendship Group	W 8pm		125.00
12 Steps to Happiness	F 7:30pm		40.87	Friendship House			9.36
A is for Alcohol	Tu 6pm		80.70	Gay Beginners Questions & Answers	F 7pm		35.38
AA As You Like It	Tu 5:30pm		149.89	Golden Gate Seniors	Tu 1:30pm		107.00
AA Step Study	S 6pm		172.52	Gold Mine Group	M 8pm		226.36
Afro American	F 8pm		36.62	Haight Street Blues	Tu 6:15pm		206.00
Afro American Beginners	Sa 8pm		132.53	Haight Street Explorers	Th 6:30pm		60.00
After Work	M 6pm		63.00	Happy Hour	F 6:30pm		381.80
All Together Now	Th 8pm	217.97	416.63	High Noon Friday	F 12:15pm	364.90	762.86
Alumni	W 8pm		60.00	High Noon Monday	M 12:15pm		419.45
Amazing Grace	M 7pm		28.80	High Noon Saturday	Sa 12:15pm	100.00	178.70
Any Lengths	Sa 9:30am		874.21	High Noon Thursday	Th 12:15pm	179.72	450.59
Artists & Writers	F 6:30pm	619.66	1,050.94	High Noon Tuesday	Tu 12:15pm		585.86
As Bill Sees It	Th 6pm		138.04	High Noon Wednesday	W 12:15pm	307.80	487.80
As Bill Sees It	Sa 11am		190.93	High Sobriety	M 8pm		168.00
Beginner's Warmup	W 6pm	90.00	90.00	High Steppers	W 7pm		157.00
Bernal Big Book	Sa 5pm		281.24	Hilldwellers	M 8pm		305.80
Beyond 164	F 12:30pm	60.00	90.00	Home Group	Sa 8:30pm	298.87	787.31
Big Book Basics	F 8pm		213.73	How It Works	Sa 2pm		125.01
Big Book Backwards	Fr 10am		15.00	Huntington Square	W 6:30pm		648.17
Big Book Study	Su 11am		47.57	Join the Tribe	Tu 7pm	139.40	267.64
Boys Night Out	Tu 7:30pm		414.73	Joys of Recovery	Tu 8pm		427.31
Buena Vista Breakfast	Su 12pm		327.60	Keep Coming Back	Sa 11am		1,194.75
Castro Discussion	W 8pm		242.00	Keep It Simple	Sa 8:30pm		86.85
Castro Monday Big Book	M 8pm		329.15	Light Brigade Discussion	Su 7pm	20.00	147.80
Cocoanuts	Su 9am		125.00	Like A Prayer	Su 4pm		158.86
Common Welfare	Th 8pm	102.01	102.01	Lincoln Park	Sa 8:30pm		355.31
Dignitaries Sympathy	W 8:15pm		150.00	Live and Let Live	Su 8pm		119.76
Each Day A New Beginning	5D 7am		236.79	Living Sober with HIV	W 6pm		261.20
Each Day a New Beginning F	F 7am		313.00	Luke's Group	W 8pm		59.47
Each Day a New Beginning M	M 7am		154.00	Lush Lounge	Sa 2pm		69.60
Each Day A New Beginning Su	Su 8am		253.24	Meeting Place Noon	F 12pm		160.06
Each Day a New Beginning Th	Th 7am		623.88	Mid-Morning Support	Su 10:30am	312.40	1,143.59
Each Day a New Beginning W	W 7am		459.73	Midnight Meditation	Sa 11:59pm		11.25
Early Start	F 6pm		375.00	Millionaires Club	Th 6pm		70.00
Easy Does It	Tu 6pm		673.00	Miracles Off 24th St	W 7:30pm		144.23
Embarcadero Group	Daily 12:10pm		328.64	Mission Terrace	W 8pm		202.33
Embarcadero Group	F 12:10pm		55.41	Monday At A Time	M 12:30pm		36.00
Embarcadero Reflections	Tu 12:10pm		89.06	Monday Men's Meeting	M 8pm		48.00
Epiphany Group	Th 8pm		25.00	New Highs	W 1:30pm	90.22	188.10
Eureka Step	Tu 6pm		114.00	New Hope Big Book	M 6:30pm	143.94	645.09
Eureka Valley Topic	M 6pm		315.64	New Wednesday High Noon	W 12:15pm		547.47
Federal Speaker	Su 12pm	121.47	373.31	Newcomers	Tu 8pm		226.20
Fellowship of the Spirit	Su 1:30pm		22.60	No Reservation	M 12pm	189.92	189.92
Fireside	F 8:30pm		92.35	One Liners	Th 8:30pm	370.15	370.15
Fireside Chat Sa	Sa 9pm		198.83	Park Presidio	M 8:30pm	75.00	162.00
Fireside Chat Th	Th 8pm		88.56	Parkside	Th 8:30pm		140.40
Fireside Chat Tu	Tu 8pm		60.11	Pure & Simple	Su 6pm		28.15
Friday All Groups	Fr 8:30pm Raffle		395.00	Pax West	Annual Dinner		36.00
Friday Lunchtime	Fr 12pm		140.00	Rose Garden Big Book	Th 12:05pm	71.55	132.22
Friday Knights	Th 7:30am		9.20	Rule 62	W 10pm		580.31
Friendly Circle	Su 8:30pm		485.70				

Continued on p. 14

Continued from p. 13

Name	Meets	June '04	YTD	Name	Meets	June '04	YTD
Saturday Afternoon Meditation	Sa 2pm		221.93	Sunset 9'ers Su	Su 9am		100.00
Saturday Easy Does It	Sa 12pm	215.00	215.00	Sunset 9'ers Tu	Tu 9am		120.00
Saturday Night Regroup	Sa 7:30pm		230.24	Sunset 9'ers W	W 9am	55.93	283.77
Saturday Serenity	Sa 8pm		362.00	Sunset Reflections	Th 12:30pm	100.00	100.00
Seacliff	Th 8:30pm		139.62	Sunset Speaker Step	Su 7:30pm	60.00	120.00
Serenity House		100.00	600.00	Sutter Street Beginners	Sa 6pm		469.49
Serenity Seekers	M 7:30pm		784.39	T. G. I. Tuesday	Tu 6pm		28.40
Sesame Step	T 7:30pm		237.13	Ten Years After	Su 6pm		474.72
Sinbar	Su 8pm		194.24	They Don't Know Who We Are	Sa 7pm		150.00
Sisters Circle	Su 6pm		70.20	Thursday Night Women's	Th 6:30pm	255.62	255.62
Sober & Centered	Fr 7pm		168.27	Thus We Grow	Th 6pm		81.00
Sometimes Slowly	Sa 11am		57.19	Too Early	Sa 8am		358.07
Step Talk	Su 8:30am	120.00	480.00	Tuesday's Daily Reflections	Tu 7am		83.62
Stepping Out	Sa 6pm		120.00	Tuesday Sunset Nooners	Tu 12:30pm	60.00	120.00
Sunday Bookworms	Su 7:30pm		115.01	Valencia Smokefree	F 6pm	40.91	632.41
Sunday Morning Gay Men's Stag	Su 10:30am		549.43	Walk of Shame	W 8pm		12.97
Sunday Night 3rd Step Group	Su 5pm		235.16	Waterfront	Su 8pm		405.72
Sunday Night Castro Speaker Discussion	Su 7:30pm	409.25	409.25	We Care	Tu 12pm	260.23	260.23
Sunday Rap	Su 8pm		268.26	Wednesday Sunrise Smokefree	W 7am		60.00
Sundown	W 7pm		216.00	Weekend Workers	Sa 7am		60.00
Sundown Steps	Th 6:30pm	66.00	168.00	West Portal	W 8:30pm		306.50
Sunrise Sunset	Th 5:45pm		54.00	Women For Women	W 12pm		107.61
Sunset 11'ers F	F 11am		138.40	Women Who Drank Too Much	Tu 6:15pm		39.00
Sunset 11'ers Sa	Sa 11am	211.20	211.20	Women's 10 Years Plus	Th 6:15pm	200.00	376.00
Sunset 11'ers Th	Th 11am	100.00	100.00	Women's Kitchen Table Group	Tu 6:30pm		233.29
Sunset 11'ers W	W 11am		24.00	Women's Promises	F 7pm		148.80
Sunset 9'ers F	F 9am		194.00	Work In Progress	Sa 7pm		64.87
Sunset 9'ers M	M 9am		148.50	<b>Total SF Contributions</b>		<b>\$6,547.93</b>	<b>\$38,964.83</b>
Sunset 9'ers Sa	Sa 9am	338.47	517.25	<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$11,140.87</b>	<b>\$63,807.33</b>

**INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS - JUNE**

**HONORS**

Honorary Contributions	\$58.40
Honorary Contributions	54.00
Honorary Contributions	76.65
Honorary Contributions	20.00
Honorary Contributions	3.65
Honorary Contributions	33.00
Honorary Contributions	<u>\$10.00</u>

Total HONORS \$255.70

**INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS**

Individual -Unrestricted	\$20.00
Individual -Unrestricted	1,000.00
Individual -Unrestricted	43.00
Individual -Unrestricted	40.00
Individual -Unrestricted	25.00
Individual -Unrestricted	25.00
Individual -Unrestricted	<u>\$250.00</u>

Total INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS \$1,403.00

**TOTAL \$1,658.70**

**The Spirit of San Francisco**

**12th Annual AA Convention**  
with Al-Anon participation

**"Carrying the Message"**

**September 3<sup>rd</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup>, 2004**

**Labor Day Weekend**

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# Dual Diagnosis: How Getting Outside Help Improved My Sobriety

By Anonymous

At around five years of sobriety I found myself sitting in my car across from a liquor store with an ice-cold beer in hand. I had just purchased it, my heart thumping and palms sweating as I reached into the fridge and pulled out a decent brand. I don't remember what kind it was except that it required an opener and I didn't have one. I sat in my car wondering how to open the beer, knowing I was moving in a bad direction, but feeling so desperate. Finally I said a prayer, halfheartedly asking my Higher Power to get between the drink and me. After a moment, I resignedly put the beer aside and drove home.

At the time I only wanted relief from the pain in my head. I'd had it with the constant, underlying internal pressure and the rapid mood swings, which seemed to come from nowhere. One day I felt on top of the world, the next I might have suicidal thoughts, with no rhyme or reason to the whole business as far as I could see. I was getting emotional whiplash and was running out of constructive ways to cope.

I had a decent enough program (a good one actually, if you asked my sponsor). I worked the steps, went to lots of meetings, welcomed newcomers, prayed, meditated (with difficulty)... I tried other things too, like exercising, working with a very helpful therapist, eating right, getting plenty of rest, but nothing seemed to eliminate the destructive and demoralizing highs and lows. I felt like such an oddball. I was having difficulty being consistent in my relationships, in my studies, and as a parent. I felt euphoric and irritable at one time, and then days or weeks later I felt depressed, with all the accompanying feelings of worthlessness and despair. When I had periods of normalcy in between I figured everything was finally OK.

One afternoon I was at an AA meeting in which a woman told her story. In it she shared that she was bipolar, and she described some of the things I had been experiencing. "My God," I thought, "That's me!" I will always be grateful that she had the courage to speak about her condition because in so doing, she helped me to get the assistance I needed. But I didn't go to a doctor right away. I wasn't ready to deal with being one of "those people" yet. I had long carried my own prejudices about what used to be called manic depression, meanwhile never suspecting that I had the disorder myself.

It wasn't until I got into a terrible argument with two people I care about very much that I realized something more was going on than just my alcoholism. The notion of "restraint of pen and tongue" was out the window; I was

being insulting and rude and felt totally out of control. I apologized to them mid-argument and left the room to keep from doing any more damage. I came back after a long walk and a meeting and said, "Something is really wrong."

Shortly after this I went to a doctor who agreed that something was definitely wrong. He did not, however, agree with my diagnosis. Like a good alcoholic, I had taken it upon myself to inform him that I probably had a touch of depression and that if he would simply supply the right prescription, I would be on my merry way. This was not to be. "No," he said, "I think there's a little something more going on here." The "something more" turned out to be bipolar disorder of course. My heart sank when he said this. I was horrified to have yet another thing wrong with me. Besides, it was so contrary to my self-image. Me? Bipolar? It was like walking around for years thinking you're at Harvard only to find you're really at Langley-Porter.

Once I got over the shock, the diagnosis was actually a relief. It helped to explain a lot of things. I was told that bipolar disorder was my primary diagnosis, and that my drinking was probably an attempt at self-medication. On hearing this I had a brief moment of joyful anticipation. "Does this mean I can drink?" The answer was, of course, an unequivocal no. I was half joking when I asked but I could tell the good doctor, speaking very slowly and enunciating every word, was taking great pains to ensure that I understood that drinking was absolutely out of the question.

I have been under the doctor's care for over a year now and it has made a tremendous difference in the quality of my sobriety. I still experience mood swings but they are not as pronounced. I haven't suddenly become brilliant at relationships but the improved understanding of my assets and liabilities has made me a better mother, friend, and sponsor.

I am beginning to understand how to better take care of myself, and to acknowledge once again that I am not a bad person getting good, but a sick person getting well. As I connect with others in the program that are also dually diagnosed, feelings of isolation and shame diminish. But perhaps one of the greatest rewards of seeking outside help is that I am now able to reach out to others far more than I could in the past. I work a better program today than I ever have, not out of any virtue, but because I have acquired at least enough clarity and humility to recognize how much I need it. I am extremely grateful for AA, and to the loving Spirit within it that gently, unceasingly, and sometimes annoyingly, pushes me to grow. †

# 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., San Francisco, CA  
Wednesday, August 4, 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	
Abby L.	Common Welfare	A*	Greg S.	Keep Coming Back	P	Monika H.	SFPOA	A*
Bob W.	Creative Alcoholics	P	Janet B.	As Bill Sees It, Saturday	A*	Morningstar V.	High Noon Saturday	P
Brian C.	Mission Terrace	P	Jen B.	Midnight Meditation	A*	Nathan M.	Too Early	P
Carol W.	Miracles Off 24th St.	P	Joe G.	Beginners	P	Pascal G.	Marin Stag (Mon. Night...)	P
Dallas R.	Early Start	P	Johnny G.	High Noon Tuesday	A*	Patrick M.	Treasurer	P
Dan P.	Second Chance	P	Judi C.	Tuesday's Daily Reflections	P	Paul C.	Waterfront	R
Dan Z.	Sunday Morning Gay Men's Stag	P	Kara S.	Friendship Group	A*	Penelope P.	Amazing Grace	A*
Danny F.	Each Day A New Beginning	P	Kate B.	Friday All Groups	P	Ramona A.	Sunset 9'ers M	P
David A.	Living Sober	P	Kezia P.	Marina Discussion	P	Ray M.	Sunday Rap	P
David B.	Beginner's Warmup	P	Kim O.	Easy Does It	P	Rebekah D.	Fell Street Step	A*
David B.	Federal Speaker	P	Kristine F.	Castro Discussion	P	Russell G.	Regroup	P
David E.	Sesame Step	A*	Kurt P.	No Reservation	A*	Russell R.	Sunset 9'ers Su	P
David K.	Haight St. Blues	Alt.	Lou H.	Mill Valley 7AM	P	Scott C.	New Hope Big Book	A*
David P.	Goodlands	P	Lynnore G.	Walk Of Shame	P	Steve N.	Terra Linda Group	P
Don B.	Friday Fell Street	P	Marc D.	Bernal Big Book	P	Steve R.	Valencia Smokefree	P
Doug S.	As Bill Sees It - Thursday	P	Mark P.	Beginner Big Book Step	A*	Steven S.	Homegroup	P
Edward F.	Happy Hour	A*	Martha C.	449'ers	P	Sue K.	Saturday Serenity	A**
Francesca K.	West Portal	P	Mary P.	Sutter St. Beginners	P	Tedra M.	Sisters Circle	P
Gary D.	Work In Progress	P	Maury P.	Office Manager	P	Tim M.	Join the Tribe	P
Georgia L.	Friendly Circle Beginners	A*	Michael R.	Huntington Square	A*	Tom B.	Eureka Valley Topic	P
Grant D.	Ten Years After	A**	Michael H.	Some Are Sicker Than Others	A*	Zoe B.	Mill Valley 7am	P
Greg B.	Cow Hollow Young People's	A**	Mike A.	Tuesday Downtown	P			

P = Present; A = Absent; R = Resigned. 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.

New IFB Reps Present		Liaisons Present			
Jenny M.	Waterfront	John Paul W.	SF General Service	Shannon L.	Marin General Service
Jonas C.	Fireside Chat	Omar C.	Marin Teleservice	Stacey S.	San Mateo Gen. Service
Peter S.	All Together Now	Russ R.	SF Teleservice		

Following is an unofficial summary of actions, information, upcoming business, and service opportunities discussed at the July 2004 IFB meeting. It is provided for your convenience, and it is not intended to be the complete or approved minutes. For a complete copy of the minutes, contact the Central Office

## A. IFB Reports

*Chair's Report:* Joe G. thanked the IFB for the opportunity to serve as Chair. His election as Chair left a vacancy on the COC to be filled. Steve S., who had initially been in a tie vote with Mark D. for one of the at-large seats was contacted and Steve agreed to fill the vacant seat for the remainder of the term. Joe stated that the primary issue facing the IFB is the financial situation and one of his goals this year is to find solutions to the problem.

*Treasurer's Report:* Patrick M. submitted the Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual, the Balance Sheet through May 2004 and Notes to the June

Financial Statements. The bottom line is that results are better than budget because the payment for the supplemental compensation plan has not been made as of June. The payment was made in July, and taking that into consideration we are \$1,072 worse than budget on the net loss.

*Central Office Manager's Report:* Maury P. thanked those who volunteered to give other IFB members a ride to the meeting. Maury passed on a request that all IFB related emails have "IFB" at the beginning of the subject line so that members can immediately identify the source of the message. Maury stated that she will attend a meeting of the Northern California Central Office Managers on August 13 and also the AAWS/Central Office Seminar in Denver September 30 - October 3. Maury reported that there were three new phone volunteers for substitute shifts at the CO since the last IFB meeting.

*Central Office Committee:* Danny F. thanked the COC for giving him the chance to serve as Chair. He said the COC discussed two actions

(Continued on page 17)



**IFB Summary** (Continued from page 16)

to increase revenue: 1) having "Faithful Fiver" form included in *The Point* and on the website; and 2) inserting an AA Birthday Donation form in *The Point* and on the website. One proposal to reduce expenses was discussed: form a Lease Review Committee to explore the possibility of renegotiating the lease. The COC also set a date for a no-cost on-site retreat for the COC.

**Action Items for August**

1. Suggestions for increasing revenue: A motion passed to raise the price of books, meeting schedules, chips and wallet cards effective September 1.

2. Tom B., Brian C and David B. volunteered to serve on the Lease Review Committee.

3. The IFB approved the following amendments to the Bylaws: 1) the IFB Secretary will be a member of the COC; and 2) IFB members may vote at their second meeting and after having attended an orientation session.

**New Business:**

Marin Unity Day: Mark D. requested volunteers to assist with Marin Unity Day, scheduled for September 18.

Discussion on Group Inventory: It was decided to set aside some time at the next meeting for small group discussions regarding goals for the IFB and the possibility of a group inventory.

**C. Ad Hoc Committee Reports**

Outreach Committee: Mark D. reported that one of the goals of the Outreach Committee is to increase group representation on the IFB and for members of the committee to attend meetings of groups without IFB representatives and explain the role of the IFB. He stated that members of the committee will be involved in events such as Marin Unity Day and Spirit of San Francisco. We need volunteers for both events. The next Outreach Committee meeting is Thursday, August 19 at 6:30 p.m. at the Central Office.

Literature Review Committee: Gary D. reported that that the committee is working on a "unified look" for locally produced publications. The next Lit. Review Committee meeting is Wednesday, August, 18 at 6:30 p.m. at the Central Office.

*The Point* Committee: Steve R. reported that the "Faithful Fiver" and AA Birthday Donation form will be regular features in *The Point*. He also solicited members to submit articles for *The Point*.

Orientation Committee: Tim M. reported that the orientation of new IFB members will include a section on how to read IFB financial statements. Current members of the IFB were encouraged to attend. The next orientation will take place at 6:00 pm prior to the IFB meeting, on Wednesday, Sept. 1 at 1187 Franklin St. in San Francisco.

Website Committee: The website will be enhanced with added features. Dan Z. was thanked for his efforts in improving the website. Volunteers were requested to test the new features. The url will be emailed to you.

12<sup>th</sup> Step Committee: No report. The next meeting is Wednesday, August 11, at 6:30 p.m. at the Central Office.

Special Events Committee: Dave B. reported that the "Hot August Nights" Dance is coming up on August 28. He requested that IFB members distribute flyers for the event. He further reported that a Halloween Bingo event is being planned for Halloween weekend.

Special Needs Committee: Dan P. reported that a questionnaire circulated among the deaf communities came to a conclusive preference for a Saturday night speaker discussion meeting. He further

reported that beginning September 11, the Sutter Street Beginners meeting will be the meeting that will have ASL interpretation. The committee is also working on wheelchair access issues. The possibility of holding another Deaf Sponsorship Workshop was also discussed. The next meeting of the committee is Tuesday, September 7, at 6:00 p.m. at the Central Office.

Archives Committee: Lynnore G. reported that that the committee is planning to begin collecting oral histories from old timers. The next meeting of the committee is scheduled for August 16, at 3:00 p.m. at the Central Office.

**D. IFB Standing Committee Reports**

SF Teleservice: There is a need for volunteers for back-up shifts on Fridays from 6:00 pm to 10:00 pm. Everyone is invited to attend the barbecue/picnic scheduled for Sunday, August 29 from noon to 3:00 pm at Sharon Meadows, Golden Gate Park. The next meeting of the Teleservice Committee is August 16 at 6:30 p.m. at the Central Office.

PI/CPC: In June and July there were 9 DUI classes. One school class was scheduled for August 2. A quarterly speaker workshop was held on July 12 with 25 people attending who were interested in becoming speakers. The next workshop will coincide with SF Unity Day in the fall. There is an opening on the Outreach Committee.

Group Rep Reports: No reports.

**E. Non-IFB Liaison Reports**

a. General Service, SF: No report. The next meeting is August 10 at 7 p.m. (orientation) and 8 p.m. (regular meeting) at 1111 O'Farrell, San Francisco.

b. General Service, Marin: Shannon L. reported that they had sent members to a meeting in Portland OR. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, August 16 at 7 p.m. at 9 Ross Valley Road, San Rafael.

c. Teleservice, Marin: The committee completed a group inventory. There will be a picnic at the Marin Alano Club on August 21. The next meeting is scheduled for August 24 at 7:30 p.m. at 1360 Lincoln/Maple (Alano Club) San Rafael.

d. PI/CPC, Marin: No Report. The next meeting is August 26 at 7:15 p.m. at 1360 Lincoln/Maple (Alano Club) San Rafael.

e. Bridging the Gap: No report. The next SF meeting is August 10 at 6:30 p.m. at 1111 O'Farrell, San Francisco. The next Marin meeting is August 11 at 6:45 p.m. at 1411 Lincoln Ave., San Rafael.

f. H & I: No report. The next SF meeting is August 26 at 7:15 p.m. (orientation) and 8 p.m. regular meeting at 1751 Sacramento St. The next Marin meeting is August 10 at 7 p.m. at Lagunitas & Shady Lane in Ross.

g. Spirit of San Francisco: Russell R. reported that special needs will be addressed at the conference. There will be headsets for the hearing impaired and a projector for the visually impaired. No one will be turned away from service tables or marathon meetings for lack of funds and there is a scholarship fund. Non-paying attendees are still required to register and get a name badge. Donations are needed for the raffle. Online registration is set at \$20. The group hotel rate is \$99/night. The next meeting is August 30 at 7 .m. at the Central Office.

The next IFB meeting will be held Wednesday, September 1, at First Unitarian Universalist Church, 1187 Franklin at Geary, San Francisco, at 7 pm (Orientation at 6 p.m.)

The 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition collection was \$99.50. ↑

*Psst... The Point* is online: [www.aasf.org](http://www.aasf.org)

## Workaholism (Continued from page 6)

with the same obsessive nature that I used to apply to getting loaded. I worked long hours, often being the first one in and the last one out of the office. In a few short months, I made the successful transition from active alcoholic to full-fledged workaholic.

I was semi-aware of the fact that my addiction had leapt to my job, but didn't know how to stop it. I decided to get outside help from a therapist and she helped me set some boundaries for myself. We set a time for me to leave the office each day, regardless of how much work was left undone. I began attending a noon AA meeting downtown a couple times a week to help keep me grounded. I started leaving for lunch each day, even if only for a 20-minute change of scenery. I discussed my workload with my boss regularly and asked for help when I was feeling overwhelmed instead of staying up all night to get things done.

At a little over one year of sobriety, I decided to quit my job and learn how to just be. I wasn't enjoying the new position or the adrenaline-fueled atmosphere anymore. After a lot of soul-searching and talks with my sponsor and therapist, I made the decision to leave. I was petrified of giving up the security of a regular paycheck. I had worked at the same ad agency for six years—during the entire time I'd been coming in and out of AA—and the job was the only consistent thing in my life.

The day I quit, the stars came into alignment and the world opened up to take care of me. I went to resign, but the HR woman told me the agency would be willing to release me through a layoff so I'd get severance and

could collect unemployment. This is exactly what I needed to ensure I could take enough time off to figure out what to do next.

The first two months of not working were really difficult for me. I struggled with not having a schedule or structure to my day. It really sank in how much I tied my self-esteem to what I *do* for a living when I suddenly wasn't doing anything *but* living. I started to feel depressed and anxious and thankfully reached to my AA tools for help. I began to go to more meetings and spend more time with friends both in and out of AA. I also picked up a commitment at *The Point*, which has been a good way both to do service and to indulge in the editorial process again, but in a more sane way. The last month has been better, though some days I feel almost too busy again.

I don't know where my career is going, which freaks me out in many ways because I'm not the type of person who does things without a plan. I'm just putting one foot in front of the other each day. I know there's a path unfolding in front of me, but I'm not able to see where it's going because for once, I'm not laying the bricks myself. My higher power is.

Today I'm holding on with faith that each step will reveal itself when it's time for me to take it. It's hard for me not to switch into that familiar make-something-happen-mode because I'm scared of the open spaces in my life right now. But I'm trying to sit quietly and be mindful of the decisions I make each day. I'm trying to stay grounded in the AA practice of doing the next right thing. I trust it will inevitably take me somewhere even better than I can possibly imagine. 📌

### CONTRIBUTIONS to the Central

Office were made through August 17, 2004 honoring the following members:

#### ONGOING MEMORIALS

Bob	R.W.
Curtis C.	Fran H.

#### ANNIVERSARIES

James D. – 21 years, Carol W. – 26 years,  
Charles M. – 26 years, Nancie G. – 28 years,  
Frances L. – 42 years

**Sometimes Slowly:** Lindell B. – 23 years

**High Noon Friday:** Andrew K.—15 years

**Mill Valley 7am:** Gene H. – 15 years

**Cocoanuts:** Mike C. – 8 years

## REGISTRATION FORMS FOR THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

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# Financial Statement

June 2004 - Intercounty Fellowship of AA

	<u>Jun 04</u>	<u>Jan - Jun 04</u>		<u>Jun 04</u>	<u>Jan - Jun 04</u>
Ordinary Income/Expense			Shipping	87.80	55.53
Income			Professional Fees		
Group Contributions			Computer Consulting	0.00	622.93
Honors	20.00	260.22	Total Professional Fees	0.00	622.93
Group Contributions - Other	<u>11,120.87</u>	<u>63,547.11</u>	Rent - Office	3,583.75	25,086.25
Total Group Contributions	<u>11,140.87</u>	<u>63,807.33</u>	Rent - Other	150.00	425.00
Individual Contributions			Repair & Maintenance	178.00	1,082.98
Honorary Contributions	255.70	1,593.70	Security System	33.50	234.50
Individual -Unrestricted	<u>1,403.00</u>	<u>3,190.96</u>	Special Events	0.00	135.00
Total Individual Contributions	<u>1,658.70</u>	<u>4,784.66</u>	Telephone	535.70	3,077.53
Gratitude Month			Travel	0.00	25.00
Gratitude Month-Groups	<u>0.00</u>	<u>1,758.22</u>	Training	0.00	94.67
Total Gratitude Month	0.00	1,758.22	Utilities	<u>219.52</u>	<u>1,236.70</u>
Newsletter Subscript.	150.00	582.00	Total Expense	<u>15,063.24</u>	<u>93,273.36</u>
Special Event Income	0.00	2,108.00	Net Ordinary Income	-191.91	-9,570.98
Sales - Bookstore	<u>7,823.53</u>	<u>44,072.48</u>	Other Income/Expense		
Total Income	<u>20,773.10</u>	<u>117,112.69</u>	Other Income		
Cost of Goods Sold			Other Income	0.00	2,615.13
Cost of Books Sold	<u>5,901.77</u>	<u>33,410.31</u>	Interest Income	<u>179.13</u>	<u>384.18</u>
Total COGS	<u>5,901.77</u>	<u>33,410.31</u>	Total Other Income	179.13	2,999.31
Gross Profit	14,871.33	83,702.38	Other Expense		
Expense			Depreciation Expense	<u>408.17</u>	<u>2,449.02</u>
IFB Literature	0.00	173.25	Total Other Expense	<u>408.17</u>	<u>2,449.02</u>
Bad Checks	0.00	-27.07	Net Other Income	<u>-229.04</u>	<u>550.29</u>
Employee Expenses			Net Income	<u>-420.95</u>	<u>-9,020.69</u>
Wages & Salaries	7,200.00	43,090.43			
Employer Tax Expenses	582.53	4,736.81			
Benefits/Pension	712.00	4,176.00			
Retirement/Annuity Expense	0.00	-2,218.30			
Workers Comp Ins.	<u>0.00</u>	<u>979.85</u>			
Total Employee Expenses	<u>8,494.53</u>	<u>50,764.79</u>			
ASL Expense					
ASL- Net- Fri All Grps	<u>705.60</u>	<u>2,646.00</u>			
Total ASL Expense	<u>705.60</u>	<u>2,646.00</u>			
Bank Charges					
Cr Card Fees	106.31	596.94			
Bank Charges - Other	<u>25.10</u>	<u>132.40</u>			
Total Bank Charges	<u>131.41</u>	<u>729.34</u>			
Equipment Lease	569.62	3,395.12			
Filing/Fees	0.00	87.00			
Insurance	100.55	603.30			
Internet Expense	0.00	215.40			
Miscellaneous Expense	0.00	65.15			
Office Supplies	251.06	1,787.79			
Postage					
Bulk Mail	0.00	400.00			
Postage - Other	<u>22.20</u>	<u>357.20</u>			
Total Postage	<u>22.20</u>	<u>757.20</u>			

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**September 2004**

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ISSUE 0904

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