

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

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

The Point

December 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.

Get Out of Jail Free By Dave G.

Court-Ordered to Alcoholics Anonymous, he gives back through H & I

"Tell him exactly what happened to you. Stress the spiritual feature freely."

—*Alcoholics Anonymous*, p. 93

I had my first taste of alcohol at about the age of eight and I went to my first A.A. meeting in 1989 at the age of 36. I had been arrested for my third DUI and my lawyer said that I was going to have to go to jail. I figured that if I started going to A.A. meetings I could convince the judge that I had changed my ways and get off with a slap on the wrist. Of course it didn't work and I got sentenced to, among other things, six months in jail, and, even worse, thirty months of alcohol rehabilitation. I was able to qualify for work furlough and started outpatient therapy.

I remember telling the intake counselor at rehab that I would go to the three A.A. meetings a week that they required for their program, but that it wouldn't work because I wasn't an alcoholic.

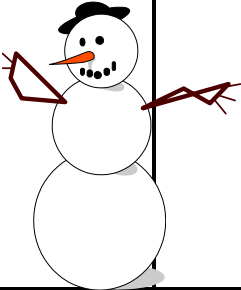


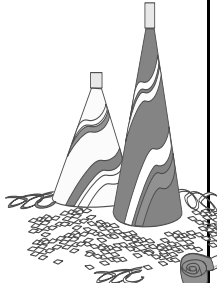
I went to lots of meetings during that first six months because going to meetings got me out of the work furlough dorm and I had to go three times a week for rehab or get kicked out and have to go back to county jail. Since I wasn't drinking, the fog in my brain started to lift and the things I was hearing in the meetings were sinking in and making sense. I started going to a Big Book study group and I liked the meeting and the people in it. I made it my home group. I got a sponsor there, same one I have today, and started working the steps. Pretty early on I learned that in order to keep it I had to give it away. I also learned that I was in a position to do something for somebody else that not everyone could do—I could talk to them one alcoholic to another.

Up until then I had led my life being a pretty miserable human being - thinking only of myself and not caring about anybody or anything but me. I was selfish, petty and a complete jerk. The idea that I was now capable of being helpful to another alcoholic because of my alcoholism was extremely appealing. I started thinking that maybe I now had an opportunity to be of service to other people as unfortunate as I had been. Since I was studying the Big Book and working with a sponsor it became clear to me that in order to keep what I had found I had to work on giving back.

(Continued on page 18)

IFB TREASURER NEEDED!
See insert or visit our website at
www.aasf.org for more information

December 2004....

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 FIRST WED Intercounty Fellowship Board Orientation 6 pm Meeting 7 pm 1187 Franklin St. at Geary, SF (Meets in Sausalito in Feb, May, Aug & Nov., Star of the Sea Church, 180 Harrison Ave.)	2 FIRST THU Marin PI Committee 1360 Lincoln Ave (Alano Club) San Rafael 7:15 pm (Note: Usually meets the Fourth Thursday)	3	
5	6 FIRST MON The Spirit of San Francisco Committee, Central Office, 7:00 pm	7	8 SECOND WED 12th Step Committee Central Office, 6:30 pm Marin Bridging the Gap 1411 Lincoln Ave., San Rafael 6:45 pm	9	10	11
12	13 SECOND MON SF Public Information Committee Central Office, 7 pm	14 SECOND TUE 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	15 THIRD WED Literature Review Committee Central Office, 6:30 pm	16 THIRD THU Outreach Committee Central Office, 6:30pm	17	18 THIRD SAT General Service CNCA Meeting 320 N. McDowell Petaluma DCMCs: 11 am Business Meeting: 12:30pm (Usually meets Fourth Saturday)
19 THIRD SUN Mission Fellowship Steering Committee 2900 24th / Florida SF 1 pm	20 THIRD MON 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	21 THIRD TUE San Mateo General Service St. Andrews Church 15th & El Camino Real San Mateo, 7:30 pm	22	23	24 25 HAPPY HOLIDAYS!! CENTRAL OFFICE CLOSED	
26 		28 FOURTH TUE Marin Teleservice 1360 Lincoln / Maple (Alano Club) San Rafael 7:30 pm	29	30 LAST THU SF H&I Old First Church, 1751 Sacramento St. SF Orientation: 7:15 pm Committee Meeting: 8pm	31 NY EVE! CENTRAL OFFICE CLOSED	

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.
Dec. 11, 12	Women's A.A. Holiday Retreat, Ralston-White Mansion on Mt. Tam., More info at divinediane@sbcglobal.net
Dec. 24-26	Holiday Alcothon, Mission Fellowship, 2900 24th St. @ Florida, begins 4pm Dec. 24; last meeting 8pm Dec. 26
Dec. 30-Jan 2	New Year's Alcothon, Mission Fellowship, 2900 24th St. @ Florida, begins 4pm Dec. 30; last meeting 8pm Jan. 2
Dec. 31	Spirit of S.F. New Year's Eve Event, St. Mark's Urban Life Center, 1101 O'Farrell St., 8:30pm: Friday All Groups Speaker Meeting, 9:30pm: Fashion Contest, 10pm: Dance! \$20 Admission to Dance; Limited Scholarships Available.
Dec. 31	Living Sober New Year's Eve Event, Harvey Milk Academy, 4235 19th St./Collingwood, See Flier on Pg. 5
Dec. 31	Marin Alano Club New Year's Eve Event, 7:30pm Speaker Meeting; Buffet Dinner; See Flier on Pg. 5
Dec. 31	Novato Fellowship New Year's Eve Event, Our Lady of Loretto Church, See Flier on Pg. 5.
Jan. 1, 2005	S.F. Alano Club Meeting & Celebration, Urban Life Center, 1101 O'Farrell @ Franklin, 6pm A.A. Meeting
Jan. 30, 2005	PI/CPC Annual Business Meeting/ Speaker Workshop, Ft. Mason, Building C, 12 noon to 2pm, Potluck!
Jan. 30, 2005	Broads Without Booze V, Irish Cultural Center, 2700 45th Ave, 12noon: Lunch; Speaker Meeting: 1:30pm
June 30-July 3, 2005	2005 International Convention, Toronto, Canada; More info at http://www.aasf.org/#convention

Registration forms for the 2005 International Convention are now available at Central Office. For additional information about the convention, please visit our website, www.aasf.org and click on the link under "Fellowship News".



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This Month in AA Trivia DECEMBER

1. What is the official name of A.A.'s basic text?
2. How many Steps did A.A. have in 1935?
3. Who was the third member of A.A.?
4. True or False: A.A. teaches that the 12 Steps are the ONLY way to sobriety.
5. True or False: You must subscribe to the traditional Judeo-Christian belief system to fully work the Steps in A.A.



1. Alcoholics Anonymous
2. Six
3. Bill D.
4. False
5. False

If you want more info on the answers, visit
<http://www.funtrivia.com/submitquiz.cfm?quiz=148361>



MEETING CHANGES

New Meetings:

Sun	12:00 pm	San Rafael	Noon Reveille, Marin Alano Club, 1360 Lincoln/ Maple (SD)
Mon	8:00 pm	Cathedral Hill	SOUGHT TO IMPROVE 1187 Franklin @ Geary, (Meditation)

Meeting Changes:

Mon-Fri	1:00 pm	Sunset	ALL Mon-Fri 12:30 pm meetings at 1329 7th Ave/ Irving will begin at 1pm
Sun	8:00 pm	Novato	North Bay Trudgers Discussion, 1905 Novato Blvd., Senior Access (was 7:00 pm)
Tue	8:00 pm	Mission	TUESDAY NIGHT OPEN HOUSE, 3550 Cesar Chavez St. (was 7:15 pm)
Sat	12:30 pm	Sunset	SEVENTH WONDER GROUP 1329 7th Ave/ Irving is NOT meeting currently, but is looking for a new location.

No Longer Meeting:

Tue	8:00 pm	Civic Center	A WOMAN'S TOUCH, 711 Eddy
Sat	7:30 pm	Mission	HOMEFIRE BEGINNERS, 2900 24th St.

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!

See You There

By Bob C.

“My Christmas at the Oz wasn’t so bad—I just stayed in my room and watched TV for three days.” That statement raised a chuckle around the room.

The laughter we shared that particular Christmas morning was because of the fact that there were no TVs at the Ozanam Detox Center on Howard Street. It was just a three-day Holiday Hallucination with an imaginary remote.

I began going to the Oz when a sponsee of mine mentioned that there was a morning A.A. meeting there on Thanksgiving. These meetings have since become one of our traditions, leavened with holiday mornings at the 24th Street Alcothon when the Oz doors were fit to burst.

The morning I made that statement, residents of the facility sat around the room in whatever robe or blanket they had, and listened while a room full of experienced A.A. members shared their past and the facts of life today. Then from the sofas the residents started to sprinkle in their own stories, their hopes and fears for recovery and their anger and embarrassment at being in detox on Christmas morning—perhaps not for the first time. We all understood.

That morning has been repeated with each holiday meeting, sometimes with more heartbreak, sometimes with the most sublime and bizarre of circumstances. The fellowship of

men and women who gather on these high holy days—filled with joy of celebration, pain of separation from loved ones and depth of gratitude for another year’s freedom—is one of the profoundest gatherings of our united strength.

Supporting these around-the-clock meetings with attendance, service and helping desperate newcomers deepens our gratitude for being spared. It also brings out some of the most amazing testaments to the power of the spirit, and the most hilarious stories of alcoholic delusion you are likely to hear.

As the meeting breaks we cherish the feeling of the sunlight on our face as we step out the door and into the first blast of crisp air (and nicotine). We head off to the rest of our holiday—to family dinners or “orphan” potlucks with A.A. friends, to quiet reflection, to the warmth of another meeting, to volunteer at soup kitchens. That sunlight feels like gratitude.

On Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Years’ Day and Easter we all gather to break the crust of a doughnut and dunk it in the communal cup. Crusty old-timer, come join us in thanks for being free. Raw recruit, come to serve. High-bottom drunk, come to cry. All come and be well. ↑



AA ALCOTHON

2900 24th Street @ Florida, San Francisco

Holiday Alcothon

Starts Friday, Dec. 24th @ 4pm
Through Sun, Dec. 26th @ 10:00pm

New Years 2004

Starts Friday Dec. 30th @ 4pm
Through Sunday Jan. 2nd @ 10:00 pm

Last Meeting starts at 8:00pm

AA Meetings on the even hour from 6am till Midnight (Door closes at midnight)
Special New Years Eve Meeting midnight till 2am (Door closes @ 2pm)



Novato Fellowship of A.A.

New Year's Eve Dance and Speaker Meeting

Friday December 31st, 2004

7-8pm Speaker Meeting with Sheila H.
8:30-12:30am DJ Dance with Magic Moments

WHERE?

Our Lady of Loretto Church
1806 Novato Blvd. @ Grant Ave.

Tickets \$8 presale, \$10 at the door

Contact: Erin B. 415.509.2069 for more info.



Friday December 31st New Years Eve Party!



Sober Benefit for The Marin Alano Club
7:30 Speaker Meeting~9:00 Dinner & Comedy
10:00 ~ 12:30 Dancing

San Rafael Masonic Hall
1010 Lootens Place between 4th & 5th Streets
Downtown San Rafael,

\$20 suggested donation includes:
Buffet Dinner, Sparkling Cider and
Party Favors!
415-456-8479



The Waterfront Group is sponsoring an
alive and kicking in in sobriety

Holiday Dance

Saturday, December 18th

8:00p.m. to Midnight

Fort Mason, Rm. C261, Bldg C

DJ, Caffeine, Sweets &
Free Parking

To those who have yet to dance
sober – it's time – fear is a
corrosive thread!

Suggested \$5.00 at door
(nobody turned away for lack of funds!)

A Fundraiser for
Living Sober / Western Roundup

New Years Eve Dance

Friday, December 31st

7:30 pm AA—AI Anon meeting
9:00 pm DANCE

Harvey Milk Civil Rights Academy
4235 19th Street @ Collingwood

\$15 Suggested Donation
No one turned away for lack of funds

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

Www.LivingSober.Org

415.978.2478

Keeping it in the Family

This is the story of my first twelfth step, which happened without my knowledge. I got sober in the spring of 99. I really did not feel that A.A. was for me, but I knew it worked for friends, so I went to some meetings and learned about the steps and sponsorship. I did not "work" the steps or follow suggestions, but I did stay sober. I was flying blind in a world of temptation that later would lead to me doing the steps and learning to love this Group Of Drunks.

My family is an international one and travel is a big part of our lives. A cousin of mine called me in early 2000 to ask if she could stay at my apartment in San Francisco on a stop over while she was traveling from England to New Zealand. She is very much like me. If you shake her family tree, bottles and crazies fall out.

This situation was a little nuts because she was still drinking and I was newly sober. I still did what I liked to do, which was going out to clubs and bars to have fun. Fun for me still was in the bar and club scene, but not drinking. Bars were the core of my life and if I was to not drink I still needed to enjoy my life, to live it to the fullest. I had sober friends who would check on me or look out for me and that helped. I was not letting the loss of the love of my life (booze) ruin my life.

How does this relate to my cousin Alice and the twelfth step? I'll tell you: I WAS HAPPY JOYOUS AND FREE. She could see that for the first time in my life, the bondage of the bottle had been lifted from me and that a drinker like me could go out and have a good time without drinking.

Is this the twelfth step? Well for me it was. I talked to her during the day. I had no hangover or remorse. I had "the joy of living." She asked me about being sober and what I thought of A.A. and the steps. I told the truth. For me at the time, the steps were only suggestions and I wasn't

By Anonymous

taking them, but I knew if I drank it would only get worse. The truth was that I was leading by example. I was practicing "attraction rather than promotion." I told her about why I quit dinking and that if I drank again I would lose what little sanity I had gained. I also talked about how I was sick of being the way I was... that something had to go, and it was booze.

At the time I did not know or understand the extent of what I was doing. I didn't realize that I was showing Alice that a life without drinking and drugs was possible, AND that I was happy and could go out and have fun. I was not trapped in my house white knuckling it or only sitting in smoke-filled church basements. I was out in the world having a good time sober and she found that attractive.

Four years later I was in England with my girlfriend visiting family and taking a much-needed vacation. My mom had gotten Alice's phone number and said that I should look her up because she had a few years sober. So I called her up and had a long and wonderful conversation with her. She told me that I had sold the idea of getting sober to her and even though I was not a great example of A.A., I was living clean and sober. She told me about leaving San Francisco and heading to Los Angeles and staying with other cousins and getting sober. It turns out that TWO weeks after she saw me Alice got sober (in A.A.). She actually had 4 1/2 years clean and was working with a sponsor and doing the steps. Her life had radically improved and the promises had come to true for her in so many ways.

The fact that I didn't know what a twelfth step was didn't matter. I showed another alcoholic that I could stop dinking and so could she. Regardless of the quality of my sobriety at the time, I helped another alcoholic get and stay sober. That is my primary purpose today.

Group Speakers for Dec. 2004

BRISBANE BREAKFAST BUNCH

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

DATE	SPEAKER	FROM
12/05/04	Darlene E.	Daly City
12/12/04	Ed H.	Burlingame
12/19/04	Javier G.	So. SF
12/26/04	Judith L.	SF

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

Thanks to all who contribute time and energy in creating our newsletter!

If you are interested in helping,
give us a call: 415.674.1821

Dear Alky

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

Dear Alky,

This is my first sober holiday season following a slip. I generally attend a large number of holiday parties, which are professional networking opportunities for me. This year I'm feeling nervous about attending any of them because the booze is always flowing so freely. I've really committed myself to staying sober this time and don't want to do anything that might compromise my seven hard-earned months of sobriety. Do you have any advice that could help me attend the parties and stay sober? Or do you think it would be best for me to opt out this year?

Sincerely, Party Girl

Dear Party Girl,

Your sponsor would probably point out that when Jonah was rescued from the belly of the whale he didn't go back in to get his hat. Those "networking" parties where the booze flows freely may have snared you last time, so beware. In *Alcoholics Anonymous* we read that: "... we aren't a glum lot. If newcomers could see no joy or fun in our existence, they wouldn't want it."

Don't go out of your way to hide from your associates who drink, just because you aren't drinking. If you have a legitimate reason to go to a party, by all means go, but remember that you are a real alcoholic. Decide beforehand who to contact to achieve your work-related goals. If it isn't awkward, take a sober friend with you. Go late to the party and grab a non-alcoholic drink the minute you walk in and don't put it down. Talk to your colleagues, even better, listen to them to learn what you need to know to be back in the game. Leave just as soon as you have connected with the people you planned to connect with. You may be pleasantly surprised how well this strategy works.

-Alky



Dear Alky,

I can't make it home for my third sober Christmas and I'm intensely lonely because I don't have many sober friends. I recently fired my boyfriend because I could only drink so many apple juices, Coca-Colas, and Virgin Marys with his crowd.

-Misty

Dear Misty,

Living Sober has a whole chapter on loneliness. One simple strategy is to take care of yourself - don't let yourself get too hungry, angry or tired, and you may not feel so lonely. As alcoholics we are emotionally immature. Many people say that our development stops when we start drinking, so quite a few of us are still teenagers. We have to learn everything from the



beginning - even how to date! Stay close to AA. It is possible to feel lonely in meetings, but it is much lonelier alone inside your head - a dangerous neighborhood!

Your sponsor would probably suggest that you reach out to the alcoholic who is even lonelier than you are - how about the newcomer who is standing all alone after a meeting while everybody else chats with their friends? Give her your phone number and volunteer to be her temporary sponsor. The best way to have a friend is to be a friend - pick up the ten-ton telephone and call people. Go to coffee or dinner after a meeting. Celebrate A.A. anniversaries by getting a chip at a chip meeting and taking people with you. Enjoy your A.A. life. Seize the sober day!

-Alky



Dear Alky,

Every year at Christmas I try to get my friends something they really need or want, often costing several hundred dollars. It seems all I ever get from them is a trip to some corny movie or the tacqueria. Should I scale back this year? Also, what about the gifts of alcohol I get from friends who don't know I'm sober? Should I give them to someone else?

-Stuffed

Dear Stuffed,

It sounds as if you feel you are getting stiffed. You may be giving your friends gifts they can't afford to reciprocate. Back off. Give the gift of yourself - invite them to join you for dinner or a movie. Give inexpensive gifts everyone can use but that don't clutter up their houses - candles, note cards, gift certificates. Be grateful you have friends want to go with you to the movies or the tacqueria. How many real friends did you have when you were drinking? If someone gives you alcohol, and you can't turn it down gracefully, pass it on to someone who can use it as soon as possible. If not, donate it or ditch it. Don't keep it around for "people who might stop by." You could be the one who stops by.

-Alky

Recent Deaths

Bob B.—7 years

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—

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RECORDING SECRETARY—

Don B. 415.777-9374

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Danny F. dannyfl12@earthlink.net

ORIENTATION COMMITTEE—

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12th STEP COMMITTEE—

Scott C. 415.614-0249

ARCHIVES COMMITTEE—

Lynnore G. lynnore1@aol.com

LITERATURE COMMITTEE—

Gary D. 415.922-1341

THE POINT

Steve R. calmont1@aol.com

SPECIAL EVENTS—

David B. dbelectric@turnershouse.net

SPECIAL NEEDS COMMITTEE—

Pene P. 415.200-6261

WEBSITE COMMITTEE—

Michael R. michaelr@aasf.org

SF TELESERVICE COMMITTEE—

Rick P./Mary P. sfteleservice@aasf.org

SF PI/CPC COMMITTEE—

Laura N. 415.931-2567

MARIN PI/CPC COMMITTEE—

Patrick K. thepmkman@aol.com

Monster Bingo Made for Sober Fun

By Stacey S.

Have you ever asked, "How is that I used to drink every day, yet now I am not only sober, but actually am having fun?" I ask myself this daily and the answer usually begins, "Well, I got this service commitment..." My involvement with the Special Events Committee (SEC) came as the result of my hand shooting up of its own accord during a District 05 General Service meeting. This is a typical example of how I become active in A.A. service, which enriches my life.

Monster Bingo on October 30th was a super fun time. The speaker, Mary Ellen H. of San Anselmo, delivered a powerful message stressing the vigilance required to keep from letting her "distorted thinking" take over. This tied in very well with the distorted looking characters that were on hand, ranging from gals dressed in blood-soaked wedding gowns to a pirate straight off the set of *Pirates of the Caribbean*. Whether or not you showed up in costume, by the time Earlene and Pearlene got done with their act, most guests were "provided" hats with sayings such as "I'd rather be at the Monster Truck Pull," "Bingo Cheater," or "Has difficulty applying oneself."

During the costume contest, the self-pronounced "punk rocker with the rosy red cheeks" who was all of maybe 10 was asked to repeat the best advice she received from her parents, to which she replied, "My parents don't give me advice!" Her father concurred citing the chapter "Working with Others" from the *Big Book!* The bingo winners were awarded gift certificates for candy, clothing, coffee, handyman services, and the grand prize of \$100 cash, split between a pirate and a personal trainer. The trainer had one of those costumes you just could NOT not laugh at: lots of plastic, and lots and lots of air so that he appeared to be 4-feet tall and 400 pounds! Guests drank "monster" drinks and ate popcorn and candy in a room adorned with super trick decorations made by SEC member Debbie M. Even IFB Chair Joe G. got lucky and won his first-ever (that he can remember!) game of Bingo and a toaster oven. To top it off, Marin/S.F. A.A. received all of the proceeds.

The night of our final SEC Monster Bingo planning meeting, neither myself nor my sponsee wanted to make the trip from San Mateo to S.F. I had just flown in from a family function back east and my sponsee had just lost a dear friend to a brain tumor. But we had to act responsibly to maintain our sobriety and quality of life, so we went. It was a quick and efficient meeting and we got to "chat it up" with some of the IFB folks we were getting to know, strengthening the inter-county bond between Marin/S.F.

It took a fair amount of hard work and support from many people outside of the SEC to hold this event. Our hats are off to everyone who lent a hand or simply "suited up and showed up." In a nutshell, this commitment kept me connected to the rest of you, thereby to our program of recovery, and finally, to that Power Greater than myself that makes this thing called "life" so worth living. 📌

Treasures of the Twelve & Twelve: Step Twelve

By Cami W.

As we take the Twelfth Step, we turn our attention toward the alcoholic still suffering. For me, this is no small feat. I am extremely self-absorbed and love to live inside my head. Years ago, one of my old sponsors told me I needed to reach out to others or I would drink. I thought she was crazy. I mean, come on, it was all I could do to keep my *own sh*t* together. I didn't have time or energy to help someone else.

After two-plus years of practicing selfish sobriety, I drank. Only after a long, miserable relapse was I humble enough to take my sponsor's advice. I got a new sponsor and started the Steps again. I did 90 meetings in 90 days and tried my best at each one to talk to someone with less sobriety than me. I shared. I got a commitment. I called my sponsor almost every day. I didn't realize it then, but by doing all that footwork, I was carrying the message of A.A. The *Twelve & Twelve* says:

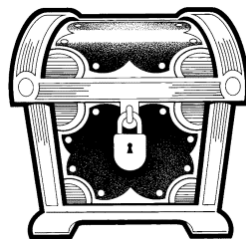
"Even the newest of newcomers finds undreamed rewards as he tries to help his brother alcoholic, the one who is even blinder than he. This is indeed the kind of giving that actually demands nothing."

For me, the spiritual awakening referred to in the Twelfth Step happened slowly. About 14 months later, after working a Tenth Step with my sponsor one afternoon, she said to me, "Cami, I think you're ready to sponsor someone. Your next assignment is to find a sponsee."

I was stunned. Was I ready? Despite the shock, somewhere deep inside I knew she was right. It was time. So I started raising my hand in meetings as someone willing to be a sponsor. I started giving my number out to newcomers and telling them I was available.

In a few weeks I had my first sponsee. I met her at her first meeting and she asked me on the spot. She was still in rehab so I visited her on the weekends and we read from the Big Book and got to know each other. I suggested the same writing assignments I had done with my sponsor and we worked on those during my visits. I suggested she call me every day to check in.

When she got out of rehab, she moved into a sober living house. She was there a week and then one day she just



stopped calling me. I was worried. My first instinct was to go hunt her down, but I knew that would just drive me crazy, so instead each day I prayed that she was safe and sober.

After about three weeks of silence, she called and left me a message. She apologized for the disappearing act and asked if I was still willing to work with her. It turns out she was

sober and safe. She had decided to leave the sober living house after her first week and move in with a man she had met at her first rehab. She said she hadn't called me because she was embarrassed and worried that I'd be disappointed in her decision. She and this man both had less than 60 days sober.

Truth be told, I wanted to knock her upside the head. But then I remembered that it's not my job to tell her how to live her life. I'm not her therapist or her mother. I'm her sponsor and my only responsibility is to support her in working the Steps if she wants to. Besides who was I to judge? I had an affair with someone I met in rehab after we got out.

I called her and asked if she was willing to go to 90 meetings in 90 days. She said yes. I asked if she was willing to meet once a week and read from the Big Book with me and do Step work in between each meeting. She said yes. That was enough for me. She was willing to do the work, so I was willing to work with her. It was that simple.

For me, being available for other alcoholics is rewarding. I find it's pretty easy to practice A.A. principles with other drunks. Practicing love and tolerance with my family or with a difficult client is certainly more of a challenge. Taking regular inventory and admitting when I'm wrong is still very hard for me. Staying connected to A.A. through the Twelfth Step is what makes it possible for me to continue to grow both inside and outside the rooms. I'm grateful that, thanks to A.A., I have a safe zone to practice living. 📌

Staying connected to A.A. through the Twelfth Step is what makes it possible for me to continue to grow both inside and outside the rooms.

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



A.A. On the Road: Italy

By Barnaby W.

Our story starts while my girlfriend and I were traveling in Rome. We went to A.A. meetings there. Getting a meeting in was good. Plus they had a list of English-speaking people in A.A. all over Italy, including loners.

We were surprised to find that there were no English-speaking A.A. meetings in Venice but we did have the list. So we rang up one of the two loners listed, Michael F. He agreed to meet us at the train station (it was across the canal from our hotel). This was great as we had a friend in him immediately and could talk about being sober in a land where everyone drinks. He surprised us by telling us that he had 18 years but was unable to talk to people in his native language (he was from Ireland) about being sober. Because he lived 20 miles outside of Venice, he went to Italian meetings but he said it was hard even though he was fluent.

He piqued our interest when he said he knew another sober Englishman in Venice who had started a meeting. This sounded like something cool to check out, and a way to connect with other A.A. members.

Michael showed us all around Venice that night. We had a great dinner with him where we all told our stories and shared. It was weird because even though he had a lot more time than either of us at 2 1/2 and 5 years, it seemed that we were carrying the message to him and that he was really moved by our time together. We did not know it but the Group Of Drunks was working in our favor. Michael had taken us to the yacht that an

A.A. friend lived on. There, we left our cell phone numbers on a note, and he too called us. He knew of an English-speaking meeting and it was the next day—would we like to attend? Would we!!!

The next morning we went to the plaza where we were to meet and there were six people there waiting. Three were friends of Bill's and we went to the meeting, which was in a maze of streets in Nunnery. Things were really hopping. As folks set up the meeting, more and more people kept walking in. At the beginning of the meeting there were nearly a dozen of us. It was only the eleventh meeting since it had been founded.

It was a Step Study meeting. We read the *Twelve & Twelve* and shared. Almost everyone spoke. The locals were surprised to find that three more sober A.A.'s were living in Venice, and three of the attendees were locals who didn't know each other. Afterwards they went out for fellowship at a little cafe and we learned more about each other. It was a beautiful thing, but the moments of serendipity weren't over yet. Later, we ran into two of our new friends on the street and heard about the struggles and triumphs they were going through in sobriety. Even at the airport when we were heading to Paris we ran into another F.O.B. We talked some more, traded numbers and plan to stay in contact.

The ways that a Higher Power can put things in one's life are amazing. The fellowship of A.A. all over the world is a great and wonderful thing. 📌

FAITHFUL FIVERS!



Faithful Fivers are A.A. members who graciously pledge to contribute at least Five Dollars each month toward the support of Central Office in its efforts to carry the A.A. message of hope and recovery to those alcoholics who still suffer in the San Francisco/ Marin area. As a Faithful Fiver, your personal contribution can and will make our vital services possible. We'd like to thank the following members for joining:

AMI JOY Y.
BARBARA M.
DAVID B.
FRANK M.
GILES H.
HARRY M.
JIM H.
KATHLEEN S.
KRIS F.

LISA C.
MICHAEL R.
PETER F.
PHILIP G.
RICH G.
SCOTT N.
KATE B.
RICHARD C.

LISA & CLAY K.
JERRY N.
JANET B.
KELLIE A.
RALPH P.
FRANCES L.
LAURIE L.
MONIKA H.
WALT B.



Literature Review: Came to Believe

By Steve N.


The subject of belief in a power greater than myself was simple. My Catholic upbringing introduced me to a God that is all-powerful, all seeing and unapproachable. I knew about good and evil, the Ten Commandments and heaven and hell, but because the God I was taught about through the church was out there, I needed only petition through prayer when I ran into difficulties.

As I grew older and more confident in my abilities to live according to the rules of society, I thought I needed God less. Alcohol put the final stones in the wall that separated me from God. Sin became sanity and abuse of alcohol became my reality. Twenty years of fear and self-reproach around my abuse of alcohol, the consequences of my decisions and denial of a power greater than myself brought me to the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous. Finally, I was willing to learn about the solution that these people had found.

The thin book with the bright red soft cover, *Came to Believe*, is a collection of seventy-six stories divided into ten chapters. The material is A.A.-approved literature first published in 1973. The heading of each chapter has a quote from Bill W. The individual stories are the experience,

strength and hope of alcoholics who explain how they came to believe. The emphasis is on a Higher Power that works for us individually: A God as we understood him. The stories are short and powerful: few beyond two pages.

I picked up this book in my first year of sobriety, but did not open it for another year. I had two sponsees go back out. Both had argued and paid lip service to steps two and three. My sponsor reminded me that I was still sober and suggested some further reading. I started reading, *Came to Believe*. I found stories of hope that suggested I could find a spiritual way of life that was unique and comfortable to my sensibilities, yet simple enough to share with a newcomer. The stories reaffirmed my belief in a Higher Power as I use it in my sponsor-sponsee relationships. The book offers many different definitions of God as we understand him and how they work for other people.

The more examples I can see of the infinite expression of God's will and knowledge, the more hope I have that my program is working and I can live another twenty four hours without picking up a drink. This is something I can pass on to the next suffering alcoholic. 

12 Relapse Prevention Tips

By Anonymous

The holiday whirlwind can provide an almost constant opportunity for relapse. Here are twelve tips to help you maintain your sobriety this season.

1. **Trust God.** This is a spiritual time of year; use a little prayer and come to believe that holiday anxiety and other discomforts will soon pass.
2. **Clean house.** Rush-rush days mean thousands of little resentments; get rid of them with a daily tenth step.
3. **Help others.** Honor service commitments and home groups, reach out to newcomers, engage with sponsors and sponsees. None of the preceding? Time to get them!
4. **Attend more meetings and fellowship.** They soothe our souls, lift our spirits, and offer perspective at a critical time. New members will appreciate our special attentions.
5. **Cultivate family and friends.** Stay in touch before and after holiday events. Let people know how you feel. If necessary, tell them in advance you can socialize minimally or not at all with problem drinkers or at a get-down bash.
6. **Communicate.** Use the phone or e-mail before a crisis if you're feeling down or disturbed. Keep fellowship phone numbers with you; put them under your pillow at night.

7. **Watch your nutrition.** Changes in blood sugar severely affect our mood. Minimize caffeine, stay hydrated with water and juices, and carry crackers, nuts, or energy bars.


8. **Volunteer.** Perform service in the public arena: food and gift drives, meal programs, church functions.

9. **Participate at work.** Take part in employer-sponsored charities; attend the annual banquet, and feel free to leave before it gets messy.

10. **Avoid slippery places.** Sports bars? No. Get cable! When traveling, don't eat at the airport bar-and-grille; try the yogurt stand instead. If seated next to a lush, a flight attendant will accommodate your request for relief.

11. **Stay busy.** If you've idle time on your hands, write letters, take long healthy walks, or go to a museum. Read periodicals and literature of interest to you.

12. **Relax.** Didn't we say stay busy? Yes, but we absolutely need regular sleep. Daily meditation is imperative. Review priorities and make changes so that you manage stress.

If we maintain our program of sobriety and balance our social, spiritual, private and professional lives, the holidays can be the joyous and rewarding season of sharing for us. 

AA Group Contributions - September 2004

Intercounty Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous - San Francisco and Marin Counties

Name	Meets	Sept. '04	YTD	Name	Meets	Sept. '04	YTD
Fellowship Contributions				Living in the Solution	F 6pm		455.00
Annual Christmas Meeting	Christmas 2004		25.00	Marin City Groups	M-F 6:30pm		300.00
Bingo Extravaganza	Bingo 7th Tradition		115.00	Marin Newcomers	M 8:30pm	249.00	249.00
Brisbane Breakfast	Su 11am	33.20	235.00	Marin Sober Group	F 8pm		86.50
Contribution Box	August 2004	46.46	496.95	Mill Valley 7am	7D 7am		1,500.00
Gay Newcomers Group	Santa Rosa		5.72	Mill Valley Original Smokeless Step Study	Th 8pm		50.00
Deer Park Discovery Group		48.00	52.67	Monday Blues	M 6:30pm		264.50
IFB	Sept. Meeting	99.83	911.31	Monday Night Stag (Tiburon)	M 8pm	306.64	1,451.92
IFB Secretaries Workshop			53.25	Monday Night Women's	M 8pm		52.35
Hot August Nights AA meeting		62.53	62.53	Nativity Monday Night Big Book	M 8pm		100.00
Marin Teleservice			1,782.00	Newcomers Step	M 7:30pm		500.00
Spirit of San Francisco	2003 Convention		577.56	Noon	Tu 12pm		140.50
Sunday Step Study	Su 4pm		126.00	Noon Discussion	Th 12pm		135.00
Unidentified			452.45	Noon Hope	F 12pm		97.40
Total Fellowship		\$290.02	\$4,895.44	Novato Fellowship Group	Deposit	120.00	120.00
Honors				Novato Spirit Discussion	F 12pm		142.18
Endless Summer	F 8:30pm		218.22	On Awakening	7D 5:30am		350.00
High Noon	6D 12:15pm		36.00	Pathfinders	Tu 12pm		204.02
Sesame Step	Tu 7:30pm		6.00	Rise N Shine	Su 10am		158.98
Total Honors		\$0.00	\$260.22	Ross San Anselmo Group	M 8:30pm		54.00
Marin Group Contributions				San Anselmo Fireside Meeting	Su 8pm		79.56
11th Step Meeting	M 8pm		100.00	San Geronimo Valley	M 8pm		134.47
12 & 12 Study	Sa 8:15am		106.50	Saturday Serenity	Sa 8pm	50.00	637.00
7am Urgent Care Group	7D 7am		400.00	Saturday Women's Speaker	Sa 6pm		105.00
A Vision For You	Su 7:30pm	40.00	108.25	Serendipity	Sa 11am		485.00
Attitude Adjustment	7D 7am		4,515.42	Sisters In Sobriety	Th 7:30pm		94.00
Awareness/Acceptance	M 10:30am	144.00	264.00	Six O'Clock Sunset	Th 6pm		359.82
Back to Basics	Su 9:30am		190.95	Sober & Serene	F 7pm		492.79
Beginners	W 7pm		500.00	Sober Moms	Fr 11:30am		18.00
Bounce Back	M 6pm		200.00	Spiritual Testosterone Sunday Men's Stag	Su 8:30am		276.00
Caledonia	Su 8pm		432.08	Steps to Freedom	M 7:30pm	202.28	677.13
Candlelight	Su 8:30pm		169.23	Steps To The Solution	W 7:15pm		87.00
Candlelight Meditation	M 7:30pm		60.00	Stinson Beach Fellowship	Th 8pm		220.60
Creekside New Growth	Su 7pm		165.00	Streetfighters	Sa 9am		22.10
Crossroads	Su 12pm		497.00	Sunday Express	Su 6pm		283.84
Day At A Time	7D 6:30am		420.00	Sunday Night Corte Madera	Su 8pm		400.00
Experience, Strength & Hope	Sa 6pm	86.00	197.00	Survivors	M 12pm		335.50
Fairfax Friday Night	F 8:30pm		46.18	T. G. I'm Sober	M 6pm		26.00
Fireside	F 8pm		35.50	Terra Linda Group	Th 8:30pm		871.00
Freedom Finders	F 8:30pm	98.52	861.60	Terra Linda Night Stag	Th 8pm		500.00
Greenfield Newcomers	Su 7pm		80.00	TGI Tuesday	Tu 6pm		124.80
Happy Hour	Th 6pm	86.00	319.49	The Barnyard Group	Sa 4pm	270.00	270.00
High & Dry	W 12pm		125.00	The Fearless Searchers	F 8pm		274.00
Hope Step Group	Tu 7:30pm		150.00	The Novato Group Fri. Night Discussion	F 8:30pm		112.05
Inverness Sunday Serenity	Su 10am		26.00	Three Step Group	Sa 5:30pm		600.00
Island Group	Th 8pm		208.00	Thurs. Night Speaker, MV	Th 8:30pm		1,868.99
Keepin' It Real	Th 6pm	482.00	482.00	Thursday Night Miracles	Th 8:30pm		39.00
				Tiburon Beginners & Closed	Tu 7pm & 8:30pm	201.77	1,157.35
				Tiburon Haven	Su 12pm		720.00

Name	Meets	Sept. '04	YTD	Name	Meets	Sept. '04	YTD
Tiburon Women's Candlelight	W 8pm		39.76	Each Day a New Beginning F	F 7am		544.00
Tuesday Twelve Step	Tu 6:30pm		34.60	Each Day a New Beginning M	M 7am		287.68
Wednesday Mid-Week	W 6pm	64.46	189.87	Each Day A New Beginning Su	Su 8am		421.71
Wednesday Night Candlelight	W 8pm		300.44	Each Day a New Beginning Th	Th 7am		858.46
Wednesday Night Speaker Discussion	W 7pm		69.52	Each Day a New Beginning Tu	Tu 7am		428.94
Wednesday Noon	W 12pm		56.49	Each Day a New Beginning W	W 7am		913.46
Women For Women	W 12pm		327.61	Early Start	F 6pm		375.00
Women on Monday	M 7pm		69.67	Easy Does It	Tu 6pm		673.00
Women on Wednesday	W 7pm		64.86	Embarcadero Group	Daily 12:10pm		328.64
Women's Big Book	Tu 10:30am		247.50	Embarcadero Group	F 12:10pm		55.41
Working Dogs	W 12:05pm		313.25	Embarcadero Group	M 12:10pm		144.60
Total Marin Contributions		\$2,400.67	\$30,055.12	Embarcadero Reflections	Tu 12:10pm		170.36
				Epiphany Group	Th 8pm		25.00
SF Group Contributions				Eureka Step	Tu 6pm		114.00
515pm Smokeless W	W 5:15pm	60.00	60.00	Eureka Valley Topic	M 6pm	631.29	946.93
7AM As Bill Sees It	F 7am	12.50	53.00	Federal Speaker	Su 12pm	170.14	543.45
12 Steps to Happiness	F 7:30pm		40.87	Fellowship of the Spirit	Su 1:30pm		31.80
A is for Alcohol	Tu 6pm	51.00	131.70	Fell Street Step	Su 8pm		127.09
A New Start	F 8:30pm		124.40	Fireside	F 8:30pm		92.35
A Vision for You	Su 6:30pm	85.00	85.00	Fireside Chat Sa	Sa 9pm		545.47
A Vision For You	Su 7:30pm	123.51	123.51	Fireside Chat Th	Th 8pm		88.56
AA As You Like It	Tu 5:30pm		149.89	Fireside Chat Tu	Tu 8pm		60.11
AA Step Study	Su 6pm		407.29	Friday All Groups	Fr 8:30pm Raffle	1,173.00	1,568.00
Afro American	F 8pm		103.32	Friday Lunchtime	Fr 12pm		280.00
Afro American Beginners	Sa 8pm	28.95	462.21	Friday Knights	Th 7:30am		9.20
After Work	M 6pm		168.54	Friday Smokeless	F 8:30pm	100.00	100.00
All Together Now	Th 8pm	247.45	664.08	Friendly Circle	Su 8:30pm		485.70
Alumni	W 8:30pm		120.00	Friendly Circle Beginners	Su 7:15pm		110.34
Amazing Grace	M 7pm	16.25	165.05	Friendship Group	W 8pm		125.00
Any Lengths	Sa 9:30am	300.00	1,878.77	Friendship House			9.36
Artists & Writers	F 6:30pm	222.50	1,273.44	Gay Beginners Questions & Answers	F 7pm		35.38
As Bill Sees It	Th 6pm		260.17	Golden Gate Seniors	Tu 1:30pm		107.00
As Bill Sees It	Sa 11am		215.87	Gold Mine Group	M 8pm		226.36
Ass in a Bag	Th 8:30pm	45.00	275.00	Goodlands	Su 2pm	30.60	30.60
Back to Basics W 8pm	Th 8pm	226.00	226.00	Haight Street Blues	Tu 6:15pm		323.34
Beginner's Step Study	Sa 6:30pm		108.00	Haight Street Explorers	Th 6:30pm		60.00
Beginner's Warmup	W 6pm		90.00	Happy Hour	F 6:30pm		381.80
Bernal Big Book	Sa 5pm	558.60	1,002.21	High Noon	M - F 12:15pm		200.00
Beyond 164	F 12:30pm		90.00	High Noon Friday	F 12:15pm		1,272.35
Big Book Basics	F 8pm	120.00	453.73	High Noon Monday	M 12:15pm		733.25
Big Book Backwards	Fr 10am		15.00	High Noon Saturday	Sa 12:15pm	103.52	282.22
Big Book Study	Su 11am		69.24	High Noon Thursday	Th 12:15pm		698.99
Boys Night Out	Tu 7:30pm		414.73	High Noon Tuesday	Tu 12:15pm		852.52
Buena Vista Breakfast	Su 12pm	59.37	386.97	High Noon Wednesday	W 12:15pm		745.80
Castro Discussion	W 8pm		763.00	High Sobriety	M 8pm		264.11
Castro Monday Big Book	M 8pm	219.23	548.38	High Steppers	W 7pm		157.00
Cocoanuts	Su 9am		125.00	Hilldwellers	M 8pm		490.46
Come N Get It	F 6:30pm	60.00	498.85	Home Group	Sa 8:30pm		1,134.73
Common Welfare	Th 8pm	34.95	136.96	Hot Java	F 12am		106.33
Cow Hollow Young People's	Tu 7:30pm		350.62	How It Works	Sa 2pm	39.65	345.84
Design for Living	Sa 8am		516.12	Huntington Square	W 6:30pm		648.17
Dignitaries Sympathy	W 8:15pm		150.00	Join the Tribe	Tu 7pm		330.79
Each Day A New Beginning	5D 7am	204.45	441.24				

Continued on p. 14

Name	Meets	Sept. '04	YTD	Name	Meets	Sept. '04	YTD
Joys of Recovery	Tu 8pm		427.31	Step Talk	Su 8:30am	120.00	720.00
Keep Coming Back	Sa 11am	1,132.28	2,327.03	Stepping Out	Sa 6pm		120.00
Keep It Simple	Sa 8:30pm		308.10	Steppin' Up	Tu 6:30pm		42.00
Let It Be Now	F 6pm	300.00	300.00	Sunday Bookworms	Su 7:30pm		115.01
Light Brigade Discussion	Su 7pm		147.80	Sunday Morning Gay Men's Stag	Su 10:30am		549.43
Light Steppers	Su 7pm		113.10	Sunday Night 3rd Step Group	Su 5pm		235.16
Like A Prayer	Su 4pm		158.86	Sunday Night Castro Speaker Discussion	Su 7:30pm		409.25
Lincoln Park	Sa 8:30pm		444.47	Sunday Rap	Su 8pm		443.26
Live and Let Live	Su 8pm		261.66	Sundown	W 7pm	132.00	348.00
Living Sober	W 8pm		241.51	Sundown Steps	Th 6:30pm		168.00
Living Sober with HIV	W 6pm		261.20	Sunrise Sunset	Th 5:45pm		112.00
Luke's Group	W 8pm		59.47	Sunset 11'ers F	F 11am		138.40
Lush Lounge	Sa 2pm		154.86	Sunset 11'ers Sa	Sa 11am		211.20
Marina Discussion	F 8:30pm		309.89	Sunset 11'ers Th	Th 11am		200.00
Meeting Place Noon	F 12pm		293.38	Sunset 11'ers W	W 11am	81.60	187.60
Mid-Morning Support	Su 10:30am	480.00	1,771.70	Sunset 9'ers F	F 9am		194.00
Midnight Meditation	Sa 11:59pm		251.25	Sunset 9'ers M	M 9am		327.23
Millionaires Club	Th 6pm		70.00	Sunset 9'ers Sa	Sa 9am		517.25
Miracles Off 24th St	W 7:30pm		322.50	Sunset 9'ers Su	Su 9am		368.00
Mission Terrace	W 8pm		382.33	Sunset 9'ers Th	Th 9am		128.16
Monday At A Time	M 12:30pm	158.10	224.10	Sunset 9'ers Tu	Tu 9am		242.95
Monday Beginners	M 8pm	136.45	378.85	Sunset 9'ers W	W 9am	90.60	453.57
Monday Men's Meeting	M 8pm		48.00	Sunset Reflections	Th 12:30pm		100.00
Monday Monday	M 12:15pm		80.00	Sunset Speaker Step	Su 7:30pm		183.96
New Glasses	Tu 6pm	108.00	108.00	Sutter Street Beginners	Sa 6pm		962.33
New Highs	W 1:30pm		188.10	Ten Years After	Su 6pm		1,619.42
New Hope Big Book	M 6:30pm		714.26	The 24 Hour Plan	M 7am		35.50
New Wednesday High Noon	W 12:15pm	506.00	1,053.47	The Parent Trap	M 12:30pm	47.52	47.52
Newcomers	Tu 8pm		303.76	They Don't Know Who We Are	Sa 7pm		150.00
No Gurus Meditation	Su 7pm	45.00	45.00	Thursday Night Women's	Th 6:30pm	175.30	430.92
No Reservation	M 12pm	164.04	353.96	Thus We Grow	Th 6pm		81.00
Noon Smokeless	M 12pm	65.89	65.89	Too Early	Sa 8am	673.09	1,031.16
One Liners	Th 8:30pm		370.15	Tuesday Downtown	Tu 8pm		840.00
Park Presidio	M 8:30pm		162.00	Tuesday's Daily Reflections	Tu 7am		162.07
Parkside	Th 8:30pm	71.16	284.64	Tuesday Sunset Nooners	Tu 12:30pm		120.00
Pure & Simple	Su 6pm	31.20	59.35	Valencia Smokefree	F 6pm		940.74
Pax West	Annual Dinner		36.00	Walk of Shame	W 8pm		12.97
Rose Garden Big Book	Th 12:05pm		132.22	Waterfront	Su 8pm		961.72
Rule 62	W 10pm		684.11	We Care	Tu 12pm		260.23
Saturday Afternoon Meditation	Sa 5pm		221.93	Wednesday Sunrise Smokefree	W 7am		60.00
Saturday Easy Does It	Sa 12pm		215.00	Weekend Workers	Sa 7am		180.00
Saturday Night Regroup	Sa 7:30pm		230.24	West Portal	W 8:30pm		306.50
Seacliff	Th 8:30pm		203.81	Wits End Step Study	Tu 8pm	30.00	30.00
Second Chance	Th 2:15pm	63.59	63.59	Women Who Drank Too Much	Tu 6:15pm		39.00
Serenity House		200.00	800.00	Women's 10 Years Plus	Th 6:15pm		376.00
Serenity Seekers	M 7:30pm		1,734.35	Women's Kitchen Table Group	Tu 6:30pm		473.29
Sesame Step	T 7:30pm	153.64	487.49	Women's Lunch Bunch	F 12pm	100.00	100.00
Sinbar	Su 8pm		346.40	Women's Promises	F 7pm	129.00	397.80
Sisters Circle	Su 6pm		70.20	Work In Progress	Sa 7pm		64.87
Sisters In Sobriety	M 7pm	110.00	110.00	Total SF Contributions		\$10,286.34	\$68,105.20
Sober & Centered	Fr 7pm		371.51				
Sometimes Slowly	Sa 11am	58.92	116.11	TOTAL		\$12,977.03	\$103,315.98

The 12 Days of Early Sobriety

By Anonymous

The following is for enjoyment only and not meant to offend or hurt anyone. If it does—lighten up! By the way, for maximum enjoyment, sing this to the tune of *The 12 Days of Christmas*.

On my first day of A.A., my sponsor gave to me: One Big Book and a seat in front.

On my second day of A.A., my sponsor gave to me: Two cups of coffee, One Big Book and a seat in front.

On my third day of A.A., my sponsor gave to me: Three dirty ashtrays, Two cups of coffee, One Big Book and a seat in front.

On my fourth day of A.A., my sponsor gave to me: Four huge resentments, Three dirty ashtrays, Two cups of coffee, One Big Book and a seat in front.

On my fifth day of A.A., my sponsor gave to me: Five golden chips, Four huge resentments, Three dirty ashtrays, Two cups of coffee, One Big Book and a seat in front.

On my sixth day of A.A., my sponsor gave to me: Six newcomers a-praying, Five golden chips, Four huge resentments, Three dirty ashtrays, Two cups of coffee, One Big Book and a seat in front.

On my seventh day of A.A., my sponsor gave to me: Seven A.A. pamphlets, Six newcomers a-praying, Five golden chips, Four huge resentments, Three dirty ashtrays, Two cups of coffee, One Big Book and a seat in front.

On my eighth day of A.A., my sponsor gave to me: Eight A.A. slogans, Seven A.A. pamphlets, Six newcomers a-praying, Five golden chips, Four huge resentments, Three dirty ashtrays, Two cups of coffee, One Big Book and a seat in front.

On my ninth day of A.A., my sponsor gave to me: Nine crumbled cookies, Eight A.A. slogans, Seven A.A. pamphlets, Six newcomers a-praying, Five golden chips, Four huge resentments, Three dirty ashtrays, Two cups of coffee, One Big Book and a seat in front.

On my tenth day of A.A., my sponsor gave to me: Ten chairs for stacking, Nine crumbled cookies, Eight A.A. slogans, seven A.A. pamphlets, Six newcomers a-praying, Five golden chips, Four huge resentments, Three dirty ashtrays, Two cups of coffee, One Big Book and a seat in front.

On my eleventh day of A.A., my sponsor gave to me: Eleven words of wisdom, Ten chairs for stacking, Nine crumbled cookies, Eight A.A. slogans, Seven A.A. pamphlets, Six newcomers a-praying, Five golden chips, Four huge resentments, Three dirty ashtrays, Two cups of coffee, One Big Book and a seat in front.

On my twelfth day of A.A., my sponsor gave to me: Twelve Steps for working, Eleven words of wisdom, Ten chairs for stacking, Nine crumbled cookies, Eight A.A. slogans, Seven A.A. pamphlets, Six newcomers a-praying, Five golden chips, Four huge resentments, Three dirty ashtrays, Two cups of coffee, One Big Book and a seat in front. ↑

New Year's Day Celebration

The Planning Committee of the Alano Club of San Francisco invites you to an A.A. meeting on Saturday, January 1, 2005 at 6:00 p.m., at the Urban Life Center

Meeting followed by a celebration to honor our founding members. The festivities will include food, fun, and fellowship—everyone is welcome.

Bring your musical talents and instruments and join an impromptu sing and strum along.

Individual Contributions—September 2004

HONORS	INDIVIDUAL		
Honorary Contributions	16.00	CONTRIBUTIONS	
Honorary Contributions	50.00	Individual	43.00
Honorary Contributions	12.00	Individual	25.00
Honorary Contributions	100.00	Individual	1.00
Honorary Contributions	17.00	Individual	100.00
Honorary Contributions	100.00	Individual	<u>10.00</u>
Honorary Contributions	100.00	Individual	25.00
Honorary Contributions	5.00	Total INDIVIDUAL	
Honorary Contributions	10.00	CONTRIBUTIONS	<u>\$204.00</u>
Honorary Contributions	<u>25.00</u>		
Total HONORS	\$435.00	TOTAL	\$639.00

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, November 3, 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			
Adrian R.	High Noon W	A**	Grant D.	Ten Years After	P	Monika H.	SFPOA	P
Amber W.	Sisters Circle	P	Greg S.	Keep Coming Back	P	Morningstar V.	High Noon Saturday	P
Bill V.	Attitude Adjustment, Fairfax	A*	Janet B.	As Bill Sees It, Saturday	P	Nathan M.	Easy Does It	P
Bob W.	Creative Alcoholics	P	Jen B.	Midnight Meditation	A*	Pascal G.	Marin Stag (Mon. Night...)	P
Brian C.	Mission Terrace	P	Jenny M.	Waterfront	P	Patrick M.	Treasurer	A*
Carol W.	Miracles Off 24th St.	P	Joe G.	Beginners	P	Penelope P.	Amazing Grace	P
Dallas R.	Early Start	R	John H.	Goldmine Group	A**	Peter S.	All Together Now	A*
Dan Z.	Sunday Morning Gay Men's Stag	P	Johnny G.	High Noon Tuesday	P	Ramona A.	Sunset 9ers M	A*
Daniel B.	Too Early	P	Judi C.	Tuesday's Daily Reflections	P	Ray M.	Sunday Rap	P
Danny F.	Each Day A New Beginning	A**	Kate B.	Friday All Groups	P	Rebekah D.	Fell Street Step	P
David A.	Living Sober	A*	Kathleen W.	Common Welfare	A*	Rudi D.	Park Presidio	P
David B.	Beginner's Warmup	P	Kezia P.	Marina Discussion	A**	Russell G.	Regroup	P
David B.	Federal Speaker	A*	Kristine F.	Castro Discussion	P	Russell R.	Sunset 9ers Su	R
David E.	Sesame Step	A*	Kurt P.	No Reservation	R	Scott C.	New Hope Big Book	A*
David K.	Haight St. Blues	R	Lou H.	Mill Valley 7AM	P	Scott N.	Sunset 11'ers Sa	P
David P.	Goodlands	Alt.	Lynnore G.	Walk Of Shame	A*	Shiloh A.	Fireside Chat	A*
David S.	High Sobriety	A*	Marc D.	Bernal Big Book	A**	Steve N.	Terra Linda Group	P
Don B.	Friday Fell Street	P	Martha C.	449'ers	A*	Stephen R.	Valencia Smokefree	P
Doug S.	As Bill Sees It - Thursday	P	Mary P.	Sutter St. Beginners	A*	Steven S.	Homegroup	P
Edward F.	Happy Hour	A**	Maury P.	Office Manager	P	Tim M.	Join the Tribe	P
Francesca K.	West Portal	A*	Meredith R.	High Noon Friday	A*	Tom B.	Eureka Valley Topic	P
Gary D.	Work In Progress	A**	Michael R.	Huntington Square	A**	Victor V.	Stepping Up	P
Georgia L.	Friendly Circle Beginners	A*	Mike A.	Tuesday Downtown	A**			
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					
Larry L.	The 24 Hour Plan		Mikey B.	SF General Service		Shannon L.	Marin General Service	
Paul L.	Goodlands - Alternate		Omar C.	Marin Teleservice		Stacy S.	San Mateo General Service	

Following is an unofficial summary of actions, information, upcoming business, and service opportunities discussed at the November 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

November 2004 IFB Summary

A. IFB Reports

Chair's Report: Joe G. reported that Patrick M., Treasurer, will not be continuing as Treasurer after his term expires, and that the IFB will need to elect a new Treasurer for a term commencing in March of 2005. An announcement will be placed in the next issue of The Point, and the process will take a minimum of 60 to 90 days to complete. Joe thanked Patrick M. for his service to the IFB. There was some discussion as to whether a length of sobriety requirement should be added to the requirements for IFB Treasurer. This will be a matter for consideration by the By-laws review committee.

Treasurers Report: Joe G. gave the report. Total income was over budget for the fourth month in a row. Income from January through

September was \$185,430.49. The budget was \$185,171.26, for a total over budget of \$259.23. October through December will be important months since nearly 30% of the total year's income is received during those months (primarily due to Gratitude Month in November).

Central Office Manager's Report: Maury P. reported that AA fellowship members interested in attending the International Convention in Toronto should bear in mind that they will need to obtain the appropriate papers to get across the border into Canada if members have any criminal convictions in their past including DUI's. This process can take up to six months or more. Information is available at CO or on the AAWS website www.aa.org. See "Frequently Asked Questions - Travel to Canada". Twenty-four people have signed up as Faithful Fiver's, bringing donations to a current total of \$1,365. There are regular phone shifts open at CO, and there is a need for substitute volunteers. One year of sobriety is required. November is Gratitude Month. There are flyers in the meeting packet for IFB members to take to their groups. Maury reminded committee chairs to notify CO of meeting schedule changes during the holidays so they can be reflected in The Point.

IFB Summary (Continued from page 16)

Central Office Committee: Kris Fleitz gave the report. GSO is not meeting its prudent reserve and may increase book pricing and/or begin to charge us for shipping and handling. If this occurs we will need to increase our book pricing accordingly. A review of cash accounts was completed and there were no discrepancies. Based on the procedures performed the COC is satisfied that cash is not misstated and that there are adequate controls in place. The 2005 Draft Budget Proposal was presented to the COC; it will be presented to the IFB in December. The CO Holiday Party is scheduled for December 16 from 6 to 8 p.m.

B. Action Items

Follow-up on Small Group Discussion Topics: Joe G. passed out a list of group discussion topics discussed at a previous meeting and asked members to rank them in importance from 1 to 10. The top three topics will become the basis for a future group inventory.

Nominating Committee: Proposed By-laws Changes: IFB By-Laws currently provide that COC members elected to fill out a partial term are ineligible for election to a full term afterward. There is a proposal to change this provision and allow a COC member to be eligible to serve a full term after having served a partial term. The proposed change must be read at three separate meetings before it can be voted on. It was read at the October meeting, this meeting, and will be read again at the December meeting and then voted on.

AA Pamphlet: Morningstar V. stated that the AA Pamphlet aimed at Gay & Lesbian alcoholics is outdated and should refer to the LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) community rather than the "Gay and Lesbian" community. During discussion it was pointed out that the issue is a General Services issue rather than an IFB issue, and that it should be presented at a GSR meeting for consideration. Greg S. and Morningstar volunteered to draft a letter for consideration by General Services.

C. Ad Hoc Committee Reports:

Outreach Committee: Lou H. gave the report. The committee drafted a mission statement that will include encouraging increased participation by AA groups not currently represented, having a presence at special events, and conducting a survey. The committee meets the third Thursday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the Central Office.

Literature Review Committee: No report. The committee meets the third Wednesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the Central Office.

Orientation Committee: Tim M. reported that four people attended the orientation meeting immediately preceding the IFB meeting. The orientation of new IFB members takes place monthly one hour prior to the IFB meeting.

The Point Committee: Steve R. gave the report. The Point will be doing a series of articles on The Traditions. He further stated that backup articles are building up and he solicited articles by AA travelers and service experiences. Persons interested in submitting articles should contact Steve at 415/821-1838.

Website Committee: Dan Z. gave the report for Michael R. The last meeting was postponed to November 11. The committee is reviewing the prototype for the new website. The committee needs a new webmaster. Dan Z. is acting as interim webmaster. A description of the webmaster position will be available at the next IFB meeting. The committee is discussing the policy re: linking from the AA website to other websites.

12th Step Committee: No report. The committee meets the second Wednesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the Central Office.

Special Events Committee: David B. reported that approximately 70 people attended the Monster Bingo event and that it had raised ap-

proximately \$450 for the CO. David encouraged IFB members to attend future events. There was discussion about coordinating the scheduling of IFB events with other events. For example, Monster Bingo was held the same night as a fundraiser for the Living Sober Conference was scheduled. Future events will take into consideration other fundraising events.

Special Needs Committee: Pene P. gave the report. A survey of special needs went out in the October issue of The Point and the survey is also available in the CO when people pick up literature. The committee is considering distributing wheelchair accessibility guidelines to AA groups. There may be a speaker at the IFB meeting in December to discuss hearing impaired issues for AA members. The next meeting of the committee is scheduled for Tuesday, November 30 at 6:00 p.m. at the CO.

Archives Committee: The committee did not meet last month. The committee meets the third Monday of the month at 3:00 p.m. at the Central Office.

D. IFB Standing Committee Reports:

Teleservice: Mary P. submitted a written report. The call forwarding procedure in which Teleservice volunteers forward the phone lines to each other, rather than paying an answering service, is working well. There has been little confusion regarding the mechanics of forwarding the phone lines. There are many phone shifts available and three Daily Coordinator positions are open. There is a definite need for volunteers to serve in these vital roles. The committee meets the third Monday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the Central Office.

PI/CPC: No report. The committee meets the second Monday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at the Central Office.

Group Rep Reports

No reports.

E. Non-IFB Liaison Reports

General Service, SF: Mikey B. reported that he is the liaison from General Service SF to the IFB and will report to both groups. He stated that he would like a volunteer to be an alternate liaison. The committee meets the second Tuesday of the month at 1111 O'Farrell. Orientation is at 7:00 p.m. and business meeting is at 8:00 p.m.

General Service, Marin: Shannon L. reported that elections are scheduled at an upcoming meeting. The committee meets the third Monday of the month at 9 Ross Valley Road, San Rafael. GSR Sharing: 7:00 p.m. District meeting: 8:00 p.m.

Teleservice, Marin: Committee officers will be turning over in December. The committee meets the fourth Tuesday of the month at 1360 Lincoln, San Rafael.

PI/CPC, Marin: No report. The committee meets the fourth Thursday of the month at 7:15 p.m. at 1360 Lincoln, San Rafael.

Bridging the Gap: No report. The SF committee meets the second Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. 1111 O'Farrell, San Francisco. The Marin committee meets the second Wednesday of the month at 6:45 p.m. at 1411 Lincoln, San Rafael.

H&I: Written report. Income and Expense reports were included with the written materials distributed at the meeting. The SF Committee meets the last Thursday of the month at 1751 Sacramento St., SF. Orientation is at 7:15 p.m. The Marin committee meets the second Tuesday at 7:00 p.m. at Lagunitas and Shady Lane, Ross.

The next IFB meeting will be held Wednesday, December 1, 2004 at First Unitarian Church, 1187 Franklin at Geary at 7:00 p.m.

Who is Sitting Next to You?

By Mike M.

I was in a meeting recently and the topic was “Abandoning yourself to God.” There was the usual hyperbole concerning each member’s relationship to a God who grants sober people things. And of course, getting things like cars, jobs, relationships and the like is all well and good, but while I was sitting in this particular church basement, I was thinking about the new member who is or might still be smarting from an upbringing with a punishing God. I got to thinking that when I was new I couldn’t stand the God business I’d hear in A.A.

In those days, when the discussion in the room became too religious, I mentally took a hike. On occasion my hike took me out the door. Luckily I stayed in enough meetings to get the drift of how to stay sober practicing the 12 steps and not drinking one day at a time. I believe we hear what we need to hear. Early in my sobriety an old timer said that G.O.D. could stand for a Group Of Drunks. His simple statement cut through my bias toward religion. I’d thrown in with a group of drunks long before I’d slunk into my first A.A. meeting.


Drunks are my people. I was raised around booze and boozers, and I’m still most comfortable around those touched by the spirits. It was no great leap for me to abandon myself to spirits. All I needed was enough money for a six-pack or a half pint and I was off to the races. The spirits in booze delivered. I questioned the effectiveness of my faith and religion, but man, oh man, booze made an impact. Early on I abandoned myself to natural grain spirits because alcohol

really made a difference in how I felt. No doubt about it. I was Mike Tyson one night, the world’s greatest lover another. The fact that I took a few beatings and that women seemed to be happy to leave me had no effect on my booze-addled mind. I abandoned myself to any odd fantasy that booze cared to deliver on any odd night.

Then something happened, and the moment of clarity we all talk about hit me like a ball peen hammer. Suddenly I thought I might be granted a reprieve. To stay sober I ignored my chapter of the God Debating Society. I was told that I could intellectualize the God issue later, once I had a clear head. And really,

Why would I want to fight with something that, for the first time in twenty years, kept me sober?

This is where the G.O.D. business comes in. I have a history of abandoning myself to booze and subsequently to drinking folk. So for me it isn’t a stretch to listen to the sober drunks in A.A. I was lucky enough to find ex-drinkers whom I could believe, and who understood my problems concerning drink. I came to trust these A.A.’s and even began to have faith that, like them, I could stay sober. In effect, I came to abandon myself to a G.O.D. of my understanding, a Group Of Drunks. This is my story.

The beauty of Alcoholics Anonymous is that there are probably gods and goddesses sitting on simple folding chairs right next to you in A.A. rooms everywhere. 

CONTRIBUTIONS to the Central Office were made through November 15, 2004 honoring the following members:

ONGOING MEMORIALS


Bob	R.W.	Bud C.
	Curtis C.	Fran H.

ANNIVERSARIES

Any Lengths—Ed K. 25 years — Island Group—Jane H. 27 years
 No Reservation—Richard C. 3 years — High Noon—Wayne E. 10 years
 Endless Summer—Larry, Paul, Jake, & Julian 1 year
 Rosalinda & Kyrsten—2 years
 Aaron—3 years, Sharon—4 years
 Armando—6 years, Steve—14 years, Eve—20 years.
 Denise H.—19 years
 Linda L.—21 years
 Stewart I.—21 years
 John M.—24 years
 Terry H.—25 years

(Get Out of Jail Free... Continued from page 1)

One of my friends told me that people who did H & I stayed sober and that is what I wanted. I hoped to be able to take meetings into institutions but since I had spent time in jail I would not be allowed in until I had more time sober. So I started doing commitments on the hospital side. After I had been doing some of these for a while they asked me to become a facility coordinator and then an area chair, both of which I did.

Over the years I have done many types of service in A.A. and sponsored a few people. I still have an H & I commitment at the Ozanam Detox Center that I enjoy very much. One of my favorite things to do is to go to “the Oz” on major holidays—Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years—for the open meetings. It is the only time that members of A.A. who are not doing H & I can go to a meeting there. It is a great experience. The clients there are freshly sober. A.A. members can come and share about how they were once as bad off, but thankfully their lives have changed through working the program of A.A. Maybe I’ll see you there. 

Financial Statement

September 2004 - Intercounty Fellowship of AA

	<u>Sep 04</u>	<u>Jan - Sep 04</u>
Ordinary Income/Expense		
Income		
Group Contributions		
Honors	0.00	260.22
Group Contributions - Other	<u>12,977.03</u>	<u>103,055.76</u>
Total Group Contributions	12,977.03	103,315.98
Individual Contributions		
Faithful Fiver	705.00	825.00
Honorary Contributions	435.00	2,899.70
Individual -Unrestricted	<u>204.00</u>	<u>5,083.96</u>
Total Individual Contributions	1,344.00	8,808.66
Gratitude Month		
Gratitude Month-Groups	<u>0.00</u>	<u>1,798.22</u>
Total Gratitude Month	0.00	1,798.22
Newsletter Subscript.	159.00	1,008.00
Special Event Income	754.75	2,862.75
Sales - Bookstore	<u>7,711.41</u>	<u>67,636.88</u>
Total Income	22,946.19	185,430.49
Cost of Goods Sold		
Cost of Books Sold	<u>4,963.56</u>	<u>50,490.68</u>
Total COGS	<u>4,963.56</u>	<u>50,490.68</u>
Gross Profit	17,982.63	134,939.81
Expense		
IFB Literature	11.77	285.38
Bad Checks	45.57	18.50
Employee Expenses		
Wages & Salaries	7,200.00	64,690.43
Employer Tax Expenses	577.58	6,469.54
Health Benefits	712.00	6,312.00
Retirement/Annuity Expense	0.00	7,666.67
Workers Comp Ins.	<u>972.87</u>	<u>1,988.55</u>
Total Employee Expenses	9,462.45	87,127.19
ASL Expense		
ASL- Net- Fri All Grps	480.00	3,478.80
ASL Expense - Other	<u>75.00</u>	<u>75.00</u>
Total ASL Expense	555.00	3,553.80
Bank Charges		
Cr Card Fees	119.62	942.42
Bank Charges - Other	<u>46.90</u>	<u>278.10</u>
Total Bank Charges	166.52	1,220.52
Equipment Lease	569.62	4,656.96
Filing/Fees	33.50	155.50
Insurance	100.55	904.95
Internet Expense	0.00	215.40
Miscellaneous Expense	-1.04	64.11
Office Supplies	335.05	2,932.05
Postage		
Bulk Mail	0.00	600.00
Postage - Other	<u>0.00</u>	<u>770.45</u>
Total Postage	0.00	1,370.45
Shipping	57.35	45.97

	<u>Sep 04</u>	<u>Jan - Sep 04</u>
Professional Fees		
Accounting	0.00	1,100.00
Computer Consulting	<u>144.79</u>	<u>817.72</u>
Total Professional Fees	144.79	1,917.72
Rent - Office	3,583.75	32,253.75
Rent - Other	150.00	650.00
Repair & Maintenance	178.00	1,681.96
Security System	0.00	301.50
Special Events	382.35	671.20
Telephone	524.00	4,654.88
Travel	0.00	363.20
Training	0.00	114.67
Utilities	<u>361.59</u>	<u>1,841.44</u>
Total Expense	<u>16,660.82</u>	<u>147,001.10</u>
Net Ordinary Income	1,321.81	-12,061.29
Other Income/Expense		
Other Income		
Other Income	0.00	4,833.43
Interest Income	<u>43.90</u>	<u>518.68</u>
Total Other Income	43.90	5,352.11
Other Expense		
Depreciation Expense	<u>408.17</u>	<u>3,673.53</u>
Total Other Expense	<u>408.17</u>	<u>3,673.53</u>
Net Other Income	<u>-364.27</u>	<u>1,678.58</u>
Net Income	<u>957.54</u>	<u>-10,382.71</u>

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December 2004

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