

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

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

The Point

February 2005

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
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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.

Dating & Relationships: One Girl's Story

By Lisa M.



Before I got sober, love's passions and heartaches had already been a difficult struggle in my life. Bill W. talks about addiction as a physical allergy and a mental obsession. I believe this is true and have seen the mental obsession at work in my mind with alcohol and drugs but also with food, emotions, sex and love.

I listened carefully when I heard it suggested that a single person not date for the first year of sobriety. I was open to the suggestion because my way of relating was not working well.

I lost the desire to have a healthy relationship during the last few years of my drinking and using. I did not want any interference with my drinking. When I got sober, I had not been dating for two years. I was okay waiting another year.

Much came to me in my first year of sobriety. Difficulties in feeling emotions and seeing what was real were slowly being peeled away to reveal life on life's terms. This was such a strange concept because I previously spent so much time hiding and not coping by using alcohol and drugs.

After a while, I was okay having a true feeling and accepting it rather than trying to control it, change it or conquer it with alcohol. I started to feel that I was ready to start dating. I was also very lonely.

I first attempted my dating search as if I were applying for a job. I networked with friends, signed up for speed dating and wrote an Internet ad. After a year of this, I was getting upset with my Higher Power (HP) because things were not happening at the speed I wanted. I thought I was due the right person, right away. "Hey, HP," I found myself thinking, "I am ready now for my life partner...Where is she?"

Then I met someone I really liked and worked up the nerve to ask her out. Dating seemed foreign and awkward. I had not dated sober for a very long time. I was scared to kiss or have sex. I couldn't remember the last time I had sex that I wasn't drunk, stoned or drugged. She finally made a physical advance toward me and I was relieved.

We went out for three weeks and I started telling all my friends I met my life partner. Then I went away for a weekend without her. When I came back, she told me she got together with someone she always liked. I was very hurt and allowed myself to feel the sadness and the pain. I had some tools and called my best friend, my sponsor, and tried to speak at meetings. I found I didn't

(Continued on page 6)

IFB TREASURER NEEDED!
Visit our website (www.aasf.org/news)
for more information about this
important service position

February 2005....

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 FIRST TUE Special Needs Committee Central Office, 6:00 pm Special Events Committee Central Office, 7:30 pm	2 FIRST WED Intercounty Fellowship Board Orientation 6 pm Meeting 7 pm 180 Harrison St. Sausalito, CA	3	4	5
6	7 FIRST MON Archives Committee, Central Office, 6:00 pm Spirit of SF Committee, Central Office, 7:30 pm	8 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	9 SECOND WED 12th Step Committee Central Office, 6:30 pm Marin Bridging the Gap 1411 Lincoln Ave., San Rafael 6:45 pm	10	11	12
13	14 SECOND MON SF Public Information Committee Central Office, 7 pm	15 THIRD TUE San Mateo General Service St. Andrews Church 15th & El Camino Real San Mateo, 7:30 pm	16 THIRD WED Literature Review Committee Central Office, 6:30 pm	17 THIRD THU Outreach Committee Central Office, 6:30 pm	18	19
20 THIRD SUN Mission Fellowship Steering Committee 2900 24th / Florida SF 1 pm	21 THIRD MON <i>Presidents' Day</i> <i>Central Office Closed</i> SF Teleservice Central Office, 6:30 pm Marin General Service 9 Ross Valley Rd, San Rafael GSR Sharing: 7 pm District Meeting: 8 pm	22 FOURTH TUE Marin Teleservice 1360 Lincoln Ave San Rafael Alano Club 7:30 pm	23	24 FOURTH THU Marin PI Committee 1360 Lincoln Ave San Rafael—Alano Club 7:15 pm LAST THU SF H&I Old First Church, 1751 Sacramento St. Orientation: 7:15 pm Business Meeting: 8pm	25	26 FOURTH SAT General Service CNCA Meeting 320 N. McDowell Petaluma DCMCs: 11 am Business Meeting: 12:30 pm
27 FOURTH SUN Living Sober Convention Committee 1668 Bush, SF 5:30 pm	28				Note: If a Committee Meeting falls on a day Central Office is closed, please call Central Office to see if the meeting may have been rescheduled.	

The Point Editorial Policy (adapted from the AA Grapevine)

The Point is published monthly to inform A.A. members about business and meeting affairs of the Intercounty Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous in San Francisco and Marin counties.

In addition, The Point publishes original feature articles submitted by local A.A. members that reflect the full diversity of experience and opinion found within the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. No one viewpoint or philosophy dominates its pages, and in determining the editorial content, the editors rely on the principles of the Twelve Traditions.

The Point illustrates the shared experience of individual A.A. members working the A.A. program and applying the spiritual principles of the Twelve Steps. Yet what works for one individual or A.A. group may not always work for another. For this reason, from month to month, articles may be published that appear to contradict one another. Seeking neither to gloss over difficult issues, nor to present such issues in a harmful or contentious manner, The Point tries to embody the widest possible view of the A.A. Fellowship.

The Point welcomes submissions from all A.A. members in San Francisco and Marin counties. Nothing published should be construed as a statement of A.A. policy, nor does publication constitute endorsement by A.A. as a whole, the Intercounty Fellowship Board, the Central Office, or The Point Editorial committee. Submissions of letters or articles that help communicate an individual's experience, strength and hope and carry the A.A. message are welcomed.

Please note that submission of an article does not constitute promise of publication. Articles are evaluated based on the Twelve Traditions, and while editing is done for purposes of clarity, style, and length, the editors encourage all writers to express their own experience in their own unique way. No payment can be made for submissions, nor can material be returned. At times, articles may be reprinted without the author's permission, but the author's byline will always be included in these cases. Email submissions to thepoint@aasf.org.

This policy is subject to revision.

Don't miss the new SECRETARY'S MONTHLY insert!!

Announce these HOT NEWS ITEMS
at your meetings.
Help Central Office get the word out.
And don't miss the
COMING EVENTS
listed on back.

Thanks to The Point Committee:

Cami W., Kathleen C., Kurt C.,
Maury P., Mike L., and Stephen R.,

Thanks to all who contribute time and
energy in creating our newsletter! If you
want to help or submit an article, email
thepoint@aasf.org or call 415.674.1821.

Joke of the Month



A new definition for 13th stepping... Steps 1 + 12
"My life is unmanageable and I want to share it with you!"



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MEETING CHANGES

New Meetings:

Mon 7:30 pm San Rafael
 Fri 6:30 pm Nob Hill
 Sat 5:00 pm Castro

MONDAY NIGHT SOLUTIONS, St. Sylvester's Church, 1555 Pt. San Pedro Rd. (SS)
 TRANS RECOVERY, 1145 Bush St./ Hyde, 2nd Floor (Di, TG)
 FOUNDERS' GROUP, 152 Church St., ring bell at gate. (SD)

Meeting Changes:

Sun 8:00 am Mission
 Mon 8:00 pm Cathedral Hill

AS BILL CC'S IT (1st & 3rd Sundays), 665 Valencia St./ 17th St. (ride follows meeting-was 2801 24th St.)
 SOUGHT TO IMPROVE, 1187 Franklin @ Geary, (Meditation) is **NOT** meeting currently,
 but is looking for a new location.

Sat 12:30 pm Sunset

SEVENTH WONDER GROUP, 1329 7th Ave/ Irving is **NOT** meeting currently,
 but is looking for a new location.

Sat 8:00 pm Mill Valley

SATURDAY SERENITY, Methodist Church, 410 Sycamore & Camino Alto,
 (was 118 E. Strawberry Dr. off Tiburon Blvd.)

No Longer Meeting:

Wed 6:00 pm So. of Market
 Sun 8:00 pm San Anselmo

NEW DIRECTION 407 Ninth St./ Harrison St. Mission
 SAN ANSELMO FIRESIDE MEETING, 96 Sir Francis Drake Blvd./ Ross Ave.

Please Note: The Central Office occasionally receives reports that meetings listed in our schedules are not there. Sometimes these reports turn out to be mistaken—and sometimes not. The office relies primarily on information that is given to us by A.A. 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!**

Slogan of the Month*We'll Love You Until You Can Love Yourself*

By Nkechi E.

When I came into A.A., I was baffled at my sponsor's willingness to spend time with me doing step work. I was unable to comprehend the love, tolerance, patience and support the fellowship gave to me at meetings. Now I recognize the love they expressed by reaching out to me, a fellow suffering alcoholic. For seven months I resisted their love and support. Then I drank again.


For the next six months, my life degenerated. I came to the realization that I was truly powerless over alcohol. I stopped communicating with friends and family. I stopped smiling and laughing. I could no longer look at myself in the mirror. I hated myself round the clock, knowing each time I picked up a drink I was choosing hell instead of reaching for the piece of heaven A.A. offered me.

A.A. members called to ask how I was doing. Usually I was too drunk and too terrified to return their calls. But their love and concern were music to my ears. One member left a message saying that no matter what shape I was in, he wanted to buy me coffee and see that I was okay. I saved this message and replayed it often.

Eventually I had my moment of Grace. I lost my craving for alcohol. I surrendered and returned to A.A., terrified of

being rejected. I was welcomed with open arms. The women hugged me, though I hadn't showered for days. People had prayed for me, hoping I would make it back safely. My sponsor started me on the steps right away. She listened to me, taking upwards of ten calls from me per day. I began to feel a love beyond my comprehension.

I have two years and nine months sober today. I now see that my Higher Power was loving me all along through the A.A. members who reached out to me while I was both "in" and "out." Many of them are among my closest friends today. A few are no longer sober. I think about them often. I call them periodically, pray for them daily and hope for their safe return as was done for me.

Daily I work the steps and practice the spiritual principles of the program. I have slowly learned how to love myself through these daily actions and have gained a self-esteem that keeps me afloat on down days. I know the privilege and honor of working the steps with newcomers, of loving them until they are able to love themselves. The more suffering alcoholics I reach out to, the more channels I open for my Higher Power to love me. This is how I stay sober. I have found a Higher Power through the fellowship and steps of Alcoholics Anonymous that fills me with enough love to give away. 

Recent Deaths

Brother Harry
22 years

Group Speakers for Feb. 2005

FRIDAY ALL GROUPS

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

DATE	HOST GROUP	SPEAKER
02/04	No Reservation	Janelle S., SF
02/11	Haight St. Explorers	Lynn, San Carlos
02/18	Walk of Shame	Stewart I., SF
02/25	They Stopped In Time	Nancy, San Rafael

I.F.B. Special Events Committee Presents:

A.A. TRUSTED SERVANTS' (Secretaries/Treasurers/Literature People) WORKSHOP

Saturday, February 19, 2005
11:30 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.

At

Central Office
1821 Sacramento Street
San Francisco, CA

Panel Speakers:

Nick H. * Maria W. * Russell G.

Question & Answer Session
Pizza! Fellowship!



Contact David B.
ohmout@aol.com
(650) 222-7227

For further Information

Living Sober / Western Roundup 2005 NEWS and EVENTS

- **Drag Bingo** — February 5, 2005; Most Holy Redeemer, Ellard Hall, 100 Diamond Street; AA—Al Anon meeting at 7:00 pm followed with Drag Bingo at 8:30 pm; \$15 Suggested Donation—No one turned away for lack of funds. Please go to www.livingsober.org for the schedule of other fundraising events to benefit Living Sober.
- **Call for Speakers** — The Speaker Committee is accepting CD or tapes for speakers at the 2005 Conference. All submissions must be postmarked by March 15, 2005, and the candidate to have 5 years clean and sober by the conference date. Please see www.livingsober.org for complete requirements for submission.
- **General Planning** — February 27, 2005 @ 5:00 pm, Trinity Episcopal Church (Bush & Gough). Come and volunteer for a committee, service keeps you sober!
- **Mark your calendars!** Living Sober 2005 will take place on July 1st—3rd at the Bill Graham Civic Center.

www.livingsober.org

415.978.2478

THE BIG BOOK COMES ALIVE!

A COMPREHENSIVE 7-WEEK STUDY OF THE
BIG BOOK OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

Sundays from 7PM-9PM

Starting February 6TH through March 20TH, 2005

At the Salvation Army – 3550 Cesar Chavez @ Valencia

You will need to bring: Highlighters, a Big Book and a 12 x 12

Week	Date	Topic	Name
1	2/6	History Traditions	Bobby J. Lorri Z.
2	2/13	Doctors Opinion Bill's Story	Emily J. Fred C.
3	2/20	There is a Solution/ More About Alcoholism We Agnostics/ How it Works to 3 rd Step Prayer on page 63	Shane H. Jesse M.
4	2/27	4 th Step -Resentment page 63-67 4 th Step-Fear page 67-68	Sean S. Leslie S.
5	3/6	4 th Step-Sex page 68-69 Into Action 5 th through 8 th page 76	Melanie J. Pat M.
6	3/13	9 th step 10 th Step- Lifetime Inventory	Alan M. Liz B.
7	3/20	11 th Step 12 th Step	Greg F. Don B.

Brought to you by GOD, Lovers of A.A., and the Spiritually Founded Program Of Action Group (S.F.P.O.A.) OF A.A. that meets every Thursday from 7 p.m. - 8 p.m. @ 510 7th street in San Francisco
Contacts: Sean 415-584-1657 * Tonus 415-368-2909

Valentine's Day Massacres

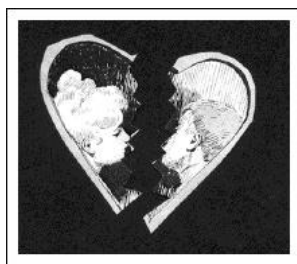
by Cami W.

I have been dumped around Valentine's Day three times in my short life. I was active in my addiction and the breakups gave me license to go on huge binges.

I recall the drinking binge I indulged in after the first Valentine's Day massacre. I was a college sophomore and was truly in love. I thought he was "the one" and was envisioning our wedding. Then he dumped me. It was Valentine's Day and our one-year anniversary to boot. I was crushed. I drowned my sorrows in cheap beer for three months. This marked my first daily drinking binge as well as the biggest heartbreak I have yet to experience. I remember sitting around with my roommate (who was dumped at the same time) drinking, commiserating and crying while we watched *Full House* and *Friends* reruns.

The other Valentine's Day dumpings are less significant. Both were with short-term dating partners and I was using daily so I don't have a clear memory of either experience. But I do remember feeling sad and bitter and upping my daily intake of substances to further numb myself from the possibility of feeling any pain.

It's safe to say that relationships (especially the end of them) are a huge trigger for me. In the past, I've been very messy when it came to matters of the heart. I often got violent and obsessive when I broke up with people. I remember once showing up at a fresh ex's house at 6 a.m.



still drunk from the night before. I was planning to win him back, but when I entered his house I saw evidence that he'd been on a date the night before. There was an open wine bottle and two glasses on the table. I stormed into his bedroom, screamed and slapped him. Then I proceeded to take the wine bottle and glasses outside and smash them against his house under his bedroom window.

I've now been through two breakups while I was sober. The first set me off on a long relapse that ended a little over two years ago when I found myself suicidal and ready to get sober again. This time around I made a whole-hearted attempt not to get too involved with anyone until I was a bit more stable. I began dating someone around nine months into my sobriety and realized four months later that I was in over my head so I had to end the relationship. For the first time I was able to be honest with someone and break up in an emotionally sober way. There was no hitting, screaming or post-breakup sex. I was honest about my feelings, allowed myself to just feel sad without fighting it and we both moved on with our lives with very little drama.

It felt good not to let a breakup be a license to insanity. I credit my A.A. tools for this obvious sign of growth. I know that left to my own devices, I would have made a ranting idiot of myself. Once again, staying close to my higher power, my sponsor, the steps and meetings paid off. ↑

Dating & Relationships

...continued from page 1

need to go out and get drunk over heartache.

Soon I was back on the dating horse. I read a book about dating called, *If the Buddha Dated*. I learned I could just meet people on my journey and not get attached to an outcome. I could treat them and myself respectfully whether the relationship was to move on or not. I previously had little communication or other relationship skills. It was difficult for me to be honest. I continued to practice and get in touch with my feelings by continuing my Twelve Step work and praying for knowledge of HP's will and the power to carry that out.

My best friend and I took a class on dating and relationships. At the end of the semester, a woman in the class told me she had a crush on me. I thought it would be fun to play with her. I was not expecting any commitment, as there was an age difference I thought would prevent any "real" relationship. But she was fun, artistic, creative, jovial, yet complicated and emotional. We started out with casual sex and have now been together a year and a half. We moved in together and are raising a puppy and two cats.

Being in a relationship is still difficult for me at times. When I stopped drinking five years ago, I thought that life would turn around and be all rosy. That is not true. Life still happens. Pain, suffering, difficult issues as well as joy, happiness and success are a combined part of our human life. The same is true for relationships.

My partner and I still fight but try to communicate better each day. We learn and grow with each other and ourselves. Early on, a good program friend spent time with me going over page 69 of the *Big Book* about sex and relationships. I had been feeling and acting immature and impatient and was upset I had no control over this new relationship. Sitting down and reading and working those few pages was very helpful.

We must use this program and the steps in all our affairs, including relationships. This was the one area I really did not want HP in. I had come to believe HP had to be in every other aspect, but please not my bedroom. But now, I am starting to welcome HP there. I am willing and open to understanding HP's will for me. As with every ↑ other

Dear Alky

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

Dear Alky,

I met my partner in the rooms of A.A. almost five years ago. We have had a great relationship and practiced the Steps in our communication with each other. Recently, however, my partner has become "restless, irritable and discontent" and we have stopped communicating. I know I can help him, but he just won't allow me any space for that. He has started hanging out at a bar he used to frequent. The bottom line: I think he's drinking again. I don't know what to do. Can you offer some advice on how to deal with a loved one that may have gone out?

**Thanks,
Rescuer**

Dear Rescuer,

For years I went to a Big Book meeting and felt resentment when we read "To Wives." Today I realize it offers good advice for those of us, male or female, who love an alcoholic. You might want to read it. It is natural to feel sad and even resentful that your partner may have relapsed after five happy sober years together, but if you accuse him or worry about him, you may give him more of an excuse to drink.

The best thing you can do for him is accept him the way he is and take care of your own spiritual condition. Don't suffer alone. Share at meetings. There are many couples where only one is sober. You might also want to check in with our sister program, Al-anon.

Your partner, sober or not, is perfect just the way he is. Act as if you want him to be happy, whether or not he comes back to the program. Love him and let him go. He has his own Higher Power and it isn't you.

Love,

Alky



Dear Alky,

One of my sponsees recently told me that he has been suffering from impotency in the five months he's been sober. He's been to the doctor has been told there is no physical problem. He even tried Viagra but the ship didn't set sail, so to speak. I myself was impotent for most of my first year. Eventually my sex drive came back. My sponsee is very upset by this though and his wife is frustrated too. I'm not sure what advice to give him. And do you know a resource where I might point him?

**Thanks for your help,
Befuddled**



Dear Befuddled,

The Family Afterward in *Alcoholics Anonymous* discusses impotence in early sobriety. If the problem persists more than a few months, "there should be no hesitancy in consulting a doctor or psychologist." Your sponsee should continue to pursue medical and psychological help.

You shared your experience that you were impotent for a full year. He has only suffered for five months. Give him perspective on how long he spent damaging his body as well as his mind, which are equally important components of a happy sex life. Remind him to give himself time to recover.

A Fourth Step and sex inventory may not solve the problem, but it certainly won't hurt. Has he made some Ninth Step amends? Perhaps he feels guilty about something in his past. He is starting a new life and may need to let go of his old ideas about sex. He and his wife may enjoy a better life together in the long run.

Sincerely,

Alky



Dear Alky,

I'm four months sober and my sponsor keeps stressing that I should wait a year before I get involved in a serious dating relationship. But I'm feeling great and want to start dating a bit. I know the "wait a year" thing is just a suggestion and not part of the official program as outlined in the Big Book. So why do people make such a big deal of it?

Sincerely,

Itching to Date

Dear Itching,

You might want to look at two chapters in *Living Sober—Fending Off Loneliness* and *Steering Clear of Emotional Entanglements*. *Fending Off* talks about how alcoholism is a disease of social isolation. Many of us come into A.A. emotionally immature—we are still psychological adolescents, awkward and insecure.

Steering Clear reminds us that we are emotionally vulnerable in our first sober days. We are so relieved and happy to have escaped our old life that we tend to grab the first person we are attracted to. Then we crash and burn when the relationship doesn't go our way. Why risk it?

At the same time, we insist on enjoying life. Join a group of sober friends for coffee, go to A.A. dances. Practice your social skills. Just keep it simple until you are on firm ground.

Yours in service,

Alky

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—

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TREASURER—

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SF PI/CPC COMMITTEE—

Laura N. 415.931-2567

Recovery ♦ Unity ♦ Service

Sponsorship: A.A. Love at Work

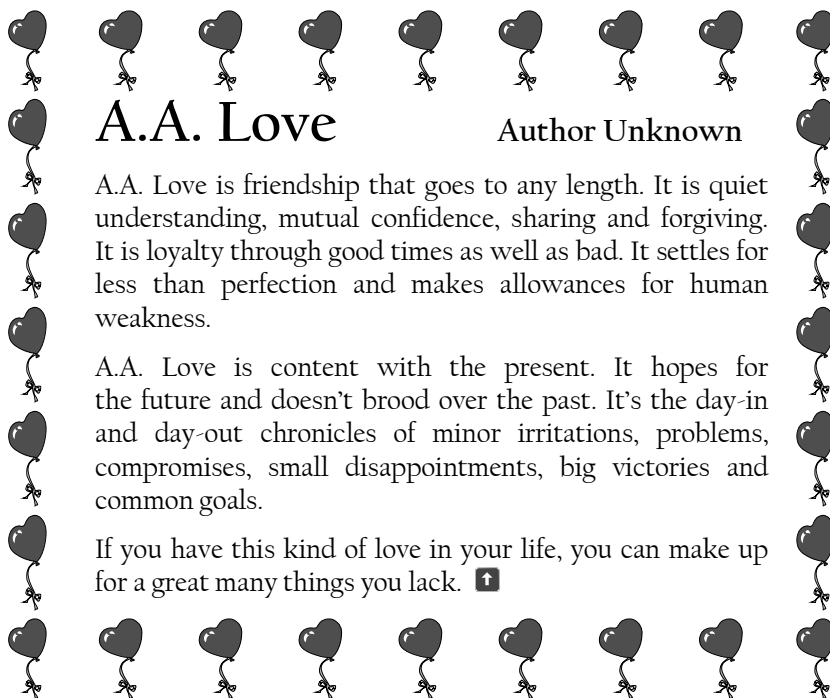
by Anonymous

To me, the sponsor-sponsee relationship is the perfect example of A.A. love at work. I recently had a sponsee stop calling me. I worried about her for a while and then began to feel resentful. *How could she stop calling me after all the work we'd done together?* I found myself obsessing with similar thoughts. After a few weeks, I wanted to call or email her to tell her she was fired, but stopped myself from doing so until I consulted with my own sponsor.

As usual, my sponsor listened to me patiently and then asked me a simple question: *Was my desire to call and give this woman the axe coming from resentment or love?* Resentment was the honest answer. The loving response in this situation would be to pray for my sponsee's safety and perhaps leave her a message saying I'm available to talk with her, if and when she needs me.

Often I am a judgmental and unforgiving person. This experience with my sponsee is helping me practice patience and tolerance, which are at the core of the philosophy of A.A. Love.

Taking a loving approach to any problem doesn't come second nature to me. That is why I'm so grateful that I have my sponsor and other A.A. friends. These are people who are also practicing living from love. None of us are perfect. At times we make mistakes in our relationships. Sometimes we spill our guts to others and accomplish little but making a mess. But luckily we have each other to check in with. We can offer each other suggestions on how to clean up any mess—and sometimes we can even help each other avoid the sloppy spill to begin with. ↑



Treasures of the Twelve & Twelve: Tradition Two

By Kim R.

For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as he may express Himself in our group conscious. Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern

In my experience, one way God expresses Himself is through another member's share. Then, after hearing that share, I can respond as an "elder diplomat" or a "bleeding deacon."

The *Twelve & Twelve* describes an elder diplomat as "one who sees the wisdom of the group's decision." This is one who holds no resentment, whose judgment is fortified by considerable experience, and who is willing to sit quietly on the sidelines patiently awaiting developments. The bleeding deacon is one who is "convinced that the group cannot get along without him," who constantly connives, and who continues to be consumed with self-centeredness.

Recently in a meeting, I was acting like a bleeding deacon.

As I understand it, the group conscious sets each meeting format. No secretary has authority to mandate the meeting format. Rather, the secretary follows the meeting format set by the group. Recently, however, a temporary secretary chose to disregard the meeting format at my home group and mandated her own format by beginning the meeting with an outside religious reading. *Wait a minute*, I thought. *She is doing everything wrong. She has unilaterally changed the meeting format. How dare she.*

I looked around and noticed that one newcomer was looking bewildered. I saw one old timer leave the meeting. I felt unsafe in the meeting. I attend A.A. meetings to connect with my loving God as I understand Him—not to be force-fed religious readings.

What followed was even more disconcerting to me.

The first person to share in the meeting told a story of her child's alcohol and drug program. The next person shared about her issues, or not, with co-dependency and martyrdom. The next person shared of her sister's Al-Anon program.

Now, to an alcoholic of my type, who got thrown off when the Maria Dock got new chairs or took posters off of its walls, I was beside myself. I was angry that the meeting started with a religious reading, and my anger grew with every share that followed. You see, I like to control



*I hear exactly
what I need to
hear in a meeting.
I feel better after
a meeting.*

everything from what others say in their share to how they sit in their chair. *Stop fidgeting. Don't shake your leg. Quit smacking your gum. Don't lean back in that chair.*

Just as I was silently lecturing others, the room burst with laughter. I missed what everyone was laughing about because I was so consumed with the chatter in my mind, I didn't hear the member's share.

Rather than raise my hand to share what I was going through, I chose to stay in my resentments. I felt more comfortable exercising my superiority and anger. I get energized by my anger. Why ruin that high?

Then, out of nowhere, my God expressed himself through another person in the meeting. This man

said exactly what I was thinking. Suddenly, I realized others felt as I did. Then, I realized a very important lesson: *while some felt as I did, others felt differently.*

Maybe the temporary secretary wasn't speaking to me. Maybe the first three people to share weren't talking to me. Maybe it isn't all about me and my wants and my desires. Maybe another suffering alcoholic heard the very words out of those first four people that she or he needed to hear to stay sober that day. Maybe God spoke through those first four people but I just didn't hear it because I was consumed with self-centeredness.

After all, haven't we all experienced a loving God express himself in our group conscious. I know I have. I hear exactly what I need to hear in a meeting. I feel better after a meeting. I become more willing to make amends. I witness emotions pour out of people who, by all previous accounts, had no emotions other than anger. I ask for help at meetings.

I realized that I was acting like a bleeding, judgmental deacon and not an elder diplomat. While I still believe that secretaries should follow the meeting format set by the group conscious, I also believe that everything happens for a reason. There are no mistakes.

Thank God this is a program of progress and not perfection because some days I am a bleeding deacon and some days an elder diplomat. ↑



A.A. On the Road: India

By Jim G.

Traveling in sobriety is great, and I have been lucky to do a fair amount of it. I traveled when I was still drinking, but have had a lot more fun since getting sober.

At the end of my drinking and during my first year sober, I had a job that required travel, so I built up a lot of frequent flyer miles. At first, traveling in sobriety was scary. I had always drunk my way through the trips. I discovered that finding local meetings made all the difference. Initially it just gave me a place to go and something to do other than thinking about drinking—most business travel is just BS and boredom.

At the end of my first year sober, I used some mileage to get to Paris and London. I went to meetings in both places. At three years sober, I took three months and went around the world. Meetings began to enhance the travel in addition to fulfilling their basic function of helping me connect to other alcoholics. Since then I have been to Greece, Turkey, Ecuador, South Africa, Mexico, and Scotland. I traveled with my wife—a fellow recovering alcoholic—on most trips and we often found meetings.

Recently, we were off to India. The weekend before our departure, I shared about the upcoming trip at a meeting. A fellow member had been to India and shared some A.A. resources by email, including this link <http://www.AAgoindia.org/location.htm>

Cyber cafes were widely available and email became an important connection for me in India because we had some trouble finding meetings in some places. We found that listings on the web weren't always current.

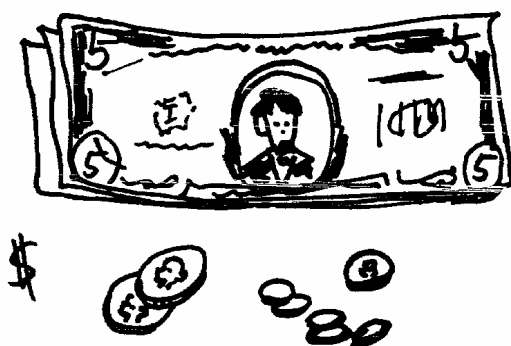
My first email message to my sponsor: *Well it has been intense. So jetlagged in Delhi that we didn't make it to a meeting there. Used the website info to locate a meeting in Jaipur, but all of the listed Jaipur contacts were no longer current and the listed facility had no idea what I was talking about. The A.A. International Directory had no Jaipur listings. Email is helpful and we are glad that we brought both a Big Book and a 12x12. Thanks for the help. It's good to know people are there.*

Another email a week later: *We have struggled to find meetings. Missed our best chance in Delhi but have another chance in Kolkotta. Today Kathleen and I established the Himalayan Sunrise meeting of the Darjeeling Fellowship on Observatory Hill, a discussion and meditation meeting that may move to Pelling in Sikkim tomorrow. The good news -- both members are still sober. Thanks for your support.*

We found a meeting in Calcutta (Kolkatta). The A.A. meeting at St. Thomas School on Market Street happened as advertised. We were a few minutes late owing to the crowds shopping and a lost cab driver. We walked into a room with a dozen or so people (all locals). The steps and traditions were on the wall; a picture of Dr. Bob, Bill Wilson and a Big Book were on

(Continued on page 11)

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.
BRUCE D.
DAVID B.
DAVID B.
FRANCES L.
GILES H.
HARRY M.
JANET B.

JERRY N.
JIM H.
JOHN M.
KATE B.
KELLIE A.
KRIS F.
LAURIE L.
LISA C.
MARGARITE S.
MICHAEL R.

MONIKA H.
PEGGY M.
PETER F.
PHILIP G.
RALPH P.
RICH G.
RICHARD C.
SCOTT N.
WICKIE S.



Literature Review: *The Language of the Heart: Bill W.'s Grapevine Writings*

by Gary D.

The alleged origin of sending Valentine's Day cards in the middle of February to loved ones came from a third century A.D. Roman Christian priest named Valentinus. He was jailed by the emperor and during his incarceration sent messages of support, love and encouragement to his fellow Christians. Since the fifth century A.D., St. Valentine's feast day is celebrated on February 14.

While Bill Wilson recognized that neither he nor others in the Fellowship were saints, there is a parallel in Bill's writings in *The Grapevine*. All of the articles deal with Bill's experience, strength and hope and are designed to encourage suffering alcoholics to be free of the bondage of alcoholism.

The Grapevine was established in 1944 as a local newsletter by several New York A.A. members. Through the efforts of a few, in 1945 *The Grapevine* became the principle journal of the Fellowship. Since 1949 it has been known as the international journal of Alcoholics Anonymous. From the inception of *The Grapevine* and up to the time of his death over a period of 26 years, Bill Wilson contributed over 150 articles. In 2002, The A.A. Grapevine, Inc. published *The Language of the Heart*, which is a compilation of virtually all of Bill's contributions. Some articles will be familiar.

Exceptions of articles not contained in *The Language of the Heart* are those written by Bill between 1952 and 1953, which were later reprinted as the *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. For the sake of keeping the book at an acceptable length, the editors decided to omit these articles since they are readily available in book form. The only other omissions are Bill's brief Thanksgiving and Christmas greetings to the fellowship with the exception of the Christmas 1970. This message is included because it was Bill's last *Grapevine* piece.

The Language of the Heart is divided into three parts. Each part contains an introduction by the editors outlining what was happening within the Fellowship during the designated time frame.

Part One covers the period from 1944 to 1950 and is divided into two segments: *The Shaping of the Traditions* and *Additional Writings From This Period*. Besides covering each of the twelve traditions, this part of the book deals with a variety of topics which helped form the A.A. organization such as: 1) the safe use of money, 2) who is a member of A.A., 3) the dangers of linking A.A. to other projects, 4) the importance of A.A. being self-supporting, and 5) the importance of anonymity.

(Continued on page 18)

A.A. on the Road, continued from page 10

the table in front. The sayings were displayed, including some we talk about in the U.S. but don't put up, like *SLIP - Sobriety Lost Its Priority*.

It was a sharing meeting and people talked in accented English about drinking, getting and staying sober, doing an inventory, making amends, prayer and service.

The meeting lasted a little over an hour with a short break for Chai and goodies. Everyone was very welcoming and both Kathleen and I got email addresses so we can stay in touch. My wife's contact was the one other woman in the group who was grateful for Kathleen's presence. She said she is often the only woman in meetings.

They closed the meeting saying an A.A. Prayer that ends with the Serenity Prayer. Once again, I felt at home and grateful half way around the world. ↑

CONTRIBUTIONS to the Central Office were made through January 15, 2005 honoring the following members:

ONGOING MEMORIALS

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

ANNIVERSARIES

Silas P. 41 years
"Tiburón" Closed: Dick F. 45 years
Friendly Circle Beginners: Charlie D. 27 years
Miracles Off 24th St.: Linda L. 21 years
Happy Hour Ladies' Night: Daranne S. 21 years
Friday High Noon: Ted R. 20 years
Novato Fellowship: Eileen M. 5 years
Waterfront: Alvin P. 2 years
 Leslie C. 15 years

AA Group Contributions - November 2004

Intercounty Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous - San Francisco and Marin Counties

Name	Meets	Nov. '04	YTD	Name	Meets	Nov. '04	YTD
Fellowship Contributions				Marin Sober Group	F 8pm		86.50
Annual Christmas Meeting	Xmas 2003		25.00	Mill Valley 7am	7D 7am		2250.00
Brisbane Breakfast	Su 11am	32.40	315.40	Mill Valley Original Smokeless SS	Th 8pm		50.00
Contribution Box	Nov. 2004	71.20	610.60	Monday Blues	M 6:30pm	165.00	429.50
Gay Newcomers Group	Santa Rosa	3.08	8.80	Monday Night Stag (Tiburon)	M 8pm	129.45	1581.37
Deer Park Discovery Group			52.67	Monday Night Women's	M 8pm		232.11
IFB	Nov.	103.00	1087.67	Nativity Monday Night BB	M 8pm		200.00
Marin Teleservice		400.00	2182.00	Newcomers Step	M 7:30pm		500.00
IFB Special Events	Monster Bingo	55.80	286.58	Noon	Tu 12pm		140.50
Spirit of San Francisco	2003		577.56	Noon Discussion	Th 12pm		135.00
Sunday Step Study	Su 4pm		201.00	Noon Hope	F 12pm		97.40
Unidentified			668.45	North Marin Speaker	Su 12pm	500.00	500.00
Total Fellowship		\$665.48	\$6,015.73	Novato Fellowship Group			120.00
Honors				Novato Spirit Discussion	F 12pm		142.18
Endless Summer	F 8:30pm	51.00	314.22	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	Refugee	Th 12pm		150.00
Total Honors		\$51.00	\$356.22	Rise N Shine	Su 10am	161.00	319.98
Marin Group Contributions				Ross San Anselmo Group	M 8:30pm		54.00
11th Step Meeting	M 8pm		200.00	San Anselmo Fireside Meeting	Su 8pm		79.56
12 & 12 Study	Sa 8:15am		106.50	San Geronimo Valley	M 8pm		134.47
7am Urgent Care Group	7D 7am		400.00	Saturday Serenity	Sa 8pm		637.00
A Vision For You	Su 7:30pm		108.25	Saturday Women's Speaker	Sa 6pm		105.00
Attitude Adjustment Fairfax	7D 7am	1833.73	7285.26	Serendipity	Sa 11am		485.00
Awareness/Acceptance	M 10:30am		264.00	Sisters In Sobriety	Th 7:30pm		94.00
Back to Basics	Su 9:30am		301.95	Six O'Clock Sunset	Th 6pm		491.44
Beginners	W 7pm	200.00	700.00	Sober & Serene	F 7pm	242.79	735.58
Bounce Back	M 6pm		200.00	Sober Moms	Fr 11:30am		18.00
Caledonia	Su 8pm		532.16	Spiritual Testosterone	Su 8:30am		276.00
Candlelight	Su 8:30pm		210.06	Steps to Freedom	M 7:30pm		677.13
Candlelight Meditation	M 7:30pm		60.00	Steps To The Solution	W 7:15pm	43.00	130.00
Closed Women's Step Study	Tu 3:30pm		117.00	Stinson Beach Fellowship	Th 8pm		220.60
Creekside New Growth	Su 7pm		165.00	Streetfighters	Sa 9am		22.10
Crossroads	Su 12pm		1329.50	Sunday Express	Su 6pm		283.84
Day At A Time	7D 6:30am		720.00	Sunday Night Corte Madera	Su 8pm		400.00
Experience, Strength & Hope	Sa 6pm		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	300.00	1171.00
Freedom Finders	F 8:30pm		861.60	Terra Linda Night Stag	Th 8pm		500.00
Gratitude	M 12pm	47.00	96.71	TGI Tuesday	Tu 6pm		124.80
Greenfield Newcomers	Su 7pm		80.00	The Barnyard Group	Sa 4pm		270.00
Happy Hour	Th 6pm		319.49	The Fearless Searchers	F 8pm		274.00
High & Dry	W 12pm		125.00	The Novato Group Fri. Night Di	F 8:30pm		112.05
Hope Step Group	Tu 7:30pm		150.00	Three Step Group	Sa 5:30pm		600.00
Inverness Sunday Serenity	Su 10am		26.00	Thurs. Night Speaker, MV	Th 8:30pm		2497.24
Island Group	Th 8pm		208.00	Thursday Night Miracles	Th 8:30pm		39.00
Just Can't Wait 'til 8	M 6:30pm	75.00	75.00	Tiburon Beginners & Closed	Tu 7pm & 8:30pm		1301.85
Keepin' It Real	Th 6pm		482.00	Tiburon Haven	Su 12pm		720.00
Living in the Solution	F 6pm		455.00	Tiburon Women's Candlelight	W 8pm		39.76
Marin City Groups	5D 6:30pm		300.00	Tuesday Twelve Step	Tu 6:30pm		34.60
Marin Newcomers	M 8:30pm		249.00	Wednesday Mid-Week	W 6pm		189.87
				Wednesday Night Candlelight	W 8pm		300.44
				Wednesday Night SD	W 7pm		69.52

Name	Meets	Nov. '04	YTD	Name	Meets	Nov. '04	YTD
Wednesday Noon	W 12pm		56.49	Early Start	F 6pm		375.00
Wednesday Sundowners	W 6pm		76.96	Easy Does It	Tu 6pm		673.00
Women For Women	W 12pm		327.61	Embarcadero Group	5D 12:10pm	54.00	382.64
Women on Monday	M 7pm		155.94	Embarcadero Group	F 12:10pm		55.41
Women on Wednesday	W 7pm		64.86	Embarcadero Group	M 12:10pm		144.60
Women's Big Book	Tu 10:30am		312.50	Embarcadero Reflections	Tu 12:10pm		249.23
Working Dogs	W 12:05pm		313.25	Epiphany Group	Th 8pm		25.00
Total Marin Contributions		\$3,696.97	\$38,651.68	Eureka Step	Tu 6pm		172.59
SF Group Contributions				Eureka Valley Topic	M 6pm		946.93
515pm Smokeless W	W 5:15pm		60.00	Federal Speaker	Su 12pm		543.45
7AM As Bill Sees It	F 7am	38.71	107.31	Fellowship of the Spirit	Su 1:30pm		31.80
12 Steps to Happiness	F 7:30pm		40.87	Fell Street Step	Su 8pm	165.45	292.54
A is for Alcohol	Tu 6pm		159.01	Fireside	F 8:30pm		92.35
A New Start	F 8:30pm		124.40	Fireside Chat Sa	Sa 9pm		545.47
A Vision for You (SF) Su 630pm	Su 6:30pm		85.00	Fireside Chat Th	Th 8pm		88.56
A Vision For You (SF) Su 730pm	Su 7:30pm		123.51	Fireside Chat Tu	Tu 8pm		60.11
AA As You Like It	Tu 5:30pm		334.79	Friday All Groups	Fr 8:30pm		1568.00
AA Step Study	Su 6pm		407.29	Friday Lunchtime	Fr 12pm		280.00
Afro American	F 8pm		103.32	Friday Knights	Th 7:30am		9.20
Afro American Beginners	Sa 8pm	46.14	531.82	Friday Smokeless	F 8:30pm		150.00
After Work	M 6pm		239.16	Friendly Circle	Su 8:30pm		485.70
All Together Now	Th 8pm		664.08	Friendly Circle Beginners	Su 7:15pm		237.34
Alumni	W 8:30pm		120.00	Friendship Group	W 8pm		125.00
Amazing Grace	M 7pm		165.05	Friendship House			9.36
Any Lengths	Sa 9:30am		1878.77	Gay Beginners Q & A	F 7pm		35.38
Artists & Writers	F 6:30pm		1273.44	Golden Gate Seniors	Tu 1:30pm		107.00
As Bill Sees It	Th 6pm		260.17	Gold Mine Group	M 8pm	242.40	468.76
As Bill Sees It	Sa 11am	149.45	365.32	Goodlands Su 2pm	Su 2pm		30.60
Ass in a Bag	Th 8:30pm	60.00	335.00	Haight Street Blues	Tu 6:15pm	240.00	563.34
Back to Basics	Th 8pm		226.00	Haight Street Explorers	Th 6:30pm	300.00	360.00
Beginner's Step Study	Sa 6:30pm		242.82	Happy Hour	F 6:30pm		381.80
Beginner's Warmup	W 6pm		90.00	High Noon	5D 12:15pm	200.00	400.00
Bernal Big Book	Sa 5pm		1002.21	High Noon Friday	F 12:15pm		1437.78
Beyond 164	F 12:30pm		90.00	High Noon Monday	M 12:15pm		733.25
Big Book Basics	F 8pm		453.73	High Noon Saturday	Sa 12:15pm	45.00	327.22
Big Book Backwards	Fr 10am		15.00	High Noon Thursday	Th 12:15pm		926.42
Big Book Study	Su 11am		69.24	High Noon Tuesday	Tu 12:15pm		852.52
Boys Night Out	Tu 7:30pm		414.73	High Noon Wednesday	W 12:15pm		1018.80
Buena Vista Breakfast	Su 12pm		462.89	High Sobriety	M 8pm		264.11
BYOL	W 12:30pm		126.00	High Steppers	W 7pm		157.00
Castro Discussion	W 8pm		763.00	Hilldwellers	M 8pm		726.59
Castro Monday Big Book	M 8pm		548.38	Home Group	Sa 8:30pm	62.86	1275.57
Cocoonuts	Su 9am		125.00	Hot Java	F 12am		106.33
Come N Get It	F 6:30pm		498.85	How It Works	Sa 2pm		345.84
Common Welfare	Th 8pm		136.96	Huntington Square	W 6:30pm		1305.25
Cow Hollow Young People's	Tu 7:30pm		350.62	Join the Tribe	Tu 7pm		330.79
Design for Living	Sa 8am		715.32	Joys of Recovery	Tu 8pm	91.80	519.11
Dignitaries Sympathy	W 8:15pm		150.00	Keep Coming Back	Sa 11am		2327.03
Drive Thru	W 12:15pm	317.00	317.00	Keep It Simple	Sa 8:30pm		308.10
Each Day A New Beginning	5D 7am		441.24	Let It Be Now	F 6pm		300.00
Each Day a New Beginning F	F 7am		1095.79	Light Brigade Discussion	Su 7pm		147.80
Each Day a New Beginning M	M 7am		287.68	Light Steppers	Su 7pm		113.10
Each Day A New Beginning Su	Su 8am		421.71	Like A Prayer	Su 4pm		158.86
Each Day a New Beginning Th	Th 7am		1166.46	Lincoln Park	Sa 8:30pm		444.47
Each Day a New Beginning Tu	Tu 7am		927.59	Live and Let Live	Su 8pm		261.66
Each Day a New Beginning W	W 7am		1307.62	Living Sober	W 8pm		241.51

Continued on p. 14

Name	Meets	Nov. '04	YTD	Name	Meets	Nov. '04	YTD
Living Sober with HIV	W 6pm		435.90	Sunday Night 3rd Step Group	Su 5pm		235.16
Luke's Group	W 8pm		59.47	Sunday Night Castro SD	Su 7:30pm		842.45
Lush Lounge	Sa 2pm		154.86	Sunday Rap	Su 8pm		443.26
Marina Discussion	F 8:30pm	273.02	1180.11	Sundown	W 7pm	138.00	486.00
Meeting Place Noon	F 12pm		376.91	Sundown Steps	Th 6:30pm		168.00
Mid-Morning Support	Su 10:30am		1771.70	Sunrise Sunset	Th 5:45pm		112.00
Midnight Meditation	Sa 11:59pm		251.25	Sunset 11'ers F	F 11am		138.40
Millionaires Club	Th 6pm		70.00	Sunset 11'ers Sa	Sa 11am		211.20
Miracles Off 24th St	W 7:30pm	79.84	402.34	Sunset 11'ers Th	Th 11am	100.00	324.09
Mission Terrace	W 8pm		382.33	Sunset 11'ers W	W 11am		187.60
Monday At A Time	M 12:30pm		224.10	Sunset 9'ers F	F 9am		194.00
Monday Beginners	M 8pm		378.85	Sunset 9'ers M	M 9am	125.73	452.96
Monday Men's Meeting	M 8pm		48.00	Sunset 9'ers Sa	Sa 9am		517.25
Monday Monday	M 12:15pm		80.00	Sunset 9'ers Su	Su 9am		368.00
New Glasses	Tu 6pm		108.00	Sunset 9'ers Th	Th 9am	73.86	202.02
New Highs	W 1:30pm		188.10	Sunset 9'ers Tu	Tu 9am		242.95
New Hope Big Book	M 6:30pm	230.79	945.05	Sunset 9'ers W	W 9am		453.57
New Wednesday High Noon	W 12:15pm		1053.47	Sunset Reflections	Th 12:30pm		100.00
Newcomers	Tu 8pm		303.76	Sunset Speaker Step	Su 7:30pm		183.96
No Gurus Meditation	Su 7pm		45.00	Sutter Street Beginners	Sa 6pm		962.33
No Reservation	M 12pm	59.51	413.47	Ten Years After	Su 6pm	240.00	2039.42
Noon Smokeless	M 12pm		65.89	The 24 Hour Plan	M 7am		99.37
One Liners	Th 8:30pm	732.47	1102.62	The Parent Trap	M 12:30pm	20.03	67.55
Panhandle3	Th 8:30pm	82.55	82.55	The Pepper Group	F 12pm		44.00
Park Presidio	M 8:30pm		239.90	They Don't Know Who We Are	Sa 7pm		150.00
Parkside	Th 8:30pm		304.64	Thursday Night Women's	Th 6:30pm		430.92
Pure & Simple	Su 6pm		59.35	Thus We Grow	Th 6pm		81.00
Pax West			373.78	Too Early	Sa 8am		1031.16
Rose Garden Big Book	Th 12:05pm		132.22	Tuesday Downtown	Tu 8pm		840.00
Rule 62	W 10pm		955.14	Tuesday's Daily Reflections	Tu 7am		162.07
Saturday Afternoon Meditation	Sa 5pm		366.93	Tuesday Sunset Nooners	Tu 12:30pm		120.00
Saturday Easy Does It	Sa 12pm	181.20	665.00	Valencia Smokefree	F 6pm	174.60	1115.34
Saturday Night Regroup	Sa 7:30pm		230.24	Walk of Shame	W 8pm		12.97
Seacliff	Th 8:30pm	50.00	253.81	Waterfront	Su 8pm	452.20	1413.92
Second Chance	Th 2:15pm		63.59	We Care	Tu 12pm		260.23
Serenity House			800.00	Wednesday Sunrise Smokefree	W 7am		60.00
Serenity Seekers	M 7:30pm		1734.35	Weekend Workers	Sa 7am		180.00
Sesame Step	T 7:30pm		580.70	West Portal	W 8:30pm		306.50
Sinbar	Su 8pm		346.40	Wits End Step Study	Tu 8pm		30.00
Sisters Circle	Su 6pm	107.00	177.20	Women Who Drank Too Much	Tu 6:15pm		39.00
Sisters In Sobriety	M 7pm		110.00	Women's 10 Years Plus	Th 6:15pm		538.00
Sober & Centered	Fr 7pm		371.51	Women's Kitchen Table Group	Tu 6:30pm		473.29
Sometimes Slowly	Sa 11am		116.11	Women's Lunch Bunch	F 12pm		100.00
St. Francis Men's	F 8:30pm	78.54	78.54	Women's Promises	F 7pm		397.80
Step Talk	Su 8:30am		840.00	Work In Progress	Sa 7pm		64.87
Stepping Out	Sa 6pm		120.00	Total SF Contributions		\$5,265.91	\$81,132.51
Steppin' Up	Tu 6:30pm	53.76	95.76				
Sunday Bookworms	Su 7:30pm		218.15	TOTAL		\$ 9,679.36	\$ 126,156.14
Sunday Morning Gay Men's Stag	Su 10:30am		549.43				

Access for All AA members

At the last IFB meeting, on January 5, 2005, Laura C., from the Hearing Society for the Bay Area, made a presentation titled "Accessibility and Hearing Loss in AA meetings". The presentation was interesting, informative and gave the IFB much to consider in regards to how well we are fulfilling the primary

purpose of A.A. and helping the alcoholic who is still suffering. The Special Needs/Access Committee (SN/AC) will be following up with Laura and the IFB with recommendations soon. In the meantime, the SN/AC needs your help with a local survey. Please download it from our website at www.aasf/news, fill it out and return it to Central Office. ↑

Gratitude Month 2004 — Groups

Intercounty Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous - San Francisco and Marin Counties

San Francisco		Nov. '04	2004 YTD	SF, con't.		Nov. '04	2004 YTD
Ass in a Bag	Th 8:30pm	13.50	13.50	Sunset 9'ers Th	Th 9am	16.62	16.62
How It Works	Sa 2pm	43.55	43.55	Sunset 9'ers Th	Th 9am	101.05	101.05
Marina Dock		6.00	6.00	Ten Years After	Su 6pm	175.00	175.00
Saturday Easy Does It	Sa 12pm	112.30	112.30	Tuesday Downtown	Tu 8pm	74.63	74.63
Sundown	W 7pm	58.60	58.60	Walk of Shame	W 8pm	27.00	27.00
Sunset 9'ers Su	Su 8am	86.67	86.67	Work In Progress	Sa 7pm	55.16	55.16
Sunset 9'ers Th	Th 9am	68.00	68.00	Total SF Gratitude Month		\$ 873.08	\$ 873.08
Sunset 9'ers Th	Th 9am	35.00	35.00	Total 2004 Gratitude Month		\$ 873.08	\$ 873.08

Individual Contributions — November 2004

HONORS		INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS		GRATITUDE MONTH	
Honorary Contributions	27.00	Individual -Unrestricted	500.00	Gratitude Month -Individual	100.00
Honorary Contributions	21.00	Individual -Unrestricted	20.00	Gratitude Month -Individual	100.00
Honorary Contributions	30.00	Individual -Unrestricted	5.00	Gratitude Month -Individual	20.00
Honorary Contributions	38.91	Individual -Unrestricted	1,000.00	Total GRATITUDE MONTH	\$ 220.00
Honorary Contributions	10.00	Individual -Unrestricted	43.00		
Honorary Contributions	21.00	Individual -Unrestricted	25.00		
Honorary Contributions	20.00	Individual -Unrestricted	50.00		
Honorary Contributions	23.00	Individual -Unrestricted	75.00		
Total HONORS	\$ 190.91	Individual -Unrestricted	15.00	TOTAL	\$ 1,723.91
		Individual -Unrestricted	100.00		
		Total INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS	\$ 1,313.00		

Announcing the New Central Office Website!



On December 31, 2004, the Website Committee launched our new website, www.aasf.org, after months of work. There's an entirely different layout with much more information for members, prospective members, trusted servants and visitors. Some of the new features include the Event Calendar, more Group Forms, including the Bookstore Catalog, resources for IFB members, printable local pamphlets and a News page. Returning favorites are Meeting Schedules, the Service Calendar, and The Point.

Of special note are links to GSO pamphlets for new comers and old-timers and front page contact information for nearby Intergrups and Central Offices. Our site can now be translated into Spanish, French, and German with one click of a mouse. Large print is available with one click too. We welcome contributions of your photos to really make this a spectacular site. Thanks to the committee members for their efforts in bringing this online as well as all the members who provided suggestions for improvement. ↑

A New Year and a New Look

Visit the new and improved www.aasf.org

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, January 5, 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	
Amber W.	Sisters Circle	A*	Greg S.	Keep Coming Back	A**	Monika H.	SFPOA	P
Bill V.	Attitude Adjustment, Fairfax	P	Janet B.	As Bill Sees It, Saturday	A**	Morningstar V.	High Noon Saturday	P
Bob W.	Creative Alcoholics	A*	Jen B.	Midnight Meditation	R	Nathan M.	Easy Does It	P
Brian C.	Mission Terrace	P	Jenny M.	Waterfront	A**	Nick T.	Cocoonuts	P
Carol W.	Miracles Off 24th St.	P	Jim T.	First Place	P	Pascal G.	Marin Stag (Mon. Night...)	P
Dan Z.	Sunday Morning Gay Men's Stag	P	Joe G.	Beginners	P	Patrick M.	Treasurer	P
Daniel B.	Too Early	P	Johnny G.	High Noon Tuesday	A*	Penelope P.	Amazing Grace	P
Danny F.	Each Day A New Beginning	P	Judi C.	Tuesday's Daily Reflections	A*	Peter S.	All Together Now	P
David A.	Living Sober	P	Kate B.	Friday All Groups	A**	Ramona A.	Sunset 9'ers M	R
David B.	Beginner's Warmup	A*	Kathleen W.	Common Welfare	R	Ray M.	Sunday Rap	P
David B.	Federal Speaker	P	Kristine F.	Castro Discussion	P	Rebekah D.	Fell Street Step	P
David E.	Sesame Step	A*	Larry L.	The 24 Hour Plan	P	Rudi D.	Park Presidio	A**
David P.	Goodlands	A*	Lou H.	Mill Valley 7AM	A*	Russell G.	Regroup	P
David S.	High Sobriety	A*	Lynnore G.	Walk Of Shame	A*	Scott C.	New Hope Big Book	P
Don B.	Friday Fell Street	P	Marc D.	Bernal Big Book	P	Scott N.	Sunset 11'ers Sa	P
Doug S.	As Bill Sees It - Thursday	P	Martha C.	449'ers	A*	Shiloh A.	Fireside Chat	A*
Edward F.	Happy Hour	A*	Mary P.	Sutter St. Beginners	R	Steve N.	Terra Linda Group	P
Francesca K.	West Portal	P	Maury P.	Office Manager	P	Stephen R.	Valencia Smokefree	P
Gary D.	Work In Progress	P	Melanie L.	Second Chance	P	Steven S.	Homegroup	P
Georgia L.	Friendly Circle Beginners	P	Meredith R.	High Noon Friday	P	Tim M.	Join the Tribe	P
Grant D.	Ten Years After	A*	Michael R.	Huntington Square	P	Tom B.	Eureka Valley Topic	P
						Victor V.	Stepping Up	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			
Jacqui G.	High Noon Thursday	Adam E.	San Mateo General Service	Matt	Marin Teleservice
Jessica J.	Home Group - Alternate	Ashley N.	SF PI/CPC	Mikey B.	SF General Service
Lillian R.	Women's Promises	Charles	Marin General Service		
Rebecca S.	Room To Grow				

January 2005 IFB Summary

Following is an unofficial summary of actions, information, upcoming business and service opportunities discussed at the January 2005 IFB meeting. It is provided for your convenience and it is not intended to be the completed approved minutes. For a complete copy of the minutes, contact the Central Office.

A. IFB Reports

Chair's Report: Joe G. reported that the COC had interviewed a candidate for Treasurer at the last meeting. He further reported that the By-laws Review Committee will begin meeting this month, although the date has not yet been determined. Interested IFB members were encouraged to attend the meeting or to e-mail Joe with suggestions for discussion. Joe's e-mail address is joe@greenwoodelectric.com. Next month's IFB meeting will include small group topics discussion.

Treasurers Report: Patrick M. gave the report. Total income was \$2,778

under budget in November. Total expenses were \$637 under budget in November. Based on how December is running, there do not appear to be any issues for the 2005 budget.

Central Office Manager's Report: Maury P. reported that the Holiday Party was successful with many IFB members attending, although there were not many office volunteers present. The year end CO inventory has been completed. She further reported that all regular phone shifts are filled; however, substitutes continue to be needed. Maury was invited to be a speaker at the International Convention in Toronto about our innovative publication, *The Point*, but unfortunately she will not be attending the convention. Maury reminded members that the next IFB meeting will be held in Marin. IFB meetings are held in Marin every February, May, August and November.

Central Office Committee: Steve R. gave the report. The COC meeting was largely devoted to interviewing a candidate for the position of IFB Treasurer. The candidate, Greg C., was introduced at the IFB meeting. The COC agreed that having an IFB liaison to both SF and Marin

IFB Summary (Continued from page 16)

General Service would increase communication and improve unity. Both Districts are encouraging our participation. Kris F., an at-large COC member volunteered to attend the Jan. Marin General Service meeting; Tim M. and Steve S. volunteered to attend the San Francisco General Service meeting.

B. Special Set Agenda Item – Presentation

Laura Clark of the Hearing Society for the Bay Area made a presentation and demonstrated various devices that can increase the accessibility and participation of hearing impaired AA members at meetings. Discussion and action regarding equipment purchase and strategies for meetings were deferred to subsequent IFB meetings.

C. Ad Hoc Committee Reports:

Outreach Committee: The committee is developing a presentation to give at AA meetings, especially those that do not currently have IFB representatives. The committee will demonstrate a presentation for the IFB at two meetings and will ask the IFB members to assist in carrying out the mission of reaching out to non-participating groups.

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: No report. The orientation of new IFB members takes place monthly one hour prior to the IFB meeting. New IFB members must attend an orientation session before they can vote on any issues before the IFB.

The Point Committee: Steve R. gave the report. Because *The Point* has increased to 20 pages, there are increased postage expenses. There will be a discussion about whether or not to decrease the number of pages to 16 to contain postal costs. The *Secretaries' Monthly* is now an insert rather than printed monthly in *The Point*.

Website Committee: The new website is online. Comments are encouraged. Any comments should be addressed to website@aasf.org. There is a need for a volunteer webmaster. The Website Committee meets the second Thursday of the month at 6:00 p.m.

12th Step Committee: There will be a workshop at the regularly scheduled meeting on January 12 for persons interested in doing 12th Step work. The committee meets the second Wednesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the Central Office.

Special Events Committee: No report. The committee meets the first Tuesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. at the Central Office.

Special Needs Committee: No report. The committee meets the first Tuesday of the month at 6:00 p.m. at the Central Office.

Archives Committee: No report. The committee has changed its meeting schedule and will meet the first Monday of the month at 6:00 p.m. at the Central Office beginning in February.

D. IFB Standing Committee Reports:

SF Teleservice: Written report. Mary P. thanked the volunteers who filled in shifts during the holidays. The committee meets the third Monday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the Central Office.

PI/CPC: There will be a workshop on Saturday, January 29 at 11:30 at Fort Mason, Building C, Room 260. The PI/CPC Annual Meeting follows the workshop. The committee meets the second Monday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at the Central Office.

E. Group Rep Reports

No reports.

F. Non-IFB Liaison Reports

General Service, SF: Written report. Mikey B. is the liaison to IFB. The committee meets the second Tuesday of the month at 1111 O'Farrell. Orientation is at 7:00 p.m. followed by the business meeting at 8:00 p.m.

General Service, Marin: No report. 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: Matt replaces Omar C. as liaison. The committee meets the fourth Tuesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. 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.

He/I: The committee needs more volunteers. 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, February 2, at Star of the Sea Church, 180 Harrison St., Sausalito, California.

Got Something to Share? Share it in *The Point*!

The Point needs articles every month for its regular features –

Dear Alky – Got a problem? A concern? A question? Write *Dear Alky* a letter of 50 – 100 words.

Literature Review – Have a favorite AA book or pamphlet? Up to 600 words.

AA Service – How about a favorite AA commitment or one that challenged your sobriety or taught you something? Up to 600 words.

AA on the Road – Gone to AA meetings while traveling for business or pleasure? Moved from SF or Marin and want to tell SF-Marin AAs about the meetings in your new home? 600-700 words.

Inside Stories – Have an anecdote you would like to share? A moment of clarity? A spiritual awakening? 600-700 words.

Treasures of the 12 & 12 – Want to dig into one of the Twelve Steps or Twelve Traditions of AA? Up to 900 words.

Cover Story – Want to share your experience strength and hope? Cover stories can be about any theme related to sobriety. Recent themes have included shyness, relationships and financial insecurity. Up to 900 words.

Please e-mail as a Microsoft Word attachment to: thepoint@aasf.org

Finding Fellowship and Sistership at an A.A. Retreat

by Anonymous

Playing charades, burning sticks in a fireplace and laughing so hard your sides ache. Can this be the fellowship (sistership) of the spirit?

Twice a year, in December and June, a group of women gather at a historic mansion, high atop Mount Tamalpais for an A.A. retreat weekend. The December retreat has become a holiday tradition for the coordinators Diane C. and Karen W. and this year was no exception.

The mansion is nestled in acres of redwood forest and makes an ideal spot to reconnect with nature and recharge one's spiritual batteries. While A.A. meetings are the highlight of the weekend, there are other activities as well—hiking, enjoying delicious meals together, working on craft projects and just acting silly. Maybe this is what they were talking about when they said, "We are not a glum lot!"

While every retreat is "the best ever," the December retreat was especially memorable. The planning-the-retreat-torch was passed to Val K. who was of service to all attendees by helping facilitate the winter retreat. In the grand tradition of pampering the attendees, she added such personal touches as placing a chocolate mint and decorated stone on everyone's pillow and creating wonderful name tags that had special messages.

Many of the women have been coming to the retreat for years and several of the women came with their sponsees in tow. It was amazing watching women with barely a month of sobriety playing a feisty game of charades. Now if we can only teach them not to beat those of us with long-term sobriety. They say that growth comes in mysterious ways in the A.A. program and having the courage to make a fool of yourself is a definite sign of progress. ↑

2005 INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

Ever gotten a DUI?

The 2005 International Convention Coordinator at GSO has requested our continued support in informing the A.A. fellowship "about obtaining 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 – and the convention is now just a few months away.

Much more information is available at Central Office or on the AAWS website: www.aa.org – see "Frequently Asked Questions – Travel to Canada". And please inform the members of your groups.

Literature Review

continued from page 11



Part Two covers the period from 1950 to 1958. It includes three segments: *A.A. Grows to Maturity*, *Let's be Friendly with our Friends*, and *Additional Writings From This Period*. These articles deal with subjects such as Bill's reflections on A.A. coming of age, the necessity of service, how A.A.'s world service grew, and the fact that A.A. is not like a big business. The second segment addresses Bill's thoughts on physicians, psychiatrists, clergy and the media.

Part Three covers Bill's contributions from 1958 through 1970. It is also broken into three segments: *All our Affairs*, *Looking Toward the Future*, and *Additional Writings From This Period*. The first segment contains the article from which this book derived its name: *The Language of the Heart*. This article deals with the importance of honestly acknowledging one's addiction to alcohol and sincerely asking a higher power for help. It is a message of love and hope for all that suffer from alcoholism. Segment two looks at the growth of the A.A. movement and considers the importance of proper leadership and communication within and outside the Fellowship.

The last two chapters of the book contain Bill's reflections about some of the early members of A.A., including a tribute to Dr. Bob, the other co-founder of A.A. written in January of 1951.

All of Bill Wilson's contributions to *The Grapevine* are written from the heart. *The Language of the Heart* is available at the Central Office bookstore and would make a wonderful Valentine's Day gift for friends or family in the Fellowship. ↑

Psst... The Point is online:
www.aasf.org

Financial Statement

November 2004 - Intercounty Fellowship of AA

	Nov 04	Jan - Nov 04		Nov 04	Jan - Nov 04
Ordinary Income/Expense			Professional Fees		
Income			Accounting	0.00	1,100.00
Group Contributions			Computer Consulting	0.00	817.72
Honors	51.00	311.22	Total Professional Fees	0.00	1,917.72
Group Contributions - Other	9,628.36	125,844.92	Rent - Office	3,708.75	39,546.25
Total Group Contributions	9,679.36	126,156.14	Rent - Other	75.00	725.00
Individual Contributions			Repair & Maintenance	178.00	2,165.22
Faithful Fiver	455.00	1,670.00	Security System	33.50	335.00
Honorary Contributions	190.91	3,495.06	Special Events	0.00	571.20
Individual -Unrestricted	1,833.00	7,086.39	Telephone	403.63	5,579.49
Total Individual Contributions	2,478.91	12,251.45	Travel	0.00	741.99
Gratitude Month			Training	0.00	114.67
Gratitude Month -Individual	220.00	2,220.00	Utilities	180.95	2,229.16
Gratitude Month-Groups	873.08	2,856.30	Total Expense	14,692.12	176,442.78
Total Gratitude Month	1,093.08	5,076.30	Net Ordinary Income	1,467.12	-6,267.22
Newsletter Subscript.	54.00	1,173.00	Other Income/Expense		
Special Event Income	438.82	3,301.57	Other Income		
Sales - Bookstore	6,851.04	82,492.21	Other Income	0.00	4,833.43
Total Income	20,595.21	230,450.67	Interest Income	49.65	615.68
Cost of Goods Sold			Total Other Income	49.65	5,449.11
Cost of Books Sold	4,435.97	60,275.11	Other Expense		
Total COGS	4,435.97	60,275.11	Depreciation Expense	408.17	4,489.87
Gross Profit	16,159.24	170,175.56	Total Other Expense	408.17	4,489.87
Expense			Net Other Income	-358.52	959.24
IFB Literature	14.60	299.98	Net Income	\$ 1,108.60	\$ (5,307.98)
Bad Checks	0.00	-27.07			
Employee Expenses					
Wages & Salaries	7,200.00	79,090.43			
Employer Tax Expenses	541.78	7,588.89			
Health Benefits	727.00	7,751.00			
Retirement/Annuity Expense	0.00	7,666.67			
Workers Comp Ins.	0.00	1,988.55			
Total Employee Expenses	8,468.78	104,085.54			
ASL Expense					
ASL Other	390.00	595.00			
ASL- Net- Fri All Grps	0.00	3,478.80			
Total ASL Expense	390.00	4,073.80			
Bank Charges					
Cr Card Fees	123.98	1,172.91			
Bank Charges - Other	-2.00	321.70			
Total Bank Charges	121.98	1,494.61			
Equipment Lease	569.62	5,796.20			
Filing/Fees	0.00	189.00			
Insurance	100.55	1,106.05			
Internet Expense	0.00	215.40			
Miscellaneous Expense	0.00	64.11			
Office Supplies	164.89	3,545.29			
Postage					
Bulk Mail	350.00	950.00			
Postage - Other	0.00	770.45			
Total Postage	350.00	1,720.45			
Shipping	-68.13	-46.28			

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