

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

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

The Point

July 2005

A publication
of the Intercounty Fellowship
of Alcoholics Anonymous

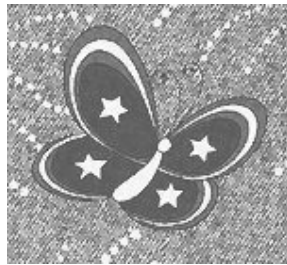
1821 Sacramento Street
San Francisco CA 94109-3528
(415) 674-1821
From Marin call (415) 499-0400
Fax (415) 674-1801
www.aasf.org
aa@aasf.org

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.

Knowing a New Freedom

by Kristen H.



When I hear the word *freedom*, I immediately think of French fries and George W. Bush. I blame the media. But after entertaining the metaphor, I find George W.'s various quotations (e.g. "They're freedom haters. They hate freedom,") to be rather appropriate applications to the experience of recovery from alcoholism.

Before I speak to my newfound freedom in sobriety, I must revisit the dependence I had upon alcohol. As I am also the child of an alcoholic, I felt victimized from the age of about seven, when my father's disease materialized. This sense stayed with me into my adult life. I learned to define myself as a victim.

Initially, alcohol seemed to free me from the world I believed to be laden on my teenage shoulders. I felt free from my fear, free from my anxiety and shyness. In college, I used my art to justify my heavy drinking because "I could think more freely when drunk." I made the same justifications as Bill W., "some of the greatest minds achieve their greatest masterpieces under the influence". I bought into a typical tortured artist lifestyle that blended perfectly with my disease.

What I didn't realize was, when I was drinking, I was unable to set boundaries for myself. I allowed myself to be taken advantage of sexually, monetarily, and emotionally. In the spiral of my disease, my victimhood became the justification for drinking and the drinking became the justification of my victimhood. Ending up in an abusive relationship, I developed a "f--- it" attitude before hitting the whiskey only to awake to an utter prison of anxiety and fear. This thinking as victim only left me feeling both oppressed and depressed. In a desperate attempt at freedom, I got myself a new boyfriend and moved to San Francisco, where everything would be different.

Despite being a graduate student and having a job in the city, I spent almost all of my time in bed or at the bar. I was drunk, on my way to getting drunk or waiting out a hangover. My artistic productivity all but vanished. What I did manage to create during my drinking years I now see as mostly superficial and self-indulgent. As art tends to do, this work actually mirrors who I was, or who I was quickly becoming. My alcoholism eventually bottomed with a 5150. I'd attempted to jump from my apartment window. Failing that, I cut up my arms and burned them with a cigarette. My partner called my father, then 911.

I didn't find out what 5150 meant until the next day. I was told I couldn't leave the

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July 2005....

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	<p>4 FIRST MON Archives Committee, Central Office, TBA</p> <p>Spirit of SF Committee, Central Office, TBA</p> <p>HOLIDAY CENTRAL OFFICE CLOSED</p>	5	<p>6 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.)</p>	7		
10	<p>11 SECOND MON SF Public Information Committee Central Office, 7 pm</p>	<p>12 SECOND TUE SF Bridging The Gap 1187 Franklin St. at Geary, SF, 6:30 pm</p> <p>SF General Service 1187 Franklin St., SF Orientation: 7 pm Meeting: 8 pm</p> <p>Marin H&I 1360 Lincoln, San Rafael Orientation: 6:15 pm Bus. Meeting: 7:15 pm</p>	<p>13 SECOND WED 12th Step Committee Central Office, 6:30 pm</p> <p>Marin Bridging the Gap 1411 Lincoln Ave., San Rafael 6:45 pm</p>	<p>14 SECOND THU Website Committee Central Office, 6 pm</p>	15	16
17	<p>18 THIRD MON SF Teleservice Central Office, 6:30 pm</p> <p>Marin General Service 9 Ross Valley Rd, San Rafael GSR Sharing: 7 pm District Meeting: 8 pm</p>	<p>19 THIRD TUE San Mateo General Service St. Andrews Church 15th & El Camino Real San Mateo, 7:30 pm</p>	<p>20 THIRD WED Literature Review Committee Central Office, 6:30 pm</p>	<p>21 THIRD THU Outreach Committee Central Office, 6:30 pm</p>	22	<p>23 FOURTH SAT General Service CNCA Meeting 320 N. McDowell Petaluma DCMCs: 10 am Business Meeting: 12:30 pm</p>
<p>24 FOURTH SUN Living Sober Convention Committee 1668 Bush, SF 5:30</p> <p>31</p>	25	<p>26 FOURTH TUE Special Needs Committee, 6:30 pm Special Events Committee Central Office, 7:30 pm</p> <p>Marin Teleservice 1360 Lincoln Ave San Rafael Alano Club 7:30 pm</p>	27	<p>28 FOURTH THU Marin PI Committee 1360 Lincoln Ave, San Rafael—Alano Club 7:15 pm</p> <p>LAST THU SF H&I Old First Church, 1751 Sacramento St. Orientation: 7:15 pm Business Meeting: 8pm</p>	29	30

The Point Editorial Policy (adapted from the *A.A. 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.

The Point Editorial Committee:
Cami W., Don R., Kathleen C.,
Maury P., Mike L., Dave F., 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



Q: How many alcoholics does it take to change a lightbulb?

A: Just one—he holds the bulb and the whole world revolves around him.



**July 2005
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New Meetings:

Sun 3:30 PM Castro MEDICATIONS IN RECOVERY 150 Eureka/ 18th St., Rm. 104, Church (SD)

Meeting Changes:

Mon 2:00 pm Novato GRATITUDE St. Francis Mission, 967 Fifth St. off Grant Ave. (was 12 noon)
 2nd Tues 6:15 pm San Rafael MARIN H & I COMMITTEE, 1360 Lincoln, Marin Alano Club (was Lagunitas & Shady Ln., 6:30 pm)
 Fri 2:00 pm Novato NOVATO SPIRIT DISCUSSION St. Francis Mission, 967 Fifth St. off Grant Ave. (was 12 noon)
 Fri 8:00 pm Nob Hill FRIDAY SMOKELESS 1755 Clay/ Van Ness (was 8:30 pm)
 Fri 8:30 pm Mission MISSION DOLORES / ENDLESS SUMMER 2900 24th St./ Florida (was 1187 Franklin; meetings merged)

**All meetings at 7th & Irving have returned except Wed 1:00 pm BYOL at Clubhouse at Tennis Courts in Golden Gate Park.

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, 415-674-1821.** If we hear no objections during the month following publication here, the meeting will be assumed disbanded and removed from the schedule. **Thank You!**

Recently Registered Trusted Servants

May 2005

We'd like to thank and recognize the eight San Francisco Trusted Servants and two Marin Trusted Servants who registered with Central Office during May 2005.

San Francisco:

Alumni Wed 8:30pm; Fell Street Fri 8:30pm; Firefighters & Friends Tu. 10am; Fogwatch Tu. 7pm; Goldmine Mon 8pm; Haight St. Explorers Thur. 6:30pm; Serenity Step Thur. 7:30pm; Sutter Street Beginners Sat. 6pm

Marin:

Friday Night Book Fri. 8:30pm; Morning After Sat. 10am

“We cannot skimp”

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

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

Are you getting *The Point*?

Secretaries and Treasurers: If you register as a Trusted Servant, you will receive a free copy of *The Point* each month. Please share *The Point* with your group. And don't forget to read the announcements from the *Secretary's Monthly* insert. *The Point* includes important announcements and financial information about our Intergroup. Information expands the Group Conscience, one of the strengths that holds A.A. together. If you haven't seen a copy of this newsletter at your meeting, let us know. And let your group Secretary and Treasurer know that registration forms are available on our website at www.aasf.org.

Download a Trusted Servant Registration Form Today!

1. Go to www.aasf.org
2. Click on “Resources for A.A. Members” from the main menu
3. Click on “Trusted Servant Registration”
4. Send your completed form to Central Office to receive your free copy of *The Point* each month!

Group Speakers for July 2005

BRISBANE BREAKFAST BUNCH

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

DATE	SPEAKER	FROM
7/03	Madeleine M.	Daly City
7/10	Selma G.	Daly City
7/17	Lucy O.	San Francisco
7/24	Susan L.	San Francisco
7/31	Paul N.	Half Moon Bay

FRIDAY ALL GROUPS

1101 O'Farrell, Urban Life Center, San Francisco
Friday, 8:30 pm

DATE	SPEAKER	FROM
7/03	David O.	Marin
7/10	Leslie F.	San Francisco
7/17	Jay M.	East Bay
7/24	Jason S.	East Bay
7/29	TBA	TBA

'Artists & Writers' meeting of AA
presents

Benefit Talent Show and Raffle
for Central Office

DRUNKS ON DISPLAY

Saturday, July 16th
7:30-10:00pm
Doors Open at 7:00pm

All Saints Church
1350 Waller Street
(between Ashbury and Masonic)
Suggested Donation \$5.00



12th-Step Workshop

"Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics and to practice these principles in all our affairs."

Wednesday, July 13th, 2005
at 6:30pm
Central Office

1821 Sacramento St./ Van Ness
San Francisco, CA
415-674-1821

Learn about practicing the 12th Step and become a 12th-Step volunteer. Share your experience doing 12th-Step work and learn from the 12th Step-experience of others. Everyone is welcome!



SPEAKERS WANTED!!

PI/CPC WILL HOLD A
SPEAKER
WORKSHOP

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

PI SPEAKER WORKSHOP at 6:30 PM

(Speaker requirement: two years of continuous sobriety in AA)

Wednesday, July 27, 2005

1821 Sacramento Street

San Francisco, CA

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

The Freedom I Want

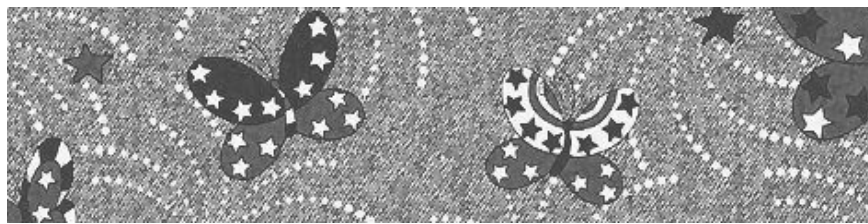
by Anonymous

I came across a passage in the *Big Book* that states that I don't have to live with anger and grudges to "show them." I actually can have freedom from anger and fear – freedom to know happiness and love. That sounds really good to me. Freedom "from" and freedom "to" are concepts that become increasingly more important to me as I continue to work on my emotional sobriety.

I learned a lot about certain paradoxes in my early days of sobriety. Concepts such as 'admitting complete defeat will bring victory', 'going through darkness will lead to light' and 'dependence on a Higher Power can lead to independence' hold deeper meaning as time goes on. It pleases me when new concepts, or a different way to look at things, fit and make sense in my quest for figuring things out. So, seeing this passage again, it makes total sense to me that when I accept and truly become willing to let go of anger and fear, happiness in the form of serenity must surely result.

I am not familiar with happiness, at least not in its purest and simplest forms. I am still afraid of many things – mainly having to do with being good enough, fitting in and being liked. In my "fight or flight" mode, if I do become fearful or feel threatened in this area, I get angry and resentful toward "them" and only further alienate and become more isolated in my pain. When I can work through this by feeling the feelings, realizing that they're probably not real, and sincerely trying to let go of the damaging anger that can result, it only makes sense that some sort of happiness will follow. The energy that goes into anger and grudges wipes out anything else for me, so all emotions work on nursing those damaging feelings.

(continued on p. 13)



New Freedom

(continued from page 1)

psychiatric hospital. My freedom was effectively annulled; save for a couple of meal choices and the option to work on a jigsaw puzzle, pace the halls, watch TV or sleep.

So, back to my Bush metaphor. After I was "freed" from the hospital and put in an outpatient program, I began to consider what alcohol had done to my freedom. It was nothing less than a (personal) terrorist attack. Alcohol constitutes the perfect terrorist. There is no negotiation. Alcohol doesn't care about me (or anyone). There's no way to completely eradicate its presence. I am powerless over it. Though it worked slowly, alcohol eventually brought me to a state of utter terror and torture. It finally tried to kill me. I realized that if I wanted to be free, something had to change. I had to stop participating in my oppression and victimization. I got myself to my first A.A. meeting.

I am now a full year into my sobriety. I have to work it every day. At this point, I don't have complete freedom from alcohol and I don't believe I ever will. I'm okay with this because I've learned to think differently. I don't believe in freedom *from* oppression or freedom *from* anything I can't control (which is just about everything). There is, however, freedom *in* things. I believe we all hold the source, a key to the cells we've created. *In A.A.*, I have freedom. *In God and God's path* I have freedom. *In truth* I have freedom. It is only *in* sobriety that I, as an alcoholic, have freedom.

As each day passes, I write down my gratitude and find I've experienced a new liberty. I feel free when I wake without a hangover and can think clearly. I feel free when I practice rigorous acceptance: of change, of imperfection, of others, of my emotions. Freedom comes after making an amends—all the armor of guilt, anger and resentment falls away in pieces like leaves. I feel my freedom when I dance, when I celebrate my life and all life, when I express love, when I am gentle with myself.

Freedom comes with responsibility. Freedom is a practice. I still struggle with some breakthrough anxiety. I've had to leave in the middle of class, I've asked for extensions on projects. But now, I have the freedom to tell the truth. It consistently amazes me how my professors, my boss, and my partner are relentlessly supportive and understanding when I simply realize I have the freedom to tell the truth and ask for what I need.

Another president, in 1941 gave us his Four Freedoms, "The first is freedom of speech and expression...The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way...The third is freedom from want...The fourth is freedom from fear." A wise man, F.D.R. These ideas are exactly what I've found in our fellowship. 📌

Dear Alky

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FROM ONE A.A. TO ANOTHER!

Dear Alky,

I live with my best friend. We have been friends since we were kids. We drank together. We know everything about each other. I just recently got sober and she didn't. She kind of knows but I haven't really talked about it with her. It is putting a real strain on our friendship. We don't hang out as much and it is tense at home. I don't want to lose my home or my best friend but I know my sobriety comes first. What should I do?

— Strained

Dear Strained,

Getting sober brings about major shifts in our lives, and most require patient adjustment. You're right that sobriety comes first, yet a part of sober living is learning to interact authentically with others. In the case of former drinking friends, it can help to practice the principle of attraction rather than promotion: showing, through acts of kindness, helpfulness and love—acts most of us, when drinking, were incapable of undertaking—that sobriety leads to a better life for the once-hopeless alcoholic. Your roommate may or may not be alcoholic—only she can decide—but she is, like you and I, another human struggling to live. Keep her happiness uppermost in mind, pray for guidance and talk to your trusted A.A. friends—and treat her with love. Also, there's plenty of wisdom in *The Family Afterward* chapter of the *Big Book*; you might want to give it a gander.

—Alky



Dear Alky,

I am 17 and just getting ready to graduate from high school. I also just got sober six months ago. I have always lived at home and everything is provided for me. I am really scared that I won't make it. I know A.A. talks about being self-supporting, but I don't know how to be. I am afraid I won't know how to live life sober and get a job and pay the bills, etc. My sponsor says to just take one thing at a time but I am really overwhelmed! Help!

Sincerely,
Growing Up



*Dear Friends,
I'm grateful for the chance to serve you by passing on what has been so freely given me. But this is one alcoholic's experience; be sure to check things out with your sponsor, other A.A.s, friends and spiritual advisors.
—Alky*

Dear Growing Up,

Congratulations on your graduation and your continuing sobriety—two great milestones! All of us feel fear when confronted with a future that seems uncertain. For alcoholics, that can be deadly. In A.A. we find relief in fellowship, unity in a common purpose and connection to a higher power. Be sure to attend plenty of meetings, and talk about your progress—and concerns. Also, get commitments (coffee maker, greeter, clean up). Not only will you serve your groups, but those “jobs” will help prepare you for your first paying job by teaching you to show up consistently, on time and with an attitude of service. For help with the fear, turn to your higher power; as it says on p. 63 of the *Big Book*, he's your “new Employer.” Finally, remember that you're embarking on an exciting adventure—adulthood free of alcoholic craziness—and that all of us are here to help you, just as you're helping others simply by being sober.

—Alky



Dear Alky,

I'm wondering if it's okay to get personally close to my sponsor. It feels like I'm relating to him as my father, to some extent, although I don't really know because I didn't have one growing up. We've had some quality time together and just the other day I helped him with his car. He's a good sponsor but he's no mechanic.

—Nash

Dear Nash,

One of the glories of A.A. is that there's no “right” way to work the program. Some sponsors tend not to get close to sponsees in the first few months because the “pigeon” might drink and disappear. Over time, however, some sponsor-sponsee relationships turn to friendships, often of long standing. Others remain more formal. In the case of you and your sponsor, working on his car seems a potentially excellent way for you two to have time for conversation about A.A. principles and your progress in recovery. And it's a mutually sharing relationship: you help with his car even as he's being your “A.A. mechanic.” If you have any doubts or concerns, talk about them directly with him, keeping in mind that a loving higher power is guiding the both of you, as it is guiding us all.

—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—

Joe G. 415.350-0373

VICE CHAIR—

Steve R. calmont1@aol.com

TREASURER

Danna P. dannajp@earthlink.net

RECORDING SECRETARY

Don B. 415.777-9374

COMMITTEE CHAIRS:

CENTRAL OFFICE COMMITTEE

Danny F. dannyf112@earthlink.net

12th STEP COMMITTEE

Rudi D. rudral7@comcast.net

ARCHIVES COMMITTEE

Lynnore G. lynnore1@aol.com

LITERATURE COMMITTEE

Steve N. snolan12000@yahoo.com

ORIENTATION COMMITTEE

Tim M. gryffindor-house@earthlink.net

OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Lou H. ljhmarin@hotmail.com

THE POINT

Steve R. calmont1@aol.com

SPECIAL EVENTS

David B. ohmout@aol.com

SPECIAL NEEDS COMMITTEE

Pene P. 415.200-6261

WEBSITE COMMITTEE

Michael R. michaelr@aasf.org

SF TELESERVICE COMMITTEE

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

SF PI/CPC COMMITTEE

Laura N. 415.931-2567

Cleaning Up Old Patterns by Barnaby W.

When I got sober it was a relief not to have to figure out what I did the night before. In a way it was just a ploy for me to get away with more. If you are not loaded then you've got to say that the stuff you did is yours. What is happening today is not a result of blackouts but from not thinking or being present.

When I was three years sober and my relationships were falling apart, I couldn't blame alcohol; I was the one acting this way, not the booze. So there I was, sober but crazy. I was driving around the block in the Mission district looking for a "distraction." That was when God slapped me back to reality. I saw a man from AA looking at me. Shame and fear overwhelmed me and I said to myself, "What am I doing?" That guy was not really there; it was a hallucination or God moment.


I called my sponsor and he told me to go home and write down a list of everything that was pissing me off. He came over to my house and that was really the first time that I ever truly looked at an inventory. I went through the first four steps that day and used the list of people I had written to figure out what *really* had happened in my life, not what I *thought* happened.

I always blamed things that happened in my life on others, and even when I was justified with this, it was really hard to understand that I had a part in it all. The thing that was crazy was that I felt some things that were done to me were not at all my problem. What I failed to see was that feelings are not facts. To let my side overwhelm the truth was not an honest way to live.

I also found there were patterns to how I behaved and that they all started with my actions even if the first pattern started with another person. If I was to truly be sober I had to see that I have the pattern of putting myself in harm's way to acquire knowledge even if I get hurt in the process. Does this excuse my or someone else's side in the situation? No, but it does clarify it.

Inventories help me see that not everything that has caused me pain or frustration has been bad. It was part of my life and that makes it not all bad. I was always an outgoing kid but underlying that I was shy, which led me to be confused by how others acted when all I wanted was to be liked. This pattern in me has put me in some crazy places and times. It has made for great stories because I got through them, but I paid a price with all my experiences.

I can see that my patterns still are active today. In fact almost all the things in my life fit the pattern of risk for knowledge and power. When I act this way now it is only negative if I do not think of the harm to others or myself.

An inventory of my life has led to a clean way of living. The hurdles that exist are usually of my own making. If getting sober was the winter of my life—a cold painful place—then the Twelve Steps, especially the inventory, was the thaw and new buds of life for me. Now the real spring in my life has come about. The rest will be a long and wonderful summer, with a rich and rewarding harvest in sobriety. 

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

Treasures of the Twelve & Twelve: Tradition Seven

by Kent G.

Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

It's funny. At first glance, much of what Bill Wilson wrote offended me. Either I wouldn't conceptually get what he was saying, or I didn't like those concepts presented in such an unvarnished manner. Or maybe I just couldn't handle the truth. Hmmm.

When I first read Tradition Seven in the *Twelve & Twelve*, I barely got past the first line. Bill begins the chapter on group self-support with a catchy hook: "Self-supporting alcoholics? Who ever heard of such a thing?"

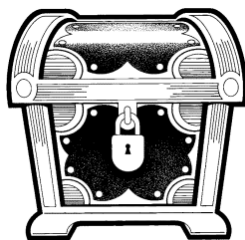
Yep, I was offended—as I caressed memories of financial surplus distant in my past. My head said I still had the career, stocks, cars, motorcycles, condo and health insurance. But I'd hocked most of that for empty beer cans, wine bottles and plastic baggies—the various contents of which never filled the aching hole inside me. Drinking and using up my own funds wasn't enough. Before I was done, I'd taken a good bite out of my family's reserves as well. Mommy footed the tab for rehab.

Bill keeps outing me in that first paragraph: "Always, we've had our hands out. Time out of mind we've been dependent upon somebody, usually money-wise." He adds, "when a society composed entirely of alcoholics says it's going to pay its bills, that's really news."

And so it is. Today I accept that yes, I was on the dole as a drunk—but sober, I pay my own tab. One big item on that tab is Alcoholics Anonymous.

The concept of self-support came arduously to the pioneers of A.A. Early on, most were broke, and what money they did have often went to wet drunks instead of to basic group expenses. Bill himself once slid five bucks (a good chunk of his rent—sorry, Lois) to a prize slippee, then threw just a dime into the hat at his own club. Some thought the spiritual and the material just didn't mix—A.A. must stay broke—while others believed in letting A.A. become rich, which would've been easy enough.

Once the movement was a proven entity, with reports of miracles rolling in - lives saved, businesses back up and running, families reunited, hopeless ner-do-wells staying out of jail—lots of grateful folks wanted to throw cash prizes at the miracle makers. One group received five grand. Bill recalls, "the hassle over that chunk of money played havoc for years." Another lady left ten grand in her will, and the debate over whether or not to accept it



revealed at least half a million set aside in other wills.

Why not get paid? It seems reasonable. These guys were doing good work. The public was behind them. They could've made A.A. into a mega-corporation. Bill was a Wall Street wunderkind from way back; he knew what built companies. He knew that people buy on emotion; he knew how to sell a story. Imagine logging into your Schwab account: "Cool, SOBR is up an eighth. Cheers!" Yeah, A.A. could've gotten rich. So why didn't it?

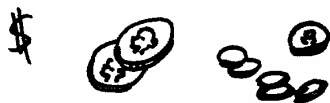
Because grace works. The very same grace (call it what you will) that brought Bill and Dr. Bob together in the first place also saved them from screwing everything up once A.A. got going. Grace got smart decisions made, time after time. Just as the *Big Book* was created by the first 100 members, every voice was heard on the topic of self-support. Rich and poor. Liberal and conservative. Extravagant and cautious. All those alcoholics who normally wouldn't mix was just the mix that was needed.

Their decision was that A.A. should always remain poor. Bare running expenses plus a prudent reserve is the policy. "...we had to recognize the fact that A.A. had to function. Meeting places cost something. To save whole areas from turmoil, small offices had to be set up, telephones installed, and a few full-time secretaries hired. Over many protests, these things were accomplished. We saw that if they weren't, the man coming in the door couldn't get a break. These simple services would require small sums of money which we could and would pay ourselves."

Bill boils it down to the essence: We support A.A. so it's here for the newcomer. We who've been given the gift of sobriety—and further gifts like, uh, jobs—kick a few bucks into the basket so the alcoholic without a dime gets his shot as well.

I'm happy to pay for A.A., and I'm at peace with Bill Wilson. His blunt but loving words helped me stop drinking. So did the drunks who fought to keep A.A. financially humble. If A.A. had gotten loaded back then, I'd likely be loaded now. If getting a meeting meant flashing my gold card at the Ebby Thatcher Memorial Amphitheatre in the Dr. Robert Holbrook Smith World Recovery Centre, I might be dead.

Grace works. 



Faithful Fivers!

Thanks for Your Support

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 to alcoholics who still suffer in the San Francisco and 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.	LISA C.
BARBARA M.	MARCUS H.
BRUCE D.	MARGARITE S.
DAVID B.	MELINDA H.
DAVID B.	MICHAEL R.
DENNIS & LUCY	MONIKA H.
ELIZABETH S.	NANCIE G.
FRANCES L.	PEGGY M.
GILES H.	PETER F.
HARRY M.	PHILIP G.
JANET B.	RALPH P.
JERRY N.	RICH G.
JIM H.	RICHARD C.
KATE B.	SCOTT N.
KELLIE A.	STEVE A.
KRIS F.	TOM M.
LAURIE L.	WICKIE S.



A.A. On the Road: Alaska

by Lauren H.


Five years ago I was on my way to Alaska with a friend from the program. We were driving up I-5 north of Seattle and it had just begun to rain. Suddenly, a car flew over the median from the southbound lane into northbound traffic. It hit three cars in succession, one of them being ours. So we were stuck in northern Washington state. We went to a hotel and made a call to the local A.A. hotline, and then to a meeting right away. At the meeting we met some people who offered to let us stay with them. It was truly a blessing. We stayed in a camper on some beautiful farmland while we waited for our car to be fixed. Our A.A. host brought us to meetings and we found tremendous support from strangers. We didn't make it to Alaska that time but we made great friends.

By next summer, I had my car packed with all my belongings and I was headed north again on I-5. It took two weeks to drive up the coast, camping most of the way in the lush lake lands of British Columbia and the Yukon. I arrived in Anchorage and made a call to the A.A. hotline and found a meeting. At the first meeting I went to I saw a flyer for an A.A. convention happening in a week and registered right away. The convention was sponsored by a group that dressed up and spoke of this guy in California that they revered. I wasn't too far from home after all.

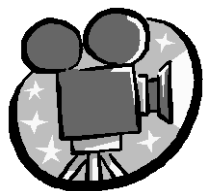
I left that convention and traveled a bit more, heading down to Valdez, the site of the infamous oil spill. They had a very small fellowship that adopted me right away. Meetings were small and newcomers were welcomed and looked after. Many stuck around to serve the meetings that got them sober. People cared if you were not at the meeting. There was a lot of fellowship between meetings. But, I did not settle there, I headed north to Talkeetna.

In Talkeetna, there was only one meeting a week. It was an incredibly cute little Alaskan town. I worked at the boarding house for the climbers of Denali. I only lasted a month there because I couldn't handle going to only one meeting a week. And it was September by this point and I needed to find a place to settle before the winter hit. As I drove out of town there was a fork in the road, if I turned left I would end up in Fairbanks. If I went right I would end up in Juneau. I turned right. In that split second of a decision I guess I couldn't handle the sub-zero winter that Fairbanks promised.

I arrived in Juneau and found a cheap hotel room. Again, I called the A.A. hotline and immediately found a meeting. There were regular meetings in a small church downtown. This meeting place would become my regular meeting for the next year and a half. I fell in love with this incredibly lush and beautiful town, surrounded by mountains, glaciers, and the Prince William Sound and filled with wildlife. The wild beauty got me to Juneau, but it was the meetings that kept me there. I became involved in service right away, becoming Area Treasurer. There weren't nearly as many young people in Juneau A.A., so me and a friend of mine started a young people's meeting. We wanted to meet other young sober people.

When I go back to visit, the people are all the same and welcome me warmly. A.A. in Alaska seemed like more of a survival mechanism than a social event. Here in San Francisco, I sometimes tend to forget why I am in meetings. I see my friends and hang out. The remote small towns of Alaska helped me realize the importance of the fellowship of A.A. – one alcoholic helping another. 

Literature Review



Markings on the Journey: Looking at A.A.'s History

by Anonymous

A wonderful offering at the Central Office bookstore is the videotape, *Markings on the Journey*, a thirty-minute tape, presented by the Archives department of the A.A. General Service Office in New York. The film chronicles the origins of Alcoholics Anonymous.

The film provides a concise look at the early years of A.A., including brief footage of Bill W. describing his experience of how the fellowship developed and the efforts made to insure the future of Alcoholics Anonymous. Materials were collected from A.A.'s extensive archives in New York and include film footage, audio recordings, photos and information about important figures in the early history of A.A. These include Bill W.'s meetings with Ebby T. and Dr. Bob, the work of Sister Mary Ignatia and Father Ed Dowling and the connection between Alcoholics Anonymous and Dr. Carl Jung.

The film also describes the early struggles of the fellowship, the writing of the *Big Book* and the importance of publications such as *Readers' Digest* and the *Saturday Evening Post* in letting people know about the spiritual solution to alcoholism that A.A. offers. In the early days of A.A., there was definitely a period where it was unclear whether the fellowship would flourish and thrive and these publications were crucial to getting the A.A. message to a larger audience.

While much of the information in this tape was not new for me, I appreciated the presentation for its clarity and brevity. The tape goes on to outline how the Twelve Traditions were developed and their importance to the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. Perhaps the tape's best feature is the description of how General Service came into existence and how General Service works, which in my experience can be a mystery to the average, meeting-going member of A.A.

Markings on the Journey serves as a great introduction to the history of Alcoholics Anonymous and is useful for anyone, newcomer or oldtimer, curious about the origins of the A.A. fellowship. This tape may even inspire a visit to the Archives offices in New York. †

Other A.A. Videos Available at Central Office		Pricing: <i>Markings on the Journey</i> is \$16. All other tapes are \$15 and may be ordered if not currently in stock.
Alcoholics Anonymous - An Inside View	28 min.	Depicts personal stories of recovery
It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell	17 min.	A.A.'s who found the message in prison
Young People in A.A.	28 min.	Young A.A. members about their experience of recovery
Hope: Alcoholics Anonymous	15 min.	Explains the principles of A.A.
Bill's Own Story	60 min.	Bill W. describes drinking and recovery

Errors of the Ego

by Anonymous

"Selfishness and self-centeredness! That, we think, is the root of our troubles." Those sentences appear on page 62 of the *Big Book*, and kick off the truth of the Third Step: consumed with alcoholism, I've done a lousy job of running the show, and it's high time I let a Power greater than myself take the reins.

Early in my sobriety, my sponsor had me read pages 60-63 and 86-88 in the *Big Book* every morning. It took me a while to make it a daily practice; I was an undisciplined alcoholic. One day, I sheepishly acknowledged that I hadn't read the pages that morning. My sponsor said, "Do you leave the house without your shoes on?"

Taking great offense, I said I most certainly did not.

"Well," he said, "These are your spiritual shoes." I don't know why, but that stuck. Afterwards, reading those pages became an unshakable daily habit.

I read the same things over and over, but with each passing day I understood them in new ways. That sentence about selfishness being the root of my problem has revealed different meanings over the years.

Today it means I'm a human being with alcoholism. As a human, I'm naturally going to be concerned, on occasion, with my own welfare. But when humanness is torqued by alcoholism, that concern becomes obsession—obsession with self and everything it thinks it wants and needs.

My alcoholic ego traffics in delusions. It tells me things that seem to make sense, but that, examined mindfully,

(Continued on page 14)

AA Group Contributions - April 2005

Intercounty Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous - San Francisco and Marin Counties

Name	April 05	YTD	Name	April 05	YTD
Fellowship Contributions			Tiburon Women's Candlelight W 8pm		225.00
Brisbane Breakfast Bunch		85.40	Tuesday Chip Meeting Tu 8pm		500.00
Contribution Box	70.50	191.43	Wednesday Mid-Week W 6pm		63.11
Gay Newcomers Group		9.08	Wednesday Night Candlelight W 8pm		75.00
IFB	94.05	350.43	Women's Big Book Tu 1030am		45.00
Marin Teleservice		500.00	Women on Monday M 7pm	46.75	126.54
Sunday Step Study		30.00	Women's Step Study Group M 12pm		240.00
The Chosen Ones		20.00	Working Dogs W 1205pm	388.00	388.00
Unidentified Group		881.27	Total Marin Group Contributions	\$2,521.22	\$12,704.41
Total Fellowship Contributions	\$164.55	\$2,067.61			
Honors			SF Group Contributions		
Endless Summer F 830pm		74.99	6am Marina Dock		72.00
Total Honors	\$0.00	\$74.99	7am Speaker Discussion Th 7am	22.11	38.51
			A is for Alcohol Tu 6pm		53.99
			A New Start F 830pm		111.06
Marin Group Contributions			A Vision for You (SF) Su 630pm	14.00	81.00
7am Urgent Care Group 7D 7am		200.00	AA As You Like It Tu 530pm	211.15	211.15
A Vision for You (Fairfax) Su 730pm	78.75	144.88	AA Step Study Su 6pm		198.30
Attitude Adjustment 7D 7am		1,412.00	Afro American F 8pm	74.58	74.58
Candlelight Group Sun 8pm		69.94	Afro American Beginners Sat 8pm	12.30	114.10
Creeside New Growth Sun 7pm	64.00	64.00	All Together Now Th 8pm	120.00	300.00
Day At A Time 7D 630am	210.00	408.51	Alumni W 830pm		60.00
Downtown Mill Valley F 830pm		275.00	Amazing Grace M 7pm		100.00
Fairfax Friday Night F 830pm		68.96	Artists & Writers F 630pm		331.20
Freedom Finders F 830pm	362.35	362.35	As Bill Sees It Th 6pm		141.95
Greenfield Newcomers Sun 7pm		120.00	As Bill Sees It Th 830pm		140.09
Happy, Joyous & Free 5D 12pm		363.00	Ass in a Bag Th 830pm		40.80
Intimate Feelings Sa 10am		183.69	Beginners' Step Study Sat 630pm		124.53
Island Group Th 8pm		228.50	Bernal Big Book Sat 5pm		188.37
Just Can't Wait 'til 8 M 630pm	61.50	94.25	Big Book Basics F 8pm		277.87
Living in the Solution F 6pm		306.00	Big Book Study Su 11am		64.00
Mill Valley 7D 7am		750.00	Blue Book Special Su 11am		97.42
Mill Valley Discussion W 830pm	16.80	16.80	Buena Vista Breakfast Su 12pm		220.00
Monday Blues M 630pm		500.00	Castro Discussion (Show Of Shows) W 8pm	365.59	365.59
Monday Night Stag (Tiburon) 8pm	254.92	816.97	Castro Monday Big Book M 8pm		137.42
Monday Night Women's M 8pm		164.09	CLAADAAGH Sat 815pm		40.00
Newcomers Step M 730pm		270.85	Cocoanuts Su 9am	37.55	90.76
Noon Tu 12pm		219.50	Come N Get It F 630pm		54.00
Noon Hope F 12pm	76.00	76.00	Creative Alcoholics M 6pm		180.00
Pathfinders Tu 12pm		105.00	Diamond Heights Tu 830pm		100.00
San Geronimo Valley Book Study F 8pm		43.45	Drive Thru W 1215pm		224.84
Saturday Serenity Sa 8pm		100.00	Each Day a New Beginning F 7am		455.60
Six O'Clock Sunset Th 6pm	151.65	258.34	Each Day a New Beginning M 7am	232.00	232.00
Steps To The Solution W 715pm	38.00	38.00	Each Day A New Beginning Su 8am		488.06
Stinson Beach Fellowship Th 8pm		451.04	Each Day a New Beginning Th 7am		304.00
Sunday Express Sun 6pm		111.80	Each Day a New Beginning Tu 7am	336.00	590.58
Terra Linda Group Th 830pm		650.00	Early Joyous & Free Th 7am	20.00	20.00
TGI Tuesday Tu 6pm		51.60	Early Start F 6pm		683.04
The Barnyard Group Sa 4pm		96.00	Easy Does It Tu 6pm		139.36
The Fearless Searchers F 8pm		61.74	Embarcadero Group 5D 1210pm		498.80
Thursday Night Speaker Th 830pm	542.00	542.00	Eureka Valley Topic M 6pm		219.57
Tiburon Beginners (Closed)		512.00	Federal Speaker Su 12pm		201.53
Tiburon Haven Sun 12pm	230.50	905.50	Fireside Chat Sa 9pm		23.61

Name	April 05	YTD
Fireside Chat Th 8pm		80.97
Fireside F 830pm		94.00
First Place		39.60
Four Forty Niners F 8pm		28.55
Friday Knights Th 730am	100.00	112.93
Friday Lunchtime Step F 12pm		140.00
Friday Smokeless F 830pm		93.34
Happy Hour (S.F.) F 630pm		63.70
Happy Hour Ladies Night F 530pm		603.00
High Noon 5D 1215pm	200.00	498.70
High Noon Friday 1215pm		266.12
High Noon Monday 1215pm	80.12	407.83
High Noon Thursday 1215pm		258.64
High Noon Tuesday 1215pm	184.70	755.96
High Noon Wednesday 1215pm		246.00
High Sobriety M 8pm		327.60
High Steppers W 7pm		301.75
Hilldwellers M 8pm		84.00
Home Group Sat 830pm		240.16
How It Works Sat 2pm	82.00	144.94
Huntington Square W 630pm	720.00	720.00
Ingleside Beginners Su 5pm		33.00
Join the Tribe Tu 7pm		244.42
Keep It Simple Sat 830pm		503.77
Let It Be Now F 6pm		100.00
Like A Prayer Su 4pm		128.57
Living Sober W 8pm		128.82
Living Sober with HIV W 6pm	101.47	221.65
Luke's Group W 8pm		40.00
Lush Lounge Sa 2pm	7.20	271.60
Marina Discussion F 830pm	329.41	329.41
Meeting Place Noon W 12pm	46.12	46.12
Midnight Meditation Sat 12am		199.43
Miracles Off 24th St W 730pm		111.48
Mission Terrace W 8pm		122.90
Monday At A Time M 1pm		30.00
Monday Beginners M 8pm		330.00
Monday Monday M 1215pm		216.41
New Friday Big Book F 12pm		27.15
New Hope Big Book M 630pm		285.54
No Gurus Meditation Su 7pm	49.83	71.19
No Reservation M 12pm		43.14
One Liners Th 830pm	569.03	569.03
Park Presidio M 830pm	79.80	79.80
Pax West M 12pm		136.44
Pinehurst Tu 730pm		128.00
Rebound W		25.00
Rigorous Honesty Th 1205pm		50.00
Rose Garden Big Book Th 1205pm		52.14
Rule 62 W 10pm	180.00	481.93
Saturday Easy Does It Sa 12pm		124.80
Saturday Night Regroup Sat 730pm		141.41
Seacliff Th 830pm		60.50
Serenity House	100.00	700.00
Sesame Step Tu 730pm		54.71
SFPOA Th 7pm	131.85	203.85
Sisters Circle Su 6pm	196.31	196.31

Name	April 05	YTD
Sisters In Sobriety M 7pm (SF)		25.00
Sober & Centered F 7pm		175.03
Sobriety & Beyond W 7pm		345.00
Sometimes Slowly Sa 11am		59.68
Step Talk Su 830am		52.20
Steppin' Up Tu 630pm	107.69	192.69
Stepping Out Sat 6pm	65.00	65.00
Steps to Freedom M 730pm		116.36
Stonestown M 8pm		101.17
Sunday Bookworms Sun 730pm		40.33
Sunday Morning Gay Men's Stag Su 1030am		908.63
Sunday Night 3rd Step Group 5pm	171.60	171.60
Sunday Rap Sun 8pm		60.00
Sundown W 7pm		174.00
Sundown Steps Th 630pm		25.00
Sunset 11'ers Su	122.33	122.33
Sunset 11'ers Tu	99.21	99.21
Sunset 11'ers W		52.65
Sunset 9'ers M	36.87	36.87
Sunset 9'ers F		197.13
Sunset 9'ers Sa	563.09	563.09
Sunset 9'ers Su		262.78
Sunset 9'ers Th	303.19	303.19
Sunset 9'ers Tu		168.67
Sunset 9'ers W		86.28
Sunset Sobriety Th 730pm		411.00
Surf Tu 8pm	200.00	850.39
Sutter Street Beginners Sat 6pm		411.49
Ten Years After Su 6pm		190.80
The 24 Hour Plan M 7am	25.00	25.00
The Pepper Group F 12pm		45.00
Thursday Night Speaker Th 830pm		935.00
Transrecovery F 630pm		5.02
Valencia Smokefree F 6pm	72.69	231.41
Waterfront Sun 8pm		510.00
We Care Tu 12pm		120.00
Wednesday Noon Steps W 12pm		104.27
Wits End Step Study Tu 8pm		17.75
Women's 10 Years Plus Th 615pm		304.00
Women's Promises F 7pm		186.00
Women Living Sober Sa 1030am		18.53
Women Who Drank Too Much Tu 615pm		63.20
Women Who Read		55.27
Work In Progress Sat 7pm		23.34
Total SF Group Contributions	\$6,369.79	\$28,997.35
TOTAL	\$9,055.56	\$43,844.36

The Freedom I Want continued from p. 6
 This living sober thing encompasses a lot more than just not drinking one day at a time. For me, all these emotional areas that are a natural part of being human can open up to me and put in perspective. This is not an easy task, by any means. I want to have freedom to know happiness and love. It is just a matter of slowly chipping away at the anger and fear and allowing these new freedoms to stream in. Whew! I'll keep coming back. 📌

<p>CONTRIBUTIONS to Central Office were made through June 15, 2005 honoring the following members:</p>
<p>ONGOING MEMORIALS</p>
<p>Bill M. (Philadelphia-4 years) Bud C. Donald H. Fran H. John D. M.</p>
<p>ANNIVERSARIES</p>
<p>8:30am Smokeless: Donald R.N. 24years Afro American Beginners: Herman B. 34 years High Noon: Marcus H. 1 year Tom M. 23 years</p>

Gratitude Month 2004 Groups

Group	April '05
SF	
Castro Discussion (Show Of Shows) W 8pm	149.50
Total SF Gratitude Month	\$149.50
Total Gratitude Month 2004 for April	\$149.50

Individual Contributions April 2005

HONORS	
	50.00
	43.00
	40.00
	10.00
Total HONORS	\$143.00
INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS	
	6.99
	25.00
	44.00
	20.00
Total INDIV. CONTRIBUTIONS	\$95.99
TOTAL	\$238.99

Saying “Yes” to Commitment... One Day at a Time

by Anonymous

My boyfriend (who I met in the rooms two years ago) proposed to me a couple months ago. It took a while for reality to hit; when I said “yes” I agreed to a lifetime commitment.

I am a woman who thinks too much so I really started to trip about the idea of getting married... What if one of us gets really sick? Will we be able to stick it out through the rough times? I've never managed to stay faithful to anyone in the past so what makes me capable of this now? The list of obsessive questions goes on and on.

Then I remembered that trite old A.A. slogan, *One day at a time*. I found comfort in the idea that I can marry the man I love one day at a time. I don't have to think about my marriage—or anything—in terms of “the rest of my life,” which is just too darn overwhelming for this future-tripping alcoholic.

I also found comfort in the idea that couples stay together by not breaking up no matter what; just like alcoholics stay sober by not taking the first drink, no matter what. That may sound a bit too simple, but my mother (who has been married for 35 years) confirmed that's the secret to a lasting marriage, to simply not break up. I figure if I can make a daily commitment to not take the first drink, I can surely make a commitment to work through problems with my partner as they come up.

The thing that most excites me about my upcoming marriage is that I will have someone wonderful to share my sober life with. And thanks to A.A., it's a life worth sharing too. ↑

Errors of the Ego

continued from Page 11

turn out to be complete lies. One is that I'm in charge of the world and its people. Turns out I'm not—there's an ego blow right there! As it happens, God's in charge. So what does that mean? Well, I've been told in A.A. that if I want to see God's will, all I have to do is to look around. *Life is God's will*.

It's when I try to impose my will on life that trouble begins. Eventually, things don't go my way, and I suffer from a killing kind of apartness—the first step to seeking relief in the bottle.

The good news is that my ego isn't me. It's just a part of me—a sick part, since it suffers from alcoholism. But there's a me that is pure essence—a small piece of God, if you will, connected to all the other little human pieces of God. When I let go of the ego's needs—its errors of perception and its insistence upon seeking a solution in self-obsession—I find myself at one with others in commonality and community. And that offers a kind of relief that no amount of self-seeking can match. ↑

Recovery ❖ Unity ❖ Service

Being Present

By Mark M.

While at lunch with a fellow A.A. recently, our talk briefly turned to old patterns vs. the new design for living that A.A. gives us. I told my friend that we alkiees are wild, jungle creatures. The steps and this way of life domesticate us. She said that we alkiees are jets roaring down the main street of a small town—oblivious to how fast we're really going and destroying everything in our wake. The steps give us the fuel to fly.

Regardless of what analogy one uses, without diligently following this path on a daily basis, I too may easily slip back into old patterns. For example, one Saturday night in May I went out dancing with a normie friend. A friend I used to party with came up to me on the dance floor and asked quite seriously, "Can I talk to you?"

Wondering what this would be about, I followed her through the club and out the front door. Once outside, she looked at me very seriously (and I have rarely seen her get serious) and said, "I'm really trying to hold it together. I have friends here from out of town." She paused.

Drugs! Booze! 12th Step! My head told me. "Uh huh," is what actually came out of my mouth, allowing her to continue.

"And, well, I just found out six hours ago that my nephew shot himself." She went into detail. I listened; my eyes locked with hers. I couldn't really say much. A "Wow," and a "Are you going back to be with your family?" might have leaked out of my mouth.

She leaned forward for a hug. I embraced her for what seemed like a long time, but in reality was 30 seconds. It made me uncomfortable. Typically, I kissed her on the cheek and gave a brief, "Hello! How are you?" when seeing her out in Clubland. Old patterns did not include sharing of real feeling and emotions.

Those five minutes on a Saturday evening in Clubland were some of the most profoundly spiritual moments I've yet to experience in sobriety. I felt sad for my friend and her family, yet had this calming sense of peace and serenity when I headed back in. Because of sobriety, I showed up for a friend when she needed to simply have someone listen to her.

In other words, I was present.

Being present is something that rarely came with being a wet drunk. Had this been two or more years before I landed in the rooms of A.A., either my friend would not have shared this with me, or it would have come out in a more twisted manner over vodka cocktails and bumps of cocaine in the bathroom. More of an "Omigod, you'll NEVER believe what happened today to my nephew. He shot himself!" comment from her, and a "REALLY?? That's awful? Are you OK?" response from me, and a final "Yeah, honey, I'm fine!" response from her.

I'm speculating because I'm not God. I don't know how it would have played out if not for sobriety. Regardless, I would not have been present, and ultimately of service to her. ↑

Pink Cloudless *By Kelly*

At 21, my bushy-tailed personality is lost. I decided to quit drinking fourteen months ago, checked myself into rehab and then lived in a recovery home for ten months. I lost my desire to inebriate myself along with a torturous eating disorder in the early months of my recovery. I have faced my deepest, darkest demons. However, I am miserable.

I have the world in front of me, and I can't get out of bed. Not because I'm lazy, but because I'm scared to be vulnerable, to fail. When I was drinking, I never thought about the consequences of my actions, and now I'm paralyzed with paranoia of the potential risks. I went from being wildly social to introverted and isolated. I never want to go out, and I hate staying in. Each movement feels like an enormous chore.

On the bright side, I am healthy. In fact, taking care of myself is surprisingly time consuming. I have eight doctors, seven of which I see on a regular basis. After years of bulimia, excessive-exercising and drinking, I'm in need of a head-to-toe tune-up.

After my doctor's appointments, and between classes, I am so lonely. I meet guys easily, however I have yet to find a male friend that I can get close to enough to feel supported. I meet women in the program often as well, and I love women for their strength and humor. Our relationships exist only in the rooms. I have yet to be in a supportive relationship that lasts in between meetings, aside from my first sponsor. Some nights I think the loneliness will kill me.

Each day, I count my fingers and toes and remember how lucky I am to be young, sober, loved, educated and healthy. I know as long as I am sober these are my advantages, my blessings. Somewhere in this train of thought, I have forgotten about my loneliness, doom and depression. Thanks to the people in A.A., I have something that can withstand loneliness and struggle; finally I have a backbone. My family didn't work for me as a foundation, nor school, sports or boyfriends, but A.A.'s message is my source of sanity today. ↑

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, June 1, 2005**

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	P	Georgia L.	Friendly Circle Beginners	P	Michael R.	Huntington Square	A**
Anthony J.	Sesame Step	P	Gilbert L.	Early Start	A*	Michael S.	Sunset 9'ers Sat.	P
Bill V.	Attitude Adjustment, Fairfax	R	Grant D.	Ten Years After	P	Mitzi H.	New Hope Big Book	P
Brian C.	Mission Terrace	P	Greg S.	Beginner's Warmup	P	Monika H.	SFPOA	P
Brian H.	Living Sober with HIV	A*	Greg S.	Keep Coming Back	A*	Nicholas S.	Sutter St. Beginners	P
Bruce K.	Sunset Speaker Step	P	Heidi S.	Cow Hollow Young People's	A**	Nick T.	Cocoanuts	R
Carol E.	High Noon Wednesday	P	Jacqui G.	High Noon Thursday	R	Omar C.	Tues. Chip	A*
Charles M.	Founders Group	A**	Jim T.	First Place	A*	Pascal G.	Marin Stag (Mon. Night...)	P
Dan Z.	Sunday Morning Gay Men's Stag	A*	Joe G.	Beginners	P	Penelope P.	Amazing Grace	A*
Daniel B.	Too Early	A**	John B.	Rule 62	P	Peter M.	Special Worker	P
Danny F.	Each Day A New Beginning	P	Johnny G.	High Noon Tuesday	A**	Ray M.	Sunday Rap	P
David B.	Beginner's Warmup	P	Judi C.	Tuesday's Daily Reflections	P	Rebekah D.	Fell Street Step	P
David B.	Federal Speaker	P	Justin S.	Alumni	P	Ryan W.	Tiburon BB	P
David H.	Tuesday Downtown	P	Kristine F.	Castro Discussion	P	Rudi D.	Serenity Seekers	P
David P.	Goodlands	P	Larry L.	The 24 Hour Plan	P	Russell G.	Regroup	P
Danna P.	Treasurer	P	Lillian R.	Women's Promises	P	Scott N.	Sunset 11'ers Sa	P
Dave F.	Reality Farm	R	Lou H.	Mill Valley 7AM	P	Stephan S.	Artists and Writers	P
Don B.	Friday Fell Street	P	Lynnore G.	Walk Of Shame		Stephen R.	Valencia Smokefree	P
Doug D.	As Bill Sees It Sat 11am	A*	Martha C.	449'ers	R	Steve N.	Terra Linda Group	P
Edward F.	Happy Hour	P	Marvin R.	Bernal Big Book	P	Steven S.	Homegroup	P
Eric S.	One Liners	A*	Matt S.	Waterfront Group	A**	Tim M.	Join the Tribe	P
Francesca K.	West Portal	P	Matt T.	Fairfax Friday Night	P	Tom B.	Eureka Valley Topic	A**
Gary D.	Work In Progress	R	Maury P.	Office Manager/ On Leave		Victor V.	Stepping Up	A*
Gaspar L.	Keep It Simple	P	Meredith R.	High Noon Friday	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			IFB Liaisons Present		
Chris T.	Keep Coming Back Sat. 11am	Michael L.	Attitude Adjustment Hour 7D 7am	Laura N.	S.F. PI/CPC Chair
Gregory F.	Midnight Meditation Sat 12am	Ralph S. (Alt.)	Ten Years After Sun. 6pm	Matt T.	Marin Teleservice
Lauren H.	Ten Years After Sun. 6pm	Randy F.	We Care Tue. 12pm	Scott B.	S.F. Teleservice Info Chair
Luis M.	High Noon Tuesday 12:15	Terry B.	High Noon Thursday 12:15pm	Trevor F.	Marin General Service
Mark O.	Come 'n' Get It! Fri. 6pm	Tom R.	Mill Valley 7AM 7D 7:00am		
Matthew Y.	Marina Discussion Fri. 8:30pm				

June 2005 IFB Summary

Following is an unofficial summary of actions, information, upcoming business and service opportunities discussed at the regular June 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. Summary information for the Annual Meeting also held in June is available from Central Office.

A. IFB Reports

Chair's Report: Joe G. gave the report. There will be three 2 year terms and one 1 year term to fill on the COC. Elections will be held in July after recommendations by the Nominating Committee. In addition, the positions of IFB Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary will be up for election. *The Point* Committee has conducted an inventory and Joe will give a report at the July meeting.

Treasurer's Report: Danna P. gave the report. The net loss for January through April was (\$6,703) which is \$5,450 less than the budgeted net loss of (\$12,153). We had a net loss in April of (\$59), which was \$1,414 less than the budgeted net loss of (\$1,473). Unrestricted cash as of April 30, 2005 totaled \$28,586 and is almost sufficient to pay the budgeted expenses for the next two months. Inventory increased by \$1,340, due to the timing of our book orders.

Central Office Manager's Report: Peter M. gave the report. Maury P., Central Office Manager, will return from maternity leave on July 5, 2005. In her absence, Peter M. and Lauren H. have been running the Central Office and things are going smoothly. There is currently an open telephone shift at Central Office on Wednesdays from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. There is also a need for substitutes to help fill in for regularly scheduled volunteers who are going on vacation. The Summer 2005 Meeting Schedule is being printed and should be ready by June 10, 2005. Effective July 1, 2005 the price of all books, with the exception of

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IFB Summary (Continued from page 16)

The Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, will increase. At the same time, the subscription rate for *The Point* will increase to \$12 per year and the price for single issues will increase from \$.75 to \$1.00.

Central Office Committee Report: Danny F. gave the report. The COC is revising the maternity leave policy after consulting with a pro bono attorney. The COC continues to oversee the operations of the Central Office.

B. Action Item: Vote on Proposed Amendments to Bylaws

The IFB adopted the following amendments to the Bylaws by majority vote: (Note: ~~strikethrough~~, e.g. regular is deleted text, and underlined text is added text.)

Article III, Section 3: Each Member A.A. Group shall elect a representative to represent that Member A.A. Group at all regular, annual and special meetings of the Membership.

Article V, Section 4: Election to membership on the Board shall be by individual Member A.A. Groups. Each Member A.A. Group shall be eligible to elect one of its own members to membership on the Board. It is suggested that each member of the Board have one year or more of continuous sobriety.

Article V, Section 6: Vacancies on the Board shall occur on the death, resignation, or inability to act of any Intergroup Representative. The absence of any Intergroup Representative from three consecutive regular meetings of the Board shall constitute a resignation. Members that resign from the Board shall be ineligible to serve for a period of one-year from the date of resignation.

Article V, Section 8: An individual may succeed to a second consecutive term as an Intergroup Representative; however, no person shall succeed to a third consecutive term as an Intergroup Representative regardless of which group(s) the member represents except that a person who is chosen to fill an unexpired term, with one year or less remaining in said term, may succeed to two full terms thereafter. An individual who has served as an Intergroup Representative for two full consecutive terms shall not be eligible to serve on the Board until a minimum of two years have elapsed since the expiration of his or her second full term.

Article VII, Section 1: It is suggested that each officer have one year or more of continuous sobriety.

Article VII, Section 6: The Chair shall be responsible for the proper execution of the policies of the Corporation, including those discussed in the Operations Manual and Employee Handbook and shall have such authority and duties as are usually incident to that office.

Action on the remaining three proposed amendments to the Bylaws was tabled to the July meeting.

Due to time constraints, the following committee reports were tabled to the July IFB meeting:

C. IFB Committee Reports

Outreach Committee: The committee meets the third Thursday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the Central Office.

Literature Review Committee: The committee meets the third Wednesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the Central Office.

The Point Editorial Committee: The committee meets the second and fourth Tuesday of the month at 5:00 p.m. at the Central Office.

Orientation Committee: The orientation of new IFB members takes place at 6:00 pm, one hour prior to the monthly IFB meeting.

Website Committee: The committee meets the second Thursday of the month at 6:00 p.m. at the Central Office.

12th Step Committee: The committee meets the second Wednesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the Central Office.

Special Events Committee: The committee meets the fourth Tuesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. at the Central Office.

Special Needs Committee: The committee meets the fourth Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the Central Office.

Archives Committee: The committee meets the first Monday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the Central Office.

D. IFB Standing Committee Reports

SF Teleservice: The committee meets on the third Monday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the Central Office.

SF PI/CPC: The committee meets the second Monday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at the Central Office.

E. Non-IFB Liaison Reports

General Service, SF: The committee meets the second Tuesday of the month at 1187 Franklin Street. Orientation is at 7:00 p.m. and the business meeting is at 8:00 p.m.

General Service, Marin: The committee meets the third Monday of the month at 9 Ross Valley Road, San Rafael. GSR sharing is at 7:00 p.m. and the District Meeting is at 8:00 p.m.

Teleservice, Marin: The committee meets the fourth Tuesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. at 1360 Lincoln, San Rafael.

PI/CPC, Marin: The committee meets the fourth Thursday of the month at 7:15 p.m. at 1360 Lincoln, San Rafael.

Bridging the Gap: The SF committee meets the second Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. 1187 Franklin/Geary, San Francisco. The Marin committee meets the second Wednesday of the month at 6:45 p.m. at 1411 Lincoln, San Rafael.

H & I: 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 has been meeting the second Tuesday at 7:00 p.m. at Lagunitas and Shady Lane, Ross. Beginning with the July meeting on Tuesday, July 12, 2005, the Marin H & I Committee will be meeting at the Marin Alano Club at 1360 Lincoln Ave. in San Rafael. The orientation for new volunteers will begin at 6:15pm and the committee Business Meeting will begin at 7:15 pm. The Marin H & I Committee will continue to meet the second Tuesday of each at this new time and location.

Spirit of San Francisco: The committee meets the first Monday of the month at 7:30 p.m. at the Central Office.

The next IFB meeting will be held Wednesday, July 6, 2005 at First Unitarian Universalist Church, 1187 Franklin at Geary, San Francisco at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Don B., IFB Secretary



***The Point* is online!**
**Visit the new Central
Office website today:**
www.aasf.org



ILLUSTRATION BY ANTHONY RUGGO

Got Something to Share?

The Point needs articles every month. We encourage A.A. members in the San Francisco and Marin Fellowship to share experience, strength and hope in *The Point*. We ask that you make your story specific and anecdotal.

Dear Alky

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

Literature Review

Have a favorite A.A. book or pamphlet? Up to 600 words.

Service, Recovery, Unity—How about a favorite A.A. commitment or an experience that taught you something about unity or recovery? Up to 550 words.

AA on the Road


Gone to A.A. meetings while traveling for business or pleasure? Moved from SF or Marin and want to tell us about the meetings in your new home? 500-600 words.

Inside Stories

Have an anecdote you would like to share? A moment of clarity? A spiritual awakening? 500-700 words.

Cover Story

Cover stories can be about any theme related to sobriety. Up to 850 words.

Email your submission as a Microsoft Word attachment to: thepoint@aasf.org 

Slogan of the Month

Let Go and Let God

by Anonymous

When I got to A.A. the phrase “Let go and let God” made little sense. Let go of what? Let God do what? Who the heck was God, anyway?

The first thing I had to let go of was getting loaded, something that had helped bend reality to my dreamy whims but had turned on me with a fury. I was told in A.A. that I could ask God—whoever or whatever that might be—to remove the compulsion to drink a day at a time. I tried it, even though it felt weird; each morning I asked “God” to keep me sober. You know what? It worked. I didn’t drink, day by day.

Eventually I found a sponsor who read me through the *Big Book* so I could work the Twelve Steps. In Chapter Five, *How it Works*, I read, “Some of us have tried to hold on to our old ideas and the result was nil until we let go absolutely.” So now I wasn’t just letting go of drinking; I was letting go of old ideas. The first batch concerned drinking; I had to give up the delusion that drinking would solve my problems—or ever had—and that I had any control over it.

But as we read through the chapter, I learned that selfishness and self-centeredness, not alcohol itself, were at the very core of my dilemma. Hold the phone, hoss: I’d given up drinking, sure, and I’d given up old ideas about drinking – was I now being asked to let go of me, myself and I? Yep, as it turned out. But the solution was in the next couple of paragraphs, which told me that if I quit playing God and let God do the job instead, I’d have a new experience of power, peace and serenity.

Well, that sounded pretty good, so I took the step with my sponsor. Then I worked Four and Five, which helped me let go of thinking of myself as the king of the world or the doormat for everyone else’s boots. But I had to let God remove the shortcomings I’d discovered in the inventory, and that I did in Six and Seven. Through the actions in Eight and Nine I let go of my pride, judgment and ego (some more!) by humbly making amends to those I’d harmed.

While doing so, I took a daily inventory in Ten to tote up my progress. When I found things that needed improvement, I had to be willing to let go of them—and, in Step Eleven, to let God take me to a better place. Finally, Step Twelve further eroded the idea that satisfying my selfish aims was the sole purpose of life, because I was asked to share my experience with freshly sober alkyies and to act with newfound kindness, love, forgiveness and hope in my daily interactions with family, friends, colleagues and even strangers.

Few alcoholics, when roundly bashed by drink, balk at the idea of giving up drinking. But letting go of self – my little plans, designs, beliefs, delusions, fears – well, that’s a tall order. I can’t do it alone, and I don’t have to. Now I have help – the help of a higher power who is Supreme Love and Understanding. (That’s just my conception of him. Yours may differ. That’s the beauty of A.A.)

Let go? Sure. Let God? Absolutely. 

Financial Statement

April 2005 - Intercounty Fellowship of AA

	<u>Apr 05</u>	<u>Jan - Apr 05</u>
Ordinary Income/Expense		
Income		
Contributions from Groups		
Group Contributions	9,055.56	43,769.37
Honors	0.00	74.99
Total Contributions from Groups	<u>9,055.56</u>	<u>43,844.36</u>
Contributions from Individuals		
Individual - Unrestricted	95.99	1,650.35
Faithful Fiver	98.00	595.00
Honorary Contributions	143.00	1,009.50
Total Contributions from Ind.	<u>336.99</u>	<u>3,254.85</u>
Gratitude Month		
Gratitude Month - Groups	149.50	3,130.94
Total Gratitude Month	<u>149.50</u>	<u>3,130.94</u>
Sales - Bookstore	8,080.13	33,234.44
Special Event Income	0.00	33.00
Newsletter Subscript.	8.30	232.40
Total Income	<u>17,630.48</u>	<u>83,729.99</u>
Cost of Goods Sold		
Cost of Books Sold	5,157.00	21,253.93
Total COGS	<u>5,157.00</u>	<u>21,253.93</u>
Gross Profit	<u>12,473.48</u>	<u>62,476.06</u>
Expense		
Employee Expenses		
Wages & Salaries	6,094.50	28,205.59
Employer Tax Expenses	616.56	3,405.24
Health Benefits	598.00	2,824.00
Retirement/Annuity Expense	0.00	7,200.00
Workers Comp Ins.	0.00	836.47
Total Employee Expenses	<u>7,309.06</u>	<u>42,471.30</u>
Bank Charges		
Credit Card Processing Fees	121.94	421.65
Bank Charges - Other	34.60	108.90
Total Bank Charges	<u>156.54</u>	<u>530.55</u>
Postage		
Bulk Mail	0.00	200.00
Postage - Other	0.00	331.35
Total Postage	<u>0.00</u>	<u>531.35</u>
ASL Expense		
ASL Other	0.00	390.00
Total ASL Expense	<u>0.00</u>	<u>390.00</u>
IFB Literature	7.30	14.60
PI/CPC	6.51	48.01
Filing/Fees	0.00	20.00
Insurance	0.00	2,312.68
Internet Expense	0.00	59.85
Office Supplies	152.84	1,057.61
Shipping	20.35	-13.95
Rent - Office	3,708.75	14,835.00
Rent - Other	0.00	225.00
Equipment Lease	600.36	2,309.22
Repair & Maintenance	250.12	784.12

Security System	33.50	199.00
Telephone	0.00	1,522.91
Utilities	309.38	777.55
Bad Checks	-98.30	0.00
Miscellaneous Expense	-461.74	-461.74
Total Expense	<u>11,994.67</u>	<u>67,613.06</u>
Net Ordinary Income	<u>478.81</u>	<u>-5,137.00</u>
Other Income/Expense		
Other Income		
Interest Income	86.76	283.31
Total Other Income	<u>86.76</u>	<u>283.31</u>
Other Expense		
Depreciation Expense	408.17	1,632.68
Amortization of Leasehold Impr.	216.22	216.22
Total Other Expense	<u>624.39</u>	<u>1,848.90</u>
Net Other Income	<u>-537.63</u>	<u>-1,565.59</u>
Net Income	<u>-\$58.82</u>	<u>-\$6,702.59</u>

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This month the annual subscription price for *The Point* will be increasing to \$12/year. Individual copies will be sold in our bookstore for \$1.00. This is part two of a two-year plan to offset the increasing prices of paper and bulk mail costs.

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(Please circle one)

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July 2005

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