

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

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

The Point

September 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 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.

Banking Spirituality

by Ignacio O.

"We alcoholics are undisciplined. So we let God discipline us in the simple way that we have just outlined." This was always the case with me; my alcoholism and addiction to heroin lasted until I was 28. As a newcomer I lived in a program for my first 13 months of recovery, and went to meetings at least once a day.

As the Ninth Step promises came slowly true, all my physical needs were magically taking care of themselves. My life became less dramatic, my career path changed two or three times and I had a core of supportive, solid friendships. The drink/drug urge was lifted and that was something that you couldn't actually "see". I tell my sponsees that was the presence of a power greater than I was, even though you couldn't see him. I told my family that by my attendance at meetings, I was "earning interest in the spiritual bank". So far so good.

Then at five years sober, I went through the most threatening and difficult incident in my sobriety. On a Monday afternoon I was driving my friend's Suzuki GS500 down beautiful San Bruno Mountain right after a class field trip. I love motorcycles; since I was twelve I've had no fear of riding them. I flew through an intersection at 55 mph, didn't see a stop sign, center punched an SUV, and landed about 15 feet on the other side.

I was rushed to the trauma unit at SF General with multiple fractures of my right foot and pelvis, the kind of stuff where they have to operate within days, but I was in agony and the doctors prepared a morphine IV, which I at first refused. Then the morphine lit me up. My body received it the way a dry sponge takes water. It felt as if I was an electrical breaker panel where all the switches had suddenly been turned on. Mentally, I was totally defenseless, even with my five plus years of sobriety. With every push of the catheter my long dormant memories of painlessness would return in seconds with the opiate rush.

My friends tried bringing meetings to my hospital room, but I couldn't feel much at that point. It was as if a giant foam wall had been erected between me and the people that loved me. On discharge from the hospital my pain wasn't going to get any better for at least a month so I left with morphine tablets and a prescription to use half a bottle of Vicodins a day.

Then I started waking up sick every day with that unmistakable feeling of cold chills and heat flashes, depression and emptiness. Reading *One Day at a Time* didn't help. I felt five years of faith in the program and interest in the world around me go right out the window, and I wondered if I had relapsed. Although everyone said

(Continued on page 6)

September 2005....

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	<p>5 FIRST MON Archives Committee, Central Office, TBA</p> <p>Spirit of SF Committee, Central Office, TBA</p> <p>LABOR DAY Central Office Closed</p>	6	<p>7 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>	8 SECOND THU Website Committee Central Office, 6 pm	9	10
11	<p>12 SECOND MON SF Public Information Committee Central Office, 7 pm</p>	<p>13 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>14 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>15 THIRD THU Outreach Committee Central Office, 6:30 pm</p>	16	<p>17 Marin County Unity Day, 498 Tamalpais Dr., Corte Madera, 2pm to 9pm, Ser- vice Panels, BBQ, Speaker Meeting, Talent Show!</p>
18	<p>19 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>20 THIRD TUE San Mateo General Service St. Andrews Church 15th & El Camino Real San Mateo, 7:30 pm</p>	<p>21 THIRD WED Literature Review Committee Central Office, 6:30 pm</p>	<p>22 FOURTH THU Marin PI Committee 1360 Lincoln Ave, San Rafael—Alano Club 7:15 pm</p>	23	<p>24 FOURTH SAT General Service CNCA Meeting 320 N. McDowell Petaluma DCMCs: 10 am Business Meeting: 12:30 pm</p>
<p>25 FOURTH SUN Living Sober Convention Committee 1668 Bush, SF 5:30 pm</p>	26	<p>27 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>	28	<p>29 LAST THU SF H&I Old First Church, 1751 Sacramento St. Orientation: 7:15 pm Business Meeting: 8pm</p>	<p>30</p> 	



MEETING CHANGES

New Meetings:

Mon	6:00 pm	Tiburon	MONDAY NIGHT STAG-12 & 12, Westminster Church, 240 Tiburon Blvd. (ST)
Thu	7:30 pm	Terra Linda	HEARD IT THROUGH THE GRAPEVINE, 620 Del Ganado Rd., Church (Di)

Meeting Changes:

Sun	9:30 am	Castro	SUNDAY MORNING GAY MEN'S STAG, 150 Eureka/ 18th St., Church (was 117 Diamond at 10:30am)
Sun	11:30 am	West. Addition	BIG BOOK STUDY, 1201 Fillmore/ Turk (was 1530 Buchanan/ Geary, YMCA at 11:00 am)
Mon	8:00 pm	Castro	CASTRO MONDAY BIG BOOK, 100 Diamond St., basement (was 117 Diamond St.)
Mon	8:00 pm	Castro	THEY STOPPED IN TIME, 3400 16th St./ Church St., enter on Church, (was 152 Church St.)
Sat	8:30 pm	Castro	HOME GROUP, 752 Diamond St./ 24th St. (was 601 Dolores/ 19th St.)

No Longer Meeting

Mon	12:05 pm	Civic Center	CIVIC CENTER NOONERS, 711 Eddy/ Polk
Mon	7:30 pm	Mission	INTO ACTION GROUP 3215 Cesar Chavez
Tue	8:00 pm	San Rafael	SAN RAFAEL BEGINNERS, Marin Alano Club
Wed	5:30 am	Mill Valley	UPON AWAKENING, Little Log Cabin
Thu	7:30 pm	Terra Linda	THE OTHER MEETING, 620 Del Ganado Rd., Church

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 July 2005

Thank You to the meetings and groups below whose Trusted Servants registered with Central Office during July 2005. A total of twelve San Francisco Trusted Servants and four Marin Trusted Servants registered with Central Office during that time.

San Francisco

AA As You Like It Tue. 5:30pm; A New Start Fri. 8:30pm; As Bill Sees It Sat. 8pm; Common Welfare Thu. 8pm; High Noon Friday Fri. 12:15pm; Lincoln Park Sat. 8:30pm; Monday Beginners Mon. 8pm; Saturday Matinee Sat. 2pm; Sober & Centered Fri. 7pm; Sunrise Sunset Women's Step Thu. 5:45pm; Women's Promises Fri. 7pm; Women Who Drank Too Much Tue. 6:15pm

Marin

Happy, Joyous & Free Fri. 12pm; Intimate Feelings Sat. 10am; Mill Valley 7D 7am; T.G.I.F. Fri. 6pm.

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 September 2005

BRISBANE BREAKFAST BUNCH

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

DATE	SPEAKER	FROM
Sept 4 th	Gretchen F.	Mon. Night Garfield, Daly City
Sept 11 th	John M.	Friendship Group, Burlingame
Sept 18 th	Robert B.	San Francisco
Sept 25 th	Rudy S.	Mon. Night Beginners, S.F.

TUESDAY DOWNTOWN

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

DATE	SPEAKER	FROM	DOS
09/06	Jim Y.	Friday Lunchtime Step	06/08/93
09/13	Coreen A.	449ers	04/02/92
09/20	John R.	Serenity Seekers	01/29/91
09/27	Al W.	Book Worms	10/25/82



**"I Want the Hand of AA
Always To Be There..."**



**Saturday, September
17, 2005
2:00 – 9:00 pm**

**Corte Madera Rec Center
498 Tamalpais Dr., Corte Madera**

You are invited to attend a wonderful
day of carrying the AA message through
Unity, Service and Recovery (and fun).

The day will include:

Entertaining and Informative Service Panels

Potluck & delicious BBQ

**Diane O. (past delegate CNCA) and
Leslie C. of San Rafael**

**Talent Showcase of our very own AA's to
wrap up the day!**

Marin County Unity Day is sponsored by the
following service entities:

- Marin General Service
- Bridging the Gap (BTG)
- Public Information/Cooperation with the Professional Community (PI/CPC)
- Central Office/I.F.B.
- Hospitals & Institutions (H&I)
- Marin Teleservice
- AI-Anon

We absolutely insist on enjoying life!

FRIDAY ALL GROUPS

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

DATE	SPEAKER	
Sept. 2	John S.	South Bay
Sept. 9	Susan	South S.F.
Sept. 16	Michele D.	South Bay
Sept. 23	Dolores	East Bay
Sept. 30	Tom W.	East Bay

A Fundraiser for
Living Sober / Western Roundup

Fall Follies Drag Show

**Saturday, September 24, 2005
6:00 pm AA—AI Anon meeting
7:30 pm Drag Show
Ellard Hall, Most Holy Redeemer
100 Diamond St. @ 18th St.**

\$15 Suggested Donation

www.LivingSober.Org

415.978.2478


Banking Spirituality

(continued from page 1)

that I hadn't because I was taking the medicine as prescribed, I was enjoying the painlessness and irresponsibility. It became all about that morning pill. I felt guilty for taking it and guilty for the pleasure it was giving me. After a month and a half, things hadn't gotten better.

I was staying at my friend's house because I needed to be cared for but I couldn't stop thinking about whether or not my sobriety was ever going to come back. On the advice of friends I terminated the Vicodins and then got to see what it was like to "kick" an opiate habit in sobriety. After a day the vomiting, spasms etc. all came back, but I held on for dear life. My mind vacillated all day long between whether I should give in and score some dope, or wait. The depression was unbelievable.

Then slowly something incredible started to happen. Instead of pursuing my concerns, after three days I grew so restless that I started running errands. I got out of the house on the bus and started to take care of my schoolwork. I was on crutches with no pain meds! During the days that followed, I couldn't control the urge to DO things, let the chips fall where they may. I still wasn't sure if I had relapsed but didn't care. Calling my sponsees, shopping, and feeding the cat were all more important.

The practice of "acting oneself into right thinking" took me years to understand. It didn't seem so at the time but a faith in a higher power happens on much deeper levels than I can see. The years of practicing the principles of the program produced automatic actions and pulled me through this crisis. 

Fitting the Steps Into My Busy Life

by Anonymous

I am really busy. I've got a full-time job and a husband and three grown children and hobbies and sponsees. And I wouldn't have any of it if I didn't also have nineteen years clean and sober.

How do I fit the Steps into my busy life? When I wake up in the morning I stretch my stiff arthritic arms and legs under the covers and practice Step 11. I say the Serenity Prayer and the Third Step Prayer and the Seventh Step Prayer. On the shelf beside my bed there is a spiral bound blank book where I write my Tenth Step inventories and my fears lists and my gratitude lists, before I go to sleep. My Palm PDA and my cell phone have the names and phone numbers of sober women and men programmed into them. When I am feeling restless, irritable and discontented I start dialing for sobriety, practicing Step Twelve.

When I came into A.A. I didn't know how I was going to squeeze all the activities into my jam-packed life. Now I build my life around the Steps. I went to one A.A. meeting a week for the first five years, and it seemed hard. Now I go to four or five meetings a week and it seems easy. When a sponsee wants to meet with me, I meet her for coffee or dinner either before or after a meeting. Together we work the Steps, which keeps *me* sober.

Step One was tough for me. My life as a drunk and pothead looked OK on the outside – I was married, had a couple kids, a teenage step-daughter, a house. But I had just flunked a critical exam and was unemployable. I had endangered my children; my husband was disgusted with my behavior. I still thought my life was manageable. Right. After I admitted complete defeat, the floodgates opened and the grace began flowing.

By Step Two I admitted that my drinking life was insane – the sleazy people, the lies, the misery. I couldn't quit on my own – I wasn't the greatest power in the Universe. Something else was – anything else was – whether it was the A.A. group, Nature, or a loving God as I understood God.

Step Three became easier when I realized that it didn't say "turn my will and my life over," but only "make a decision" to turn them over. After I made the decision, when the opportunity arose, the turnover was easier. Nowadays it is almost subconscious.

My sponsor was patient the last two times I did Steps Four and Five. She let me take my time and she was available when I was finally ready to talk. I still do mini-Fourth and Fifth Steps when I have resentments. We visit, talk on the phone and e-mail a lot.

Steps Six and Seven have been lessons in humility. I am not perfect, I never will be, that is not the point. The point is "we are willing to grow along spiritual lines." God is the expert on spiritual stuff. I try to grow the way he wants me to and be available when he has an assignment.

I did my Eighth and Ninth Steps with

Dear Alky

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

Dear Alky,

I'm three years sober and never think about drinking. I'm busy with work, a relationship, friendships and A.A. commitments, including meetings. I don't feel like I need a meeting every day any more. My sponsor says my commitment to sobriety is flagging. He's pushing me to do 90 in 90 again. I really don't want to. Would it be a mistake to say no to him?

Nay-Sayer

Dear Nay-Sayer,

I guess you'd have to ask yourself where your best thinking got you when you were drinking, and then decide if you want to trust that thinking now. Are you willing to risk that your alcoholic mind may be trying to divide you from meetings and fellowship – the very things that gave you the busy life you lead? Alcoholism is cunning. The *Big Book* calls it a “subtle foe.” Why not take your sponsor's suggestion and see what happens? You've got nothing to lose but insanity. Anyway, you're no longer going to meetings primarily for you: you're attending them to serve newcomers. (Ironically, serving others serves you.)

A side note: nowhere does the *Big Book* suggest attending 90 meetings in 90 days. That folklore can set impossible standards for newcomers, and incorrectly suggests that A.A. is a horse race. My sponsor taught me to wake up, decide what meeting I was going to, build my day around it and then attend it. That keeps everything in today, which is how we do this program: one day at a time.

–Alky



Dear Alky,

I have a new sponsee who keeps relapsing. She's entangled in a sick relationship with another alcoholic. Whenever she spends time with this guy she relapses. Then we meet and she says she doesn't know what to do differently. I've bluntly told her she lacks willingness. I suggested she stop feeding her addiction with this relationship. Is it mean of me to be so blunt with her? Is it wrong of me to suggest that she end a relationship? I'm hoping I didn't step out of line as her sponsor.

Perplexed



*“Why not take your sponsor's suggestion and see what happens?
You've got nothing to lose, but your insanity!”*
— Alky

Dear Perplexed,

It's tempting to manage sponsee's lives. But we are powerless over all forms of alcoholism and cannot manage it – including in others. No human power keeps alkies sober. That's God's job. We sponsors just lay out the spiritual toolkit. Conversely, no human power gets an alky drunk – including your sponsee's boyfriend. Re-read pps. 68-70 of the *Big Book*. They say: “God alone can judge our sex situation. Counsel with persons is often desirable, but we let God be the final judge.” I don't get involved in my sponsees' relationship lives. I may offer a friendly warning, but if relapsing helps them understand that no human power – including a boyfriend or girlfriend – keeps them sober, then the bounce is worth it. I just pray they don't have to die finding out. As to bluntness: used rightly, it can help deflate the insane alcoholic ego. But remember that honesty without love is cruelty.

–Alky



Dear Alky,

I've been sober for a couple of months. Sometimes my thinking is really negative. I go to daily meetings, read the Big Book every morning and have begun doing the steps with my sponsor. But some days my head is so brutal I just can't stand it. Am I crazy?

–Brain Ache

Dear Brain,

First, congratulations on your new sobriety. Second, you're right on time. It takes the mind and body months to detoxify from the poisonous effects of long-term alcohol and substance abuse. Even when the body improves, the mind may still spin in darkness. If you stick it out, this will pass. In the meantime, as strange as this may sound, you can hand your twisted thinking to your newfound higher power. Even a simple prayer, such as “God, please restore my thinking to balance,” can bring relief. Try memorizing the Third Step prayer, on p. 63 of the *Big Book*, and repeating the Serenity Prayer throughout the day. Continue to work the steps with your sponsor: they clear out a lot of the mental poison. Most important, check your thinking with other A.A. members. We've all been where you are, and most of us have suggestions for dealing with the dark thoughts that occasionally plague us. Feel free to lean on us. Welcome to A.A., and good luck.

–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

Steve R. calmont1@aol.com

VICE CHAIR

Steve S. s@p90.net

TREASURER

Danna P. dannajp@earthlink.net

RECORDING SECRETARY

Lauren laurenhache@earthlink.net

COMMITTEE CHAIRS:

CENTRAL OFFICE COMMITTEE

Lynnore G. lynnore1@aol.com

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

Jim T. (temp.) yimbiesf@yahoo.com

THE POINT

Chair Needed

SPECIAL EVENTS

Fran K. 415.424.0626

SPECIAL NEEDS COMMITTEE

Pene P. 415.200-6261

WEBSITE COMMITTEE

Michael R. michaelr@aasf.org

SF TELESERVICE COMMITTEE

Rick P./Scott B. sfteservice@aasf.org

SF PI/CPC COMMITTEE

Laura N. 415.931-2567

Recovery ❖ Unity ❖ Service

GSR: Being Transformed By Service

by Hannah K.

If you had asked me during my first 6 months as a GSR if I would ever sign up for it again, I would have laughed. My higher power is subtle, however, and my perspective on this type of service was irrevocably changed by a seemingly minor observation.


I initially became a GSR for my old home group because I was the only member with enough sobriety (more than two years) who was willing to do it. My initial assessment of my first monthly General Service District meeting was that there were two camps in attendance: those who were really, *really* into it and those who seemed to view it as a sentence of sorts. I plunked myself down at a table where people were doodling, passing notes and yawning. I felt right at home.

For the first few months of my GSR-ship, I definitely ascribed to the “less is more” attitude when it came to participation. Although I had attended the GSR orientation meeting and read the pamphlet, I was still really lost. I couldn’t understand how this was relevant to the alcoholic walking in the door of a meeting and discovering how to stop drinking. I resigned myself to coasting through my two-year commitment and hoped for the best.

My perspective changed when I attended a workshop with the Spanish-speaking district of GSRs. I showed up at the workshop expecting to be confused at best and bored at worst. The workshop was to discuss development of the newest edition of the Spanish Big Book and the challenges presented to the Hispanic community.

The first thing I noticed was that the GSRs from the Hispanic community were dressed nicely – jackets and ties for men, skirts for ladies. This was a Saturday morning and they all looked as though they were ready to go to church or something equally respectable. Secondly, they had this composure, this air of the honor of being in attendance. It became evident throughout the day that these GSRs had been elected to a highly valued position of leadership within their community, and they meant to live up to it. This is when I noticed that I was dressed, well, *down*. I had thought that I was pulling through just showing up at this workshop. It had never occurred to me to consider it a privilege to attend.

I learned a lot that day about the legacy of our literature, about different communities within A.A., about General Service being a major keystone that helps to link the A.A. group to A.A. as a whole and, most importantly, about contempt prior to investigation. Now, in my second term as a GSR, I am trying to expand my understanding and service within the General Service structure.

I recently volunteered at the Founder’s Day celebration – an event that I wouldn’t have elected to go to on my own (again, with the contempt prior to investigation!). As it turns out, I had a total blast – dancing, selling sodas, seeing old friends, being of service. I left the event feeling like I was a part of something bigger than my sobriety, than the meetings I attend or the group I belong to... it was the feeling of being right-sized in service. 

Treasures of the Twelve & Twelve: Tradition Nine

by Anonymous

A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

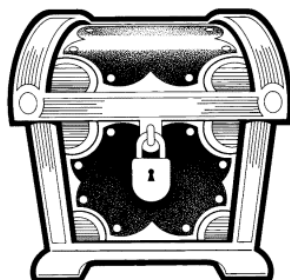
Before I became a member of A.A., I was court ordered to attend meetings. People in the meetings were reading things from a large book. Organized is not the word I would have used to describe the meetings I went to, but this was one of the few times I have seen that many drunks in one place and a fight didn't break out.

I was aware of the A.A. Recovery, Unity, Service symbol – a triangle inside of a circle – prior to becoming a member. I saw it in movies, television shows, and around town. I just thought of it as a symbol, nothing more.

When I had a desire to stop drinking and became a member of A.A., I heard people reading the Twelve Steps, the Twelve Traditions, the Promises, and it all seemed so boring and stupid to me. That didn't stop me from coming to meetings because I didn't want to drink again, but joining a cult were everyone talked like clones, prayed during the meetings, and closed with a childish chant, was not really what I wanted either!

I stayed sober long enough through FEAR and the help of some old-timers who know what the fellowship of A.A. should be, to finally get a sponsor. A member came up and declared that he was my temporary sponsor and that lasted more than five years. In that time I worked the steps many times. The first time we came to Step 12, I was asked what service I was going to do to give back to the fellowship that gave so freely to me. Then my sponsor reminded me of a resentment I had toward Teleservice for getting me lost once. Before the start of my second overnight shift began, I was asking myself why I was doing it and thinking of a way to quit. In the middle of the night, I got the call that answered my question. A sick, desperate, lonely and scared alcoholic called.

I don't remember exactly what was said during that 90-minute conversation. I didn't have a script to go by, no rules to follow, nothing other than my experience of being an alcoholic. I shared that A.A. worked for me, and a little on my journey thru the fellowship. The caller thanked me for being there. I remember how I felt after hanging up the phone and throughout the following day.



“Though Tradition Nine at first sight seems to deal with a purely practical matter, in its actual operation it discloses a society without organization, animated only the spirit of service – a true fellowship”


–*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*

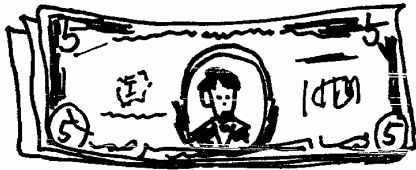
It was the feeling of being happy, joyous and free. Serenity at its best, what a high! My true journey in the fellowship of A.A. had begun. My spiritual awakening came to me after completing the Twelfth Step, not before. I have been involved with many different committees (not counting the ones that go on between my ears) ever since.

I have read the book *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* in book studies and on business trips, but didn't honestly retain any of the traditions part of the book for some time. Why would I, it doesn't really benefit me personally, right? I was still very selfish and self-centered at this point of my journey. I was introduced to General Service, “The Guardians of the Traditions” as Bill W. called them. Then, I not only read about the traditions, I learned their history, what they are there for, and, most importantly, learned how to apply them in my recovery today.

I have a little bit of time now, and even more important, an education about the fellowship of A.A. I can reflect back in my life with clear eyes, not with a tainted perception. I was Twelve Stepped by the judge that sent me to A.A. meetings — the CPC Committee; and by the DUI class — the PI Committee. I was Twelve Stepped by the person who answered the A.A. telephone — the Central Office / IFB / Teleservice Committee.

The services that are provided by the local A.A. Fellowship, Central Office, IFB and The General Service Office in New York, lets the suffering alcoholic know where to find the members of this fellowship. The commitments I've had taught me what a true group conscience is—love and tolerance for members who hold different views—and what the A.A. symbol really means – the circle around the outside is the fellowship.

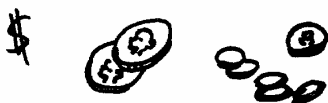
Tradition Nine set up a Twelfth Step service structure so that each member could not only do Twelfth Step service work, but also receive its rewards. We can become a self-supporting, productive member of a fellowship to which we owe our lives. We can reach out the hand of A.A. to those future alcoholics that might not know they have a problem. This work lets those still suffering know who and what we are and where to find us. 



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.
DOUGLAS C.	NANCIE G.
ELIZABETH S.	PEGGY M.
FRANCES L.	PETER F.
GILES H.	PHILIP G.
HERMAN B.	RALPH P.
JANET B.	RICH G.
JERRY N.	RICHARD C.
JIM H.	SCOTT N.
KATE B.	STEVE A.
KELLIE A.	TOM M.
KRIS F.	WICKIE S.
LAURIE L.	




A.A. On the Road: Paris *by Kathy R.*

I first went to Paris 23 years ago. I spent two weeks with my boyfriend, drinking cheap red wine, eating bread and cheese and trying to sleep in a very cold room near the Sorbonne. We spent a year in Europe. I remember the skiing, bartending and cultural observation through an alcohol haze. My tendency to romanticize my love affair with alcohol comes through even as I write this.

In April, after being sober for five years, I returned to Paris to pick up my daughter. She is eleven and was finishing an exchange program with a French family in Normandy. Before she arrived, I had two days alone. I had loved Paris years ago but now was overcome with its beauty, its light, by every building, corner and face. Now that I am sober my senses are heightened - life is more vivid and real in its highs and its lows. I think that consciousness was even more pronounced in a place where I was really alone. The idea of being alone in Paris for two days was exciting. Remembering that I was an alcoholic visiting a city where I had memories only of café wine, I decided to print a Paris meeting schedule before I left. If I could not drink in Paris, at least I was going to have a romantic meeting memory.

I left my hotel in the 6th Arrondissement around 6:00 p.m. to walk across Paris to an 8:30 meeting at the American Church at 65 Quai d'Orsay, on the Seine. I was groggy from being up all night, from airplane food and map reading. Yet, as I neared the church, I imagined myself walking into a big meeting. There would be hundreds of people, all straining to see who the mysterious visitor was. Not speaking English (even though it was an English speaking meeting), being handsome and French, and inviting me out for an espresso afterwards.

Instead, I found myself struggling to find the meeting and was directed toward the church basement. There was one person in the room, setting up chairs in a circle. Charles, the secretary, looked up and said, "You're new, you'll speak tonight." Fifteen minutes later, I was talking and telling my story. There were only twelve people, of all ages and ethnicities. Some made eye contact with me and nodded, others looked at the floor. Some looked pink-cloudish, others looked desperately sad. When I finished speaking, some wanted to share. A young man of maybe nineteen was to my left. When I called on him, he had a hard time finding words except to say he needed help. As the meeting ended two men went up to him, offering the help only one alcoholic can give another.

I walked another American alcoholic to the Metro station and headed off alone. I was filled with the joy of being there, in that moment. I shared the night with twelve other people who, just like me, did not want to drink that day, and wanted to be heard by someone who understood what they were feeling. Just like me, they honored for that day all the joy and sorrow alcoholism brings us, whether drinking or not. I ended up, wide awake, sitting in the courtyard of the Louvre. The streets were empty, and I, who knew only twelve other alcoholics scattered around that city, had never had felt less alone. 

Psst... The Point is online. Download it free at www.aasf.org

Literature Review




Box 4-5-9 and General Service

by Anonymous

Box 4-5-9 (which gets its name from the P.O. Box used to contact General Service) is essential reading for anyone interested in the goings on at the annual General Service Conference and the year-round activities of our General Service Office in New York. Change happens slowly in A.A., but it happens. For example, A.A.s develop and edit A.A. books and pamphlets at the General Service Conference in April each year and one way to find out about what's going on with General Service is through *Box 4-5-9*. The June-July 2005 issue of *Box 4-5-9* focuses on the 55th General Service Conference which this year featured the theme of Basics of Our Home Group – Recovery, Unity and Service.

Delegates representing General Service Areas from around the United States and Canada, gather for a week in April of each year to decide issues relevant to the future of Alcoholics Anonymous. The June-July 2005 issue of *Box 4-5-9* contains a summary of this year's Conference and the Conference Advisory Actions which reflect recommendations made by standing committees at the Conference and approved by the Conference body as a whole. The magazine also provides information about the numerous committees (or desks) at the General Service Office. This is a chance to learn what's new with Literature, Corrections, Treatment and Public Information, as well as the other service committees associated with General Service.

Other issues of *Box 4-5-9* contain news about Alcoholics Anonymous around the world, such as the challenges of carrying the message of A.A. to remote areas, and providing services for those with special needs. Recent issues had news about carrying the message to Native North Americans, the Inuits of Eastern Canada, and helping those A.A.s who are hearing-impaired. Reading these stories always makes me grateful that Alcoholics Anonymous in San Francisco is as near as a phone call to Central Office or Teleservice or my local meeting place which is a 5-minute walk from my apartment.

Box 4-5-9 is available at the Central Office bookstore for 10 cents an issue. Quite a bargain when you consider all of the wonderful information that the bimonthly publication provides. Or it may be obtained by writing P.O. Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163 and is also available at the General Service website: www.aa.org 


Back to Basics: One AA's Perspective

by Anonymous

I know that I need to slow down at times, not only to take in the beauty of the world, but also to remember where my roots in this program are. I tend to get caught up in "working a better program" or "finding myself" which leads to thinking too much and taking myself too seriously. When I get to this stage, it is only a matter of time until I'll chuck it all and do the exact opposite of what I originally intended.

Getting back to basics for me means to practice Steps 1-3 on a daily or hourly basis and remember that my Will got me into trouble in the first place. I cannot take back this Will and expect to get any further in my program and spiritual life. I am glad that I have added new tools in my "box" such as remembering that I can start my day over at any time. I have also polished up some of the old tools including the one that tells me not to get too hungry, angry, lonely or tired (HALT) when I need to slow down and think of the reason why I get so agitated at times. Remembering to breathe and form a gratitude list in my head or on paper helps me get out of myself.

I guess the most important "basic" for me is to remember the Serenity Prayer and practice it as much as I can. I can't change many things but can ask for courage to see and change those things that I can – especially my actions and behaviors. It is not always easy. That's why I am glad that I have an extremely forgiving Higher Power who allows me to make mistakes and have the willingness to correct them without beating myself up too much.

The roots of my program are important to me and I am thankful that I listened when I came to A.A. I need to do what I can to "practice these principles in all of my affairs" and help others along the way. In many ways, the basics aren't so basic at all. 

A.A. is self-supporting and Central Office needs your help!

As an expression of gratitude for your sobriety, consider putting \$2 in the basket at your next meeting.

AA Group Contributions - June 2005

Intercounty Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous - San Francisco and Marin Counties

Name	June 05	YTD
Fellowship Contributions		
Brisbane Breakfast Bunch	32.00	154.60
Contribution Box	85.39	341.59
Gay Newcomers Group		9.08
IFB	108.00	539.43
Marin Teleservice		500.00
Sunday Step Study	35.70	65.70
The Chosen Ones		20.00
Unidentified Group		<u>881.27</u>
Total Fellowship Contributions	\$261.09	\$2,511.67

Honors

Endless Summer F 830pm		<u>74.99</u>
Total Honors	\$0.00	\$74.99

Marin Group Contributions

7am Urgent Care Group 7D 7am		200.00
A Vision for You (Fairfax) Su 730pm		144.88
Attitude Adjustment 7D 7am		1,979.00
Candlelight Group Sun 8pm		69.94
Closed Women Step Study Tu 330pm		66.25
Creekside New Growth Sun 7pm		64.00
Crossroads Sun 12pm	765.00	765.00
Day At A Time 7D 630am		408.51
Downtown Mill Valley F 830pm		275.00
Experience, Strength & Hope(Marin) Sa 6pm		109.80
Fairfax Friday Night F 830pm	57.94	238.21
Freedom Finders F 830pm	152.66	515.01
Greenfield Newcomers Sun 7pm		120.00
Happy Hour (Marin) Th 6pm		109.80
Happy, Joyous & Free 5D 12pm		363.00
Intimate Feelings Sa 10am		224.05
Inverness Sunday Serenity Su 10am		60.00
Island Group Th 8pm		228.50
Just Can't Wait 'til 8 M 630pm		94.25
Living in the Solution F 6pm		306.00
Marin Newcomers M 830pm		469.78
Mill Valley 7D 7am		750.00
Mill Valley Discussion W 830pm		16.80
Monday Blues M 630pm		500.00
Monday Night Stag (Tiburon) 8pm	238.03	1,250.60
Monday Night Women's M 8pm		164.09
Nativity Monday Night Big Book M 8pm		100.00
Newcomers Step M 730pm	130.88	401.73
Noon Tu 12pm		219.50
Noon Hope F 12pm		76.00
Pathfinders Tu 12pm		273.35
Rise N Shine Sun 10am		93.75
San Geronimo Valley Book Study F 8pm		43.45
Saturday Serenity Sa 8pm	100.00	200.00
Six O'Clock Sunset Th 6pm	73.10	331.44
Sober & Serene F 7pm		112.00
Steps to Freedom M 730pm	173.90	173.90

Name	June 05	YTD
SF Group Contributions		
Steps To The Solution W 715pm		38.00
Stinson Beach Fellowship Th 8pm	190.00	641.04
Sunday Express Sun 6pm		111.80
Terra Linda Group Th 830pm		650.00
T. G. I'm Sober M 6pm		115.07
TGI Tuesday Tu 6pm		51.60
The Barnyard Group Sa 4pm		96.00
The Fearless Searchers F 8pm		61.74
There is a Solution Tu 6pm		70.00
Thursday Night Speaker Th 830pm		542.00
Tiburon Beginners & Closed		1,162.92
Tiburon Haven Sun 12pm		905.50
Tiburon Women's Candlelight W 8pm		225.00
Tuesday Chip Meeting Tu 8pm		500.00
Wednesday Mid-Week W 6pm		63.11
Wednesday Night Candlelight W 8pm		75.00
Wednesday Sundowners W 6pm	98.66	98.66
Women's Big Book Tu 1030am		123.00
Women on Monday M 7pm		126.54
Women's Step Study Group M 12pm		240.00
Working Dogs W 1205pm		<u>388.00</u>
Total Marin Group Contributions	\$1,980.17	\$17,802.57

SF Group Contributions

515pm Smokeless W		103.80
6am Marina Dock Sa	76.00	148.00
7am Speaker Discussion Th 7am	11.01	71.43
830am Smokeless Tu		84.00
A is for Alcohol Tu 6pm	33.52	159.69
A New Start F 830pm		111.06
A Vision for You (SF) Su 630pm		81.00
AA As You Like It Tu 530pm		211.15
AA Step Study Su 6pm	150.00	348.30
Afro American F 8pm		74.58
Afro American Beginners Sat 8pm	18.41	188.21
All Together Now Th 8pm		486.00
Alumni W 830pm		60.00
Amazing Grace M 7pm		100.00
Artists & Writers F 630pm		907.20
As Bill Sees It Sat 11am		293.00
As Bill Sees It Th 6pm		141.95
As Bill Sees It Th 830pm		140.09
Ass in a Bag Th 830pm		40.80
Beginners' Step Study Sat 630pm		124.53
Bernal Big Book Sat 5pm		188.37
Big Book Basics F 8pm	63.00	340.87
Big Book Study Su 11am		124.00
Birthday Party Sharing Our Sob. Sat 7pm		133.54
Blue Book Special Su 11am		97.42
Boys Night Out Tu 730pm	120.00	120.00
Buena Vista Breakfast Su 12pm		220.00
Castro Discussion (Show Of Shows) W 8pm		365.59
Castro Monday Big Book M 8pm		137.42

<u>Name</u>	<u>June 05</u>	<u>YTD</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>June 05</u>	<u>YTD</u>
CLAADAAGH Sat 815pm		40.00	Living Sober with HIV W 6pm		221.65
CLAADAAGH Step Study Tu 8pm	60.25	60.25	Luke's Group W 8pm		70.00
Cocoanuts Su 9am	74.69	165.45	Lush Lounge Sa 2pm	30.60	302.20
Come N Get It F 630pm		54.00	Marina Discussion F 830pm		329.41
Common Welfare Th 8pm	20.40	20.40	Meeting Place Noon W 12pm		46.12
Creative Alcoholics M 6pm	261.82	441.82	Midnight Meditation Sat 12am		199.43
Design for Living Sat 8am	126.00	126.00	Miracles Off 24th St W 730pm		302.48
Diamond Heights Tu 830pm		100.00	Mission Terrace W 8pm		122.90
Drive Thru W 1215pm		224.84	Monday At A Time M 1pm		30.00
Each Day a New Beginning F 7am	598.26	1,053.86	Monday Beginners M 8pm		330.00
Each Day a New Beginning M 7am		232.00	Monday Monday M 1215pm		280.97
Each Day A New Beginning Su 8am		488.06	New Friday Big Book F 12pm		27.15
Each Day a New Beginning Th 7am		304.00	New Hope Big Book M 630pm		285.54
Each Day a New Beginning Tu 7am		590.58	No Gurus Meditation Su 7pm		71.19
Each Day a New Beginning W 7am	138.67	138.67	No Reservation M 12pm	95.76	138.90
Early Joyous & Free Th 7am		20.00	One Liners Th 830pm		569.03
Early Start F 6pm		683.04	Park Presidio M 830pm		79.80
Easy Does It Tu 6pm		139.36	Pax West M 12pm	532.19	760.92
Embarcadero Group 5D 1210pm	324.00	822.80	Pinehurst Tu 730pm		128.00
Eureka Valley Topic M 6pm		219.57	Rebound W		25.00
Experience, Strength & Hope W 715pm		44.20	Red Road Healing Circle Th 6pm		121.48
Federal Speaker Su 12pm	129.11	330.64	Rigorous Honesty Th 1205pm		50.00
Fell Street Step Su 8pm	151.76	151.76	Rose Garden Big Book Th 1205pm		52.14
Firefighters & Friends Tu 10am		35.00	Rule 62 W 10pm		481.93
Fireside Chat Sa 9pm		299.01	Saturday Afternoon Meditation Sat 5pm		169.20
Fireside Chat Th 8pm		80.97	Saturday Easy Does It Sa 12pm		359.39
Fireside F 830pm		94.00	Saturday Night Regroup Sat 730pm		260.97
First Place		39.60	Seacliff Th 830pm	32.03	92.53
Four Forty Niners F 8pm		28.55	Second Chance Th 215pm		127.00
Friday Knights Th 730am		112.93	Serenity House		700.00
Friday Lunchtime Step F 12pm	140.00	280.00	Serenity Seekers M 730pm		686.37
Friday Smokeless F 830pm	153.53	246.87	Sesame Step Tu 730pm		54.71
Gold Mine Group M 8pm		214.95	SFPOA Th 7pm		203.85
Haight Street Explorers Th 630pm	141.00	141.00	Sisters Circle Su 6pm		196.31
Happy Hour (S.F.) F 630pm		63.70	Sisters In Sobriety M 7pm (SF)		25.00
Happy Hour Ladies Night F 530pm		603.00	Sober & Centered F 7pm		175.03
High Noon 5D 1215pm	114.19	612.89	Sober Across the Board M 830am	30.45	40.45
High Noon Friday 1215pm	207.90	474.02	Sobriety & Beyond W 7pm		345.00
High Noon Monday 1215pm	189.50	597.33	Sometimes Slowly Sa 11am		59.68
High Noon Thursday 1215pm		418.24	Step Talk Su 830am		462.62
High Noon Tuesday 1215pm	170.32	1,034.46	Steppin' Up Tu 630pm	58.92	251.61
High Noon Wednesday 1215pm		544.80	Stepping Out Sat 6pm		65.00
High Sobriety M 8pm		327.60	Steps to Freedom M 730pm		116.36
High Steppers W 7pm		546.04	Stonestown M 8pm		101.17
Hilldwellers M 8pm		84.00	Sunday Bookworms Sun 730pm	84.00	124.33
Home Group Sat 830pm		240.16	Sunday Morning Gay Men's Stag Su 1030am		908.63
How It Works Sat 2pm		144.94	Sunday Night 3rd Step Group 5pm		171.60
Huntington Square W 630pm		720.00	Sunday Rap Sun 8pm		60.00
Ingleside Beginners Su 5pm	21.45	54.45	Sundown W 7pm		352.80
Join the Tribe Tu 7pm		244.42	Sundown Steps Th 630pm	91.20	116.20
Keep Coming Back Sa 11am	2,004.08	2,004.08	Sunset 11'ers Su		122.33
Keep It Simple Sat 830pm		503.77	Sunset 11'ers Tu		99.21
Let It Be Now F 6pm		100.00	Sunset 11'ers W		52.65
Like A Prayer Su 4pm		227.28	Sunset 9'ers M		36.87
Living Sober W 8pm	383.23	512.05	Sunset 9'ers F	25.57	222.70

(Continued on p. 14)

(Continued from p. 13)

Name	June 05	YTD
Sunset 9'ers Sa		563.09
Sunset 9'ers Su		262.78
Sunset 9'ers Th		303.19
Sunset 9'ers Tu		168.67
Sunset 9'ers W	11.77	139.94
Sunset Sobriety Th 730pm		411.00
Surf Tu 8pm	263.47	1,113.86
Sutter Street Beginners Sat 6pm		411.49
Ten Years After Su 6pm		190.80
The 24 Hour Plan M 7am		25.00
The Parent Trap M 1230pm	119.85	119.85
The Pepper Group F 12pm		45.00
Thought For The Day F 730am		140.00
Thursday Night Speaker Th 830pm		935.00
Thursday Night Women's Th 630pm	346.57	346.57
Too Early Sat 8am		730.59

Name	June 05	YTD
Transrecovery F 630pm		5.02
Valencia Smokefree F 6pm	225.35	456.76
Waterfront Sun 8pm		796.84
We Care Tu 12pm	147.99	267.99
Wednesday Noon Steps W 12pm		104.27
Wednesday Women's Big Book W 615pm		60.00
Wits End Step Study Tu 8pm		17.75
Women's 10 Years Plus Th 615pm		304.00
Women's Kitchen Table Group Tu 630pm		171.33
Women's Promises F 7pm	225.58	411.58
Women Living Sober Sa 1030am		18.53
Women Who Drank Too Much Tu 615pm		93.20
Women Who Read		55.27
Work In Progress Sat 7pm		23.34
Total SF Group Contributions	\$8,203.40	\$44,161.93
TOTAL	\$10,444.66	\$64,551.16

Individual Contributions June 2005

HONORS

	5.00
	25.00
	50.00
	73.00
	50.00
	100.00
	50.00
	50.00
Total HONORS	\$403.00

INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS

	100.00
	25.00
	150.00
	5.99
Total INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS	\$280.99
TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS	\$964.98

CONTRIBUTIONS

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

ONGOING MEMORIALS

Dina R., Bill M. (Philadelphia)
 Bud C., Donald H.
 Fran H., John D. M.
 Vern S., Donald W.

ANNIVERSARIES

Kathleen C. 19 years
Santa Rosa Fellowship: James D. 22 years

Something to Share? Share it in *The Point*

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: Had an experience that taught you about recovery, unity or service? Up to 550 words.

AA on the Road: Gone to A.A. meetings while traveling for business or pleasure? Submit a story. 500-600 words.

Inside Stories: Have an anecdote 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

The Dark Truth: An Oldtimer's Rhetoric

by Anonymous

The problems may change, but the tools stay the same. A.A. works. It worked to help me get sober. It helps with my fears, my daily frustrations, my relationships, my jobs, whatever it is that causes me to doubt and thus reach for something other than my higher power. That is what I have found to be the bottom line for me. It is all about the higher power. If I am afraid and I pray, then I feel better. If I am lonely and I pray, I stop thinking about myself. If I want to drink and I pray, well, I haven't drunk yet. I find my higher power in other people, though not by turning my life over to them, but by helping others.

Though I cannot give what I haven't got, I know that the people I work with are just two steps behind me in their recovery. We each share our experience. The people that come to me are usually working on issues that I have just finished dealing with. But when I say dealing with, I mean that I am working the steps, talking with my sponsor and friends. It is through the steps that I gain awareness of my patterns and then I can work on those that cause me pain. Through this awareness, I then ask for my higher power's help.

It seems as though my entire life is molded around the lessons my higher power wants me to learn. Right now my life is good. I have a home with a partner. I have a career and a job. I have friends, a sponsor, and sponsees. I am sober. I live in a beautiful city and can get to the ocean in half an hour. I really have no problems. Yet, there is this inexplicable doom complex taking up space in my brain. In this program, we call it alcoholism. So it is really not the externals that bother me at this point. It is my alcoholism. It is that part of me that I cannot control. I can choose not to engage a thought when it appears, but I seem to have little control over the initial thought. It is when I notice that thought that I can take responsibility and decide to engage it or let it go. I can ask my higher power to remove it or enhance it, whatever my desire.

I continue to work the steps because I continue to have fear, selfishness, negativity and a slew of other self-defeating thought patterns. Sometimes I think of all that negativity as a demon running around in my head. If I try to run after it and destroy it, it just defends itself and hides. If I make friends with it, it is more amenable to my request to leave or change. That is where in the Fourth Step, it says we look at our defects and accept them. Only then can we ask our higher power to remove them.

So what started out as a desperate attempt to get sober and stay alive has become a basis for living, for dealing with all of life's problems. More and more often can I look through the mire of my brain and see the light of recovery all around me.



Home Group Series

Cocoanuts

By Thea L.

Church bells in the Mission haven't yet struck 9 a.m. But on the corner of 24th and Florida St., a few dozen alcoholics are wide awake, talking and laughing as they light each others' cigarettes under the Sunday morning sun. They are not sucking down a last smoke after a night of drinking and drugging. Instead, these alcoholics are chit chatting as they wait for a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous to begin.

Cocoanuts, one of San Francisco's oldest running meetings, has offered an hour and a half of quality recovery at 9:00 a.m. on Sunday mornings for over twenty years. Named for its original members' penchant for hot cocoa drinks, Cocoanuts was housed for 16 years at 1010 Valencia St. before settling into its current home at 2400 24th St. The move hasn't altered the meeting's tendency to attract alcoholics from unusually diverse cultural backgrounds and lengths of sobriety.

"One of the things I like about Cocoanuts is the mix of people from all San Francisco neighborhoods," said Terry K., who has attended the meeting for 14 years. "You'll see everyone from investment lawyers to longtime homeless people to gay dads to Latina women who grew up in the Mission. It has always been very open and inclusive."

In addition to its warm atmosphere, the meeting's non-judgmental demeanor has also contributed to its lighthearted humor. Bill K. began attending the meeting in 1989. The group's colorful personalities helped cheer him through the painful months of early sobriety. "Cocoanuts is always full of weird, funny moments," he remembers. "One of my favorite people was an elderly gypsy man who traveled around the country selling crocheted crosses. He was an odd character- I mean the guy was seriously a transient

(Continued on page 18)

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, July 6, 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	
Alecs C.	Second Chance	A*	Greg S.	Beginner's Warmup	P	Nicholas L.	Some Are Sicker Than . . .	P
Amber W.	Sisters Circle	P	Heidi S.	Cow Hollow Young People's	R	Nicholas S.	Sutter St. Beginners	P
Anthony J.	Founders Group	P	Jim T.	First Place	P	Omar C.	Tues. Chip	P
Brian C.	Mission Terrace	P	Joe G.	Beginners	P	Pascal G.	Marin Stag (Mon. Night...)	P
Brian H.	Living Sober with HIV	P	John B.	Rule 62	A**	Penelope P.	Amazing Grace	P
Bruce K.	Sunset Speaker Step	A**	Judi C.	Tuesday's Daily Reflections	A*	Randy F.	We Care	P
Carol E.	High Noon Wednesday	A**	Justin S.	Alumni	A*	Rebekah D.	Fell Street Step	A*
Chris T.	Keep Coming Back	P	Larry L.	The 24 Hour Plan	A*	Ryan W.	Tiburon BB	P
Dan H.	Each Day a New Beginning	A*	Lauren H.	Ten Years After	P	Rudi DiP.	Serenity Seekers	A*
Daniel B.	Too Early	A*	Lillian R.	Women's Promises	A*	Scott N.	Sunset 11'ers Sat.	P
David B.	Federal Speaker	P	Luis M.	High Noon Tuesday	P	Stephan S.	Artists and Writers	A*
David H.	Tuesday Downtown	P	Lynnore G.	Walk Of Shame	P	Stephanie R.	Live & Let Live	A*
David P.	Goodlands	P	Mark O.	Come 'n' Get It!	A*	Stephen R.	Valencia Smokefree	P
Danna P.	Treasurer	A*	Marvin R.	Bernal Big Book	P	Steve N.	Terra Linda Group	P
Don B.	Friday Fell Street	P	Matt T.	Fairfax Friday Night	P	Steven S.	Homegroup	P
Doug D.	As Bill Sees It Sat 11am	P	Matthew Y.	Marina Discussion	A*	Terry B.	High Noon Thursday	A**
Edward F.	Happy Hour	P	Maury P.	Central Office Manager	P	Tim K.	High Noon Saturday	P
Eric S.	One Liners	R	Meredith R.	High Noon Friday	A*	Tim McC.	Join the Tribe	A*
Francesca K.	West Portal	P	Michael L.	Attitude Adjustment Hour	P	Tom R.	Mill Valley 7AM	P
Gaspar L.	Keep It Simple	P	Michael S.	Sunset 9'ers Sat.	P	Victor V.	Stepping Up	P
Gilbert L.	Early Start	R	Mitsi H.	New Hope Big Book	P			
Gregory F.	Midnight Meditation	A*	Monika H.	SFPOA	A**			

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

New IFB Reps Present

Amy	Artists & Writers	Curtis S.	Sunday Gay Men's Stag
Alejandro D.	Fireside Chat	Jason K.	Cocoanuts
Chris H.	Friendly Circle	Julia W.	Sesame Step (Alternate)
Thomas K.	Mission Terrace	Andy T.	Waterfront
Sam C.	Boys Night Out	Gerard W.	Any Lengths

IFB Liaisons Present

Trevor F.	Marin General Service
Matt T.	Marin Teleservice
Mitsi H.	H & I

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

I. IFB Reports

Chair's Report: Steve R. gave the report. Thanks were given to past Board members and Central Office workers. The agenda was re-organized temporarily, giving liaisons priority. Ad Hoc committees will meet and brainstorm about membership.

Treasurer's Report: Tony J. read the report written by Danna P. The net loss for January through June was (\$5,857) which is \$11,607 less than the budgeted net loss of (\$17,464). The net income in June of \$2,566 exceeded the budgeted net income of \$1,351 by \$1,215. Unre-

stricted cash as of June 30, 2005 totaled \$19,193 and is no longer sufficient to pay the budgeted expenses totaling \$33,000 for the next two months. Unrestricted cash decreased by \$3,540 primarily due to creating a reserve for computer equipment of \$1,500 and increasing bookstore inventory prior to the book price increase by AAWS effective July 1st.

Central Office Manager's Report: Maury P. gave the report. Maury has been back for three weeks now and will work part-time until October. Peter M. is on vacation this week. AAWS is looking for a Non-Trustee Director. The final bylaws, which were approved last month, are included in your packet. Maury is going to the Annual Intergroup Managers Seminar in September in North Carolina.

Central Office Committee Report: Lynnore G. gave the report. Elections were held and Lynnore G. was elected Chair and Rudi DiP. was

(Continued on page 17)

IFB Summary (Continued from page 16)

elected Secretary. Date for the Annual COC Retreat is tentatively set for September 10, 2005.

2. Non-IFB Liaison Reports

General Service, SF: Brian C. gave the report. The condensed version of the Concepts were voted down. 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: Trevor gave the report. Marin County is making a bid for an Assembly next year. The next Assembly will be held in Vacaville on August 13th. The cost of General Service per member is \$5.48 but the contribution per member is \$3.98. The difference is made up by literature sales. Only 45% of groups participate. A new training program with a two year timeline is being put together for new GSR's. Marin Unity Day is September 17th in Corte Madera. 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: Matt T. gave the report. They have a booth at Unity Day. Several open shifts were filled. 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. 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: Mitsi H. gave the report. Mitsi H. and Lily M. are the new liaisons. Mission statement was read. There is a new Regional Chair named Roy Reimer at 650-306-9405. The H&I website is www.norcalhandi.org. The SF Committee meets the last Thursday of the month at 1751 Sacramento St., SF. Orientation is at 7:15 p.m. and the committee Business Meeting is at 8:00 pm.

The Marin committee meets the second Tuesday at the Marin Alano Club at 1360 Lincoln Ave. in San Rafael. The orientation for new volunteers is at 6:15pm and the committee Business Meeting is at 7:15 pm.

Spirit of San Francisco: Chris gave the report. Registration is up 30% from last year. The Scholarship Fund is also up from last year. The event is September 2-4, 2005. See the website for more info. The committee meets the first Monday of the month at 7:30 p.m. at the Central Office.

3. IFB Standing Committee Reports

SF Teleservice: No report. The committee meets on the 3rd Monday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the Central Office.

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

4. IFB Ad Hoc Committee Reports

Outreach Committee: Jim gave the report. Trained new member. Committee discussed ways to retain IFB members and identify groups that drop. The committee meets the third Thursday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the Central Office.

Literature Review Committee: Steve N. gave the report. The committee didn't meet last month. They welcome new members. The committee meets the third Wednesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the Central Office.

The Point Editorial Committee: Steve R. gave the report. There is a new layout editor, Lynne. The Chair position is open. All Committee Chairs are listed in The Point. The committee meets the second and fourth Tuesday of the month at 5:00 p.m. at the Central Office.

Orientation Committee: Steve S. gave the report. All new members need to attend an orientation. There are two new members of the committee. The orientation of new IFB members takes place at 6:00 pm, one hour prior to the monthly IFB meeting.

Website Committee: No report. The committee meets the second Thursday of the month at 6:00 p.m. at the Central Office.

12th Step Committee: Rudi DiP. submitted written report. The July 13th Workshop was very successful with 13 SF members and 2 Marin members signed up for 12th Step list, total attendance at 19 members. Speakers were Lord H. and Lily M. New members from the IFB are encouraged to join committee. Thanks to Peter M. for his assistance. The committee meets the second Wednesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the Central Office.

Special Events Committee: Fran gave the report. Many thanks to the outgoing committee members. This month's meeting was well attended. They brainstormed about events with golfing or BBQ possibilities. Members of the committee volunteered their services for Marin Unity Day. Contacted General Service Special Events Coordinator to discuss inclusion in their Unity Day. The committee meets the fourth Tuesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. at the Central Office.

Special Needs Committee: Pene gave the report. Committee is being restructured due to member turnover. AA Guidelines for Special Needs was passed out. The committee meets the 4th Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the Central Office.

Archives Committee: Lynnore G. gave the report. Committee continues to review the inventory. An Archives Workshop is scheduled for August 28th from 1-5pm at Central Office. There is one new member on the committee and more are welcome. The committee meets the 1st Monday of the month at 6 p.m. at the Central Office.

Nominating Committee: Mitsi H. gave the report. The committee has no members from Marin and encourages people from Marin to join. The committee meets as necessary.

5. Ad Hoc Committee Staffing – Committee Huddles

All IFB members present gathered in the Ad Hoc Committee of their choice and brainstormed about membership attraction and maintenance.

6. Committee Huddle Review

Committees were welcome to comment on the huddle. Archives thanked all who came to the huddle.

The next IFB meeting will be held Wednesday, September 7, 2005 at First Unitarian Universalist Church, 1187 Franklin St., SF at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lauren H., IFB Secretary




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Cocoanuts

(Continued from p. 15)

gypsy- but he had a great program that focused on living in the moment.”

Other alcoholics find the Sunday morning meeting both inspiring and fun. Karen B. has been going to Cocoanuts for ten years since her drinking ended- a time when Sunday mornings meant nasty hangovers and regret. “I’d wake up and check my body for damage because I couldn’t remember what I had done the night before,” she said. “Now, I am up at a meeting, which is good because if I sleep in too late my head can go in the wrong direction.”


No matter what emotional state Cocoanuts members are in when they arrive, most leave feeling better. Christina W., a newcomer with four months of sobriety, has made it a regular feature of her weekly A.A. schedule. “It has helped me a lot, the positive energy, the honesty,” she said. “I hear a lot of the message, and I get to revel in the fact that I am not puking with a hangover.” 

Busy Life

continued from page 6

my sponsor’s help and some of my amends took years. I try to catch myself when I feel harsh words or angry thoughts forming in my brain. I try not to say or do anything I will need to make an amends for. I think of it as clearing away the wreckage of my future.

My own problems tend to disappear when I trust God, help others, and clean house. If I practice Steps 10, 11 and 12, I can stay sober, one day at a time.

The Steps are as much a part of my life as breathing. I thought I wouldn’t be able to make room for them in my busy life, but I wouldn’t have a life without them! 

Slogan of the Month

Easy Does It


by Kristen H.

The first few months of my recovery were difficult. I’ve heard many A.A.s describe “the pink cloud” of first getting sober, but this experience was far from my own—at first. Once I’d gotten through my Fifth Step, I began to feel immense relief. This was short-lived. After the craving to drink was removed from me, I figured every other part of my life would, or rather *should* come together straight away. As I went through Steps Six and Seven with my sponsor, I became obsessed with my defects of character. I began to think of myself as defective, damaged goods. My “solution” was to reach an elusive image of what I was supposed to be: Perfect. My appearance had to be flawless, my apartment sparkling, and I had to change my struggling relationship with my boyfriend into the very picture of perfection.

Things did not work out exactly the way I’d envisioned. I continued to work doggedly to change things I could not, and thus began to drive myself back into insanity. My eating habits became unhealthy, my skin broke out, I began to procrastinate and my relationship became more difficult than ever. Although I didn’t drink, I began to escape by sleeping. At a loss to figure out what I could possibly be doing wrong, I was bewildered and guilt-ridden. Everything seemed black or white: I was either doing something good or something bad. My decisions, from choosing what to eat for breakfast to how to treat my boyfriend, were either right or wrong. I was either a good person or a bad person.

Thankfully, I finally realized why the slogan, *Easy Does It* exists in our fellowship. The only choice I had to make the right way was the decision not to take the first drink. Everything beyond this is part of my journey, my adventure in recovery. I need to realize I will continue making mistakes, but that feeling guilty about them is a choice.

I learned how important it is to put myself on my Ninth Step amends list. While drinking, I’d completely forgotten how to take care of myself. I knew how to put on make-up, dress-up, and make it to the same bar every night, but I had no idea how to take care of myself spiritually, physically, mentally, or emotionally. While making living amends to myself, I also had to forgive myself. A year into sobriety, I’d already spent too much time being ashamed, apologetic, and doubtful of my God-given beauty (inside and out).

Easy Does It is not necessarily easy. Sometimes I move a little forward, and sometimes I get stuck. I hate the feeling that I can’t do it, or that I’m unwilling to do it. I need to remember that I’m not perfect and my recovery is sometimes slow. I have to trust God that I’m right where I need to be on my journey. For me, *easy does it* means *walking* through my fear, slowly but deliberately, letting God take care of the rest. So far, it’s working. 

Financial Statement

June 2005 - Intercounty Fellowship of AA

	<u>Jun 05</u>	<u>Jan - Jun 05</u>		<u>Jun 05</u>	<u>Jan - Jun 05</u>
Ordinary Income/Expense					
Income			Repair & Maintenance	178.00	1,140.12
Contributions from Groups			Security System	33.50	266.00
Group Contributions	11,596.66	66,078.17	Special Events	0.00	760.00
Honors	0.00	74.99	Telephone	378.45	2,659.45
Total Contributions from Groups	11,596.66	66,153.16	Utilities	231.63	1,218.72
Contributions from Individuals			Bad Checks	0.00	0.00
Individual - Unrestricted	280.99	2,144.34	Miscellaneous Expense	0.05	-462.47
Faithful Fiver	238.00	1,166.00	Total Expense	<u>14,001.67</u>	<u>98,108.32</u>
Honorary Contributions	403.00	2,060.50	Net Ordinary Income	2,553.07	-3,745.36
Total Contributions from Individuals	921.99	5,370.84	Other Income/Expense		
Gratitude Month			Other Income		
Gratitude Month - Groups	33.00	3,451.68	Interest Income	68.36	417.61
Total Gratitude Month	33.00	3,451.68	Total Other Income	68.36	417.61
Sales - Bookstore	8,298.83	49,986.99	Other Expense		
Special Event Income	836.37	869.37	Depreciation Expense	408.17	2,449.02
Newsletter Subscript.	49.80	323.70	Amortization of Leasehold Impr.	216.22	648.66
Total Income	21,736.65	126,155.74	Total Other Expense	624.39	3,097.68
Cost of Goods Sold			Net Other Income	-556.03	-2,680.07
Cost of Books Sold	5,181.91	31,792.78	Net Income	<u>1,997.04</u>	<u>-6,425.43</u>
Total COGS	5,181.91	31,792.78			
Gross Profit	16,554.74	94,362.96			
Expense					
Employee Expenses					
Wages & Salaries	6,601.00	42,811.59			
Employer Tax Expenses	596.80	4,734.01			
Health Benefits	788.00	4,400.00			
Retirement/Annuity Expense	0.00	7,200.00			
Workers Comp Ins.	0.00	836.47			
Total Employee Expenses	7,985.80	59,982.07			
Bank Charges					
Credit Card Processing Fees	103.21	635.80			
Bank Charges - Other	0.00	108.90			
Total Bank Charges	103.21	744.70			
Postage					
Bulk Mail	0.00	400.00			
Postage - Other	0.00	331.35			
Total Postage	0.00	731.35			
ASL Expense					
ASL Other	0.00	390.00			
Total ASL Expense	0.00	390.00			
IFB Literature	21.90	43.80			
PI/CPC	15.00	29.01			
Filing/Fees	27.00	47.00			
Insurance	0.00	2,383.68			
Internet Expense	0.00	119.70			
Office Supplies	600.81	1,839.11			
Shipping	-2.05	34.38			
Rent - Office	3,708.75	22,252.50			
Rent - Other	150.00	450.00			
Equipment Lease	569.62	3,479.20			

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