

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

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

The Point

October 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
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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.

Just What IS This Higher Power Thing Anyway?


by Anonymous

I was watching two guys working on a car the other day. They were looking under the hood, scratching their heads like they didn't know what the heck was wrong with this vehicle. Apparently, there was no power to run the car and they could find no explanation why.




It got me thinking about the power that runs my body and my life. I can have a lot of outside influences try to get me running or otherwise fix me, but if I don't have the willingness or desire to accept these outside influences and transform them to work on a day-to-day basis, I could end up like that car and have no solution whatsoever to get me back on the road again.



Anyway, the power in my life really has nothing to do with me. I am an instrument that a Power greater than myself can use to carry a message to others and make me a stronger person. I need to remember to do the work—to use the “fuel” from my Higher Power in an efficient way so I can continue to run smoothly and not waste the gifts that result. There have been many times when I think that I have all of the answers and that I don't need anyone or anything else to get me through the day. That is when I end up restless and irritable and basically not much use to anyone. I might as well be that car at the side of road that doesn't work. When I allow the Power greater than me to enter my mind and life, miraculous things always happen and I find myself at peace with a serenity that I have spent my entire life trying to find. It's funny how quickly I can forget this and go back to my old fuel-inefficient ways.

What is this Higher Power energy cell? I am not sure. What I do know is that I don't necessarily need to know this or many other answers anyway and that the results are far better than knowing them. I can run with the other “vehicles” on the road and keep on running knowing that my power is not mine at all. 

October 2005....

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

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.

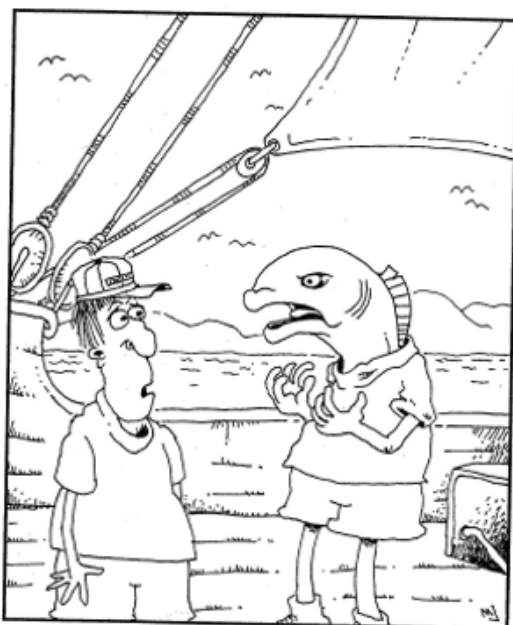
The Point illustrates the shared experience of individual A.A. members working the A.A. program and applying the spiritual principles of the Twelve Steps. Yet what works for one individual or A.A. group may not always work for another. For this reason, from month to month, articles may be published that 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. ↑

Joke of the Month



"This, sad to say, is no mask.
I've been drinking like a fish for thirteen years."

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., Lynne H.,
Kathleen C., Maury P., Mike L.,
Rick and Dave F.

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.



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MEETING CHANGES

New Meetings:

Sat 9:30 am Outer Sunset OFFICIAL SEA LION SIGHTING, Stairwell 28, Lincoln & Great Highway (SD; Meditation)

Meeting Changes:

7D 7:00 am Ross 7AM Group Masonic Hall, 1122 Magnolia (was St. John's Church, Lagunitas Rd./ Shady Ln.; No Wheelchair access)
 Mon 12:15 pm Cath. Hill MONDAY NOONERS, 1031 Franklin/ O'Farrell (was Civic Center Nooners, 711 Eddy, 12:05pm)
 Wed 12:30 pm Inner Sunset BYOL, Clubhouse at Tennis Courts in Golden Gate Park (was 1:00 pm)
 Thu 7:15 pm Civ Ctr STEP SISTERS, 930 Gough/ Eddy (was 7:30 pm)

No Longer Meeting

Fri 9:30 am San Rafael LIVING SOBER GROUP Ritter House, 16 Ritter St.

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 August 2005

Thank You to the meetings and groups below whose Trusted Servants registered with Central Office during August 2005. Thirteen San Francisco Trusted Servants and six Marin Trusted Servants registered with Central Office during that time.

San Francisco:

AA Gays Y Lesbianas 5D 7pm; Artists & Writers Fri. 6:30pm; Fireside Chat Sat. 9 pm; Meeting Place Noon Fri. 12pm; Moving Toward Serenity Wed. 8:30pm; New Hope Big Book Mon. 6:30 pm; Saturday Night Regroup Sat. 7:30pm; Sunday Morning Gay Men's Stag Sun. 9:30am; Ten Years After Sun. 6pm; Tuesday's Daily Reflections Tue. 7am; Tuesday Downtown Tue. 8:30pm; West Portal Wed. 830pm; Work in Progress Sat. 7pm

Marin:

Bounce Back Mon. 6pm; Candlelight Meditation Mon. 7:30pm; Girl's Night Out Wed. 8:15 pm; Sunday Express Sun. 6pm; "Tiburon" Beginners Meeting Tue. 7pm; Too Young Sun. 830pm

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 October 2005

BRISBANE BREAKFAST BUNCH

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

DATE	SPEAKER	FROM
10/02	Patty S.	Thursday Kaiser, So. SF
10/09	John S.	Palo Alto
10/16	Daniel	Strawberry, Tiburon
10/23	Mike Z.	Spiritual Progress, Red Bluff
10/30	Karen H.	Valencia Smokeless, SF

TUESDAY DOWNTOWN

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

DATE	SPEAKER	DOS	FROM
10/04	Lester R.	02/02/92	Rebound Group
10/11	Marica G.	10/13/84	Too Early
10/18	David C.	04/05/83	Rebound Group
10/25	Laura B.	10/16/84	Indianapolis

FRIDAY ALL GROUPS

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

DATE	SPEAKER	FROM
10/07	Astrid M.	Oakland
10/14	Doug F.	Palo Alto
10/21	Rudy F.	San Francisco
10/28	Kelly F.	San Francisco

1st Annual

AASF OKTOBERFEST

Saturday, October 15th

12:00 pm to 5:00 pm

Speedway Meadows

25th Ave. & John F. Kennedy Dr.

BBQ, Volleyball, Sack Races, Games
Suggested Donation \$5.00

Bring your favorite Potluck Item

Raffle Tickets sold through the day with great prizes

Speakers: Marcel A. and Dan M.

BBQ: 12:00pm to 2:30pm — Games: 1pm to 3pm

Countdown: 3:15pm — Meeting: 3:30pm

For information: Fran K. 415.424.0626

cesca_mia@hotmail.com

Sponsored by the IFB Special Events Committee



A Fundraiser for
Living Sober / Western Roundup

Halloween Dance

Saturday, October 29th

7:30 pm AA/AlAnon meeting — 9:00 pm DANCE

Harvey Milk Civil Rights Academy
4235 19th Street @ Collingwood

\$15 Suggested Donation

This is a fundraiser for Living Sober 2006.

No one will be turned away for lack of funds, but PLEASE give what you can.

Next Events:

New Years Eve Dance, Saturday, December 31st

HMCRA; 4235 19th St. @ Collingwood; 7:00 pm meeting, 9:00 pm dance.

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

Www.LivingSober.Org

415.978.2478

Join us for the Some-Kind-of-Annual, Every-So-Often

Traditions Workshop

November 5th, 2005 from 1pm—3pm

ILWU Clerks Hall on Berry St.

(at the foot of 2nd and King Streets—NE corner near the ball park)

Opening Presentation on the Importance of our Traditions with Si P.

Followed by

Twelve Speakers discuss the History of the Traditions—Moderators Lane K. and Ted R.

Stay tuned—or call Central Office—for more details

Devilishly Fun!

A HARVEST BREW... OF UNITY, RECOVERY, SERVICE and HALLOWEEN FUN!

You are invited to attend a terrific day of learning how to carry the message of AA through Service, and have some Halloween Fun!

Come in Costume!

SATURDAY, OCT 29th

10am—5pm

Urban Life Center

**1101 O'Farrell at Franklin St.
San Francisco**

Opening Speaker at 10 am

**Presentation and Discussion
on Home Groups**

PICPC Workshop!

Delicious Lunch & Desserts Galore!

**Pumpkin Carving Contest
Best Individual Pumpkin &
Best Pumpkin From a Home Group
(Bring Your Own Pre-Carved Pumpkin)**

Costume Competition

Service Presentations

**Speaker Meeting and
Sobriety Countdown at 4pm**

**SF Unity Day 2005 Co-sponsored by
SF General Service &
Central Office
with participation from H&I, PICPC,
BTG, & Teleservice**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT
JEFF O. 415-350-4441**

A Wicked Good Time!

Thanks To My Sponsor

by Kristen H.


I spoke at a meeting recently, and my sponsor Barbara was there right in the front row. The week before, at the same meeting, Barbara's sponsor Jill had been the speaker, and Barbara sat right in front. It amazes me how wisdom is passed down from A.A. generation to generation. I've even heard some San Francisco A.A.s use the terms grand-sponsor and grand sponsee. I think the idioms are fitting.

As I watched my grand sponsor Jill the week before I spoke, I was given a moment to focus on the solution, as she talked almost solely about her recovery. It was a stunning reminiscence, as she simultaneously looked back at her journey, ahead with the wisdom she'd garnered, and presently, generously passed these gifts to anyone in the room who would have them.

I realized that I not only identified with Jill's story, I also identified much with her recovery. We don't chat often, but I felt as if she were a part of my A.A. family. I held her in the esteem of a wise elder, truly grand. I hadn't been asked to speak yet, but I remember walking home and thanking Jill for being a great sponsor to my sponsor.

Jill recalled the phrase she learned from her sponsor, "*This too shall pass.*" I'd heard it before I stopped drinking, but the prayer never worked until I re-learned it in the fellowship of A.A., when Barbara, with her calm and serene, but stalwart voice repeated it to me many times over during a rough couple of months.

My relationship with Barbara has traveled a winding path, but she has always remained by my side, or in the front row. I haven't yet actively sought a sponsee. And I don't know if I'm "ready yet." But I do believe that the opportunity will present itself in God's time. When this happens, I will be honored to carry the message from Jill's sponsor to Jill to Barbara to me to my sponsee. This lineage is so powerful, and although it seems many sponsors are older than their sponsees, it need not be the case at all.

Our place in this genealogy, and if we have a sponsor, we all have a place in it, connects us directly with the very founders of A.A. What a reminder of the union and solidarity we alcoholics share with one another. The thought always keeps me from feeling alone. Even if a recovering alcoholic is floating somewhere in international waters, or traveling the world with a knapsack, or still fearful of leaving home, she is part of a vast network of love and wisdom. I'd bet much less than six-degrees away. 

A.A. is self-supporting.

Central Office needs your support!

As an expression of gratitude for your sobriety, consider putting \$2 in the basket at your next meeting—or become a Faithful Fiver (see p. 10).

Dear Alky

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

Dear Alky,

One of my sponsees moved to the East Bay several years ago. We talk on the phone and even get together occasionally, but we don't go to the same meetings any more. She still considers me her sponsor and once in a while even calls with a program-related issue. But I'm not comfortable with the situation. I feel as if she should get a sponsor in her new town. How do I tell her this? Or should I just keep my big mouth shut and turn it over?

—Out of town sponsor

Dear Out of Town,

If you feel your sponsee should find a new sponsor, simply tell her so. Remind her that it's not personal (no matter how her alcoholic mind might try to trick her into believing it is), and that you have her sobriety uppermost in mind. Also, it might help to explain why you're suggesting it. Finally, I've found it helpful, when encouraging sponsees to move on, to wait until they've found a new sponsor, and then to have a final meeting at which we finish the relationship on a high note. There's great spiritual growth in ending a relationship lovingly as opposed to destructively—the unevolved alcoholic's usual stock in trade.

—Alky



Dear Alky,

I find that my sponsor of many years may no longer be right for me—or me for him. He's out of town and out of touch for long stretches. My A.A. service experience has led me into dynamic relationships with several other gentlemen of active sobriety whom I consider possible sponsor material. Can you shed some light on the sense of foreboding I get whenever I consider changing sponsors?

—In a Quandry

Dear Quandry,

Changing sponsors isn't easy. Like all points of spiritual growth, it pushes us beyond our comfort zone. It's possible that your foreboding derives from an obsession with self. The



The antidote to fear is God. Turn to your higher power in prayer and ask for guidance, then talk with fellow A.A.s. God's guidance often comes to us through the humans we know and trust.

Big Book tells us on page 62 that we're driven by "a hundred forms of fear, self-delusion, self-seeking and self-pity." Yours sounds like a fear of the unknown. The antidote to fear is God. Turn to your higher power in prayer and ask for guidance, then talk with fellow A.A.s. God's guidance often comes to us through the humans we know and trust. Sponsor-sponsee relationships aren't marriages; they're relationships in which one alcoholic helps another—and, in so doing, stays sober himself. When they've outlasted their usefulness, it's right to lovingly end them.

—Alky



Dear Alky,

I definitely fall into the agnostic camp (and sometimes even the atheist one) when analyzing and discussing God. Yet in the glow of sobriety I'm in

touch with the vast goodness and selfless love that I see in the world and in our program. I pray modestly in times of stress but overwhelmingly in times of joy and gratitude, using the old standby the Lord's Prayer. I can never square the one mindset with the other. Would you say this is risky business?

—Anonymous

Dear Anonymous,

What's risky about it? You sound like you're finding your way through Steps Two and Three. Chapter Four of the *Big Book*, titled "We Agnostics," lays out the case with surgical skill. Many who come to A.A. as atheists or agnostics have experiences like yours. Some of them come to identify the feeling you describe—a kind of Oneness—as a manifestation of their higher power. This program's founders had the rare foresight to suggest we find God *as we understood Him*, which leaves plenty of room to discover the Realm of the Spirit. In the end, labels don't much matter—they're constructs of the mind. Whether atheist, agnostic or "believer," the key is that we've been relieved of the drink obsession by a power not associated with—and greater than—our individual wills, which didn't succeed in stopping the juggernaut of alcoholism. Enjoy your newfound gratitude—and don't sweat the rest.

—Alky

If you have a questions for Alky, please write to us at thepoint@aaaf.org. We welcome our readers participation!

COMMITTEE CONTACTS

The following is a list of the names and contact information for the IFB Officers and Chairpersons of most of the service committees.

If you are interested in doing service on a committee or if you wish to receive more information about a committee, please contact these committee chairs.

INTERGROUP OFFICERS:

CHAIR

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VICE CHAIR

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Lauren laurenhache@earthlink.net

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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

Jason K. websitechair@aasf.org

SF TELESERVICE COMMITTEE

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

SF PI/CPC COMMITTEE

Laura N. 415.931-2567

Recovery ♦ Unity ♦ Service

Prayer & Meditation

by Lauren H.


When I first came into A.A., I did not have a relationship with a God of any understanding. I understood getting drunk, and that's what motivated me. When I needed help, I got drunk. When I had nothing to do, I got drunk. When I had something to do, I would put it off, and get drunk. I was sure the drink would fix me. It made me feel good thinking about drinking, but not even the drinking made me feel better. So then I got to A.A., and heard about this God thing in meetings. People talked about having a Higher Power and how they felt better. They trusted something would help them.

What were they talking about?! I had no idea. I wanted proof that this God thing would help me. It seemed as though every time I asked for something, I didn't get it. So where was God? My life had been a daily torment. I didn't believe anything could help me.

People introduced the idea of pretending to believe in something. My life wasn't working. It had to get better. So I prayed to a God that I didn't believe in. More to the point, I prayed to a God that I hated because I believed It had personally ruined my life. I prayed with clenched teeth and fists and demanded that It help me. It was a start.

It probably took a few years of practicing praying and being angry at God until I started to have faith. I tried many different faiths, other people's faiths, anything from Christianity to Buddhism to Paganism to any New Age oracle you can come up with. Eventually I developed my own concept of a Higher Power. I took pieces of those other faiths and used them and then added my own stuff, stuff I discovered on my own. I started to pray when I was having a hard time, and I wasn't bitter about it. Then I would give thanks to this God of my understanding. Eventually, I was praying on a daily basis, giving thanks and asking for guidance to be of service. Now when I say 'eventually', I mean it took me over 15 years to develop the relationship with my Higher Power that I have today and it is all through practicing praying and meditating.

The meditation was easier for me because it was something I could do. I didn't need to have faith in anything to meditate. I just sat down and breathed. I started meditating when I had about 7 years sober. I was in a crisis in my recovery. I was in an abusive relationship and had started self-mutilating again. Something had to change. I don't even remember how I got the idea, maybe I heard it in a meeting but I started meditating in the morning a few days a week. It was only for 5 minutes at a time. Then several months later I increased it to 10 minutes, and so on.

Now I make time in the morning to meditate for 20 to 30 minutes and then pray. My meditation is still simply just sitting and breathing. In my prayer, I give thanks and ask to be of service. 

San Francisco Has a New Alano Club!

The new San Francisco Alano Club plans to open its doors on November 1st, at 1748 Market Street (between Gough and Octavia). The Alano Club will have room for small (10-15), medium (15-30), and large (50-100) meetings.

For further information e-mail info@alanosf.org.

Treasures of the Twelve & Twelve: Tradition Ten

by Steve S.

Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

This month we plumb the depths of the twenty-second chapter of Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, the chapter about A.A.'s Tenth Tradition.

Sometimes reading the "back twelve" of the Twelve & Twelve is like watching a movie with a high-speed car chase. As the cars careen around mountainous corners above precipitous drops to what would surely be a fiery death in twisted metal and glass, we sit on the edge of our seats in nervous anticipation of the fate the drivers avoid by a margin of inches. Likewise, the history of A.A. tradition is fraught with close calls and would-be disaster, avoided just in time by the adoption of these principles that keep the fellowship alive.

In the chapter on Tradition Ten, we're treated to a more vivid example. Instead of the example of early A.A. members learning the necessity of the Tradition the hard way, we read of a society which shared a lot with Alcoholics Anonymous in its day but which ceased to exist subsequent to involving itself in outside affairs: The Washingtonian Society.

As is spelled out in the chapter, the Washingtonians were a nineteenth century movement that had some notable success with a spiritual solution to alcoholism. The movement was popular in the years leading up to the American Civil War, and is remembered almost exclusively by historians who keep archives of Abraham Lincoln's speeches and writings. Honest Abe addressed the Washingtonians at least twice, and in these speeches reveals an understanding of alcoholism surprising for a Nineteenth Century man:

"In my judgment such of us as have never fallen victims have been spared more by the absence of appetite than from any mental or moral superiority over those who have. Indeed, I believe if we take habitual drunkards as

a class, their heads and their hearts will bear an advantageous comparison with those of any other class. There seems ever to have been a proneness in the brilliant and warm-blooded to fall into this vice — the demon of intemperance ever seems to have delighted in sucking the blood of genius and of generosity. What one of us but can call to mind some relative, more promising in youth than all his fellows, who has fallen a sacrifice to his rapacity?"

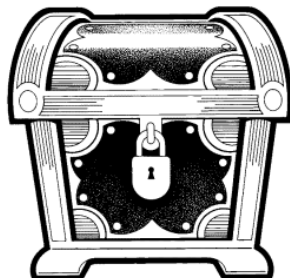
While wrapped up in the language of yesteryear (I know, this can be more difficult than reading the Big Book), Abe said something vital here that was not echoed again for a few decades. The idea that alcoholism is not a moral issue but rather an obsession (or an "appetite") flies in the face of the conventional thought of the time. But the Washingtonians,

a society of "reformed drunkards" had this idea!

In the same speech, Abe seems to speak presciently on the topic of A.A.'s traditions, over a century before our Twelve Traditions were adopted.

"And again, it is so common and so easy to ascribe motives to men of these classes other than those they profess to act upon. The preacher, it is said, advocates temperance because he is a fanatic, and desires a union of the church and state; the lawyer from his pride and vanity of hearing himself speak; and the hired agent for his salary. But when one who has long been known as a victim of intemperance bursts the fetters that have bound him... there is a logic and an eloquence in it that few with human feelings can resist. They cannot say that he desires a union of church and state, for he is not a church member; they cannot say he is vain of hearing himself speak, for his whole demeanor shows he would gladly avoid speaking at all; they cannot say he speaks for pay, for he receives none, and asks for none. Nor can his sincerity in any way be doubted, or his sympathy for those he would persuade to imitate his example be denied."

(Continued on page 18)



...the history of A.A. tradition is fraught with close calls and would-be disaster, avoided just in time by the adoption of these principles that keep the fellowship alive.

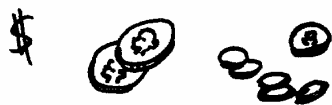


Faithful Fivers!

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:

BARBARA M.	LISA C.
BRUCE D.	MARCUS H.
DAVID B.	MARGARITE S.
DOUGLAS C.	MICHAEL R.
ELIZABETH S.	NANCIE G.
FRANCES L.	PEGGY M.
GILES H.	PETER F.
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JANE K.	RICH G.
JANET B.	RICHARD C.
JIM H.	STEVE A.
JOHN F.	TOM M.
KATE B.	WICKIE S.
KELLIE A.	DENNIS &
LAURIE L.	LUCY



A.A. On the Road: Brooklyn

By Liz B.

The most common advice I hear from my sponsor is, "Get to a meeting." So that's what I do. Before I go anywhere for any length of time—from a weekend in Baja to a month in Brooklyn—I search the Internet (name of the city + Alcoholics Anonymous), get a meeting schedule, and then I'm good to go. I often plan my itinerary around A.A. meetings and events. During my most recent trip to see my family in Brooklyn, I planned to attend noon meetings in the neighborhood every day, go to the General Service Office in Manhattan and listen to an old speaker tape of my father (who joined A.A. in 1948 and passed away in 1980), and spend a few days helping with the newsletter mailing at the Wilson House in Vermont. Nice plans, but my Higher Power apparently had other ideas.

Babysitting my 2-year-old niece thwarted any regular attendance at the Midday Sobriety group, the speaker tapes were packed away in boxes to be digitized and were not accessible, and a first-week back injury left me unable to make the five-hour drive to rural Vermont. Finally, on my last day in town, I took the subway all the way up to the G.S.O. only to find I had just missed their once-weekly meeting. My great A.A. odyssey wasn't panning out.


Then the little miracle happened, though I didn't yet realize it. My volunteer tour guide at G.S.O. introduced me to the speaker from the meeting I had just missed. He was Ron C., an Australian man with more than 51 years of continuous sobriety. He wrote the preface to the Aussie Big Book, and his story is in it. After the tour, Ron and I sat and talked for at least a half-hour. I cried as I told him how much I had hoped to hear my father's voice after 35 years and how I had missed my chance to go to the Wilson House. He totally understood my disappointment and tried to comfort me.

"When are you leaving?" he asked gently.

"Tomorrow," I replied.

"Can you change your flight?" he asked. "The annual picnic at Stepping Stones is tomorrow. You really shouldn't miss it."

Then he explained that Stepping Stones was Bill and Lois Wilson's home until they died and that there has always been an A.A. picnic there on the first Saturday in June. Ron had been a close friend of Lois's and had stayed there many times. He offered to give me a personal tour if I could arrange to go. It was an inexpensive one-hour train ride from Manhattan and the picnic was free. I decided to change my flight and go to Stepping Stones. It turned out to be one of the highlights of my A.A. life thus far.

Ron took me through the house and shared stories in every room. I checked out the many metaphysical and occult titles in the bookcases of the "Spook Room," where Bill W. had hosted séances and played with Ouija boards in an attempt to remain open to all spiritual ideas. I saw the handwritten letter he had scribbled to Lois after his first meeting with Dr. Bob. We stood and chatted around the very kitchen table where Bill and his first sponsor, Ebby, had argued until Ebby finally suggested that Bill find a God of his own understanding. These people, our founders, became absolutely real to me as I realized that nothing had changed -- A.A. is still all about one alcoholic helping another. 

Literature Review

Portable Primers, Tuckable Treasures



Two portable primers were slipped into my tote this afternoon—two treasures—A.A. pamphlets written with women in mind: “Letter to a Woman Alcoholic”, written in 1954 and “A.A. for the Woman” issued in 1976. While they do reflect the prevailing sen-

timents of their time, they are also fairly transcendental and express the core of the alcoholic experience of many women I know.

Many of us women feel that the tough guy tone in a lot of the traditional A.A. literature leaves us behind. Maybe many guys may need their egos cut down to size, but most of ours need to be peeled off the floor. Sure, I had my days of bravado, but at the end I was the quiet little drinker, miserably caught like a hamster in its wheel—work, drink, pass out; work, drink, pass out—the sad gal upstairs.

“Letter to a Woman” Alcoholic sounds like a woman doctor writing to a few women in the neighborhood. It was probably revolutionary for its time, published in Redbook Magazine in 1954, bringing the hidden alcoholic woman into the light. It begins with vivid descriptions, addressing the different types of alcoholic women, in various stages of misery. Then it tells us that we are not alone—and highlights the common triggers of alcoholism and emotional issues that propel so many deeper into the affliction. It conveys the physical allergy and mental obsession very neatly.

All that sadness fills the first few pages while the subsequent ones express the hope and healing in A.A. very well. It explains the strength of turning things over quite precisely. I also loved the description of “the mellow laughter, which can come only from people who have looked destruction and catastrophe in the face, not once but continuously over long years, and are now free and unafraid.” I could see sharing some passages with non-alcoholics, to help them understand.

But there are disappointing parts in the purple prose—for someone who may still be struggling with weight management, the repeated declarations that the alcoholic woman who was fat and blowsy was now attractive could be a tad demoralizing. And the God statements are just a bit too charming—like after the lovely mellow laughter passage comes the sentence “The laughter, in short, of people who hold God’s hand and feel safe.”

“A.A. for the Woman” definitely feels more contemporary, if only because it dives right into the individual stories pretty quickly. I was glad about that because the first page has 15 Questions, targeted to women and I bristled at “Do you reward yourself with a little drinking bout after you’ve worked hard in the house?” as Question Three. But on the other hand I had to admit that the targeted questions were effective. I certainly bought my little half pints in different places to disguise the amount I consumed (or so I thought). And yes I did “phone the hostess of a party” to find out if I’d made a fool of myself.

So once I relaxed and looked for the similarities, I was glad to see a few pages about what A.A. has learned about alcoholism, followed by some great stories. And the stories are well selected to show the broad range of drunk broads there are in the world—from waitress to doctor to mom and grandma. I was thinking, as I folded back the cover to discreetly read it on the bus, that I was lucky to have such a portable piece of the Big Book—and all the stories were from women. The stories also reflected different points of view—from the tragic, to the tough independent, the neurotic dual-addicted woman, the “lace curtains” housewife and the barfly. Both of these pamphlets provide an excellent introduction to A.A.. One is more dramatic and emotionally appealing; the other is more reflective of the range of experiences of A.A. women today. I would definitely recommend them to you and your sponsees. ↑

SPEAKERS WANTED!!

PI/CPC SPEAKER WORKSHOP

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

(Requirement: two years of continuous sobriety in AA)

Saturday, October 29th, 2005, 11:00 a.m.

At SF Unity Day

Urban Life Center, 1101 O’Farrell at Franklin St., San Francisco

AA Group Contributions - July 2005

Intercounty Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous - San Francisco and Marin Counties

Name	July '05	YTD	Name	July '05	YTD
Fellowship Contributions			San Geronimo Valley M 8pm	74.55	74.55
Brisbane Breakfast Bunch	28.00	182.60	San Geronimo Valley Book Study F 8pm		43.45
Contribution Box	107.51	449.10	Saturday Serenity Sa 8pm		200
Gay Newcomers Group	11.68	20.76	Six O'Clock Sunset Th 6pm		331.44
IFB	79.26	618.69	Sober & Serene F 7pm		112
Marin Teleservice		500.00	Steps to Freedom M 730pm		173.9
Sunday Step Study		65.70	Steps To The Solution W 715pm	31	69
The Chosen Ones		20.00	Stinson Beach Fellowship Th 8pm		641.04
Unidentified Group	234.60	1,115.87	Sunday Express Sun 6pm		111.8
Total Fellowship Contributions	\$ 461.05	\$ 2,972.72	Terra Linda Group Th 830pm	297.64	947.64
Honors			T. G. I'm Sober M 6pm		115.07
Endless Summer F 830pm		74.99	TGI Tuesday Tu 6pm	61.32	112.92
Total Honors		\$ 74.99	T.G.I.F. F 6pm	160	160
Marin Group Contributions			The Barnyard Group Sa 4pm		96
12 & 12 Study Sa 815am	174.50	174.50	The Fearless Searchers F 8pm		61.74
7am Urgent Care Group 7D 7am		200.00	There is a Solution Tu 6pm		70
A Vision for You (Fairfax) Su 730pm	45.36	190.24	Thursday Night Speaker Th 830pm	512	1054
Attitude Adjustment 7D 7am		1,979.00	Tiburon Beginners & Closed		1162.92
Awareness/Acceptance M 1030am	216.00	216.00	Tiburon Haven Sun 12pm		905.5
Candlelight Group Sun 8pm		69.94	Tiburon Women's Candlelight W 8pm		225
Closed Women Step Study Tu 330pm		66.25	Tuesday Chip Meeting Tu 8pm		500
Creekside New Growth Sun 7pm		64.00	Wednesday Mid-Week W 6pm		63.11
Crossroads Sun 12pm		765.00	Wednesday Night Candlelight W 8pm		75
Day At A Time 7D 630am	240.00	648.51	Wednesday Sundowners W 6pm		98.66
Downtown Mill Valley F 830pm	291.53	566.53	Women's Big Book Tu 1030am		123
Experience, Strength & Hope(Marin) Sa 6pm		109.80	Women on Monday M 7pm		126.54
Fairfax Friday Night F 830pm		238.21	Women's Big Book Tu 1030am	80.5	80.5
Freedom Finders F 830pm		515.01	Women's Step Study Group M 12pm		240
Gratitude Tu 8pm	538.36	538.36	Working Dogs W 1205pm		388
Greenfield Newcomers Sun 7pm		120.00	Total Marin Group Contributions	\$ 3,455.07	\$ 21,257.64
Happy Hour (Marin) Th 6pm		109.80	SF Group Contributions		
Happy, Joyous & Free 5D 12pm		363.00	515pm Smokeless W		103.8
Hope Step Group Tu 730pm	150.00	150.00	6am Marina Dock Sa		148
Intimate Feelings Sa 10am		224.05	7am Speaker Discussion Th 7am	46.97	118.4
Inverness Sunday Serenity Su 10am		60.00	830am Smokeless Tu		84
Island Group Th 8pm		228.50	A is for Alcohol Tu 6pm		159.69
Just Can't Wait 'til 8 M 630pm	97.50	191.75	A New Start F 830pm		111.06
Living in the Solution F 6pm		306.00	A Vision for You (SF) Su 630pm		81
Marin Newcomers M 830pm		469.78	AA As You Like It Tu 530pm		211.15
Marin Sober Group F 8pm	111.11	111.11	AA Step Study Su 6pm		348.3
Mill Valley 7D 7am		750.00	Afro American F 8pm		74.58
Mill Valley Discussion W 830pm		16.80	Afro American Beginners Sat 8pm	45.6	233.81
Monday Blues M 630pm		500.00	All Together Now Th 8pm		486
Monday Night Stag (Tiburon) 8pm	228.40	1,479.00	Alumni W 830pm	60	120
Monday Night Women's M 8pm	145.30	309.39	Amazing Grace M 7pm		100
Nativity Monday Night Big Book M 8pm		100.00	Artists & Writers F 630pm		907.2
Newcomers Step M 730pm		401.73	Artists & Writers DRUNKS ON DISPLAY	794	794
Noon Tu 12pm		219.50	As Bill Sees It Sat 11am		293
Noon Hope F 12pm		76.00	As Bill Sees It Th 6pm		141.95
Pathfinders Tu 12pm		273.35	As Bill Sees It Th 830pm	246.6	386.69
Rise N Shine Sun 10am		93.75	Ass in a Bag Th 830pm		40.8
			Beginners' Step Study Sat 630pm	76.8	201.33

Name	July '05	YTD	Name	July '05	YTD
Bernal Big Book Sat 5pm		188.37	High Noon Wednesday 1215pm		544.8
Big Book Basics F 8pm		340.87	High Sobriety M 8pm	298	625.6
Big Book Study Su 11am		124	High Steppers W 7pm	35.42	581.46
Birthday Party Sharing Our Sob. Sat 7pm		133.54	Hilldwellers M 8pm	396.32	480.32
Blue Book Special Su 11am		97.42	Home Group Sat 830pm		240.16
Boys Night Out Tu 730pm		120	How It Works Sat 2pm	38.68	183.62
Buena Vista Breakfast Su 12pm		220	Huntington Square W 630pm		720
Castro Discussion (Show Of Shows) W 8pm		365.59	Ingleside Beginners Su 5pm		54.45
Castro Monday Big Book M 8pm		137.42	Join the Tribe Tu 7pm		244.42
CLAADAAGH Sat 815pm		40	Joys of Recovery Tu 8pm	108	108
CLAADAAGH Step Study Tu 8pm		60.25	Keep Coming Back Sa 11am		
Cocoanuts Su 9am		165.45	Keep It Simple Sat 830pm		503.77
Come N Get It F 630pm		54	Let It Be Now F 6pm		100
Common Welfare Th 8pm		20.4	Like A Prayer Su 4pm		227.28
Creative Alcoholics M 6pm		441.82	Living Sober W 8pm		512.05
Design for Living Sat 8am		126	Living Sober with HIV W 6pm		221.65
Diamond Heights Tu 830pm	200	300	Luke's Group W 8pm	30	100
Drive Thru W 1215pm		224.84	Lush Lounge Sa 2pm	9.93	312.13
Each Day a New Beginning F 7am		1053.86	Marina Discussion F 830pm		329.41
Each Day a New Beginning M 7am	246.68	478.68	Meeting Place Noon F 12pm	66.98	66.98
Each Day A New Beginning Su 8am	656.68	1144.74	Meeting Place Noon W 12pm	45.03	91.15
Each Day a New Beginning Th 7am	327.05	631.05	Men's Gentle Touch M 7pm	90	90
Each Day a New Beginning Tu 7am	245	835.58	Mid-Morning Support Su 1030am	808.8	808.8
Each Day a New Beginning W 7am		138.67	Midnight Meditation Sat 12am	60.11	259.54
Early Joyous & Free Th 7am		20	Miracles Off 24th St W 730pm	208.08	510.56
Early Start F 6pm		683.04	Mission Terrace W 8pm		122.9
Easy Does It Tu 6pm		139.36	Monday At A Time M 1pm	25.72	55.72
Embarcadero Group 5D 1210pm		822.8	Monday Beginners M 8pm	165.6	495.6
Eureka Valley Topic M 6pm		219.57	Monday Monday M 1215pm		280.97
Experience, Strength & Hope W 715pm		44.2	New Friday Big Book F 12pm		27.15
Federal Speaker Su 12pm		330.64	New Hope Big Book M 630pm	200.22	485.76
Fell Street Step Su 8pm		151.76	New Life W 7pm	212.4	212.4
Firefighters & Friends Tu 10am		35	Newcomers Tu 8pm	252	252
Fireside Chat Sa 9pm		299.01	No Gurus Meditation Su 7pm		71.19
Fireside Chat Th 8pm		80.97	No Reservation M 12pm		138.9
Fireside Chat Tu 8pm	114.04	114.04	One Liners Th 830pm		569.03
Fireside F 830pm		94	Park Presidio M 830pm		79.8
First Place		39.6	Pax West M 12pm		760.92
First Step Speaker/ Discussion Th 730pm	27	27	Pinehurst Tu 730pm		128
Founders' Group Sa 5pm	84.4	84.4	Rebound W	30	55
Four Forty Niners F 8pm		28.55	Red Road Healing Circle Th 6pm		121.48
Friday All Groups F 830pm	938	938	Rigorous Honesty Th 1205pm		50
Friday at Five F 5pm	100	100	Rose Garden Big Book Th 1205pm		52.14
Friday Knights Th 730am		112.93	Rule 62 W 10pm		481.93
Friday Lunchtime Step F 12pm		280	Saturday Afternoon Meditation Sat 5pm		169.2
Friday Smokeless F 830pm		246.87	Saturday Easy Does It Sa 12pm	315.18	674.57
Gold Mine Group M 8pm		214.95	Saturday Night Regroup Sat 730pm	197.96	458.93
Haight Street Explorers Th 630pm		141	Seacliff Th 830pm		92.53
Happy Hour (S.F.) F 630pm		63.7	Second Chance Th 215pm		127
Happy Hour Ladies Night F 530pm		603	Serenity House		700
High Noon 5D 1215pm		612.89	Serenity Seekers M 730pm		686.37
High Noon Friday 1215pm	136.8	610.82	Sesame Step Tu 730pm		54.71
High Noon Monday 1215pm	125.57	722.9	SFPOA Th 7pm	223	426.85
High Noon Thursday 1215pm	182.45	600.69	Sisters Circle Su 6pm		196.31
High Noon Tuesday 1215pm		1034.46	Sisters In Sobriety M 7pm (SF)	235	260

(Continued on p. 14)

(Continued from p. 13)

Name	July '05	YTD	Name	July '05	YTD
Sober & Centered F 7pm		175.03	Ten Years After Su 6pm	1016.88	1207.68
Sober Across the Board M 830am	30	70.45	The 24 Hour Plan M 7am		25
Sobriety & Beyond W 7pm		345	The Parent Trap M 1230pm		119.85
Sometimes Slowly Sa 11am		59.68	The Pepper Group F 12pm		45
Step Talk Su 830am	126.09	588.71	Thought For The Day F 730am		140
Steppin' Up Tu 630pm		251.61	Thursday Night Speaker Th 830pm		935
Stepping Out Sat 6pm	86.7	151.7	Thursday Night Women's Th 630pm		346.57
Steps to Freedom M 730pm		116.36	Too Early Sat 8am		730.59
Stonestown M 8pm		101.17	Transrecovery F 630pm	6.53	11.55
Sunday Bookworms Sun 730pm		124.33	Valencia Smokefree F 6pm		456.76
Sunday Morning Gay Men's Stag Su 1030am		908.63	Walk of Shame W 8pm	135.09	135.09
Sunday Night 3rd Step Group 5pm		171.6	Washington Square M 7pm	286.8	286.8
Sunday Rap Sun 8pm		60	Waterfront Sun 8pm		796.84
Sundown W 7pm		352.8	We Care Tu 12pm		267.99
Sundown Steps Th 630pm		116.2	Wednesday Noon Steps W 12pm		104.27
Sunset 11'ers Su	122.6	244.93	Wednesday Women's Big Book W 615pm		60
Sunset 11'ers Tu		99.21	West Portal W 830pm	109.8	109.8
Sunset 11'ers W		52.65	Wits End Step Study Tu 8pm	50.99	68.74
Sunset 9'ers M		36.87	Women's 10 Years Plus Th 615pm		304
Sunset 9'ers F		222.7	Women's Kitchen Table Group Tu 630pm		171.33
Sunset 9'ers Sa		563.09	Women's Promises F 7pm		411.58
Sunset 9'ers Su		262.78	Women Living Sober Sa 1030am		18.53
Sunset 9'ers Th		303.19	Women Who Drank Too Much Tu 615pm	13.74	106.94
Sunset 9'ers Tu		168.67	Women Who Read		55.27
Sunset 9'ers W	35.17	175.11	Work In Progress Sat 7pm		23.34
Sunset Sobriety Th 730pm		411	Total SF Group Contributions	\$ 10,726.46	\$ 52,884.31
Surf Tu 8pm		1113.86			
Sutter Street Beginners Sat 6pm		411.49	TOTAL	\$ 14,642.58	\$ 77,189.66

"The position of group treasurer is one of the most responsible positions in the group and requires accuracy, attention to detail, and accountability to the group as a whole....Most groups request a treasurer's report and all relevant documentation at regularly scheduled business meetings. This way, all group members can stay informed about the financial health of the group and make group conscience decisions about how the funds should be spent...Money contributed at A.A. meetings belongs to the group, so that it may serve A.A. as a whole. Group funds are used in a number of ways throughout the Fellowship, always with the aim of making more and better Twelfth Step work possible."

Reprinted from "Memo to an A.A. Group Treasurer" with permission from A.A. World Services

Individual Contributions July 2005

	<u>Amount</u>
HONORS	15.00
	50.00
	<u>22.00</u>
Total HONORS	\$ 87.00
INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS	44.00
	250.00
	25.00
	<u>3.00</u>
Total INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS	\$ 322.00
TOTAL	\$ 409.00

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., and Donald W.

ANNIVERSARIES

Frances L.—43 years

A Fresh Start

by Liz B.

Like most of us, I have not experienced a searing epiphany in which God came to me in a blinding flash. So when I am feeling troubled or confused, I sometimes wonder if I am kidding myself about having had a “real” spiritual awakening. I know my life has changed radically since I joined Alcoholics Anonymous a few years ago and I know that prayer works for me, but since I haven’t “seen God,” I’m not sure who or what I am praying to. One of my spiritual teachers, a Zen master, suggested that I pray to the God that feels most natural to me, even if it is the kindly old man-in-the-sky of my childhood, an image I don’t really believe any more.

“It’s just a raft,” he told me. “It’s not the shore.” In his view, whatever makes me comfortable with prayer is good. The most important thing is simply that I pray and give my problems back to the universe, where they belong.

All of that was fine and dandy, but it didn’t really resolve the question of whether or not I have had an authentic spiritual experience. Wouldn’t I know it, if I had? Wouldn’t I be sure about God? I was in a bit of a tizzy about the whole thing, so I prayed for faith. I didn’t pray for a sign because I couldn’t be sure I’d recognize it. (Yes, I am a real alcoholic.)

Shortly thereafter I got a message in my e-mail that ultimately led me to the *Grapevine* archives, where I read this message written by Bill Wilson in 1962:

“When AAs come to me, hoping to find out how one comes by those sudden experiences, I simply tell them in all probability that they have had one just as good – and that theirs is identical excepting it has been strung out over a longer period of time. Then I go on to say that if their transformation in A.A. extending over six months had been condensed into six minutes – well, they then might have seen the stars too!”

That made sense to me. I had a friend back in the Sixties who used to do that sort of thing all of the time. He called it a “consciousness comparison.” When I compared the alienated, anxious, angry, and thoroughly hopeless woman of a few years ago to the thriving, happy person who has more friends than she can keep up with today, I could easily see a transformation that amounts to nothing less than a full-scale spiritual experience.

I’m glad mine happened gradually. I probably wouldn’t have known how to handle it if it had been given to me all of a sudden. As I said earlier, I’m not so sure I would have recognized a burning bush if it was right in front of me. Thankfully, what I got instead was a fresh start, a program of recovery that let me wake up one step at a time. That’s a spiritual experience I can use every day. ↑



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

Home Group Series

The Too Early Group

By Kathy P.

Every Saturday morning I get up early and head out to my home group, which meets at St. Dominic’s School, at Pierce and Pine Streets, in San Francisco. The Too Early Group is a Big Book study meeting that starts at 8 a.m. Over a period of two to three years, we read the Big Book cover to cover. Each week, we pick up where we left off the week before and read until someone is moved to share about the reading. Usually, we then proceed to share on that topic for the rest of the meeting. Since 1986, when the group was founded, the group has read the Big Book seven times (including every footnote and appendix). Since March 2003, we have been working our way through the fourth edition for the first time.

This meeting has taught me an incredible amount about AA and sobriety. Week after week, members share their perspectives on spiritual principles and living a sober life, and share their understanding of the fellowship’s “basic text”. I hear many things that I might never “get” on my own. Just as important, Too Early’s members like to laugh and truly care about their sobriety and each other. The group includes people in early, middle and long-term sobriety. Newcomers are welcomed and encouraged to participate. For someone who used to spend Saturday morning recovering from the night before, this meeting is a joy and mainstay of my spiritual life.

NOTE: Thanks to Bruce K. for his excellent “Too Early Group; a Brief History”. ↑

Let us know if you want to
write about your homegroup.
Email thepoint@aasf.org

IFB Meeting Summary

The IFB is the Board of Directors for our local AA Central Office (San Francisco and Marin Counties)

Regular Monthly Meeting Intercounty Fellowship Board 1187 Franklin St., San Francisco, CA Wednesday, September 7, 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**	Gerard W.	Any Lengths	A*	Monika H.	SFPOA	P
Alejandro D.	Fireside Chat	P	Gregory F.	Midnight Meditation	P	Nicholas L.	Some Are Sicker Than...	P
Amber West	Sisters Circle	P	Greg S.	Beginner's Warmup	P	Nicholas S.	Sutter St. Beginners	P
Amy	Artists & Writers	A*	Jason K.	Cocoanuts	P	Omar C.	Tuesday Chip	P
Andy T.	Waterfront	P	Jim T.	First Place	P	Pascal G.	Monday Night Stag	P
Anthony J.	Founders Group	P	Joe G.	Beginners	A*	Penelope P.	Amazing Grace	P
Brian H.	Living Sober with HIV	P	Judi C.	Tuesday's Daily Reflections	P	Randy F.	We Care	P
Bruce K.	Sunset Speaker Step	P	Julia W.	Sesame Step	P	Rebekah D.	Fell Street Step	P
Carol E.	High Noon Wednesday	P	Justin S.	Alumni	P	Rudi D.	Serenity Seekers	P
Chris H.	Friendly Circle	P	Lauren H.	Ten Years After	P	Ryan W.	Tiburon BB	P
Chris T.	Keep Coming Back	A*	Lillian R.	Women's Promises	P	Sam C.	Boys Night Out	P
Curtis S.	Sunday Gay Men's Stag	A*	Luis M.	High Noon Tuesday	P	Scott N.	Sunset 11'ers Sat.	P
Dan H.	Each Day a New Beginning	A**	Lynnore G.	Walk Of Shame	P	Stephanie R.	Live & Let Live	A**
Danna P.	Treasurer	P	Mark O.	Come 'n' Get It!	A**	Stephen R.	Valencia Smokefree	P
Daniel B.	Too Early	P	Marvin R.	Bernal Big Book	P	Steve N.	Terra Linda Group	P
David B.	Federal Speaker	P	Matt T.	Fairfax Friday Night	P	Steven S.	Homegroup	P
David H.	Tuesday Downtown	A*	Matthew Y.	Marina Discussion	A**	Terry B.	High Noon Thursday	P
David P.	Goodlands	P	Maury P.	Central Office Manager	P	Tim K.	High Noon Saturday	A*
Don B.	Friday Fell Street	A*	Meredith R.	High Noon Friday	A**	Tim Mc.	Join the Tribe	A**
Doug D.	As Bill Sees It Sat 11am	P	Michael L.	Attitude Adjustment Hour	A*	Tom R.	Mill Valley 7AM	P
Edward F.	Happy Hour	A*	Michael S.	Sunset 9'ers Sat.	P	Thomsa K.	Mission Terrace	P
Francesca K.	West Portal	P	Mitzi H.	New Hope Big Book	P	Victor V.	Stepping Up	P
Gaspar L.	Keep It Simple	P						

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 Bylaws.

New IFB Reps Present

David	Work in Progress
Karen	24 Hour Plan
Patty	Huntington Square

IFB Liaisons Present

Trevor F.	Marin General Service
Matt T.	Marin Teleservice
Mitzi H.	H & I
Chris H.	Spirit of SF

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

1. IFB Reports

Chair's Report: Steve R. gave the report. Central Office staffed a table at the Spirit of San Francisco Convention but because of location, the table received few visitors. Central Office will have a table at Marin Unity Day and will co-host San Francisco Unity Day on Oct. 29. The summary of the Ad Hoc Committee Huddles on how to get and keep new members is as follows: 1) keep it fun, 2) reach out to the IFB and fellowship at large, 3) build database of skills and availability of members, 4) mentor new members.

Treasurer's Report: Danna P. gave the report. The net loss for January through July was (\$1,742) which is \$13,321 less than the budgeted net loss of (\$15,063). The net income in July of \$4,114 exceeded the budgeted net income of \$2,401 by \$1,713. Unrestricted cash as of July 31, 2005 totaled \$24,922 and is no longer sufficient to pay the budgeted expenses totaling \$33,700 for the next two months. Unrestricted cash increased by \$5,729 primarily due to the net income in July.

Central Office Manager's Report: Maury P. gave the report. Maury is now at the office 30 hours a week. With her increase in hours, she hopes to spend more time with the committees and help facilitate their work. All regular phone shifts are covered. She attended the Northern California Central Office Managers seminar on Friday, August 12th, the focus being on comparison of each's Intergroup structure. Maury is going to the Annual Intergroup Managers Seminar in North Carolina and will be out of the office from 9/22-10/3.

IFB Summary (Continued from page 16)

Central Office Committee Report: Steve S. gave the report. Steve S. chaired the August 22nd meeting. The COC determined that the Spirit of SF website link to the Central Office website was appropriate. A motion was passed to spend \$500 to upgrade QuickBooks in order to keep it supported and up to date. The position of IFB Liaison to Marin General Service is open. David P. will give a workshop for committee chairs on October 18th at 6:00pm at Central Office.

2. Katrina / AA Relief

We need to decide what, if any, assistance we can provide the areas affected by the hurricane. Request for literature, cash, email contact, and meetings have been received from the offices and service entities in the Gulf Port region. www.aa-louisiana.org/katrina has information on what is needed. The phone number is 1-800-924-0431. Danna P. makes a motion to send \$1000 in literature. Motion seconded. Steve R. amends motion to add another \$1000 of literature, totaling \$2000.

Motion: SF/Marin Central Office will send \$2000 in literature to a site determined by the Central Office Manager in consultation with the Central Office Committee and approval of the IFB Chair.

Motion passed, no count taken.

After hearing the opposition voice, a re-count of the motion was taken:

Favor – 21, Opposed – 18, Abstain – 6, Motion passed, but without substantial unanimity

Bruce K. moves that we turn over the decision making to Central Office staff. Motion seconded.

Motion: The Central Office staff, in consultation of the Central Office Committee, will be responsible for determining the amount, type, and recipients of donation.

Favor – 35, Opposed – 2, Abstain – 7, Motion passed.

3. IFB Committee Reports

Outreach Committee: No report. The committee meets the 3rd Thursday of the month at 6:30pm at Central Office.

Literature Review Committee: Steve N. gave the report. The committee needs help. Each month they write a literature review for *The Point*. The committee meets the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 6:30pm at Central Office.

The Point Editorial Committee: Maury P. gave the report. Each contributor to *The Point* will receive a complimentary issue. The committee meets the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month at 5:00pm at Central Office.

Orientation Committee: No report. Orientation of new IFB members takes place at 6:00pm, one hour prior to the monthly IFB meeting.

Website Committee: Jason K. gave the report. Jason K. was elected Chair of the committee. The committee is working on more changes to the website to make it more accessible. The committee meets the 2nd Thursday of the month at 6:00pm at Central Office.

12th Step Committee: Rudi DiP. gave the report. The committee had a table at the Spirit of San Francisco Convention. They will have a table at the Marin Unity Day. There will be a 12th Step workshop on September 14th at 6:30pm at Central Office. Lord H. was named recording secretary. The committee meets the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 6:30pm at Central Office.

Special Events Committee: Fran gave the report. The committee is hosting an AA October Fest BBQ at Speedway Meadow in Golden Gate Park on Saturday, October 15th from 12-5pm. Committee members will attend Marin Unity Day and request the support of more IFB members. San Francisco Unity Day will be on October 29th. The coordinating committee for SF Unity Day meets every Friday at 6pm at the Central Office until the event. The committee meets the 4th Tuesday of the month at 7:30pm at Central Office.

Special Needs Committee: Pene gave the report. The wheel chair project is close to complete. The committee needs help identifying wheel chair accessible meetings. There will be pizza at the next committee meeting. The committee meets the 4th Tuesday of the month at 6:30pm at Central Office.

Archives Committee: Lynnore G. gave the report. The committee is working on a budget to present in a few months. The committee meets the 1st Monday of the month at 6:00pm at Central Office.

Nominating Committee: No report. The committee meets as necessary.

4. IFB Standing Committee Reports

SF Teleservice: Written report submitted. The August Orientation meeting was attended by two volunteers. There are seven open shifts. The 12th Step list was just updated. Email addresses are being collected for Central Office to send out updates. The committee meets on the 3rd Monday of the month at 6:30pm at Central Office.

SF PI/CPC: No report. The committee meets the 2nd Monday of the month at 7:00pm. at Central Office.

5. Non-IFB Liaison Reports

General Service, SF: No report. The committee meets the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 1187 Franklin Street. Orientation is at 7:00pm and the business meeting is at 8:00pm

General Service, Marin: Trevor gave the report. Marin Unity Day is September 17th in Corte Madera. The committee meets the 3rd Monday of the month at 9 Ross Valley Road, San Rafael. GSR sharing is at 7:00pm and the District Meeting is at 8:00pm

Teleservice, Marin: Matt T. gave the report. They have a booth at Unity Day. The committee meets the 4th Tuesday of the month at 7:30pm at 1360 Lincoln, San Rafael.

PI/CPC, Marin: No report. The committee meets the 4th Thursday of the month at 7:15pm at 1360 Lincoln, San Rafael.

Bridging the Gap: No report. The SF committee meets the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 6:30pm 1187 Franklin/Geary, San Francisco. The Marin committee meets the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 6:45pm at 1411 Lincoln, San Rafael.

H & I: Mitsi H. gave the report. Mission statement was read. Mitzi passed out the H & I Policy & Purpose, the H & I Purpose & History, and the H & I schedule. The SF Committee meets the last Thursday of the month at 1751 Sacramento St., SF. Orientation is at 7:15pm and the committee Business Meeting is at 8:00pm. The Marin committee meets the 2nd 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 7:15pm.

Spirit of San Francisco: Chris gave the report. Attendance at the convention was good. The committee meets the 1st Monday of the month at 7:30pm at Central Office.

The next IFB meeting will be held Wednesday, October 5, 2005 at First Unitarian Universalist Church, 1187 Franklin St., SF at 7:00pm

Respectfully submitted, Lauren H., IFB Secretary

Tradition Ten

(Continued from page 9)

How ironic it is that despite these words that sound like reinforcement of the values the society already embraced, the Washingtonians would stray from their singleness of purpose, and involve themselves in the public controversies regarding the legal prohibition of alcohol and the abolition of slavery. Abe said it in perhaps overly flowery prose, but still clearly: the Washingtonians' credibility, and therefore their survival as a group, rested on their refusal to confuse themselves by alliance with issues of the preacher, of the lawyer, or the hired agent. This was the pillar on which they could credit their effectiveness in helping drunkards recover from their alcoholism. With a group doing such work, it's a wonder we aren't all recovering members of the Washingtonian Society today.

But the Washingtonian Society never adopted A.A.'s Tenth Tradition. As much as the membership might have understood this when Abe Lincoln spoke to them in 1842, the Washingtonians did take to the soapbox on outside issues, divided their membership with stormy debate, and lost their effectiveness at carrying the message to the suffering alcoholic.

Perhaps this seems like academic historical rambling, but what does it have to do with A.A.? Well, just imagine if A.A. started taking sides on political issues and involving itself in any outside controversy. Imagine if A.A. existed without the protection of the Tenth Tradition. Imagine if A.A. were to divide over some fiery controversy and in the space of a few years ceased to exist. We can't afford to let our solution slip away and be diluted by any outside cause, no matter how good. ↑

Sections taken from Abraham Lincoln, "Address before the Springfield Washington Temperance Society," 22 February 1842.

Slogan of the Month

Turn It Over

by Mark M.

Before sitting down to write this article I wrote a spot-check fear inventory. Within the next couple of days, I need to have a conversation that will be difficult for me, yet has been a long time coming.

People were a large part of why I drank. I drank to please them, in fear of them, and to simply fit in. As a result, I never mastered the proper execution of the dreaded B-word—*Boundaries*. Armed with a new sponsor and the suggested assignment of going deeper into my sex inventory, I'm closely examining my people patterns in past romantic relationships, with past sex partners, and even with past bosses. This upcoming conversation will be with an ex of mine with whom I am still friends.

Before sitting down to write the inventory, I meditated for five minutes. My cat hopped up in my lap as he often does when I meditate. I asked God for guidance in writing the inventory, this article, and guiding me toward what I need to say in this conversation to end a friendship. That, to me, is the pure essence of *Turning It Over*—drop into prayer or meditation, ask God for guidance, and let go of the results.

I know the next right steps I need to take here: make a list of talking points for the conversation, review with my sponsor, and make the call. Uncomfortable as it might be, I know deep down it's the right thing to do.

Another example of turning it over is that cat I just mentioned, the one who likes to meditate with me. He arrived because of just showing up for life, turning it over, and letting go of the results. Last spring, my first sponsor suggested I get a cat. My roommate and I headed over to the SPCA one Sunday afternoon. I was determined to leave that day with a cat (my will). I did not want to wait. But it turned out the kitten he and I both liked that day had terminal kidney failure. After much deliberation, we decided to pass on him.

However, there was a second cat that day named Wilbur whom I thought was OK, but we decided to leave. As we continued to run our errands, I adamantly told my roommate I wanted to go back for Wilbur (again, my will). My roommate, also in the program, said, "Let's wait a few weeks and go back. If that other cat is still there, then it's probably meant for us to adopt him." Still sulking, I agreed.

One month later, I found myself on a first lunch date with someone who volunteered at the SPCA. I relayed my cat story, and he suggested I look at two new cats when I went that weekend.

I never did have a second date with him, but three days later found myself at the SPCA, names of the suggested cats in hand. Both my roommate and I fell in love with one named Cole, and we adopted him. The cat and I only found each other because I put my will in check and followed the signs being presented to me. That, to me, is *Turning It Over*. ↑

Financial Statement

July 2005 - Intercounty Fellowship of AA

	<u>Jul 05</u>	<u>Jan - Jul 05</u>		<u>Jul 05</u>	<u>Jan - Jul 05</u>
Ordinary Income/Expense			Shipping	-24.88	9.50
Income			Rent - Office	3,730.20	25,982.70
Contributions from Groups			Rent - Other	0.00	450.00
Group Contributions	14,642.58	80,720.75	Equipment Lease	0.00	2,909.58
Honors	<u>0.00</u>	<u>74.99</u>	Repair & Maintenance	178.00	1,318.12
Total Contributions from Groups	14,642.58	80,795.74	Security System	33.50	299.50
Contributions from Individuals			Special Events	-150.00	610.00
Individual - Unrestricted	322.00	2,466.34	Telephone	384.08	3,043.53
Faithful Fiver	100.00	1,266.00	Utilities	289.85	1,508.57
Honorary Contributions	<u>87.00</u>	<u>2,147.50</u>	Bad Checks	0.00	0.00
Total Contributions from Individuals	509.00	5,879.84	Miscellaneous Expense	<u>1.14</u>	<u>-461.33</u>
Gratitude Month			Total Expense	<u>13,983.85</u>	<u>111,522.55</u>
Gratitude Month - Groups	<u>0.00</u>	<u>3,451.68</u>	Net Ordinary Income	4,706.95	1,531.21
Total Gratitude Month	0.00	3,451.68	Other Income/Expense		
Sales - Bookstore	7,924.08	57,911.07	Other Income		
Special Event Income	460.00	1,329.37	Interest Income	<u>68.76</u>	<u>486.37</u>
Newsletter Subscript.	<u>53.24</u>	<u>376.94</u>	Total Other Income	68.76	486.37
Total Income	23,588.90	149,744.64	Other Expense		
Cost of Goods Sold			Depreciation Expense	445.89	2,894.91
Cost of Books Sold	<u>4,898.10</u>	<u>36,690.88</u>	Amortization of Leasehold Impr.	<u>216.22</u>	<u>864.88</u>
Total COGS	<u>4,898.10</u>	<u>36,690.88</u>	Total Other Expense	<u>662.11</u>	<u>3,759.79</u>
Gross Profit	18,690.80	113,053.76	Net Other Income	<u>-593.35</u>	<u>-3,273.42</u>
Expense			Net Income	<u>\$ 4,113.60</u>	<u>\$ (1,742.21)</u>
Employee Expenses					
Wages & Salaries	6,805.50	49,617.09			
Employer Tax Expenses	647.93	5,381.94			
Health Benefits	1,128.00	5,528.00			
Retirement/Annuity Expense	0.00	7,200.00			
Workers Comp Ins.	<u>0.00</u>	<u>836.47</u>			
Total Employee Expenses	8,581.43	68,563.50			
Professional Fees					
Computer Consulting	<u>156.25</u>	<u>156.25</u>			
Total Professional Fees	156.25	156.25			
Bank Charges					
Credit Card Processing Fees	119.65	755.45			
Bank Charges - Other	<u>0.00</u>	<u>108.90</u>			
Total Bank Charges	119.65	864.35			
Postage					
Bulk Mail	200.00	600.00			
Postage - Other	<u>173.00</u>	<u>504.35</u>			
Total Postage	373.00	1,104.35			
ASL Expense					
ASL Other	<u>0.00</u>	<u>390.00</u>			
Total ASL Expense	0.00	390.00			
IFB Literature	0.00	43.80			
PI/CPC	0.00	29.01			
Filing/Fees	0.00	47.00			
Insurance	0.00	2,383.68			
Internet Expense	0.00	119.70			
Office Supplies	311.63	2,150.74			

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