

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

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

The Point

December 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.

The Gift of Gratitude

by Michael F.

The first lesson in maintaining a happy heart came with my final arrival into the rooms of A.A. This lesson was learned not through my intellect, but through my heart. I was happy just to be a part of the small group that met at Central Office in Phoenix, once a week on Saturday nights.

I experienced a short period of sobriety in 1972, when my first semester of college led me to the rooms. I heard the message, realized I was in the right place, and heard the answers to my problems. My heart felt this without assistance from my head. However, one thing led to another (youth, moving home from college and not continuing to go to meetings) and I decided to drink again.

It took me six years to find my way back to A.A. My thoughts the second time were similar to the first. Home. Safe. The answer to my problems. The difference this time was my bottom. This time I entered with a determination to stay. I also kept my mouth shut most of the time. There were no arguments, rationalizations or excuses. I only said, "My name is Spike, and I'm here to listen." Fortunately, the last portion of the introduction was true. I did listen and have continued to do so for the last 27 years.

My feelings of gratitude were not sweet sentiments. It was the gratitude of a starving man for food, or the gratitude that is felt at an oasis after being lost in the desert. There was little room for grateful feelings for the people that shared their stories and made room for me. Ultimately, these members left me with the feeling that my recovery was mine. It had to come out of my motives and understanding. Much has happened since my first meeting. Applying myself to the steps, getting to know my sponsor, and becoming a part of my home group has carried me into sobriety.

I remember an image I had while meditating my first year. The vivid image was of me raising my head out of an ocean of slime. Debris dripping from my body, I looked up and saw the rising sun on the horizon. I took the meaning of this vision to be my opportunity to rise out of the slime. This led me to some arrogance and pride in being an alcoholic. It made me feel sorry for normal people who don't get the chance to rise out of the slime. Over time, I met people who haven't had to go to the depths of alcoholism to achieve awareness and self-knowledge. My perspective of my vision has been tempered over the years to understand it as a look at my chance at recovery.

Gratitude for the big things is pretty easy. As time goes by in sobriety, old wounds have healed and new skills and tools have been applied to life. I went back to college

(Continued on page 6)

December 2005....

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
<h1>Happy Holidays!</h1>						
4	5 FIRST MON Archives Committee, Central Office, 6 pm Spirit of SF Committee, Central Office, 7:30 pm	6	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.)	8 SECOND THU Website Committee Central Office, 6 pm	9	10
11	12 SECOND MON SF Public Information Committee Central Office, 7 pm	13 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	14 SECOND WED 12th Step Committee Central Office, 6:30 pm Marin Bridging the Gap 1411 Lincoln Ave., San Rafael 6:45 pm	15 THIRD THU Outreach Committee Central Office, 6:30 pm	16	17 THIRD SAT General Service CNCA Meeting 320 N. McDowell Petaluma DCMCs: 10 am Business Meeting: 12:30 pm
18	19 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	20 THIRD TUE San Mateo General Service St. Andrews Church 15th & El Camino Real San Mateo, 7:30 pm	21 THIRD WED Literature Review Committee Central Office, 6:30 pm	22	23	24
25 FOURTH SUN Living Sober Convention Committee 1668 Bush, SF 5:30 pm	26 Central Office Closed Happy Holidays!	27 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	28	29 LAST THU SF H&I Old First Church, 1751 Sacramento St. SF Orientation: 7:15 pm Committee Meeting: 8pm	30 Central Office will close at noon today for our Annual Inventory	31 NOTE: Central Office will be closed on Monday, Jan 2, 2006

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.

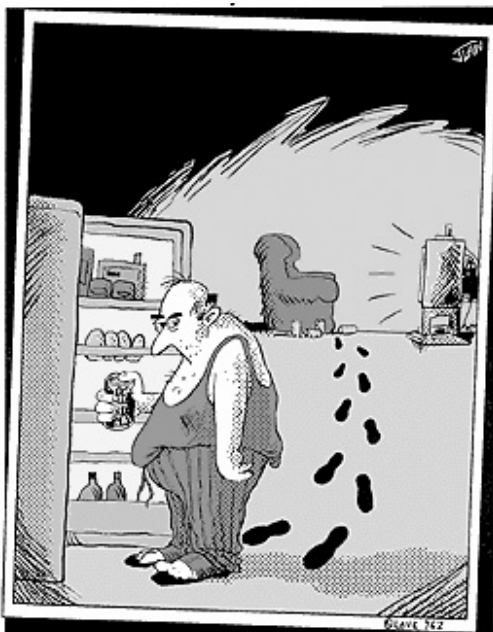
The Point illustrates the shared experience of individual A.A. members working the A.A. program and applying the spiritual principles of the Twelve Steps. Yet what works for one individual or A.A. group may not always work for another. For this reason, from month to month, articles may be published that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



Hank's 12-Step Program.

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

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

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

Sun 3:45 pm Marina BETTY FORD ALUMNI, Marina Dock, 2118 Greenwich/ Fillmore (SD)

Meeting Changes:

Tue 8:30 pm Marina LIVING SOBER, Marina Dock, 2118 Greenwich/ Fillmore (was 8pm)
 Tue 8:30 pm San Rafael TUESDAY CHIP MEETING, Community Center, 618 B St. (was 8pm)
 Wed 8:30 pm Marina 8:30 PM SMOKELESS, Marina Dock, 2118 Greenwich/ Fillmore (was 8:15pm)
 Sun 6:00 pm Sunset SISTERS CIRCLE, 5th Ave./ Irving, Church (was 7th & Irving)

No Longer Meeting:

Mon 7:30 pm Richmond ONWARD UPWARD 30th & Geary, Church
 Wed 5:30 pm San Rafael QUITTING TIME, First Methodist Church, 9 Ross Valley Rd at Greenfield Ave.
 Sat 8:30 am Mission OH NO NOT THE BIG BOOK, 2900 24th St./ Florida

THERE ARE A NUMBER OF NEW AA MEETINGS AT THE SF ALANO CLUB (1748 MARKET ST./OCTAVIA) NOT YET LISTED IN OUR SCHEDULE. FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT MEETING TIMES CALL 255-7903 OR VISIT THEIR WEBSITE: www.alanosf.org

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 October 2005

Below are the meetings and groups whose Trusted Servants registered with Central Office during October 2005. A total of eighteen San Francisco Trusted Servants and four Marin Trusted Servants registered with Central Office during that time.

San Francisco

8:30am Smokeless Thu. 8:30am; 8:30am Smokeless Fri. 8:30am; Big Book Basics Fri. 8pm; Chips Ahoy Tue. 12pm; Easy Does It Tue. 6pm; Embarcadero Big Book Thu. 12:10pm; Federal Speaker Sun. 12pm; Friendly Circle Beginners Sun. 7:15pm; Happy Destiny Sat. 6:30pm; Happy Hour Ladies' Night Fri. 5:30pm; Huntington Square Wed. 6:30pm; Just for Today Sun. 2:30pm; Marina Discussion Fri. 8:30pm; Parkside Thur. 8:30pm; Sunset Sobriety Thu. 7:30pm; Ten Years After Sun. 6pm; Valencia Smokefree Fri. 6pm; Women's Promises Fri. 7pm

Marin

Candlelight Sun. 8:30pm; Monday Night Stag Mon. 8pm; Six O'clock Sunset Thu. 6pm; Beginners Meeting Tue. 7pm

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 & Flyers for December 2005

BRISBANE BREAKFAST BUNCH

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

DATE	SPEAKER	FROM
12/04	Yvonne D.	San Francisco
12/11	John T.	San Francisco
12/18	Peggy H.	San Francisco
12/25	No Meeting!	Building Closed

TUESDAY DOWNTOWN

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

DATE	SPEAKER	DOS	FROM
12/06	Susan L.	02/03/85	SF
12/13	Lynn H.	07/29/70	Back to Basics
12/20	Larry H.	11/08/91	Ass in a Bag
12/27	Erston P.	09/22/87	449'ers

The Spirit of San Francisco

AA Speaker/Chip Meeting

Speaker: Anita L. T. of El Sobrante
and

NEW YEAR'S EVE DANCE

Meeting 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM

Dance 9:30 PM - 1:00 AM

Urban Life Center
Franklin & O'Farrell St.

Dance \$15 suggested donation

Free Parking

Information (415) 752-9930 www.spirit-sf.org

The Novato Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous

New Year's Eve Dance

Saturday December 31st 2005

Meeting from 7-8pm

Dance starts at 8:30

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

Advance Tickets: \$10.00

At-the-Door Suggested Donation: \$12.00

For advanced ticket sales call Frank R.—415-269-6075.
For general information, or to get a commitment,
call Erin B.— 415-509-2069



AA ALCOTHON

2900 24th Street @ Florida, San Francisco

Holiday Alcolthon

Starts Friday, December 23rd

@ 6pm

Through

Sunday, December 25th

@ 11:30pm

New Years 2005

Starts Friday, December 30th

@ 6pm

Through

Sunday January 1st

@ 11:30pm



AA Meetings on the even hour from 6am 'til Midnight (Door closes at midnight)
Special New Years Eve Meeting on 12/31 from midnight til 2am (Door closes @ 2am)

A.A. OktoberFest: The Gift of Fellowship

by Scott N.


The night before the first annual Alcoholics Anonymous OctoberFest picnic, all weather forecasts called for rain. A committee member who spent weeks helping plan the event sat at home trying not to pray for good weather, and simply accept that it might be a very wet picnic. I sat at home with the beginning of a cold, wishing I had not committed to help and wanting to stay home catnapping all day on the couch. The collective HP (Higher Power) of A.A. SF decided to give the roughly 130 people who would attend the gift of abundant sunshine. It was to be the first of many such gifts during that event for me.

When I arrived one of the first people I saw was the same person that was at home worried about the weather. He was at total ease and had let go of all expectations. I had personally seen the stress level increasing prior to the event and was thrilled that he was enjoying the event. Sure enough that was only the first gift resulting from contrary action.

The next gift I experienced was seeing a member of the fellowship who had recently been in a hospital. Just seeing him walk around talking with members old and new brought a smile to my face. Although I still consider myself relatively new, it is the inspiration of the 'old-timers' that helped me get where I am today and taught me to ignore my own thinking and show up to events like this.


The fact that a member so newly out of the hospital would come out and spend 3 hours of his day sharing stories with old friends, and making new friends, was a huge example of just how important fellowship is.

The gifts kept coming. I had called someone I have seen struggling with the program. I recently was told that he was back out and thought I would invite him to the event. I got his voicemail and didn't think I was going to see him. Sure enough, during later in the day he called back. He came to the event and tried to reconnect with the program and the people in it. The power of attraction is one of the greatest assets of A.A.; bringing people towards the fellowship, and bringing back people who have experienced the solution.

Once the meeting started I was amazed at how all of the people crowded around for the countdown and speakers. There were about 8 new members that identified. I am certain there were more that chose not to. We had sobriety ranging from 42 years down to 2 days. Had I chosen to sleep in, I would have missed the gift of fellowship. So many members and their families were there to enjoy great food, fun games, and most importantly the company of other travelers on a spiritual path. If you missed it, I hope you can join us at the next local event and find your own gifts. 

The Gift of Gratitude *(Continued from page 1)*

and got a degree. I've been to Moscow on business. Births and deaths of friends and family have lent both joy and sorrow to my days. A relationship that lasted for 15 years both began and ended with a 4th step. Those are the big moments. These moments are supported by longer periods of time that don't have the grand bang of excitement to propel my feelings to gratitude. Looking back on these big moments, I remember feeling gratitude for my recovery, for A.A. and for my higher power. It was easy to notice how I had arrived at a place I had not earned, at a gift beyond what my toils and efforts could have produced.

Daily gratitude has always been a greater challenge. On days when life and work seems too much to bear, or when failures seemingly outweigh successes, *taking action* grants perspective. Recently a phone call from a sponsee gave me a sense of purpose that warmed my heart. These small action steps are not so much drudgery as they are building blocks that make my life something I treasure and am grateful for. 

A Fundraiser for
Living Sober / Western Roundup

New Years Eve Dance

Saturday, December 31st
7:30 pm AA—AI Anon meeting
9:00 pm DANCE
Harvey Milk Civil Rights Academy
4235 19th Street @ Collingwood

\$15 Suggested Donation

*This is a fundraiser for Living Sober 2006.
No one will be turned away for lack of funds,
PLEASE give what you can.*

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

Www.LivingSober.Org
415.978.2478

Dear Alky

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

Dear Alky,

I've got a big trip home planned for the holidays. I'm really excited, because I haven't seen my family for two years. But I'm scared to fly. I used to calm my airplane nerves with several drinks or a sleeping pill. I'm worried about what will happen when I hear those little bottles clinking as the beverage cart rolls by me. Do you have any suggestions about how to fly sober?

-Nervous

Dear Nervous:

The older I get, the more I'm afraid to fly, and the longer I'm sober, the more I realize it's all up to God. My first sponsor told me that if I'm supposed to die in a plane crash, not flying won't help. "God'll drop a plane on your head when you're walking down the street," he said. That made me laugh, which eased my worries. But on a recent flight home from Europe, the plane I was in hit turbulence. I was terrified. My first response, believe it or not, was to pray as I've been taught in A.A.: "God, I only want to know your will; show me how I can be helpful." It calmed the worst of it. Perhaps you could try that. Also, you might initiate a friendly conversation with your seatmate. See who God has put next to you that you might help through fellowship. You may make – and be – a friend, and it'll calm you in a way booze never could. As the Big Book notes on page 20, "Our very lives, as ex-problem drinkers, depend upon our constant thought of others and how we may help meet their needs." Have fun!



Dear Alky --

This time of year usually causes me some anxiety, especially in response to gifts that some friends give me. They don't really know about or appreciate my sobriety. Following a long-standing tradition, they still give me gifts of alcohol. I truly appreciate the gestures, but I don't know what to do with the gifts or what to tell them.

-No More Booze



"God, I only want to know your will; show me how I can be helpful."

Dear No More:

A simple "thank you" should do nicely. Then give the booze to someone you know who drinks sanely. The Big Book reminds us that we don't ask our friends to change their habits on our account. And isn't it nice that you have friends? By the way, are any of these good-hearted people on your Eighth Step list? Maybe it's time to make Ninth Step amends to them, during which you can mention that you no longer drink. Then tell them how thoughtful you've always found them to be.



Dear Alky,

Before I got sober, I used to drink an alcohol-laced cold medicine whether or not I was actually sick. Now, when I get sick in sobriety I crave that sense of ease and comfort that medicines with alcohol used to give me. My sponsor says to stay away from most cold remedies because many have alcohol. But I wonder, can't I take anything and still be sober? How am I going to get through the winter? At least I won't be drinking hot toddies!

Thanks,

Rudolph the red-nosed

Dear Rudolph:

So here's my question: if your sponsor told you to stay away from cold medicines with alcohol, why are you asking me? Are you taking an A.A. poll until you find the answer you want? Sneaky! We've all done that, but it can lead to ruin. I'm with your sponsor: I stay away from stuff with alcohol, but not from any moral stance. I just don't want to start the physical allergy that leads to the mental mania for booze. It's happened when I've bitten into a dessert I didn't know had, say, rum in it. Suddenly – zang! Every cell wakes up and says, "More!" It's an awful feeling. As to how you'll get through winter, gosh, how about going to meetings, working the steps, helping other alxies and leaving the rest up to God? That oughta do it. If you get sick, ask someone to bring an A.A. meeting to your house – and some chicken soup.

Happy holidays!

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:

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Steve S. s@p90.net

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ORIENTATION COMMITTEE

Tim M. gryffindor-house@earthlink.net

OUTREACH COMMITTEE

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

THE POINT

Chair Needed

SPECIAL EVENTS

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Pene P. 415.200-6261

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SF TELESERVICE COMMITTEE

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

SF PI/CPC COMMITTEE

Laura N. 415.931-2567

Recovery ❖ Unity ❖ Service

Discovering my Higher Power

by Carol D.

In a thinking mood one dark and starry night I asked myself what I was doing in Alcoholics Anonymous, whose founders in the Big Book wrote and talked about God. I also heard people at A.A. meetings talking about a Higher Power.

I had turned away from believing in a God when my mother died. I said nasty words, in my thoughts, to a priest who was my cousin, and then I walked out of my mother's funeral service. I also turned away from religion because of the guilt of breaking out of the limits put on me as a female who was not married and still wanted to have sex when I drank too much.

One evening after I started going to A.A. meetings, I sat down to read the Third Step. The first thing I saw was: "Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood him." I suddenly thought, "What am I doing in A.A., because I understood God to be in charge of the Church and this is a God that I neither like nor understand."

I went to a meeting the next evening and talked to a friend about the Third Step. I told him that I was not sure about this step because I was not willing to turn my will over to God. For all I knew, I might be an atheist. He took me outside to look up at the darkness of the sky that made the stars bright with a shining white glow, and said: 'Look up in the sky and see a vast Universe filled with glistening stars. You can choose anything that you want to be a God of your choice and call it your Higher Power, who will help you in your days of sobriety.' I thought about what he told me and came to believe that I have a right to choose from this vast Universe which star will be my Higher Power or "God".

I came to believe that a Higher Power exists in the Guardian Angels who have helped me. One of my living Guardian Angels is my Life Coach, who first sent me to A.A. Others were people that I knew in the material world who are now spirits guiding me. One of these Guardian Angels is my Aunt Rita, my godmother, who always praised me. Another is my older sister, who I never really got along with when she was alive. Now I let her hang around with my other spiritual Guardian Angels. When I feel some mischief going on in my life, I call on her to quit stirring up trouble. I choose a different spiritual Guardian Angel for each challenge presented to me today.

I once left a party because a woman was coming that I did not want to confront. I had the choice of soberly confronting her or not, or confronting her after a few drinks. I left the party and went home to be by myself. For the first time in a while, I really wanted to get drunk. Instead I paced the floor and prayed to my Guardian Angels, asking all of them to help me stay sober. I told myself to "Let Go and Let God." I finally went to sleep. The next day these thoughts of drinking were released and my sober life has continued. I have the help of my Guardian Angels, and my Higher Power, the spiritual empowerment inside of me which gives me the strength to handle my life challenges without a drink. My life becomes spiritually uplifted and I feel a power guiding me to happiness, because of the Higher Power or Powers that I choose from a Universe filled with many stars. 📌

Treasures of the Twelve & Twelve: Tradition Twelve *by Nkechi E.*

Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

One joy of writing articles for this publication is the opportunity to reflect on lessons I have learned by applying the dharma of Alcoholics Anonymous to my life. As a newcomer, the Traditions were a confusing set of lines on the wall only comprehensible, I thought, to oldtimers. Oldtimers seemed to be the only ones who never left to use the restroom when the traditions were read. After many step meetings, I learned that the steps are to the individual, as the traditions are to the group. The traditions teach me how to join my new A.A. life in healthy relationship to the world; and how to carry A.A.'s message into the world, through attraction rather than promotion.

According to Bill W., the practice of anonymity develops prudence and humility. As a newcomer, my first attempt at practicing prudence and anonymity was simply to refrain from inappropriately yelling out A.A. lingo to my new A.A. friends in public, lest I risk breaking their anonymity. Today, in non-A.A. settings, I practice prudence and humility by listening carefully to my Higher Power, waiting for the opportunity to break my anonymity when it would be of service to an alcoholic in need.

Later I learned to practice humility in order to share honestly about my character defects and personal struggles. This practice helps to keep my alcoholic ego in check as it strives to be unique, perfect, and anything but anonymous and humble.

The phrase "principles before personalities," became a tool for me as a newcomer, especially as I began to notice the variety of personalities in A.A. When I was shown the fourth step prayer by my first sponsor, I learned that it was my task to place A.A.'s principles first, to practice tolerance, patience, and love, regardless of the behavior or personalities in the rooms.

Recently, I was gently reminded that I had committed



Our relations with the general public should be characterized by personal anonymity.

over a year ago to writing this article, my first reaction was "Yikes! I'm too busy!" I paused in my agitation to consider whether I could fit writing this article in with all the other things on my plate. I reflected on all that A.A. has given me, and remembered that the only reason I have a plate today, let alone anything on it, is because of A.A.

In responding to the call of service to A.A., I live the Twelfth Tradition by setting aside my personal concerns and agendas in order to practice the principles that got me sober over three-and-a-half years ago and keep me sober today.

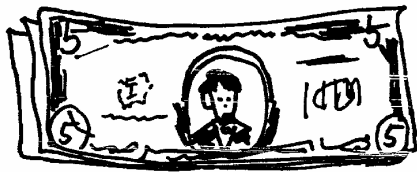
Saying "yes" to A.A. and putting A.A. first in my life, is a principle I was taught early on. It was easy to follow when my life was small and all I could do was go to meetings. As my life has grown it has become a bit more complicated and I need the help of my sponsor to keep my program as my highest

priority. In working with sponsees and newcomers I get to see firsthand the dangers of de-prioritizing A.A. in one's life.

A.A.'s Twelfth Tradition, like the Twelfth Step, is the crowning summation of the practice of the previous eleven. Anonymity is A.A.'s simple yet profound spiritual foundation. The practice of placing principles before personalities enables prideful, self-centered alcoholics like me to set aside personal interests to make A.A.'s message of hope available to others, locally and worldwide, over time.

Following is a quote from Bill W's November 1948 Grapevine article on the twelfth tradition:

...ONE may say that anonymity is the spiritual base, the sure key to all the rest of our Traditions. It has come to stand for prudence and, most importantly, for self-effacement. True consideration for the newcomer if he desires to be nameless; vital protection against misuse of the name Alcoholics Anonymous at the public level; and to each of us a constant reminder that principles come before personal interest--such is the wide scope of this all embracing principle. In it we see the cornerstone of our security as a movement; at a deeper spiritual level it points us to still greater self-renunciation... ↑



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:

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



A.A. On the Road: Costa Rica

By Kathleen C.

Costa Rica—Hawaii with a Spanish accent. Nestled in the heart of Central America, south of Nicaragua and north of Panama, it features volcanoes, rain forests, coffee, cattle and an independent people who call themselves *Ticos*. Forty thousand American expatriates call it home. Many of them probably arrived with visions of relaxing in their *cabinas* by the Pacific or the Caribbean, sipping *Pina coladas*. Many have joined Costa Rica's large fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous – either Spanish-speaking or English-speaking, like the *Gringo Ticos* Group in San Jose, the capital, which hosts seven meetings a week. The fellowship in Manuel Antonio, a Pacific coast resort, hosts three. There are also meetings in Heredia, Quepos, and many other cities.

In August my husband, daughter and I visited our second daughter who was working in villages near the market town of San Isidro, in the central highlands. From there we all bounced along a gravel road by van to Montezuma, a rain forest reserve on the Pacific Coast. We were entranced by sloths and monkeys in the trees, coatis and their cousins the raccoons along the pathways, and magpie blue jays (like a blue jay on prom night, with a tall crest and a long tail) who helped themselves to fruit from a plate on the bar at the hotel's open-air restaurant. We took a boat out onto the bay and waved back to a humpback whale mother and her baby. The people everywhere were friendly and proud of their beautiful country and its abundant wildlife.

Alas, there were no English-speaking A.A. meetings at any of the places we visited. Oh well, I had my copy of *Daily Reflections* and a handful of wallet cards. However, whenever an A.A. anywhere reaches out, the hand of A.A. is there. At dinner one night in Montezuma, I noticed one of our fellow diners staring at me. Eventually he and his girlfriend stopped by our table and he said apologetically, "I'm sorry, but you look really familiar and I can't figure out how I know you."

He looked familiar to me too, but I couldn't place him. I told him where I worked and where I lived – ah, San Francisco, they were San Franciscans too, we were on the right track. But we couldn't find either a work or a neighborhood connection. As we exchanged puzzled looks, I took a deep breath and asked, "Are you a friend of Bill W.?" A smile lit up his face. "Yes, I am." "Me too," I answered. We shook hands and introduced ourselves by our first names, just as if we were at a meeting.

We figured out that we both went to the Cocoanuts and Bernal Big Book meetings and that we had probably seen each other there. We chatted for a little while. He and his girlfriend were in Montezuma for a month-long yoga course and as a special treat had stayed a couple of nights at the hotel where I was staying with my family. Just a coincidence. God being anonymous. The hand of A.A. reached out to me, from San Francisco all the way to Costa Rica. 📌

Literature Review

The AA Group and Guide to Group Service

by Morgan L.



Tradition One states that the recovery of the individual is dependent on AA unity. Tradition Nine states that the service boards and committees are “directly responsible to those they serve.” However, throughout


both the Traditions and the Steps, the purpose of Alcoholics Anonymous rings clear; to carry the message to alcoholics who still suffer. Carrying the message is A.A.’s principal aim and the main reason for its existence. Therefore, A.A. is more than a set of principles; it is a society of alcoholics in action. In Alcoholics Anonymous, action is often synonymous with service. Service includes meetings, sponsorship, literature production, and taking meetings to hospitals and institutions. Collaboration between these services is helpful in serving both the fellowship and the individual.

Alcoholics Anonymous has developed an intricate structure of responsibilities. These responsibilities and service positions vary from meeting to meeting, and region to region, as each group chooses its own structure. Literature produced by San Francisco’s district and the General Service Conference shed further insight on the loosely knit structure of responsibilities and service positions.

“*The AA Group... Where it all begins*,” approved by the General Service Conference, is a suggested guide for Alcoholics Anonymous service commitments. It serves as the Cliff Notes version to *The A.A. Service Manual*. Designed for easy reference, the pamphlet covers four main areas: (1) what an A.A. group is; (2) how a group functions; (3) group

relations with others in the community; and (4) how the group fits into the structure of A.A. as a whole. In keeping with the Traditions, this pamphlet serves only as a suggestion how an individual, meeting, committee, or service board can carry the message.

Drawing from this pamphlet, the San Francisco and Marin Intercounty Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous published a guide to the services and responsibilities of A.A. in San Francisco and Marin County. The guide conveys experience, observations and suggestions regarding such service positions as: secretary, treasurer, General Service representative, Intergroup representative, coffee maker, literature person, greeter, raffle person, chip person, Grapevine representative, security person and other A.A. service opportunities. A group can elect to use or not use this guide for meetings. In accordance with A.A.’s Traditions, there are no steadfast rules.

Each group in A.A. is as unique as a thumbprint, and group approaches to carrying the message of sobriety vary widely. Acting autonomously, each group charts its own course in extending its hand to the newcomer. Many groups choose to incorporate the suggestions from the regional and national service guides and work as a group. As Bill said, “Realization dawns on each member that he is but a small part of a great whole... He learns that the clamor of desires and ambitions within him must be silenced whenever these could damage the group. It becomes plain that the group must survive or the individual will not.” 

Home Group Series

There’s No Place Like Homegroup

by Theresa R.

In September, while visiting New York City, I dropped in on my old home group, the Monday Night Spiritual Workshop at Trinity Church in Tribeca. It was Labor Day Weekend, when most New Yorkers head out of town to enjoy the last days of summer so when I entered the room in the church bookstore’s basement, there were only a handful of people. I walked into the room and was immediately greeted by the meeting’s secretary who asked me if I would speak! Since I have been “encouraged” by my sponsor never to say “No” to A.A., I accepted. A few more people trickled in, and by the time the meeting started, there were 10-15 people, including a few faces that I recognized from when I lived there in the late nineties.

As the meeting opened, I began to feel a familiar connection to the meeting and the people. I was the Secretary of this meeting at one time, and on subsequent visits to New York over the years, I always made a point of attending it. The focus of the meeting is the Third and Eleventh Step, and I have gained much insight from the spiritual practices of other members, as well as their different concepts of a Higher Power.

It had been a very emotional day for me. For the first time since I lived in New York, I visited the hole in the ground that was once the site of the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center. I also visited the memorial to the victims

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AA Group Contributions - September 2005

Intercounty Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous - San Francisco and Marin Counties

Name	Sept. 2005	YTD	Name	Sept. 2005	YTD
Fellowship Contributions			Nativity Monday Night Big Book M 8pm		100.00
AA Workshop		90.60	Newcomers Step M 730pm	148.85	550.58
Brisbane Breakfast Bunch	24.00	236.60	Noon Tu 12pm		219.50
Contribution Box		524.30	Noon Hope F 12pm		76.00
Deer Park Discovery Group		80.00	On Awakening 7D 530am		350.00
Gay Newcomers Group		20.76	Pathfinders Tu 12pm	166.95	440.30
IFB	83.80	786.49	Refugee Th 12pm		100.00
Marin Teleservice		500.00	Rise N Shine Sun 10am		93.75
Sunday Step Study	100.00	165.70	San Geronimo Valley M 8pm		74.55
The Chosen Ones		20.00	San Geronimo Valley Book Study F 8pm		43.45
Unidentified Group		1355.87	Saturday Serenity Sa 8pm	125	325.00
Total Fellowship Contributions	\$ 207.80	\$ 3,780.32	Sisters In Sobriety Th 730pm (M)		60.00
Honors			Six O'Clock Sunset Th 6pm		331.44
Endless Summer F 830pm		74.99	Sober & Serene F 7pm		462.00
Total Honors		\$ 74.99	Steps to Freedom M 730pm		173.90
Marin Group Contributions			Steps To The Solution W 715pm		69.00
12 & 12 Study Sa 815am		174.50	Stinson Beach Fellowship Th 8pm		641.04
7am Urgent Care Group 7D 7am		200.00	Sunday Express Sun 6pm	200	311.80
A Vision for You (Fairfax) Su 730pm		190.24	Terra Linda Group Th 830pm		947.64
Attitude Adjustment 7D 7am		2866.50	T. G. I'm Sober M 6pm		115.07
Awareness/Acceptance M 1030am		216.00	TGI Tuesday Tu 6pm		112.92
Beginners W 7pm	250.00	250.00	T.G.I.F. F 6pm		160.00
Bounce Back M 6pm		90.00	The Barnyard Group Sa 4pm		326.00
Candlelight Group Sun 8pm		69.94	The Fearless Searchers F 8pm		138.01
Closed Women Step Study Tu 330pm		155.00	There is a Solution Tu 6pm		70.00
Creekside New Growth Sun 7pm		104.00	Thursday Night Speaker Th 830pm		1054.00
Crossroads Sun 12pm		765.00	Tiburon Beginners & Closed	136.95	1462.87
Day At A Time 7D 630am		648.51	Tiburon Big Book Group W 730pm		250.00
Downtown Mill Valley F 830pm		566.53	Tiburon Haven Sun 12pm		1141.05
Experience, Strength & Hope(Marin) Sa 6pm		109.80	Tiburon Women's Candlelight W 8pm		337.50
Fairfax Friday Night F 830pm		238.21	Tuesday Chip Meeting Tu 8pm	750	1250.00
Freedom Finders F 830pm		515.01	Wednesday Mid-Week W 6pm		63.11
Gratitude Tu 8pm		538.36	Wednesday Night Candlelight W 8pm		75.00
Greenfield Newcomers Sun 7pm		120.00	Wednesday Sundowners W 6pm		98.66
Happy Hour (Marin) Th 6pm		109.80	Women's Big Book Tu 1030am		123.00
Happy, Joyous & Free 5D 12pm		363.00	Women on Monday M 7pm		126.54
Hope Step Group Tu 730pm		150.00	Women's Big Book Tu 1030am		80.50
Intimate Feelings Sa 10am	90.93	314.98	Women's Step Study Group M 12pm		240.00
Inverness Sunday Serenity Su 10am		60.00	Working Dogs W 1205pm		388.00
Island Group Th 8pm		410.00	Total Marin Group Contributions	\$ 2,092.45	\$ 27,776.77
Just Can't Wait 'til 8 M 630pm		191.75	SF Group Contributions		
Keepin' It Real Th 6pm	60.00	60.00	515pm Smokeless W		103.80
Living in the Solution F 6pm		306.00	6am Marina Dock Sa		148.00
Marin Newcomers M 830pm		469.78	7am Speaker Discussion Th 7am		118.40
Marin Sober Group F 8pm		111.11	7AM As Bill Sees It Fri	100.00	100.00
Mill Valley 7D 7am		1748.61	830am Smokeless Tu		84.00
Mill Valley Discussion W 830pm		16.80	A is for Alcohol Tu 6pm	43.50	203.19
Monday Blues M 630pm		713.00	A New Start F 830pm		111.06
Monday Night Stag (Tiburon) 8pm	163.77	1642.77	A Vision for You (SF) Su 630pm		81.00
Monday Night Women's M 8pm		309.39	AA As You Like It Tu 530pm		211.15
			AA Step Study Su 6pm	109.36	457.66

Name	Sept. 2005	YTD	Name	Sept. 2005	YTD
Afro American F 8pm	81.00	155.58	Founders' Group Sa 5pm		84.40
Afro American Beginners Sat 8pm	59.04	390.21	Four Forty Niners F 8pm		28.55
All Together Now Th 8pm		592.28	Friday All Groups F 830pm		938.00
Alta Plaza (dispbanded)	67.48	67.48	Friday at Five F 5pm		100.00
Alumni W 830pm	60.00	180.00	Friday Knights Th 730am		112.93
Amazing Grace M 7pm		100.00	Friday Lunchtime Step F 12pm		280.00
Artists & Writers F 630pm		1107.20	Friday Smokeless F 830pm		246.87
Artists & Writers DRUNKS ON DISPLAY		794.00	Friendly Circle Beginners Su 715pm		396.00
As Bill Sees It Sat 11am		293.00	Gold Mine Group M 8pm	113.47	328.42
As Bill Sees It Th 6pm		141.95	Haight Street Explorers Th 630pm		158.89
As Bill Sees It Th 830pm		386.69	Happy Hour (S.F.) F 630pm		63.70
Ass in a Bag Th 830pm		40.80	Happy Hour Ladies Night F 530pm	354.00	957.00
Beginner Big Book Step Th 6:30pm	90.00	90.00	High Noon 5D 1215pm		612.89
Beginners' Step Study Sat 630pm		201.33	High Noon Friday 1215pm	70.20	999.02
Bernal Big Book Sat 5pm		188.37	High Noon Monday 1215pm	152.80	875.70
Big Book Basics F 8pm		431.37	High Noon Thursday 1215pm	193.38	794.07
Big Book Study Su 11am	41.32	389.72	High Noon Tuesday 1215pm		1034.46
Birthday Party Sharing Our Sob. Sat 7pm		133.54	High Noon Wednesday 1215pm		842.80
Blue Book Special Su 11am		97.42	High Sobriety M 8pm		625.60
Boys Night Out Tu 730pm		120.00	High Steppers W 7pm	49.55	666.99
Buena Vista Breakfast Su 12pm		220.00	Hilldwellers M 8pm		480.32
Castro Discussion (Show Of Shows) W 8pm		365.59	Home Group Sat 830pm		240.16
Castro Monday Big Book M 8pm		279.91	How It Works Sat 2pm	29.89	213.51
CLAADAAGH Sat 815pm		40.00	Huntington Square W 630pm		720.00
CLAADAAGH Step Study Tu 8pm		60.25	Ingleside Beginners Su 5pm		54.45
Cocoanuts Su 9am		291.45	Join the Tribe Tu 7pm	200.00	444.42
Come N Get It F 630pm		54.00	Joys of Recovery Tu 8pm		109.46
Common Welfare Th 8pm		20.40	Keepin' It Real Th 6pm		60.00
Cow Hollow Men's Group W 8pm	142.02	142.02	Keep Coming Back Sa 11am	1,058.40	3062.48
Cow Hollow Young People's Tu 730pm	30.00	30.00	Keep It Simple Sat 830pm		503.77
Creative Alcoholics M 6pm		441.82	Let It Be Now F 6pm		100.00
Design for Living Sat 8am		126.00	Light Steppers Su 7pm	120.00	120.00
Diamond Heights Tu 830pm		300.00	Like A Prayer Su 4pm		227.28
Drive Thru W 1215pm		224.84	Live and Let Live Su 8pm		119.40
Each Day a New Beginning F 7am		1053.86	Living Sober W 8pm		512.05
Each Day a New Beginning M 7am		478.68	Living Sober with HIV W 6pm		333.42
Each Day A New Beginning Su 8am		1144.74	Luke's Group W 8pm		100.00
Each Day a New Beginning Th 7am		631.05	Lush Lounge Sa 2pm	64.38	376.51
Each Day a New Beginning Tu 7am		835.58	Marina Discussion F 830pm		615.38
Each Day a New Beginning W 7am		138.67	Meeting Place Noon F 12pm		66.98
Early Joyous & Free Th 7am		20.00	Meeting Place Noon W 12pm		91.15
Early Start F 6pm	764.64	1447.68	Men's Gentle Touch M 7pm	90.00	180.00
Easy Does It Tu 6pm		139.36	Mid-Morning Support Su 1030am		808.80
Embarcadero Group 5D 1210pm		1187.60	Midnight Meditation Sat 12am		259.54
Eureka Valley Topic M 6pm		219.57	Miracles Off 24th St W 730pm		510.56
Experience, Strength & Hope W 715pm		44.20	Mission Terrace W 8pm		122.90
Federal Speaker Su 12pm		487.93	Monday At A Time M 1pm		55.72
Fell Street F 830pm	71.73	71.73	Monday Beginners M 8pm		495.60
Fell Street Step Su 8pm		151.76	Monday Monday M 1215pm		280.97
Firefighters & Friends Tu 10am		35.00	New Friday Big Book F 12pm		27.15
Fireside Chat Sa 9pm		299.01	New Highs W 130pm		94.80
Fireside Chat Th 8pm		80.97	New Hope Big Book M 630pm		485.76
Fireside Chat Tu 8pm		114.04	New Life W 7pm		212.40
Fireside F 830pm		94.00	Newcomers Tu 8pm		252.00
First Place		39.60	No Gurus Meditation Su 7pm		118.72
First Step Speaker/ Discussion Th 730pm		64.29	No Reservation M 12pm	140.62	279.52

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Name	Sept. 2005	YTD	Name	Sept. 2005	YTD
One Liners Th 830pm		569.03	Sunset 11'ers W	60.00	112.65
Parkside Th 830pm	117.89	117.89	Sunset 9'ers M		36.87
Park Presidio M 830pm		79.80	Sunset 9'ers F		222.70
Pax West M 12pm		760.92	Sunset 9'ers Sa		675.09
Pinehurst Tu 730pm		128.00	Sunset 9'ers Su		262.78
Rebound W		55.00	Sunset 9'ers Th	106.84	410.03
Red Road Healing Circle Th 6pm		121.48	Sunset 9'ers Tu	106.11	334.78
Richmond Step Study M 730pm	84.00	84.00	Sunset 9'ers W		209.70
Rigorous Honesty Th 1205pm		50.00	Sunset Sobriety Th 730pm		411.00
Rose Garden Big Book Th 1205pm		85.40	Sunset Speaker Step Sun 730pm	400.20	400.20
Rule 62 W 10pm		481.93	Surf Tu 8pm		1113.86
Saturday Afternoon Meditation Sat 5pm		169.20	Sutter Street Beginners Sat 6pm		411.49
Saturday Easy Does It Sa 12pm		674.57	Ten Years After Su 6pm		1207.68
Saturday Night Regroup Sat 730pm		458.93	The 24 Hour Plan M 7am		25.00
Seacliff Th 830pm		92.53	The Parent Trap M 1230pm		119.85
Second Chance Th 215pm		127.00	The Pepper Group F 12pm		45.00
Serenity House	300.00	1200.00	Thought For The Day F 730am		140.00
Serenity Seekers M 730pm		686.37	Thursday Night Speaker Th 830pm		935.00
Sesame Step Tu 730pm	112.98	358.23	Thursday Night Women's Th 630pm	215.84	562.41
Seventh Wonder Group Sa 1230pm		86.18	Too Early Sat 8am	307.00	1037.59
SFPOA Th 7pm		426.85	Transrecovery F 630pm		12.90
Sisters Circle Su 6pm		196.31	Tuesday's Daily Reflections Tu 7am	108.91	108.91
Sisters In Sobriety M 7pm (SF)		260.00	Valencia Smokefree F 6pm	395.27	852.03
Sober & Centered F 7pm		175.03	Walk of Shame W 8pm		177.39
Sober Across the Board M 830am	20.06	106.46	Washington Square M 7pm		286.80
Sobriety & Beyond W 7pm		345.00	Waterfront Sun 8pm	71.24	868.08
Sometimes Slowly Sa 11am		106.06	We Care Tu 12pm	173.00	440.99
Step Talk Su 830am		588.71	Wednesday Noon Steps W 12pm		104.27
Steppin' Up Tu 630pm		251.61	Wednesday Women's Big Book W 615pm		144.00
Stepping Out Sat 6pm		151.70	West Portal W 830pm		109.80
Steps to Freedom M 730pm		116.36	Wits End Step Study Tu 8pm		68.74
Stonestown M 8pm	87.71	188.88	Women's 10 Years Plus Th 615pm		304.00
Sunday Bookworms Sun 730pm		244.33	Women's Kitchen Table Group Tu 630pm		171.33
Sunday Morning Gay Men's Stag Su 1030am		1083.32	Women's Promises F 7pm	39.90	451.48
Sunday Night 3rd Step Group 5pm		171.60	Women Living Sober Sa 1030am		18.53
Sunday Rap Sun 8pm	180.00	240.00	Women Who Drank Too Much Tu 615pm	12.00	137.18
Sundown W 7pm		352.80	Women Who Read		55.27
Sundown Steps Th 630pm		116.20	Work In Progress Sat 7pm		121.74
Sunrise Sunset Women's Step Th 545pm		60.00	Total SF Group Contributions	\$ 7,292.84	\$ 66,892.32
Sunset 11'ers Su		244.93	TOTAL	\$ 9,593.09	\$ 98,524.40
Sunset 11'ers Tu	97.11	196.32			

Individual Contributions Sept. 2005

HONORS	11.00
	25.00
	100.00
	<u>32.00</u>
Total HONORS	\$ 168.00
INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS	44.00
	9.35
	<u>20.00</u>
Total INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS	\$ 73.35
TOTAL	\$ 241.35

Gratitude Month Contributions

We'd like to thank the Sunset Speaker Step Meeting for sending in a 2004 Gratitude Month Contribution of \$62.00 in September 2005. Better late than never!!

We also request that your group send in any Gratitude Month Contributions for 2005 before the end of the year—or as close to 2005 as possible!

Sending in regular Group Contributions on a monthly or quarterly basis is also very helpful. Call the office if you have any ?'s.

Pen & Tongue Restraint this time of Year

by Anonymous

We are in the Christmas Season. Or, is it the Holiday Season? Do I wish you a “Merry Christmas” or a “Happy Holidays” these days? Do I even dare go to the other Holiday greetings like “Happy Hanukkah” or “Happy Kwanzaa”? There are so many politically correct ways of saying things these days, especially during the Holidays, so we don’t offend anyone or exclude a group that also celebrates this time of year. It gets extremely difficult for a drunk like me to extend any type of greetings whatsoever.

I have learned in sobriety that I must practice restraint of tongue and pen at many times when I would have spouted off something rude or insensitive in my old days. The old saying of “If you don’t have anything nice to say,

don’t say anything” intertwines in this AA suggestion for me as well. I am not stating that I usually plan on saying something rude to someone else during the Holidays; I just don’t want to inadvertently be rude or insensitive when communicating during this time of year. It is just difficult to stay in a politically-correct state during these seemingly sensitive holidays.

I know I can always do my Ninth and Tenth Steps which are to take my personal inventory and make amends when necessary. But, it gets ridiculous in my mind when I feel the need to apologize to someone who doesn’t recognize Christmas after sending them a thoughtful Christmas card. If I bought the appropriate card for every

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Homegroup *(Continued from page 11)*

located at St. Paul’s, which is directly across the street, and had an underground passageway linking the WTC and its chapel. Because the fourth year anniversary of September 11 was only a few days away, many tourists were visiting the site. A new enclosed walkway had opened, so you could walk above it and look down on a vast empty construction site that went down four stories into the ground. When I looked up, there was an empty space in the sky where the towers had been. I had often stopped at the WTC on my way to The Spiritual Workshop to meet up with my friend from the program, who worked on the 57th Floor of Tower One.

A flood of memories came rushing back as I began my share. My friend had survived the attack, but witnessed it from her bicycle as she rode along the West Side Highway, late for work. She still suffers from the trauma of what she saw, and the thirty-seven friends she lost that day. I shared about my feelings as I had sat and watched the horror unfold on television that morning in my San Francisco apartment, not knowing if my friend was dead or alive. When the telephone rang later, it was another friend from the program in New York, telling me that our friend was safe. I thought of all my friends from the program who lived and worked in Tribeca, and were regulars at the Spiritual Workshop, and that some of them were sitting in the room!

It occurred to me later that this was the reason for having a home group—a chance to develop friends and a support group in recovery. And here I was, staying with my friend in New York, going to meetings together, sharing our recovery and the memories of an event that had touched all of us in some profound way. I was glad I could be there when I know it was difficult for her. She relapsed and had a hard time finding her way back to A.A., but was celebrating her one-year anniversary. I celebrated my own sixteen-year anniversary, September 1, with her.

Returning to San Francisco, I went to my home group, Sesame Step, on Tuesday nights in Noe Valley on 23rd Street and Sanchez. It’s funny to me now that when I was newly sober, I didn’t go to this meeting because it was in my neighborhood and I was afraid I would run into someone I knew!

When I walk into my home group now, I recognize most of the faces, even though it has become a large meeting. I love the format of the meeting; it is a step meeting, and the last Tuesday of the month we read a tradition out of the book. The speaker shares his or her experience on the step for fifteen minutes, and then the floor is open for discussion. In all the years I have been attending this meeting, I always hear a new and fresh perspective on whatever step we are on. When I look around the room, there are always some newcomers and visitors, as well as the friends I have come to know over the years on the road to recovery. We are all there for the same purpose—to help each other stay sober. 📌

IFB Meeting Summary—November 2005

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

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	
Alejandro D.	Fireside Chat	A*	Gregory F.	Midnight Meditation	A*	Nicholas S.	Sutter St. Beginners	P
Amber W.	Sisters Circle	A*	Greg S.	Beginner's Warmup	P	Omar C.	Tuesday Chip	P
Andy T.	Waterfront	P	Jason K.	Cocoanuts	P	Pascal G.	Monday Night Stag	A**
Anthony J.	Founders Group	A*	Jim T.	First Place	P	Patty M.	Huntington Square	P
Brian H.	Living Sober with HIV	P	Joe G.	Beginners	P	Penelope P.	Amazing Grace	A*
Bruce K.	Sunset Speaker Step	P	Judi C.	Tuesday's Daily Reflections	P	Randy F.	We Care	A*
Carol E.	High Noon Wednesday	A*	Julia W.	Sesame Step	P	Rebekah D.	Fell Street Step	A*
Chris H.	Friendly Circle	P	Justin S.	Alumni	P	Rudi D.	Serenity Seekers	A*
Chris T.	Keep Coming Back	P	Karin K.	24 Hour Plan	A*	Ryan W.	Tiburon BB	A**
Curtis S.	Sunday Gay Men's Stag	P	Larry B.	Castro Discussion	P	Sam C.	Boys Night Out	A*
Dan Z.	Each Day a New Beginning	P	Lauren H.	Ten Years After	P	Scott N.	Sunset 11'ers Sat.	A*
Danna P.	Treasurer	P	Lillian R.	Women's Promises	A*	Sheila R.	Sundown	P
Daniel B.	Too Early	A**	Luis M.	High Noon Tuesday	A*	Stephanie R.	Live & Let Live	A*
David B.	Federal Speaker	P	Lynnore G.	Walk Of Shame	P	Stephen R.	Valencia Smokefree	P
David H.	Tuesday Downtown	P	Marvin R.	Bernal Big Book	P	Steve N.	Terra Linda Group	P
David L.	Work in Progress	P	Matt T.	Fairfax Friday Night	P	Steve S.	Homegroup	A*
David P.	Goodlands	A*	Maury P.	Central Office Manager	P	Terry B.	High Noon Thursday	A*
Don B.	Friday Fell Street	P	Michael L.	Attitude Adjustment Hour	P	Tim K.	High Noon Saturday	P
Doug D.	As Bill Sees It Sat 11am	A*	Michael S.	Sunset 9'ers Sat.	P	Tim M.	Join the Tribe	P
Edward F.	Happy Hour	A*	Mitzi H.	New Hope Big Book	R	Tom R.	Mill Valley 7AM	P
Francesca K.	West Portal	P	Monika H.	SFPOA	P	Thomas K.	Mission Terrace	A*
Gaspar L.	Keep It Simple	P	Nicholas L.	Some Are Sicker Than...	P	Victor V.	Stepping Up	P
Gerard W.	Any Lengths	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		IFB Liaisons Present			
None		Bruce D.	PI/CPC Marin	Matt T.	Marin Teleservice
		Lily S.	H & I	Trevor F.	Marin General Service

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

IFB Reports

Chair's Report: Steve R. gave the report. Unity Day was a great success with over 300 attendees. Its planning committee will be meeting again to discuss the possibility of a standing committee between the IFB and SFGS as well as the pros and cons of this year's event. Tonight will review IFB committees in need.

Treasurer's Report: Danna P. gave the report. The net loss for January through September was (\$619) which is \$13,422 less than the budgeted net loss of (\$14,041). The net income in September of \$460 was \$1,902 less than the budgeted income of \$2,362. Unrestricted cash as of September 30, 2005 totaled \$29,141 and is sufficient to pay the budgeted expenses for October totaling \$21,425. Unrestricted cash decreased from \$40,465 at the beginning of 2005. Please ask your Treasurers to submit contributions on a monthly basis to help with our cash flow.

Central Office Manager's Report: Maury P. gave the report. November is Gratitude Month. There are two phone shifts available, Tuesday from 3-6pm and Wednesday from 1-3pm. The Central Office will be closed November 24 & 25, December 26, and January 2, and will be closing early on December 30. The IFB will host a Holiday Party for Central Office volunteers and IFB Committee members on December 15 from 6-8pm. Maury presented a COC motion to take a draft of a Central Office pamphlet to our Districts with the goal of getting it from the Districts to our Area Delegate and the Conference Literature Committee.

Motion: Bring the Central Office pamphlet to General Service in San Francisco and Marin.

Favor – 35, Oppose – 0, Abstain – 2

Central Office Committee Report: Joe G. gave the report. The 2006 Budget for Central Office was presented to the COC in rough form and reviewed. The final budget will be presented in December to the IFB. The COC decided to hand out “Memo to an AA Group Treasurer” and “Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix” to the IFB Reps to pass on to group Treasurers in hopes of increasing awareness of how contributions are used and to encour-

IFB Summary (Continued from page 16)

age timely distributions. The annual Holiday Party will be December 15 from 6-8pm. COC supports a Central Office pamphlet to be published by AAWS. Maury will write a letter on behalf of Intergroup. Louisiana and Mississippi do not presently need Katrina assistance but Central Office will send the \$56 collected from donations to-date. Oktoberfest was well attended.

2. October Special Events

a. Special Events Committee report: Fran K. gave the report. On October 15th there was the Oktoberfest Picnic from 12-5pm at Speedway Meadows. There was a sack race, water balloon toss, speaker meeting, and lots of food. Many volunteers helped out. It was well attended.

b. San Francisco Unity Day: Steve R. gave the report. SF Unity Day held on October 29 at Urban Life Center was very successful. There were lots of volunteers and over 300 attendees. There will be a debriefing meeting in a few weeks. It presented opportunities for future collaborations between SF General Service and the IFB. Collected \$160 in unsolicited donations, \$100 from drink sales, \$170 from speaker meeting collections, and \$20 for H&I. The quarterly PI/CPC workshop was held.

3. Committee Staffing:

a. Posters were on the wall representing each committee available for volunteers.

b. . Mentoring is available within each committee.

c. Trusted Servant Workshop Committee: Maury gave the report. 45% of groups contributed to Central Office last year, but fewer to General Service. Is there interest in forming a committee to put on monthly workshops about Secretary, Treasurer, and Literature positions? Shall we ask General Service if they'd like to participate? Patti and Monika volunteered to develop a committee. A one year commitment was suggested.

d. Steve R. asked that a few committees who need support speak for a few minutes. Literature, Outreach, and 12 Step committees spoke.

7th Tradition and reading of the 12 Traditions: \$75.10 was collected

4. 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: No report. The committee meets the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 6:30pm at Central Office.

The Point Editorial Committee: No report. The committee meets the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month at 5:30pm at Central Office.

Orientation Committee: Steve R. gave the report. They would like three volunteers to act as greeters at the IFB meeting. Victor, Omar, Nick, and Julia volunteered. Orientation of new IFB members takes place at 6:00pm, one hour prior to the monthly IFB meeting.

Website Committee: No report. The committee meets the 2nd Thursday of the month at 6:00pm at Central Office.

12th Step Committee: No report. The committee meets the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 6:30pm at Central Office. The next workshop is on Friday, Dec. 2nd at 6:30 pm at Central Office.

Special Events Committee: Fran gave the report. See above. The committee meets the 4th Tuesday of the month at 7:30pm at Central Office.

Special Needs Committee: No report. The committee meets the 4th Tuesday of the month at 6:30pm at Central Office.

Archives Committee: No report. The committee meets the 1st Monday of the month at 6:00pm at Central Office.

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

6. IFB Standing Committee Reports

SF Teleservice: Judy C. gave the report. They do not have coordinators for Tuesday and Friday. Extra volunteers are needed during the holidays. The committee meets on the 3rd Monday of the month at 6:30pm at Central Office.

SF PI/CPC: Bruce K. gave the report. The media coordinator is distributing PSA's to local news stations. We staff a table at the monthly city hosted event, Homeless Connect. The workshop at Unity Day was a success. The committee meets the 2nd Monday of the month at 7:00pm. at Central Office.

7. 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: No report. 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 are updating the 12 Step list and the Guidelines. In December, all the service positions are rotating. They are considering switching the phone service to self-service. 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: Lily S. gave the report. Need volunteers and coordinators. Specifically, a Literature Coordinator is needed. 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 H. gave the report. Spirit of SF is \$3900 over budget this year. People are needed to staff the committee and work on the website. The committee meets the 1st Monday of the month at 7:30pm at Central Office.

The next IFB meeting will be held Wednesday, December 7, 2005 at the First Unitarian Universalist Church at 1187 Franklin at Geary in San Francisco at 7:00pm

Respectfully submitted,

Lauren H., IFB Secretary

Slogan of the Month You've Got to Give it Away to Keep It By Mark M.

These past few days have been extremely hectic for me. Prepping for a month-long trip to Bangalore, India, for work, I feel like I'm running out of time. There's too much to do, too many people (to try) to see before I leave—plus working and going to meetings.

So when a sponsee of mine emailed me to see what time we could meet Wednesday night, my first thought was, "Crap! How am I going to fit this into my schedule?" I let the thought rise and pass, pausing for a moment as it suggests on the bottom of page 86 in the Big Book (thanks Step 11!). Instead, I wrote him back, suggesting we attend an 8 pm meeting and meet afterwards. We'll take the 3rd step together that night, and he'll get to start on his 4th step.

I did not necessarily agree to meet him because it's the "right" thing to do, or because I have to. I did it mostly because I'm really the patient—the sick one—when I meet with my sponsees. To keep it—sobriety—I've got to give it away. That slogan is actually the essence and beauty of Step 12.

At a meeting on Sunday night in Hayes Valley, we read through Step 12 in the 12 & 12—a passage I had not read in a long time. The one line that appeared to me to be set in bold type that night is toward the bottom of page 109. It reads, "And then he discovers that by the divine paradox of this kind of giving he has found his own reward, whether his brother has yet received anything or not."


Practicing Step 12 is our vehicle for keeping our

sobriety—by giving it away. For me, Step 12 also enhances the already magical quality of this program; I cannot think of anything else in my life that I have to give away to keep. It actually doesn't make common sense if you stop to think about it, but then neither does A.A. and how it keeps each of us sober. It just works—simple as that.

Another great thing about Step 12 is that there are several ways to practice it. One does not need sponsees to "give it away." Raising your hand to share at a meeting gives it away. Doing service at a meeting gives it away. Talking to newcomers gives it away. Doing H&I (Hospitals & Institutions) gives it away. Taking calls from wet drunks during tele-service hours at Central Office gives it away. Writing this article gives it away.


This part of the A.A. systems works for me, because this self-centered alcoholic does not always remember to talk to newcomers at meetings, and lately I've lapsed in my daily program calls. Thankfully, my sponsees call each day, I do service, and I often share at meetings.

If I want to maintain peace of mind while I'm in India, I can go to meetings. However, if I want to maintain true serenity, I'll do some 12th step work—talk to newcomers at meetings, contact my sponsees occasionally, and perhaps even get a temporary service commitment.

Finally, all three of my sponsees will be on their 4th steps while I'm gone. While meeting with my sponsees to start their 4th steps, I said what I needed to hear—and applied it to MY 4th step. 

Pen & Tongue *(Continued from page 15)*

holiday named at this time of year, I'd either go broke or chuck it all and go back to my own version of "Christmas Cheer".

This passage is a little over-the-top and meant to be an example of how I can get insane when I don't practice a simple program. I cannot be perfect nor be everything to everyone. I can try to be a thoughtful and caring person during the Holidays and extend those greetings to those I know and come in contact with. If I make a mistake I can apologize if necessary and not take the situation or myself too seriously. My main purpose, after all, is to remain sober and help others recover from alcoholism everyday. That includes Christmas, Kwanzaa, Hanukkah and any other day of the year. 

CONTRIBUTIONS

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

ONGOING MEMORIALS

Dina R., Bill M. (Philadelphia)
John D. M.
Vern S., and Donald W.

ANNIVERSARIES.🎵

Jill H. 17 years; Linda L. 22 years
Barbara W. 23 years
High Noon: Wayne E. 11 years

Financial Statement

September 2005 - Intercounty Fellowship of AA

	<u>Sep 05</u>	<u>Jan - Sep 05</u>		<u>Sep 05</u>	<u>Jan - Sep 05</u>
Ordinary Income/Expense			Shipping	-196.85	-159.75
Income			Equipment Lease	0.00	4,048.82
Contributions from Groups			Repair & Maintenance	178.00	1,746.24
Group Contributions	9,593.09	100,051.41	Security System	33.50	366.50
Honors	<u>0.00</u>	<u>74.99</u>	Special Events	75.00	685.00
Total Contributions from Groups	9,593.09	100,126.40	Telephone	392.76	3,822.58
Contributions from Individuals			Utilities	146.90	1,655.47
Individual - Unrestricted	73.35	3,123.83	Travel	323.80	323.80
Faithful Fiver	223.00	1,817.00	Training	20.00	20.00
Honorary Contributions	<u>168.00</u>	<u>2,609.50</u>	Bad Checks	0.00	0.00
Total Contributions from Individuals	464.35	7,550.33	Miscellaneous Expense	<u>0.00</u>	<u>-461.33</u>
Gratitude Month			Total Expense	<u>12,970.42</u>	<u>137,999.84</u>
Gratitude Month - Groups	<u>62.00</u>	<u>3,513.68</u>	Net Ordinary Income	838.78	3,624.28
Total Gratitude Month	62.00	3,513.68	Other Income/Expense		
Sales - Bookstore	8,830.98	76,794.04	Other Income		
Special Event Income	0.00	1,329.37	Other Income	0.00	0.12
Newsletter Subscript.	<u>22.12</u>	<u>432.24</u>	Interest Income	<u>76.89</u>	<u>636.42</u>
Total Income	18,972.54	189,746.06	Total Other Income	76.89	636.54
Cost of Goods Sold			Other Expense		
Cost of Books Sold	<u>5,163.34</u>	<u>48,121.94</u>	Depreciation Expense	216.65	3,557.45
Total COGS	<u>5,163.34</u>	<u>48,121.94</u>	Amortization Expense	<u>238.78</u>	<u>1,319.88</u>
Gross Profit	13,809.20	141,624.12	Total Other Expense	<u>455.43</u>	<u>4,877.33</u>
Expense			Net Other Income	<u>-378.54</u>	<u>-4,240.79</u>
Employee Expenses			Net Income	<u>460.24</u>	<u>-616.51</u>
Wages & Salaries	4,879.14	60,370.23			
Employer Tax Expenses	387.77	6,290.75			
Health Benefits	598.00	6,914.00			
Retirement/Annuity Expense	0.00	7,200.00			
Workers Comp Ins.	<u>1,999.23</u>	<u>2,835.70</u>			
Total Employee Expenses	7,864.14	83,610.68			
Professional Fees					
Computer Consulting	<u>0.00</u>	<u>562.50</u>			
Total Professional Fees	0.00	562.50			
Bank Charges					
Credit Card Processing Fees	128.06	1,011.09			
Bank Charges - Other	<u>0.00</u>	<u>108.90</u>			
Total Bank Charges	128.06	1,119.99			
Postage					
Bulk Mail	0.00	600.00			
Postage - Other	<u>0.00</u>	<u>504.35</u>			
Total Postage	0.00	1,104.35			
ASL Expense					
ASL Other	<u>0.00</u>	<u>390.00</u>			
Total ASL Expense	0.00	390.00			
Rent - Office	3,708.75	33,378.75			
Rent - Other	150.00	675.00			
IFB Literature	0.00	52.56			
PI/CPC	-109.87	-80.86			
Filing/Fees	0.00	47.00			
Insurance	0.00	2,383.68			
Internet Expense	109.60	229.30			
Office Supplies	146.63	2,479.56			

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