

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

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

The Point

January 2006

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.

New Year's Resolutions

by Liz B.

"Some will be drunk the day after making their resolutions; most of them within a few weeks."

Alcoholics Anonymous, page 34

I took my last drink on New Year's Day, 1999, but it wasn't because I made a resolution. I had behaved so badly that even I couldn't stand me, so I begged God for the umpteenth time to let me stop being who I was. I was sitting cross-legged in an easy chair, picking fights with the few stalwart (or perhaps just indifferent) men who had not yet fled my combat zone in the cozy lodge atop Mt. Tamalpais. Wine sloshed out of my glass as I waved my arms to accentuate my brilliant diatribe. Our host had diplomatically (and repeatedly) tried to change the subject, but I had a pompous argument for any and every subject, so his efforts died in vain. The worst part was that I could see that my arrogance and sarcasm were hurting everyone, including me, and I felt awful. I desperately wanted to just shut up, but I couldn't. It was a nightmarish *déjà vu*. I had resolved dozens of times to stop ruining dinner parties with my drunken tirades, yet there I was, doing it again. I desperately wished I could disappear.

"Why can't I stop this?" I asked God silently.

The answer was immediate: "Look in your hand."

I stared at the sloppy, almost empty wine glass and slowly set it down onto the table. For some reason I didn't even argue. I was defeated and I knew it. After thirty-five years of frustration, hangovers, and remorse, my drinking career ended right then and there.

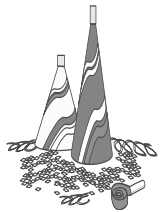
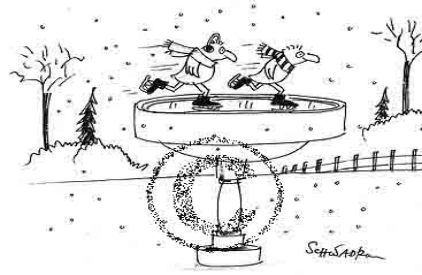
A prayer turned out to be the answer to my failed resolutions.

Later, in Alcoholics Anonymous, I learned that resolving to stop drinking was useless, because I have no control over it. I found out that alcoholism was not a bad habit I could have chosen to break. It was – and is – a disease, not an option.

My behavior, on the other hand, is a different story. I do have some choice about what I say and do, now that I don't have that sloshy wine glass in my hand. I like to celebrate that freedom by taking time during the New Year holiday to reflect on how much I've grown during the past year, what I am grateful for, and what

(Continued on page 6)

January 2006....

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 	2 Central Office Closed Happy Holidays!	3	4 <u>FIRST WED</u> 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.)	5	6	7
8	9 <u>SECOND MON</u> SF Public Information Committee Central Office, 7 pm	10 <u>SECOND TUE</u> 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	11 <u>SECOND WED</u> 12th Step Committee Central Office, 6:30 pm Marin Bridging the Gap 1411 Lincoln Ave., San Rafael 6:45 pm	12 <u>SECOND THU</u> Website Committee Central Office, 6 pm	13	14
15	16 Central Office Closed SF Teleservice Central Office, 6:30 pm Marin General Service 9 Ross Valley Rd, San Rafael GSR Sharing: 7 pm District Meeting: 8 pm	17 <u>THIRD TUE</u> San Mateo General Service St. Andrews Church 15th & El Camino Real San Mateo, 7:30 pm	18 <u>THIRD WED</u> Literature Review Committee Central Office, 6:30 pm	19 <u>THIRD THU</u> Outreach Committee Central Office, 6:30 pm	20	21
22 <u>FOURTH SUN</u> Living Sober Convention Committee 1668 Bush, SF 5:30 pm	23	24 <u>FOURTH TUE</u> 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	25	26 <u>FOURTH THU</u> Marin PI Committee 1360 Lincoln Ave, San Rafael – Alano Club 7:00 pm LAST THU SF H&I Old First Church, 1751 Sacramento St. SF Orientation: 7:15 pm Committee Meeting: 8:00 pm	27	28 <u>FOURTH SAT</u> General Service CNCA Meeting 320 N. McDowell Petaluma DCMCs: 10 am Business Meeting: 12:30 pm
29	30	31				

From the Editor...

It's January – time for New Year's resolutions – when many alcoholics swear off drinking for good – this time. A.A.'s can start the New Year without a hangover, and hopefully with a fresh start in sobriety. The theme for this month's issue of *The Point* is "change", one of the things we alcoholics hate most! The articles in this issue celebrate the changes we make in our sober lives – adjusting our attitudes, learning to live without loved ones, and moving to a new home and home group.

The Point is experiencing change as well with the departure of our fantastic Editor. Thank you, Cami! The Committee will try to carry on with a temporary editor. If you have any experience with newsletters, please call Maury at Central Office at 674-1821 and find out how you can help. *The Point* is also looking for volunteers to help with printing and production. If you have a couple of days each month to print, collate, fold and label, please call.

This year we will continue with refreshing articles and regular Inter-group business and have added some new features, as well, such as a study of our basic text—the first 164 pages of the "Big Book", a Service Bulletin, AA Acronyms, and this Editorial! We hope the Service Bulletin will encourage some of you to make a resolution to take a commitment— in your home group or on an A.A. service committee. With so many to choose from, there is sure to be one right for you! *The Point* Editorial Committee hopes you have a happy, safe, and sober 2006! †

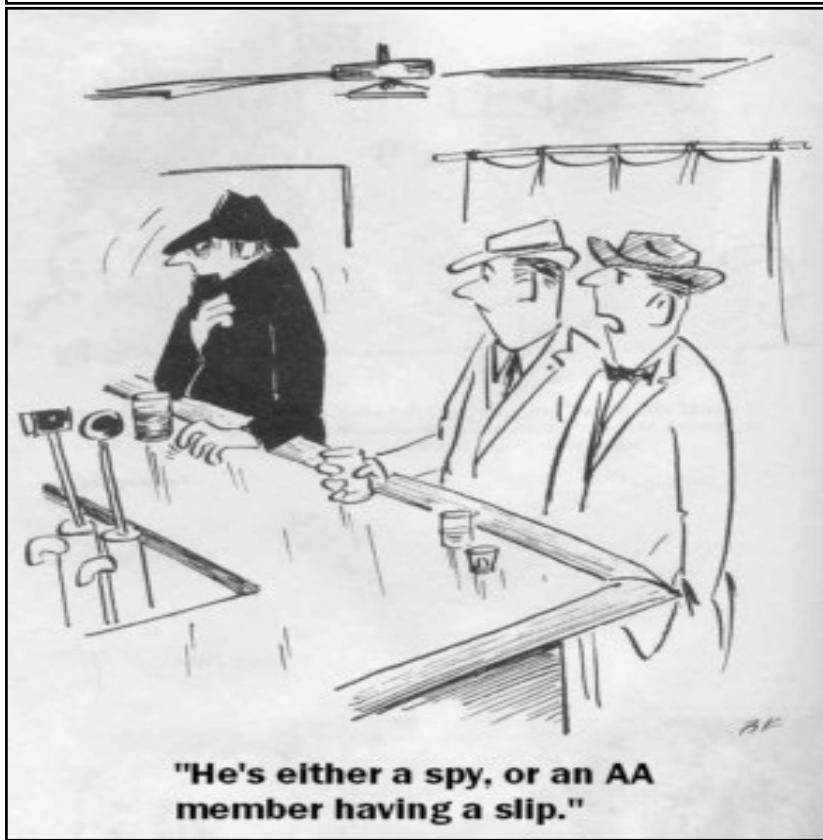
**Don't miss the
SECRETARY'S MONTHLY
insert!!**

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:
Kathleen C., Lynne H.,
Maury P., Mike L., Morgan 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.

Joke of the Month



The Point
January 2006
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MEETING CHANGES

New Meetings:

Mon	12:00 pm	Novato	MONDAY NOONERS 1461 S. Novato Blvd, (SD)
Mon	2:00 pm	Castro	NEW CLAY Alano Club, 1748 Market St./ Gough (BB)
Tue	7:00 pm	Castro	DEUCES NEVER LOSES Alano Club, 1748 Market St./ Gough (Cl, SS)
Thu	8:00 pm	Castro	4th STEP WORKSHOP Alano Club, 1748 Market St./ Gough (Cl, BB, SS, 1.5 hours)
Fri	6:00 pm	Castro	JUST US DRUNKS Alano Club, 1748 Market St./ Gough (Cl, BB)
Fri	7:00 pm	San Rafael	HAPPY DESTINY 684 Pt. San Pedro Rd.

Meeting Changes:

Wed	8:30 pm	Laguna Honda	WEST PORTAL 501 Laguna Honda @ Woodside, Church (was 321 Taravall Funston)
Sat	5:00 pm	Castro	FOUNDERS' GROUP, Alano Club, 1748 Market St./ Gough (was 152 Church St.)

No Longer Meeting:

Sat	11:30 pm	Mission	NIGHT OWL CLASSIC, 2900 24th St./ Florida
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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 has disbanded, please call the Central Office immediately, 415-674-1821.** If we hear no objections during the month following publication here, the meeting will be removed from the schedule. **Thank You!**

Recently Registered Trusted Servants November 2005

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

San Francisco

The 24 Hour Plan Mon. 7am; Big Book Basics Fri. 8pm; Deuces Never Loses Tue. 7pm; Easy Does It Tue. 6pm; Federal Speaker Sun. 12pm; Goodlands Sun. 2pm; Joys of Recovery Tue. 8pm; Parkside Thur. 8:30pm; Progress Not Perfection Tue. 8:30pm; Pure & Simple Sun. 6pm; Sunset 9'ers Mon. 9am; Sunset Sobriety Thu. 7:30pm; Thursday Afternoon Step Study Thu. 1:30pm; Valencia Smokefree Fri. 6pm; Women's Promises Fri. 7pm

Marin

Friday Night Fairfax Fri. 8:30pm; Happy Destiny Fri. 7pm; Mill Valley 7AM Thu. 7am; Mill Valley 7AM 7D 7am; Newcomers Step Mon. 7:30pm

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
01/01	Curtis K.	Daly City
01/08	Sean S.	San Francisco
01/15	Leslie S.	San Francisco
01/22	Ed F.	San Francisco
01/29	Lisa L.	San Francisco

TUESDAY DOWNTOWN

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

DATE	SPEAKER	DOS	FROM
01/03	Leana	11/16/90	Watch Your Step
01/10	Maury P.	02/06/89	SF Fellowship
01/17	Mike M.	11/20/87	Serenity Seekers
01/24	Brit H.	12/09/93	Pax West
01/31	Able M.	07/18/94	SF Fellowship

WANTED: DEAD OR ALIVE!!!

Now that I have your attention, I have to say that my title may have been just a tiny bit dramatic. But I guess it worked if you're reading this ad!

This isn't actually an advertisement trying to track down the bad guys, but rather the GOOD guys (or gals). H&I needs one or more people willing to take on the position of Literature Chair for San Francisco.

The Literature Chair, or Librarian, as it is also known, maintains a stock of AA literature and meeting schedules and makes them available so that volunteers can bring books with them when they bring AA meetings into places where alcoholics can't get out to meetings. These places include jails and prisons, hospitals, treatment centers, and homeless shelters, among others. The position does not involve going into the facilities, but the Literature Chair may also have other H&I commitments if they choose to.

This is an extremely rewarding position because every piece of literature helps to carry the message when there's no AA meeting going on. A week between meetings can be a long time for someone who is incarcerated or in the hospital, so letting literature carry the message in between is a vital service.

If you would like more information about this wonderful service position, please contact Gerri B. at 415-271-2762.

BROADS WITHOUT BOOZE VII

**Women's Luncheon & Speaker Meeting of
Alcoholics Anonymous**

WHEN: Sunday, January 29, 2006

11:30 a.m. - Fellowship / Lunch - 12:00 p.m. Sharp
Open Speaker Meeting - 1:30-2:30 p.m.

(Speaker: Terry H., Tiburon)

NOTE: Attending meeting only? Please arrive no earlier than 1:15 p.m. to allow luncheon to finish.

Thank you.

WHERE: United Irish Cultural Center

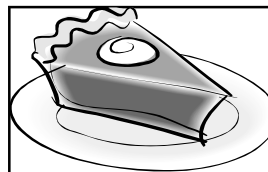
2700 - 45th Avenue (near Sloat), San Francisco, CA

For more info, contact Gerry at 650-654-7666

(coachgerry@sbcglobal.net) or

Linda at 650-593-2124 (linda_gemini@yahoo.com)

Reservations required by Jan. 20, 2005



Happy 32nd Anniversary of the Sinbar AA Meeting

Sunday, January 29, 2006

at St. Finn Barr

419 Hearst (at Edna) SF CA

8PM AA Meeting with Speaker TBA

9PM Pie and Ice Cream Social

The Ultimate Test

by Ruth F.

Everything I learned in my recovery was tested on October 12, 1992, when I received a call from my 29-year-old son, Bob. "I can't concentrate," he said. "I can't read. I'm too far behind. I have a paper that I have to pass in today and I'm nowhere near ready. I have to pass it in at 11AM." He went on to tell me what was wrong with the rest of his life. I suggested that he get a new therapist and find a good support group and suggested that he get on his knees and pray for help to have his fear removed. He agreed.


"Do you have a God Bag?" "No," answered my son. "Well, get a paper bag and write the word GOD or Higher Power on it. Then write down all your fears and put them in the bag. Every time a fear comes up for you, know that you have that fear in the God Bag. Know that you have turned it over. You don't have to worry about that any more. God, or your Higher Power, is handling it. There's nothing else you have to do about it." He promised he would call me during the day if he needed to talk. "Thanks, Mom." He assured me he was okay. "I love you." "I love you, too, honey. I love you, too."

I thought the conversation had gone so well! I felt power flow through the telephone lines, the power connected us, knowing that I was receiving strength from my Higher Power and I was passing it on to my son. Later that evening I received a call from his fiancée telling me that my son took his life that afternoon. The next days and weeks were a blur of pain, of putting one foot in front of the other. The pain was so great at times I felt as if I couldn't breathe or move.

Yet, other times I felt light and soft, as if I were wrapped in a cocoon of cotton, being held and guided and taken care of at all times.

This was the darkest time of my life. Yet there were moments of brilliant light. I was grateful that I had 19 years of sobriety and I had learned how to take care of myself, that I now believed in a God of love and goodness, an energy and power which I knew would take care of me if I simply reached out and up, for my 14 years of meditation which I knew would bring me peace. I was grateful for friends and for the warmth and love of my daughters and my partner. I had to feel everything there was to feel - numbness, pain, anger, the guilt. I knew medication would simply prolong my suffering. I wrote and I wrote and I wrote. I received a note from a friend that read: "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go." Psalm 32.8

That's exactly what has happened. I did find a purpose in all this pain. Each time I shared my pain, and how I got through it, I felt a little lighter. I was turning my pain into purpose and helping to light the way for others to heal. I believe God uses our pain to help lighten the burdens of others who are in situations similar to the ones we have experienced.

Reaching out to the hearts of people in pain lessens the chains that keep us in the prison of our own pain. As feathers float on the lightest breeze, our gentle words, our soft touch, and our compassionate presence can be that breeze that stirs the hearts of fellow sufferers. 

New Year's Resolutions *(Continued from page 1)*

I'd like to add to my life in the coming year. My New Year's resolutions are a sort of cross between a wish list and an annual Tenth Step inventory.

I start by creating my own little serenity spa atmosphere. I'm still a party girl, after all, even if it's a party of one. I set the mood with my favorite music, then I arrange a little table next to a soft, comfy chair with a couple of velvety leopard-print pillows, just to establish a minimum standard of decadence. A frothy café latte (decaf) and a couple of biscotti are mandatory. Next, I get down to the basic tools: I've got a bit of a jones for sexy writing instruments, so I try to choose one that feels good in my hand and has just the right drag on paper, preferably a fountain pen. Add a few sheets of fancy hand-made paper and I'm ready to go.

Lest you call an official *frou-frou* alert, let me just say that all of these accoutrements may not be a strict necessity, but they do make it festive. It's a New Year's gala, and you can go in your jammies!

The most important thing for me to remember during this process is that I am not trying to accomplish anything. That's God's work. I am merely noticing, appreciating, and considering. This year I am particularly grateful for the help I have received in taking care of my mother. It has given me the gift of time to go to meetings, to work with sponsees, to nourish friendships. All of that has allowed me to grow immeasurably. In the coming year, I would like to enjoy going back to school and make more progress toward my degree. I wouldn't mind having some gainful employment if that's part of God's plan for me. And I want God to surprise me, one day at a time, with many new opportunities to carry the AA message.

I read a wonderful resolution in the January 1957 issue of the *Grapevine*. "I pray that I might introduce one new member to the AA way of life," the gentleman wrote. "And equally important, try to keep one member in the fellowship who might otherwise drift away."

If I can do that much, it will indeed be a happy new year. 

Dear Alky

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

Dear Alky,

I have trouble getting things done on time. I'm often late with work assignments, and sometimes show up well after A.A. meetings or social functions have started. It drives friends and colleagues to distraction, and is getting on my nerves. How can I change?

**SIGNED,
Better Late Than Never?**

Dear Better,

Honey, you are singing my song. Alky can count on zero fingers the number of times he's turned in his column when he was supposed to. Many alcoholics have a strange – and strained – relationship to time. Seen in retrospect, my own drinking appears in part a symbolic attempt to stop time, or at least to expand it. Ah, but morning would arrive after a long night of drinking, and with it shame, remorse, despair. If only I could live outside time – where God lives! Alas, we're humans living in the Third Dimension and trying to get to the Fourth and time is a Third-Dimension element. Prayer provides answers, but even it can be a challenge. The 12X12 chapter on Step Eleven reminds us that we're sometimes gripped by "a rebellion so sickening" that we won't pray – or, I'd add, show up on time. Happily, as ever in A.A., there is a solution. The 12X12 continues, "When these things happen we should not think too ill of ourselves. We should simply resume prayer as soon as we can, doing what we know to be good for us." Have compassion for yourself, but be firm. Start by praying for the willingness to be on time. Then take the right action. God will help if you ask. As a wise sober friend recently put it, the Power behind you is greater than the problem before you.



Dear Alky,

My sponsor moved away to the East Coast, and my friends are saying that I should get a new one who is local. I feel that I can still work a good program with my same sponsor via phone and email. What should I do?

**SIGNED,
Virtually Sober**



*"the Power
behind you
is greater
than the
problem
before
you."*

Dear Virtually,

There's no one rule for working with a sponsor; indeed, the very word "sponsor" doesn't even appear in the Big Book. (It does in the 12X12). Still, the Big Book chapter "Working With Others," with its clear directions for helping newcomers, implies face-to-face contact. A danger for older-timers is the delusion that what's good for the newcomer is no longer good for us. It might work fine for you to continue with your present (and now geographically distant) sponsor. But why not shake things up? Each A.A. sponsors differently; why not try something new? The further advantage of a local sponsor is that he or she is nearby when you need them. Additionally, I find it soothing to see my sponsor in meetings. Again, however, there's no right answer; pray for guidance and see what direction you receive.



Dear Alky,

Sometimes I feel like January is the hardest month of the year. The holidays are over and the weather is gloomy. I've been sober a few years, but still fear slipping in January even more than during the holidays. Am I crazy?

**SIGNED,
Winter Blues**

Dear Winter,

Only to the extent that you have an obsession of the mind and an allergy of the body that, taken together, qualify you for a seat in A.A. Otherwise, no. January is tough for many people, including alcoholics. But the depression that winter sometimes brings can be minimized, I find, simply by attending to my A.A. program. Even in January we can find cheer and spiritual solace in meetings; usefulness in sponsorship; purpose in doing A.A. service; and joy in having escaped the bottle and its wreckage. If you want to go an extra step, gather some A.A. friends – and newcomers – and have a house party to celebrate being sober and alive. No month is too gloomy for that!

COMMITTEE CONTACTS

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

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

INTERGROUP OFFICERS:

CHAIR

Steve R. calmont1@aol.com

VICE CHAIR

Steve S. s@p90.net

TREASURER

Danna P. dannajp@earthlink.net

RECORDING SECRETARY

Lauren laurenhache@earthlink.net

COMMITTEE CHAIRS:

CENTRAL OFFICE COMMITTEE

Lynnore G. lynnore1@aol.com

12th STEP COMMITTEE

Rudi D. rudral7@comcast.net

ARCHIVES COMMITTEE

Lynnore G. lynnore1@aol.com

LITERATURE COMMITTEE

Steve N. snolan12000@yahoo.com

ORIENTATION COMMITTEE

Tim M. gryffindor-house@earthlink.net

OUTREACH COMMITTEE

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

THE POINT

Chair Needed

SPECIAL EVENTS

Fran K. 415.424.0626

SPECIAL NEEDS COMMITTEE

Pene P. 415.200-6261

WEBSITE COMMITTEE

Jason K. websitechair@aasf.org

SF TELESERVICE COMMITTEE

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

SF PI/CPC COMMITTEE

Laura N. 415.931-2567

Service Bulletin

Service as an Avocation?

by Rudi D.

In the Big Book of *Alcoholics Anonymous* it says "...none of us makes a sole vocation of [A.A.] work..." (p.19). When I came to A.A. a little over 5 years ago and got sober, I heard the message that if I was willing to put A.A. first, everything else would fall into place. I have tried to live according to that belief and I have not had a drink since coming to A.A. in June of 2000. In taking on service in A.A., one can sometimes feel over-extended. As far as possible types of service, the sky is the limit; and, as alcoholics, it can be a challenge (or sometimes an impossibility) to know when to say when. I have done service at the meeting level ever since coming to A.A., always maintaining at least one commitment, and often several, in order to stay involved; in some ways, service has become, for me, an avocation.

A little over a year ago, I got involved in our local Intergroup, the Intercounty Fellowship Board. I was told that the work of the IFB is done on the committee level, so to be a vital member of the IFB, one should get on a committee and get to work. Eventually, I joined the then-defunct 12th Step Committee. Since joining, several other alcoholics have come on board and we have done some workshops to get people on the 12th Step list and taken some people who were no longer sober off the 12th Step list.

I try to keep the above quote and the idea of service as an avocation in mind, however, because in order to be an effective servant of the fellowship, I feel it is important not to stretch myself too thin: an alcoholic like me sometimes thinks that he has to do everything and that is not the case. I believe that God has created A.A. just the way it was meant to be and there is a job for everyone who wants to stay sober and carry the message.

The IFB is a great way to be of service. I especially like it because there is a certain degree of anonymity inherent in this type of work and it often feels like one is not really doing anything concrete at all. In truth, without a viable IFB, there would be no Central Office, no meeting schedules, nowhere for the visiting alcoholic to drop in to say hello and find out about local A.A., just to mention a few things. Any A.A. who wants to get involved may sit on an IFB committee without even being an IFB member! Maybe your Higher Power has something waiting here for you!

In the months to come, we hope to have all of the service committees use this space to inform you, our Fellowship, about the service opportunities available within our Intergroup. Many of the committees, and contact information for their respective Chairpersons, are listed in the column to the left. If you don't want to wait to read about the committee, give the Chairperson a call or drop him or her an email. Better yet, see the Calendar on p. 2 and locate the day and time that the committee meets and come on down and introduce yourself. There are many ways to carry the message to the still suffering alcoholic and your time and energy will be greatly appreciated. †

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).

Big Book Study: The Forewords and Doctor's Opinion *by Patti M.*

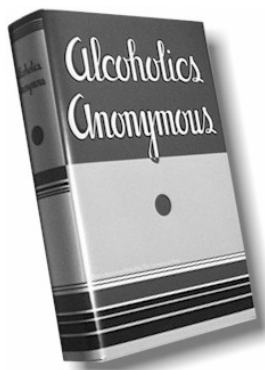
Acceptance may be the key to Dr. Paul's sobriety, but compliance is the key to mine. Translation: do what everyone else is doing whether I like it or not. This means I almost never groan out loud when it's time to cover the Forewords and the Doctor's Opinion in the Big Book meetings I attend.

While reading the Foreword to the third edition this time, three words stood out for me: "simple and personal." The A.A. program is simple and personal. True, we have an impressive and miraculous history, and the Forewords tout our ever-growing numbers, the explosion of groups across the world, and the multiple translations of the Big Book. Clearly, A.A. is the winning enterprise in the recovery scene. But I'd found my way into this article through my own simple story, written between the lines of A.A.'s remarkable history.

The Doctor's Opinion reminds me of who I am as an alcoholic and of the only solution I have ever known—the program of Alcoholics Anonymous. My membership in A.A. has become a central part of my identity and for me, A.A. recovery has three main layers: the collective practice of the Fellowship, including participation in meetings, sponsorship and service, and finally, my solitary and private dialogue with my higher power.

Alcoholics Anonymous is briefly introduced in the Forewords through snapshots of an imperfect and halting beginning and a few major milestones in the years that followed. A few people, barely sober themselves, were desperate enough to work through the uncertainties of a struggling beginning and start something that had a unique place in the world. It grew, and it keeps growing, because it works.

Where it especially comes home for me is when I'm on the road. I often travel to make my living and I've been to A.A. meetings in a storefront in the Midwest to a basement storage room in Midtown. One time, while working in Hawaii, after an A.A. meeting in Honolulu, I was walking back to my hotel in the balmy night air. A truck pulled up next to me, the truck bed overflowing with people from the meeting. The woman driving



...we have a simple job to do, and we know how to do it.

yelled, "whatcha doin'?" I hesitated for a second and that was all she needed. "Get in," she yelled. And I did.

That's my version of A.A., on the grand scale.

About A.A. on my local scene . . . When I first started attending meetings nearly 14 years ago, going to A.A. felt like going public with a carefully tended secret. I was full of shame and fear of being found out. I slipped between the shadows into my first A.A. meeting, and my second, and my tenth. I eventually got a sponsor and somewhere in there I joined the fellowship. I told everyone in my life about getting sober as a kind of insurance. Seems I had more confidence in my pride and fear of public failure than I had in A.A. But I'd really joined and now I wanted to belong.

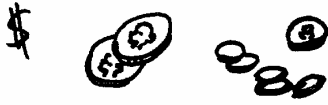
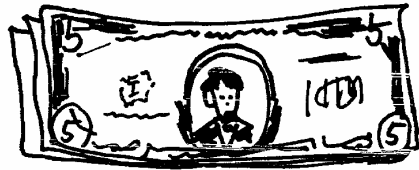
What they don't tell you in the Forewords, and what the good doctor probably never had occasion to know for himself, are some of the things that go on in A.A. that keep us coming back. For me, in the beginning, it was the smallest acts of fellowship. People remembered my name. They let me talk. They invited me to coffee though I always said no. I'll thank them forever.

I once heard a psych professor describe how groups develop, progressing from a bunch of individuals with no connection to a group that has wholeness and an identity. He said it happens one little relationship, one small connection at a time. One of us sits next to the guy we've never seen before, and he turns out to be a newcomer and he gets introduced to two other people. And that's how groups form.

He may not even want to be there but that newcomer just participated in making us a group. If he finds his way back we'll probably be there. We'll be there because we're a group, we mean something to one another, we have a simple job to do, and we know how to do it.

The deepest layer of my program, however, are the solitary moments, the step writing, the private prayer and the reflection. Through my own experience filling a dozen journals with step work over the years and

(Continued on page 15)



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.	John F.
Barbara M.	Lisa M.
Brian H.	Margarite S.
Bruce D.	Michael R.
Caroline A.	Nancie G.
David P.	Peter F.
Douglas C.	Rich G.
Elizabeth S.	Steve A.
Giles H.	Tim M.
Herman B.	Tom M.
Jane K.	Tony J.
Janet B.	Wickie S.
Jim H.	Dennis & Lucy O.



SF Unity Day 2005

By Hannah K.

When the ad hoc organizational committee for Unity Day first began to meet this autumn, we asked ourselves what the theme of Unity Day ought to be this year. We decided to focus on Service, the Home Group and Halloween. We wanted to create an event where people could learn about different types of service in A.A. and how to contribute in their home group, wear odd costumes, have fun, and feel connected to San Francisco A.A. and enriched in their understanding of this special community we inhabit.

I really got to experience the embodiment of unity as an organizer—possibly more so than that of the participants. During the nine weeks of organization prior to the event, I came to feel that the group of us who met weekly on Friday nights to create Unity Day became bonded in a very special way. During the hours we spent emailing, talking on the phone, asking questions, meeting and creating, I got the chance to begin finding a place and a voice for so many of my A.A. experiences that simply don't fit during the standard fare of a normal A.A. meeting.

For instance, one night we got off on a tangent discussing tradition-breaks at a group level. Each person at the table in Central Office had a different experience with a tradition break at their home group, and we each had an insight as to how we thought it could have been handled, or why we considered the situation to have been a breach in how we try to do things in A.A. as a whole. Every A.A. meeting I've attended has had a policy of requesting that there not be cross talk, and for good reason – this format allows for each attendee to feel safe to express what they need to share without concern for how others might respond. This was something I'd been thirsting for a long time – the chance to have discourse about my experiences and feelings regarding A.A.'s traditions in my life! At the end of the evening, we were no closer to a "solution" to some of the situations than at the beginning of the night, but I felt enriched and closer to my program and to the people on the committee.

This year's Unity Day was, by all accounts, a success with record attendance and lots of positive feedback. People seemed to be having fun throughout the day – the contests were a blast; High Noon's Service Jeopardy Game Show was brilliant; Alfred's lunchtime cabaret was highly entertaining and, hey, we got to see people like Steve R. dressed as a cowgirl and hear John T. sing the blues! The food was delicious and so smoothly prepared – THANK YOU IFB!!! In addition to all this festivity, workshop participants seemed truly engaged and inspired, asking insightful questions after each session and, I hope, coming away with a lot of new ideas about service, both inside and outside of their home group. Finally, we had excellent speakers at both our opening and closing meetings. At the end of the day, I was already blessed – that sense of Unity, belonging to a special group and enrichment in my experience within A.A. had already begun budding in me from the moment I put myself out there to first get involved in the service of creating Unity Day. 📌

Literature Review

Do You Think You're Different?

by Kim A.



Those slim gray pamphlets on the literature table are jam-packed with essential information, often excerpted and adapted from our primary sources, like the Big Book. They provide an excellent means of studying discreetly. Explore those resources and share them with friends.

Terminal uniqueness is the subject of this pamphlet. Many of us have felt that AA just wouldn't work for us, or share the experience of being outsiders. I thought I was the only one — but wouldn't you know, I'm not alone.

Do You Think You're Different is an efficient pamphlet which gently asks and answers questions in AA's empathetic way. Paragraph one describes the feeling; paragraph two wonders if "perhaps you are one of those people" who think AA won't work for them and then summarizes the issue beautifully with:

"We in A.A. believe alcoholism is a disease that is no respecter of age, sex, creed, race, wealth, occupation, or education. It strikes at random. Our experience seems to show that anyone can be an alcoholic. And, beyond question, anyone who wants to stop drinking is welcome in A.A."

Then it quotes from Bill W. in three paragraphs of history and encouragement that lead into the three traditions that highlight AA's welcoming of all who have a desire to stop

drinking. Then this amazing mini-Big Book tells 13 "story-ettes" from a diverse bunch of drunks:

My name is Gloria (black) | My name is Louis (79 years old) | My name is Padric (gay) | My name is Ed (atheist) | My name is Paul (Native American) | My name is Diane (15 years old) | My name is Michael (clergy) | My name is Mary (lesbian) | My name is George (Jewish) | My name is famous (movie star) | My name is Phil ("low bottom") | My name is Jim ("high bottom") | My name is Jan (agnostic)

The crabby cynic will question why these particular people were singled out and not some others they'd consider more appropriate, but this is a good assortment. I'm glad to see an atheist represented because so many people struggle with the frequent mention of God in A.A... Some stories address adjustment issues and some don't, but all include enough of their drunkalogues to highlight what unites us.

You can find this and other pamphlets on line, if your favorite meetings don't have them and you won't be visiting Central Office bookstore soon. Would you believe the address is just www.aa.org? It is the A.A. World Services home page. Click "About AA" to access this excellent collection of pamphlets. I hope you'll explore the elegant gray pamphlets arrayed at our meetings, at the Central Office bookstore and on line. They're a comfortable way to keep A.A. with you for spiritual refreshment. ↑

Moving in Recovery

by Lauren H.

So this friend of mine calls me up one day and says, "Hey, there's this cabin in the..." and before she even finishes her sentence, I say, "Yes!"

People that know me know that I have been trying to move to the woods for years. "Where is it?" I finally asked. It's in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Within a week I drove down to check it out, having already agreed, sight unseen. When I got there I found it both divine and surprisingly small. The divinity part is the location—surrounded by trees, it really is in the woods, and not just any woods, but redwoods. The small part is the cabin. 9' x 13'. Without a kitchen. I am a roughing it kind of gal though, so I figure I can do it.

San Francisco has been my home base for years. I first moved here in 1991 from New York City, having just celebrated three years sober. Since then I have mostly lived in the city, but moved to other places for six-months or a year. The saving grace in each move was always the meet-

ings. The first thing I always do is call up the local hotline and get to a meeting so I wouldn't have to be alone.

I was having strange feelings about moving and thinking about drinking like I hadn't in a really long time, so I jumped into the program. It really helped to get to meetings and have people start to recognize me. Within a week of being there I began volunteering at the Central Office and made myself available for other service commitments. I picked up a phone shift on Tuesdays and a Treasury commitment on Thursdays. Then I got a sponsee. I even called some of the phone numbers that the women handed me on those little slips of paper. I felt really welcomed by the AA fellowship in Santa Cruz. It helped me feel at home and, more importantly, sane. And I didn't drink. The initial fear passed.

I am happy to be here and grateful that A.A. helped me get through one more change in my life. ↑

AA Group Contributions - October 2005

Intercounty Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous - San Francisco and Marin Counties

Name	Oct. 2005	YTD	Name	Oct. 2005	YTD
Fellowship Contributions			Monday Night Stag (Tiburon) 8pm		1642.77
AA Workshop		90.60	Monday Night Women's M 8pm		309.39
Brisbane Breakfast Bunch	32.00	268.60	Nativity Monday Night Big Book M 8pm	100.00	200.00
Contribution Box		524.30	Newcomers Step M 730pm		550.58
Deer Park Discovery Group		80.00	Noon Tu 12pm		219.50
Gay Newcomers Group		20.76	Noon Hope F 12pm	117.50	193.50
IFB	101.23	887.72	On Awakening 7D 530am		350.00
Marin General Service Unity Day 2005	121.13	121.13	Pathfinders Tu 12pm		440.30
Marin Teleservice		500.00	Refugee Th 12pm		100.00
Sunday Step Study		165.70	Rise N Shine Sun 10am		93.75
The Chosen Ones		20.00	San Geronimo Valley M 8pm		74.55
Unidentified Group		1355.87	San Geronimo Valley Book Study F 8pm		43.45
Total Fellowship Contributions	\$ 254.36	\$ 4,034.68	Saturday Serenity Sa 8pm		325.00
Honors			Sisters In Sobriety Th 730pm (M)		60.00
Endless Summer F 830pm		74.99	Six O'Clock Sunset Th 6pm	242.15	573.59
Total Honors		\$ 74.99	Sober & Serene F 7pm		462.00
Marin Group Contributions			Steps to Freedom M 730pm		173.90
12 & 12 Study Sa 815am		174.50	Steps To The Solution W 715pm		69.00
7am Urgent Care Group 7D 7am		200.00	Stinson Beach Fellowship Th 8pm		641.04
A Vision for You (Fairfax) Su 730pm	68.97	259.21	Sunday Express Sun 6pm		311.80
Attitude Adjustment 7D 7am		2866.50	Survivors M 12pm	201.20	201.20
Awareness/Acceptance M 1030am		216.00	Terra Linda Group Th 830pm	533.05	1480.69
Beginners W 7pm		250.00	T. G. I'm Sober M 6pm		115.07
Beginners & Closed Tu 7pm & 830pm	285.00	1747.87	TGI Tuesday Tu 6pm		112.92
Bounce Back M 6pm		90.00	T.G.I.F. F 6pm		160.00
Candlelight Group Sun 8pm		69.94	The Barnyard Group Sa 4pm		326.00
Closed Women Step Study Tu 330pm		155.00	The Fearless Searchers F 8pm		138.01
Creekside New Growth Sun 7pm		104.00	There is a Solution Tu 6pm		70.00
Crossroads Sun 12pm		765.00	Thursday Night Speaker Th 830pm	445.00	1499.00
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	85.50	323.71	Tuesday Chip Meeting Tu 8pm		1250.00
Freedom Finders F 830pm		515.01	Wednesday Mid-Week W 6pm		63.11
Gratitude Tu 8pm	5.00	543.36	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	62.50	185.50
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		314.98	Women's Lunch Bunch F 12pm	100.00	100.00
Inverness Sunday Serenity Su 10am		60.00	Women's Step Study Group M 12pm		240.00
Island Group Th 8pm		410.00	Working Dogs W 1205pm		388.00
Just Can't Wait 'til 8 M 630pm		191.75	Total Marin Group Contributions	\$ 2,245.87	\$ 30,022.64
Keepin' It Real Th 6pm		60.00	SF Group Contributions		
Living in the Solution F 6pm		306.00	515pm Smokeless W	45.60	149.40
Marin Newcomers M 830pm		469.78	6am Marina Dock Sa		148.00
Marin Sober Group F 8pm		111.11	7am Grab Bag M 7am	51.81	51.81
Mill Valley 7D 7am		1748.61	7am Speaker Discussion Th 7am	105.98	224.38
Mill Valley Discussion W 830pm		16.80	7AM As Bill Sees It Fri		100.00
Monday Blues M 630pm		713.00	830am Smokeless Tu		84.00
			A is for Alcohol Tu 6pm		203.19

Name	Oct. 2005	YTD	Name	Oct. 2005	YTD
A New Start F 830pm		111.06	Fireside Chat Th 8pm		80.97
A Vision for You (SF) Su 630pm		81.00	Fireside Chat Tu 8pm		114.04
AA As You Like It Tu 530pm	46.79	257.94	Fireside F 830pm		94.00
AA Step Study Su 6pm		457.66	First Place		39.60
Acceptance Group M 530pm	118.11	118.11	First Step Speaker/ Discussion Th 730pm		64.29
Afro American F 8pm		155.58	Founders' Group Sa 5pm		84.40
Afro American Beginners Sat 8pm		390.21	Four Forty Niners F 8pm		28.55
All Together Now Th 8pm	150.55	742.83	Friday All Groups F 830pm		938.00
Alta Plaza (disbanded)		67.48	Friday at Five F 5pm		100.00
Alumni W 830pm		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	44.98	291.85
Artists & Writers DRUNKS ON DISPLAY		794.00	Friendly Circle Beginners Su 715pm	309.56	705.56
As Bill Sees It Sat 11am		293.00	Gold Mine Group M 8pm		328.42
As Bill Sees It Th 6pm	389.41	531.36	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		957.00
Beginner Big Book Step Th 6:30pm		90.00	High Noon 5D 1215pm		612.89
Beginners' Step Study Sat 630pm		201.33	High Noon Friday 1215pm		999.02
Bernal Big Book Sat 5pm	139.31	327.68	High Noon Monday 1215pm	110.00	985.70
Big Book Basics F 8pm	72.00	503.37	High Noon Thursday 1215pm		794.07
Big Book Study Su 11am		389.72	High Noon Tuesday 1215pm		1034.46
Birthday Party Sharing Our Sob. Sat 7pm		133.54	High Noon Wednesday 1215pm	45.00	887.80
Blue Book Special Su 11am		97.42	High Sobriety M 8pm		625.60
Boys Night Out Tu 730pm	13.80	133.80	High Steppers W 7pm		666.99
Buena Vista Breakfast Su 12pm		220.00	Hilldwellers M 8pm	120.00	600.32
Castro Discussion (Show Of Shows) W 8pm		365.59	Home Group Sat 830pm	160.00	400.16
Castro Monday Big Book M 8pm		279.91	How It Works Sat 2pm		213.51
CLAADAAGH Sat 815pm	61.35	101.35	Hot Java F 12am	53.47	53.47
CLAADAAGH Step Study Tu 8pm		60.25	Huntington Square W 630pm		720.00
Cocoanuts Su 9am		291.45	Ingleside Beginners Su 5pm		54.45
Come N Get It F 630pm		54.00	Join the Tribe Tu 7pm	228.00	672.42
Common Welfare Th 8pm		20.40	Joys of Recovery Tu 8pm		109.46
Cow Hollow Men's Group W 8pm	145.46	287.48	Keepin' It Real Th 6pm		60.00
Cow Hollow Young People's Tu 730pm		30.00	Keep Coming Back Sa 11am		3062.48
Creative Alcoholics M 6pm		441.82	Keep It Simple Sat 830pm		503.77
Design for Living Sat 8am		126.00	Let It Be Now F 6pm		100.00
Diamond Heights Tu 830pm		300.00	Light Steppers Su 7pm		120.00
Drive Thru W 1215pm		224.84	Like A Prayer Su 4pm		227.28
Each Day a New Beginning F 7am		1053.86	Lincoln Park Sat 830pm	121.94	121.94
Each Day a New Beginning M 7am		478.68	Live and Let Live Su 8pm		119.40
Each Day A New Beginning Su 8am	288.00	1432.74	Living Sober W 8pm		512.05
Each Day a New Beginning Th 7am		631.05	Living Sober with HIV W 6pm		333.42
Each Day a New Beginning Tu 7am	342.66	1178.24	Luke's Group W 8pm	48.00	148.00
Each Day a New Beginning W 7am	339.10	477.77	Lush Lounge Sa 2pm		376.51
Early Joyous & Free Th 7am		20.00	Marina Discussion F 830pm		615.38
Early Start F 6pm		1447.68	Meeting Place Noon F 12pm		66.98
Easy Does It Tu 6pm		139.36	Meeting Place Noon W 12pm		91.15
Embarcadero Group 5D 1210pm		1187.60	Men's Gentle Touch M 7pm		180.00
Eureka Valley Topic M 6pm		219.57	Mid-Morning Support Su 1030am		808.80
Experience, Strength & Hope W 715pm		44.20	Midnight Meditation Sat 12am		259.54
Federal Speaker Su 12pm		487.93	Miracles Off 24th St W 730pm		510.56
Fell Street F 830pm		71.73	Mission Terrace W 8pm		122.90
Fell Street Step Su 8pm	46.75	198.51	Monday At A Time M 1pm		55.72
Firefighters & Friends Tu 10am		35.00	Monday Beginners M 8pm		495.60
Fireside Chat Sa 9pm		299.01	Monday Monday M 1215pm	50.00	330.97

(Continued on p. 14)

(Continued from p. 13)

Name	Oct. 2005	YTD	Name	Oct. 2005	YTD
New Friday Big Book F 12pm		27.15	Sunset 9'ers W		209.70
New Highs W 130pm		94.80	Sunset Sobriety Th 730pm		411.00
New Hope Big Book M 630pm	52.70	538.46	Sunset Speaker Step Sun 730pm		400.20
New Life W 7pm		212.40	Surf Tu 8pm		1113.86
Newcomers Tu 8pm		252.00	Sutter Street Beginners Sat 6pm	473.29	884.78
No Gurus Meditation Su 7pm		118.72	Ten Years After Su 6pm		1207.68
No Reservation M 12pm		279.52	The 24 Hour Plan M 7am		25.00
Official Sea Lion Sighting Sa 930am	11.00	11.00	The Parent Trap M 1230pm		119.85
One Liners Th 830pm		569.03	The Pepper Group F 12pm		45.00
Parkside Th 830pm		117.89	Thought For The Day F 730am		140.00
Park Presidio M 830pm		79.80	Thursday Night Speaker Th 830pm		935.00
Pax West M 12pm		760.92	Thursday Night Women's Th 630pm		562.41
Pinehurst Tu 730pm		128.00	Too Early Sat 8am		1037.59
Rebound W		55.00	Transrecovery F 630pm		12.90
Red Road Healing Circle Th 6pm		121.48	Tuesday Downtown Tu 8pm	1,040.00	1040.00
Richmond Step Study M 730pm		84.00	Tuesday's Daily Reflections Tu 7am		108.91
Rigorous Honesty Th 1205pm		50.00	Valencia Smokefree F 6pm		852.03
Rose Garden Big Book Th 1205pm		85.40	Walk of Shame W 8pm		177.39
Rule 62 W 10pm		481.93	Washington Square M 7pm	48.00	334.80
Saturday Afternoon Meditation Sat 5pm		169.20	Waterfront Sun 8pm		868.08
Saturday Easy Does It Sa 12pm		674.57	We Care Tu 12pm		440.99
Saturday Night Regroup Sat 730pm	153.50	612.43	Wednesday Noon Steps W 12pm		104.27
Seacliff Th 830pm		92.53	Wednesday Women's Big Book W 615pm		144.00
Second Chance Th 215pm		127.00	West Portal W 830pm	44.00	153.80
Serenity House		1200.00	Wits End Step Study Tu 8pm		68.74
Serenity Seekers M 730pm		686.37	Women's 10 Years Plus Th 615pm		304.00
Sesame Step Tu 730pm	109.80	468.03	Women's Kitchen Table Group Tu 630pm		171.33
Seventh Wonder Group Sa 1230pm		86.18	Women's Promises F 7pm		451.48
SFPOA Th 7pm	110.00	536.85	Women Living Sober Sa 1030am		18.53
Sisters Circle Su 6pm		196.31	Women Who Drank Too Much Tu 615pm		137.18
Sisters In Sobriety M 7pm (SF)		260.00	Women Who Read		55.27
Sober & Centered F 7pm		175.03	Work In Progress Sat 7pm		121.74
Sober Across the Board M 830am	11.41	117.87	Total SF Group Contributions	\$ 5,803.33	\$ 72,695.65
Sobriety & Beyond W 7pm		345.00	TOTAL	\$ 8,303.56	\$ 106,827.96
Sometimes Slowly Sa 11am		106.06			
Step Talk Su 830am		588.71			
Steppin' Up Tu 630pm	54.00	305.61			
Stepping Out Sat 6pm		151.70			
Steps to Freedom M 730pm		116.36			
Stonestown M 8pm		188.88			
Sunday Bookworms Sun 730pm		244.33			
Sunday Morning Gay Men's Stag Su 1030am		1083.32			
Sunday Night 3rd Step Group 5pm		171.60			
Sunday Rap Sun 8pm		240.00			
Sundown W 7pm		352.80			
Sundown Steps Th 630pm		116.20			
Sunrise Sunset Women's Step Th 545pm		60.00			
Sunset 11'ers Su		244.93			
Sunset 11'ers Tu		196.32			
Sunset 11'ers W		112.65			
Sunset 9'ers M		36.87			
Sunset 9'ers F		222.70			
Sunset 9'ers Sa		675.09			
Sunset 9'ers Su		262.78			
Sunset 9'ers Th		410.03			
Sunset 9'ers Tu	48.00	382.78			

Individual Contributions Oct. 2005

INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Contribution Box	53.02
	44.00
	1,000.00
	25.00
	1,500.00
	100.00
Total INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS	\$ 2,722.02

Gratitude Month 2005 Contributions

SF

Gratitude Month

Artists & Writers F 630pm	37.72
Total Gratitude Month	\$ 37.72

Whole Attitude and Outlook

by David M.

“Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change.” In early sobriety, to the extent that I gave this “Ninth Step Promise” any thought at all, I had a very narrow idea of what it might mean. I pretty much figured that I could perhaps look forward to feeling a little better about life in general, mainly because I wouldn’t be consistently suffering the immediate miseries associated with craving, seeking, consuming, and recovering from drugs and alcohol. Only recently, after a sustained period of time spent experiencing the miracles of recovery, has the true meaning and magnitude of this promise become clear to me.

I was away on a long awaited, and much-anticipated, getaway weekend in Mendocino with my sober girlfriend and our very special dog, Eddie. We woke up in our dog-friendly seaside lodge, had a fantastic gourmet brunch, and then took Eddie for a swim in the river near its confluence with the ocean. Next, we strolled along the beach, caught some sun, watched the waves, and poked around for driftwood and seashells. The weather was perfect. The ocean air smelled fantastic. Eddie was doing his “World’s Cutest Dog” thing. It was in every way a great day in the making. And then it happened. Very quickly, I began to feel sick. The kind of sick that can’t be mistaken. The kind where you know its either food poisoning, or a severe 24-hour virus, and that you are going to be physically miserable for a good while before it gets any better. Awful. I lay down in the sand, stared at the sky, and breathed deeply to try and get some relief.

It was soon obvious that this sickness was not going to go away any time soon, and I was in for some suffering. And my first self-pitying thought was: “Doesn’t this just stink? I finally get to take off for a nice weekend and I

have to go and get sick! Why is this happening to me?” But then, *almost immediately*, and with *no conscious effort on my part*, a second, and very different thought came: “I have been going on weekend trips my entire life, and I don’t recall, ever, *even once*, getting sick during such a trip. That’s amazing. I’ve been really lucky. I guess it’s my turn. I’ll just make the best of this and get through it.”

And that’s what I did. We holed up in our luxurious room (a nice contrast to the homeless shelter I once inhabited while bottoming out), and I sat in front of the fireplace with my girlfriend, and my dog, listened to the sound of the surf, and was very, very sick. But the whole time, instead of making it all worse by being angry and felling sorry for myself, I was making it better, by counting my blessings. I was thinking, again with no conscious effort, that if I had to be sick this was a pretty darn nice way to go about it.

Now this little anecdote may not seem to contain any earth-shattering revelations. However, reflecting back on it after the trip was over, I realized how enormous a blessing I have received. As a result of working my program, I have undergone a change that allows me to automatically and almost instantly turn misery into gratitude. For me, this is a phenomenal development, after years of unsuccessfully medicating my misery in every destructive way imaginable.

Since that “not so sick anymore” weekend, I have had many opportunities to observe that my newfound “gratitude mechanism” is very firmly in place and is working for me all the time, in every type of situation. Now I know what that promise is all about. My whole attitude and outlook on life *has* truly changed, and in a way I couldn’t have imagined. What a gift! †

The Forewords and Doctors Opinion

(Continued from page 9)

witnessing hundreds of steps for my sponsees, I have come to a conclusion: the Twelve Steps are the core and it doesn’t even have to feel good to work.

My A.A.: A worldwide, robust, messy organization that can fill up a sports stadium when we hold a worldwide convention. The A.A. meeting I was in the other night where the speaker was so funny I was screaming with laughter. The sponsee I’ll call when I get to my hotel.

My sponsor who’ll give me a spiritual shot on a decision I need to make. The Big Book that travels with me and the half a minute of reflection I’ll take to set my intention for the day.

As we’re reminded in Forewords, “Each day, somewhere in the world, recovery begins when one alcoholic talks with another alcoholic, sharing experience, strength, and hope.” I hope you’ve been reminded of your own story and your unique place in the brilliant history of A.A. †

IFB Meeting Summary—December 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	P	Gerard W.	Any Lengths	A*	Nicholas S.	Sutter St. Beginners	P
Amber W.	Sisters Circle	P	Gregory F.	Midnight Meditation	R	Omar C.	Tuesday Chip	P
Andy T.	Waterfront	A*	Greg S.	Beginner’s Warmup	A	Pascal G.	Monday Night Stag	P
Anthony J.	Founders Group	P	Jason K.	Cocoonuts	P	Patty M.	Huntington Square	P
Brian H.	Living Sober with HIV	P	Jim T.	First Place	A*	Penelope P.	Amazing Grace	P
Bruce K.	Sunset Speaker Step	P	Joe G.	Beginners	P	Randy F.	We Care	P
Carol E.	High Noon Wednesday	P	Judi C.	Tuesday’s Daily Reflections	A*	Rebekah D.	Fell Street Step	P
Chris H.	Friendly Circle	A*	Julia W.	Sesame Step	P	Rudi D.	Serenity Seekers	P
Chris T.	Keep Coming Back	P	Justin S.	Alumni	A*	Ryan W.	Tiburon BB	P
Curtis S.	Sunday Gay Men’s Stag	P	Karin K.	24 Hour Plan	P	Sam C.	Boys Night Out	P
Dan Z.	Each Day a New Beginning	P	Larry B.	Castro Discussion	P	Scott N.	Sunset 11’ers Sat.	P
Danna P.	Treasurer	P	Lauren H.	Ten Years After	P	Sheila R.	Sundown	A*
Daniel B.	Too Early	P	Lillian R.	Women’s Promises	P	Stephanie R.	Live & Let Live	A**
David B.	Federal Speaker	P	Luis M.	High Noon Tuesday	A**	Stephen R.	Valencia Smokefree	P
David H.	Tuesday Downtown	A*	Lynnore G.	Walk Of Shame	A*	Steve N.	Terra Linda Group	P
David L.	Work in Progress	A*	Marvin R.	Bernal Big Book	P	Steve S.	Homegroup	P
David P.	Goodlands	P	Matt T.	Fairfax Friday Night	A*	Terry B.	High Noon Thursday	A**
Don B.	Friday Fell Street	A*	Maury P.	Central Office Manager	P	Tim K.	High Noon Saturday	A*
Doug D.	As Bill Sees It Sat 11am	P	Michael L.	Attitude Adjustment Hour	P	Tim M.	Join the Tribe	P
Edward F.	Happy Hour	A**	Michael S.	Sunset 9’ers Sat.	A*	Tom R.	Mill Valley 7AM	P
Francesca K.	West Portal	A*	Monika H.	SFPOA	P	Thomas K.	Mission Terrace	R
Gaspar L.	Keep It Simple	P	Nicholas L.	Some Are Sicker Than...	P	Victor V.	Stepping Up	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	
Scott B.	Keep Coming Back (Alt.)	Trevor F.	Marin General Service
Elizabeth L-R.	Monday High Noon	Mitzi H.	H & I

Following is an unofficial summary of actions, information, upcoming business and service opportunities discussed at the December 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. Committee sign-up sheets will be circulated during the meeting. The 2006 budget will be presented tonight. The term ‘Intergroup’ will be considered instead of ‘IFB’.

Central Office Manager’s Report: Maury P. gave the report. Please ask your groups to mail in any Gratitude Month contributions. There are phone shifts open at Central Office on Tuesday from 10-1pm and Thursday from 3-6pm. The office will be closed on Monday, Dec. 26th, Monday, Jan. 2nd and closing early on Friday, Dec. 30th. The IFB hosted holiday party for Central Office volunteers and IFB Committee members is Thursday, Dec. 15th from 6-8pm. The Central Office pamphlet was presented to both Marin and San Francisco General Service. The Faithful Fivers pamphlet has been updated to include a credit card option.

Central Office Committee Report: Tony J. gave the report. The 2006 Budget for Central Office was presented to the COC and approved. The annual Holiday Party will be December 15 from 6-8pm. The COC

recommends that IFB Reps returning to service after a break would be required to attend an orientation if they have been absent more than two years.

Motion: The COC proposes to the IFB that the Central Office purchase an upgraded Point of Sale system for \$1500.

Favor – 37, Opposed – 0, Abstain – 4

Treasurer’s Monthly Report: Danna P. gave the report. The net loss for January through October was (\$3,246) which is \$6,002 less than the budgeted net loss of (\$9,248). The net loss in October of (\$2,625) was (\$7,418) short of the budgeted income of \$4,793. Unrestricted cash as of October 31, 2005 totaled \$28,395 and is sufficient to pay the budgeted expenses for November totaling \$16,500. Unrestricted cash remained relatively unchanged from September 30th. Prepaid Expenses increased by \$1,161 due to the prepayment of a book order not received until November. Inventory increased by \$1,198 due to lower bookstore sales. Accounts Payable increased by \$2,000 primarily due to the receipt of an inventory order which was not paid for until November. Payroll Liabilities increased by \$1,675 primarily due to higher payroll expenses resulting from the deferral of Maury’s 9/30/5 paycheck until October.

Proposed 2006 Budget: Danna P. gave the report. The budgeted net income for 2006 is \$89. Total Operating Expenses are projected to increase 10% over 2005 actual amounts, however, they increased only

3% over 2005 budgeted expenses. Total Operating Revenues are projected to increase by 4% to cover the increased expenses. Interest income is also projected to increase by \$2,000 due to investing the Prudent Reserve at a higher interest rate. We will continue to allocate \$250 per month to our Reserve for Computer Equipment. This cash will be deposited into the Prudent Reserve money market account. Funds equal to one month's salary for Maury Polk and Peter Murphy, approximately \$7,700, will be deposited into the Supplemental Compensation bank account in March from Unrestricted Cash. This amount will not be reflected as an expense in the budget or in the financial statements. The Prudent Reserve could be decreased by \$2,500 based upon the standard calculation which averages expenses during the prior two years, however, I recommend that we do not decrease the balance. Six months of 2006 budgeted expenses exceed the current reserve by approximately \$7,000. Based upon the projections above, our Unrestricted Cash balance at the end of 2006 should be approximately \$32,000. The lowest cash balance during the year is estimated to be \$21,000.

Motion: Approve budget as presented.

Favor – 40, Oppose – 0, Abstain – 0

7th Tradition and reading of the 12 Traditions: \$132.20 was collected

2. 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: Maury P. gave the report. The committee is in need of a Chair, an Editor, and a Print/Production person. New features in the Point in the coming year are – Big Book Study, Acronym of the Month, and a Service Bulletin. The committee meets the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month at 5:30pm 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 gave the report. Please have your meeting contact the Central Office with current location details as the committee is updating the website to be more interactive. The committee meets the 2nd Thursday of the month at 6:00pm at Central Office.

12th Step Committee: Rudi gave the report. The last workshop had no attendees. The committee is working with the Website Committee to set up link for alcoholics to email 12 step calls. 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: Written report submitted by Fran. The committee has had a successful and busy year with many events. The next planning meeting is on December 10th at 10:00am at 3643 Balboa Street in San Francisco. The committee meets the 4th Tuesday of the month at 7:30pm at Central Office.

Special Needs Committee: Pene gave the report. The committee needs support. Ask your group what special needs it has and get back to the committee. 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.

Trusted Servants Workshop Committee: Patty gave the report. This is a new committee that has met once to discuss creating a new workshop. The next committee meeting is on Tuesday, December 20th at 5pm at Central Office.

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

3. IFB Standing Committee Reports

SF Teleservice: Maury gave the report. No volunteers showed up at the last meeting. 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: No report. The committee meets the 2nd Monday of the month at 7:00pm. at Central Office.

4. 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. The Area Delegate helped with the inventory at the last meeting. The Prudent Reserve is down at the New York office. The Central Office pamphlet was well received. 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: No report. 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: Mitzi H. gave the report. There are 70 meetings in San Francisco and 30 meetings in Marin. 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: No report. The committee meets the 1st Monday of the month at 7:30pm at Central Office.

The next IFB meeting will be held Wednesday, January 4, 2005 at the First Unitarian Universalist Church at 1187 Franklin at Geary in San Francisco at 7:00pm

Respectfully submitted,
Lauren H., IFB Secretary

2005 SF PI/CPC Annual Meeting & Speaker Workshop

Saturday, January 21st, 2006
Urban Life Center—1101 O'Farrell St.
11am: Speaker Workshop
12pm: Annual Business Meeting
Refreshments provided!


**Reminder to current/former PI/CPC speakers:
Attendance at at least one Speaker Workshop
per calendar year is required of all speakers who
wish to remain on the active speaker list.

E.G.O.

By Russ R.

In the early days of my sobriety, I was convinced that I had no ego, that I had been a victim of everyone else's cruelty, greed and selfishness, and that I had simply been too afraid and humble to fight back. Over the course of working the steps, and learning more about how the alcoholic mind works, I have come to realize that this belief was a myth, something I had created to cover up the fact that I had a massive ego. By going through my years of drinking passively, it was easy for me to blame everyone else for my problems. Underneath it all, I was convinced that I deserved much better in life, that I was smarter than other people, and most importantly, and that I didn't need God. I had eased God out of my life years before I came into the program, because I was convinced he wasn't interested in helping me, that he was just like the rest, not concerned about me.

Working the steps has allowed me to come to terms with the fact that I am responsible for the quality of my life.

By giving up the idea that I am a victim, and by accepting that I am not in charge of planning the results of my day, I have given my life in sobriety over to the care of a God who has done a wonderful job for the past twenty-two years. Steps Six and Seven enabled me to realize that it's not my job to decide which of my defects are the worst ones, which ones need to be addressed first, or how to get rid of any of them. By doing what's in front of me each day, and taking care of the basic responsibilities of life, and by simply believing that God will remove my defects of character, the changes take place without my help, and usually without me even noticing. This is a daily choice for me. I can either get up and try to pretend I have all the answers, and that I do everything perfectly, or I can share with my fellow alcoholics the experiences of my life as it unfolds. That to me is letting go of my ego. That is letting God in rather than Easing God Out. 

CONTRIBUTIONS

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

ONGOING MEMORIALS

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

ANNIVERSARIES

Surf: Barbara M. 48 years
Miracles Off 24th St.: George S. 16 years

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. 

Financial Statement

October 2005 - Intercounty Fellowship of AA

	<u>Oct 05</u>	<u>Jan - Oct 05</u>		<u>Oct 05</u>	<u>Jan - Oct 05</u>
Ordinary Income/Expense			Office Supplies	0.00	2,479.56
Income			Shipping	-179.20	-338.95
Contributions from Groups			Equipment Lease	183.30	4,232.12
Group Contributions	8,303.56	108,354.97	Repair & Maintenance	250.12	1,996.36
Honors	0.00	74.99	Security System	33.50	400.00
Total Contributions from Groups	8,303.56	108,429.96	Special Events	1,025.00	1,710.00
Contributions from Individuals			Telephone	0.00	3,822.58
Individual - Unrestricted	2,722.02	5,845.85	Utilities	95.72	1,751.19
Faithful Fiver	458.00	2,275.00	Travel	439.44	763.24
Honorary Contributions	0.00	2,609.50	Training	0.00	20.00
Total Contributions from Individuals	3,180.02	10,730.35	Bad Checks	0.00	0.00
Gratitude Month			Miscellaneous Expense	0.00	-461.33
Gratitude Month - Groups	37.72	3,551.40	Total Expense	<u>16,552.98</u>	<u>154,552.82</u>
Total Gratitude Month	37.72	3,551.40	Net Ordinary Income	-2,107.74	1,516.54
Sales - Bookstore	7,569.57	84,363.61	Other Income/Expense		
Special Event Income	0.00	1,329.37	Other Income		
Newsletter Subscript.	22.12	454.36	Other Income	0.00	0.12
Total Income	19,112.99	208,859.05	Interest Income	75.22	711.64
Cost of Goods Sold			Total Other Income	75.22	711.76
Cost of Books Sold	4,667.75	52,789.69	Other Expense		
Total COGS	4,667.75	52,789.69	Depreciation Expense	354.36	3,911.81
Gross Profit	14,445.24	156,069.36	Amortization Expense	238.78	1,558.66
Expense			Total Other Expense	593.14	5,470.47
Employee Expenses			Net Other Income	-517.92	-4,758.71
Wages & Salaries	8,943.00	69,313.23	Net Income	<u>-2,625.66</u>	<u>-3,242.17</u>
Employer Tax Expenses	736.28	7,027.03			
Health Benefits	978.00	7,892.00			
Retirement/Annuity Expense	0.00	7,200.00			
Workers Comp Ins.	-8.27	2,827.43			
Total Employee Expenses	10,649.01	94,259.69			
Professional Fees					
Computer Consulting	0.00	562.50			
Total Professional Fees	0.00	562.50			
Bank Charges					
Credit Card Processing Fees	147.34	1,158.43			
Bank Charges - Other	0.00	108.90			
Total Bank Charges	147.34	1,267.33			
Postage					
Bulk Mail	200.00	800.00			
Postage - Other	0.00	504.35			
Total Postage	200.00	1,304.35			
ASL Expense					
ASL Other	0.00	390.00			
Total ASL Expense	0.00	390.00			
Rent - Office	3,708.75	37,087.50			
Rent - Other	0.00	675.00			
IFB Literature	0.00	52.56			
PI/CPC	0.00	-80.86			
Filing/Fees	0.00	47.00			
Insurance	0.00	2,383.68			
Internet Expense	0.00	229.30			

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January 2006

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ISSUE 01.06

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